

OUTDOORS



The Official Organ
of the
Otago Tramping Club

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The Official Organ of The Otago Tramping Club (Inc.)

MARCH, 1945

Vol. II, No. 3

President: Mr. J. Niven.

Immediate Past President: Mr. F. Dunn.

Vice-Presidents: Miss N. Munro, Mr. N. H. Bonsell.

Committee: Mrs. E. Wing, Misses H. Donaldson, N. Lawrenson, M. Parkhill, Messrs. L. Butterfield and R. M. Smith.

Hon. Auditor: Mr. E. W. Hunter.

Hon. Secretary and Treasurer: Mr. E. Hughes, 12 Sheen Street, Roslyn.

Hon. Editor: Mr. N. H. Bonsell, 67a Kaikorai Valley Road.

Club Room:

PLUMBING & ELECTRICAL SUPPLIES BUILDING,
Stuart Street, Dunedin (2 doors from Bath Street). Top Floor.
Open from 7.45 p.m. on Fridays.

Acknowledgments.—Since the last issue of "Outdoors," the position of Editor has changed hands. To Mr. Niven we owe our thanks for his untiring work during the past five years.

The response for contributions for this issue has been particularly good, and the Editor thanks all contributors, while hoping that they will keep up the good work.

OBITUARY

It is with regret that we record the death of Mr. P. L. Ritchie, and Mr. J. Knox, who were both foundation members of the Tramping Club.

The following is an extract from a letter written by the late Mr. James Knox to Mr. Eric Hughes last September:—

"It was on one of the following personal trips we had decided to make the spring much larger, so as to get a mug in, and while the main body went on to boil the billies, P. L. Ritchie and myself (J. Knox) enlarged it to what it is now, as tools had been taken to cut away the rock.

The following personnel—O. Balk, P. L. Ritchie, G. Wright, R. Gilkison, W. Main, Mr. Clayton, Mr. Marlow and J. Knox—having had a splendid walk over the peaks from Mount Allen to Waitati, were coming down Green Hill, when the topic of talk was 'Why not start a Tramping Club' so as to give some of the pleasures which we got out of the different walks and over tracks to the younger folks."

Late on February 3rd, Mr. Stevenson received advice that Mr. Knox had failed to return from a tramping trip, having been seen last at Hightop. Mr. Stevenson lost no time in collaborating with Mr. Hamel, and together they organised a search party.

Next morning, at 6 o'clock, in heavy rain, Mr. and Mrs. Stevenson, and Messrs. Hamel, Arras and Bonsell, left the foot of the sawmill track, only to find on arrival at Hightop that Mr. Knox had expired amidst the hills he loved. Mr. Harris, a local farmer, and two unknown trampers, were with Mr. Knox during the preceding night, and were away for help when the search-party arrived.

EDITORIAL

It is significant that in the year of attainment of its majority, the Club has initiated an experiment intended to encourage juveniles to become members. Henceforth the subscription for those under eighteen will be half that for adults. It is towards such young members and potential members that we grey-bearded veterans look to keep alive the urge to tramp and build new huts.

"Build New Huts" might indeed be the slogan of the Otago Tramping Club. For a variety of reasons, our own Green Peak Hut has lost its erstwhile popularity. The bush-line recedes with each passing year, the intermittent tide of pig-hunters with their dogs has made it impossible for us to prophesy our chances of getting into this, our own hut. We are compelled, therefore, to fall back on the Pyramid and Red Huts, to whose owners we protest our gratitude. In short, it is generally agreed that the hut be shifted to some more sylvan setting. To make the dream reality needs only many willing hands to make light work of the task. Any surplus enthusiasm could very well go into the erection of still more huts.

PERSONALITY PARADE

At a recent committee meeting, Christmas Cards and letters of thanks for parcels were read from Bill McFarland, Tom Foley, Bert Armstrong, Keith Wing, Cliff Trezise, Avon Potter, Peter and John McPherson. These may be seen at the Club-room.

Peter Barnes has returned from service in the Chathams. Unfortunately, after the Moke Lake trip, Peter was directed to Wellington, and thence to Waihi, an appointment which we hope is not permanent.

BIRTH.—The Tramping Club will be pleased to hear of the birth of a son to Mr. and Mrs. Marriott, to whom we extend our heartiest congratulations. As a club member of long standing, may we respectfully draw your attention, Marion, to the reduced subscription for juveniles.

MARRIAGES.—After returning from four years' service in Greece, Syria, North Africa, and Italy, wedding bells have pealed for Robin Smith at his recent marriage to Jessie Beattie (actually it was the bagpipes, no doubt in deference to the bride's Scottish ancestry). May we wish you both a long and happy life together.

Some months ago, Pilot Officer Harry Buckland was in the news, the happy event being his marriage in Canada. On their return to Dunedin we look forward to welcoming Mrs. Buckland to our midst.

ENGAGEMENTS.—Another marriage that looms on the horizon is that of Jim Hermiston and Margaret Burrell, who appeared together at the Club-room recently.

ABSENT MEMBERS.—Ferg. Dunn, Len Butterfield, and Jim Hermiston recently proceeded to Camp. Not long since Len was on leave, when he resigned from the committee due to his inability to attend meetings. A vote of thanks for his good work while secretary and committee member was extended to him.

After a period of duty at the nearby airport, Ken Timlin has returned once more to active duty overseas. To these and other absent members we extend best wishes and hopes for a speedy return. And don't forget to write, for there is always room on these pages.

NEW MEMBERS.—We welcome Misses V. McGavin, K. Brown, and S. Hogan; and Messrs. J. Lymburn and R. J. Vann to the fold, and hope we enjoy their company on many trips.

EASTER TRIP

After reviewing the comparative advantages of Blue Spur, Trotter's Gorge, Piano Flat, and Kakanui Mountains, those members interested in the Easter Trip decided on the latter. At the present time, arrangements for transport are being made from Palmerston to Happy Valley.

From the camping ground it is a short distance to the main ridge upon which at convenient intervals are huts. Though not many Club members are familiar with this range, everyone has seen its peaks when going towards the Club hut, golden in summer-time and sparkling white in winter. Bearing this familiar picture in mind, plenty of good tramp-ing is visualised this Easter.

To strike a more practical note, all those who are going should take their own food. Another meeting will be held to finalise arrangements.

Moonbeams from Lake Luna

"You didn't come up here to stuff yourself, did you, Barnes? That's the second water biscuit you've had to-day!"

CHRISTMAS CREEK

I had always been rather attracted by the appearance of Three O'clock Creek and Christmas Creek from the Central Otago railway line, and the desire to visit them was intensified by a Home Guard expedition into the former, early in 1943, when I was much taken with the fine scenery of the lower gorge. Three O'clock, however, is rather far away for most week-end expeditions, and has the disadvantage of leading away from the Silver Peak country into comparatively uninteresting country beyond, so it was towards Christmas Creek that we turned our attention at Labour Day week-end, 1944. Train services being what they were, we made a cross-country expedition of it from Waitati to Hindon, and thus had the feeling of having made the best of that particular slice of country, of the weather, and of the available rail transport.

We set off from Dunedin on a very crowded Saturday morning train, and an hour later were sorting out our goods and belongings at Waitati Station. Thence up and round Double Hill, through a thickening north-easterly mist, which made visibility very bad on the higher levels. We had no difficulty, however, in finding our chosen camping site in the Upper Waikouaiti, thus ensuring a comfortable night under delightful conditions, and avoiding the anticipated crowd at the Club hut. Next day dawned thick and foggy, and we were prepared to abandon the scheme and make for Whare Flat, when the sun began to break through and things quickly looked a lot better. So we struck up the long ridge to wards the Peaks, and after a very pleasant scramble were at the Pulpit Rock early in the afternoon—no other parties in sight, and we seemed to have the whole array of mountain country to ourselves. We carried on along the track to the survey trig—which, I was surprised to find out, a few years ago was the true summit of the Silver Peaks. Once here, we had the whole Christmas Creek system at our feet. On one side of us a large, deep valley draining the Mt. Allen-Pulpit Rock area; on the other side a series of streams draining the main range almost to the Gap. Right below us was a long, leading ridge which, according to the map, would land us at the junction of these two main branches—and so it proved. We travelled more or less along the crest for some time, losing but little height, and saw our ridge leading out nicely between the two streams. The last few hundred feet of descent was steeper, but not difficult, and eventually landed us a short distance up the left-hand branch. While descending we had been cheered to see, not far down-

stream, a patch of willow trees, and some distance beyond that a station homestead, which made us realise we were not so far from civilisation as we might otherwise have thought. We crossed the left branch of Christmas Creek, and on the far side found a cunningly built little foot-track leading easily round a bluff. We skirted the hillside beyond, crossed the main stream, and came out at the patch of willows, which offered a splendid camping site. The stream here was most delightful, and would surely have enticed us for a swim had it not at this stage come on to rain, so we quickly pitched camp, prepared a meal, and turned in. We were up betimes on the Monday morning, having no idea how long it would take us to cover the remaining eight miles or so to Hindon—where we must be by 3 p.m. or risk being two days late for work! The existence of a hut across the river and some distance up the left hillside seemed to favour the chances of an easy route down, and this was correct. We picked up a track which led us easily down-stream for a mile or so, then began to climb steadily out of a rough section of the stream bed, and finally landed us, quite unexpectedly, in among some station buildings not far from the homestead we had spied from the hilltop. The remaining two miles were by road, first of clay, and then of good metal—and so the journey down from our camp-site, for which we had allowed eight or nine hours in case of need, was finished by 10 a.m., and we were able to see the morning up-train crossing the river below us, and pulling in to Hindon Station. Rain was now coming on in earnest, so we made for a little shelter shed attached to the Christmas Creek Station, and there boiled our billy over a cheery manuka fire. In the afternoon it cleared, and we wandered upstream in the sunshine to catch the homeward train at Hindon.

—S. G.

THE LAMMERLAWS—A YOUTHFUL UNDERTAKING

Perusal of Mr. Scott Gilkison's article, "The Lammerlaws—a Winter Crossing" in a recent issue of "Outdoors," brought back vivid memories of our own experiences on the same trip.

School holidays this year had been spent fruit-picking at Roxburgh, and from the time our boss—an old gold miner—produced a map of the goldfields, I determined to return by no other route but the hills. As the distance appeared no more than 60 miles, by a simple process of arithmetic I decided three days would be ample. That everyone was against me going alone, served only to increase my determination, and despite all weathers. "Cox" rapidly succumbed to the infection of my enthusiasm. By the day of leaving we were both equally excited, for the preparations proved as exciting as the trip itself.

Being then a member of the O.T.C., for appearances sake I possessed boots, haversack and sleeping bag. Cox had neither—just his working clothes. He only needed to send home for his father's boots and bag; on the other hand, if he did, and his mother got wind of it, the trip would be off. The letter home had, therefore, to be very carefully concocted. And the boots and bag arrived. All we needed now was a compass.

Fortunately someone possessed a small Woolworth's magnet, with which we magnetised a darning needle, which was suspended by cotton inside a jelly jar, and after allowing for declination which was supplied by one of the learned members of our hut, we marked the readings on the tin lid with a nail. We did not need to inscribe the warning "Handle with care!"

Carefully guarding this and a large cream sponge which had been baked for us, we set out from Coal Creek on Monday night after tea.

With our bikes checked to Dunedin, lightheartedly we crossed the Roxburgh Bridge and set off up the hillside, later joining the Onslow Road till we reached a green-roofed house surrounded by tall pines. Striking a track from here we had high hopes of reaching the "Dip," but landed on the pipe-line instead, where we spent the night squeezed inside a gap between adjacent pipes.

We experienced no difficulty in continuing our journey at 6 a.m. next morning, and found the track higher up the hillside, and when this petered out followed sheep-tracks to the "Dip."

This consists of a dam over the Teviot River, with a swing bridge for the sheep which used in olden times to be dipped here. Lying amidst barren country, it is itself a mass of healthy trees, and these also clothe "The Island" in the middle of the dam, serving to conceal the wonderful two-roomed hut. Having on a previous excursion found the hiding place of the boat, which is necessary to reach the hut in dryness, we now found the oars under a rock while having dinner.

From the next bend in the river we tramped over the high spots for five miles until, tired of crossing the spurs and gullies that led towards the river, we rejoined the river.

Two or three miles beyond a group of four huts, two tributaries formed a swamp entailing a five-mile detour. On the principle that we could eat and think at the same time, we had dinner while perusing map and compass, after which we headed south along a fence-line towards a peak we believed to be Mt. Teviot (3,203ft.).

Five miles later we arrived. Seeing that the Onslow Road ran round the mountain top gave rise to temporary doubts of our position, but our compass bearing bore out the fact that it was Mt. Teviot. Through the saddle we made E.-S.E. for Wally's Knob, where weariness having overtaken Cox, we camped. On the East side we found the remains of a sheep-yard and, with great forethought, prepared a shelter from the sole and large boards of the derelict structure.

Rain at midnight sought out the cracks and directed a stream of water onto us, and into my right ear in particular. We were young then, with wet sleeping bags, and the prospect of a comfortless night before us, we completely lost our senses. For a start, we were for going to Miller's Flat, had not the thought occurred to us that in the mist our chances of getting there were small.

Within half an hour the rain passed, and the stars shone, but as there seemed to be more rain in store, we used one ground-sheet to cover the boards, and lay on the other, deriving what comfort we could from wet clothes, wet sleeping-bags, and the erroneous belief that it was four o'clock. The fact that it was only 12.20 emerged 1½ hours later, when dawn should have arrived but didn't. The remainder of the night was spent jumping about to neutralise the chilly blast of the wind.

When dawn made its belated arrival, we hastily swallowed some "Weetbix," and followed the fence in a semi-circular direction to the north side of Lam Top (3,697 ft.), due south of Lake Onslow.

For several hours we followed the ridge until, when east of Spylaw Hill, we turned S.E. over all the valleys until we reached the highest point we had seen. After crossing the three sources of the Taieri, at 3 o'clock we paused somewhere near Little Peak to observe the Waipori Dam, and ponder over the fact that we had 20 more miles to cover before dark if we were to get home at the appointed time; so we headed east towards a distant farm, our pace being about a run, over thick tussocks, followed by a scramble down a steep rock face, to reach an old miner's hut, where we had tea. After a short tussle, conscience set us going once more, although Cox was emphatically more interested in sleeping here than in getting home on time.

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PROGRAMME—APRIL-SEPTEMBER, 1945

March 30-April 2.—Easter Trip to Kakanui Mountains.

Sat., April 7—Ben Rudd's and Sanatorium. Kaikorai Terminus, 2.15. Miss D. Boyd.

Sun., April 8—Chalkies, via Black Bridge. Kaikorai Terminus, 9.30. Mr. J. B. Stout.

Sat., April 14—Organ Pipes. Duke Street, 2.15. Miss N. Lawrenson.

Sun., April 15—Pipikaretu Beach. 10 a.m. bus to Portobello. Miss N. Munro.

Sat., April 21—Flagstaff, via Bridle Track. Kaikorai Terminus, 2.15. Miss Hardie.

Sun., April 22—Simple Map Reading at Old Sanny. Kaikorai Terminus, 9.30. Mr. R. Smith.*

Sat., April 28—Pine Hill, via Leith Valley. Duke Street, 2.15. Mrs. Stevenson.

Sun., April 29—Whare Flat. Kaikorai Terminus, 9.30. Miss L. Williamson.

Sat., May 5—Mount Grand and Kaikorai Valley. Kaikorai Terminus, 2.15. Miss N. Munro.

Sun., May 6—Organ Pipes. Duke St., 9.30. Miss H. Donaldson.

Sat., May 12—Seal Point. 2 p.m. bus to Macandrew Bay. Miss A. F. Edmond.

Sun., May 13—Working Party on Rollinson's Track. Kaikorai Terminus, 9.30. Mr. G. Arras.*

Sat., May 19—Flagstaff, via Rudd's Road. Kaikorai Terminus, 2.15. Mr. Thompson.

Sun., May 20—Home Guard Hut and Track Work. Kaikorai Terminus, 9 a.m. Mr. R. B. Hamel.

Sat., May 26—Sullivan's Dam. Duke St., 2.15. Mr. A. Newton.

Sun., May 27—McAra's Track. Duke St., 9.30. Mrs. E. Wing.

Sat., June 2—Signal Hill and Ravensbourne. Opoho Terminus, 2.15. Miss L. Tweedie.

Sat. and Sun., June 2 and 3—Week-end to Club Hut. 7.52 Central train. Mr. R. Markby.*

Sat., June 9—Wingatui Road. Kaikorai Terminus, 2.15. Mrs. A. McFarland.

Sun., June 10—McIntyre's. Kaikorai Terminus, 9.30. Mrs. R. M. Smith

Sat., June 16—Lake Whare. Kaikorai Terminus, 2.15. Miss E. Wilson

Sun., June 17—Benn Rudd's and Whare Flat. Kaikorai Terminus, 9.30. Mr. P. L. Moore.

Sat., June 23—Flagstaff, via Pineapple Track. Duke Street, 2.15. Mrs. P. L. Moore.

Sun., June 24—Sullivan's Dam and Swampy. Duke Street, 9.30. Miss N. Buswell.

Sat., June 30—School Creek. Duke Street, 2.15. Mrs. R. M. Smith.

Sun., July 1—Harbour Cone and Mt. Charles. 10 a.m. bus, Portobello. Mrs. McFarland.

Sat., July 7—District Road and Cafe. Anderson's Bay Terminus, 2.15. Miss M. Parkhill.

Sat. and Sun., July 7 and 8—Week-end at Red Hut and Club Hut. 1.30 train Waitati. Miss N. Lawrenson.*

Sat., July 14—Bethune's Gully. Normanby Terminus, 2.15. Mr. J. B. Stout.

Sun., July 15—Pigeon's Flat and Stone Hut. Duke Street, 9.30. Mr. R. Savidge.

Sat., July 21—Fraser's Gully. Kaikorai Terminus, 2.15. Mr. E. Hughes.

Sat. and Sun., July 21 and 22—Mountain Track—Red Hut. 9.0 a.m. train to Merton. Mr. J. Freeman.*

Sat., July 28—Flagstaff, via Kuaka Road. Kaikorai Terminus, 2.15. Miss S. Hogan.

Sun., July 29—Boulder Hill and Dodd's Gully. Kaikorai Terminus, 8.30. Mr. R. J. Vann.

Sat., Aug. 4—Signal Hill. Logan Point Quarry, 2.15. Miss N. Buswell.

Sun., Aug. 5—Swampy, Ben Rudd's, via Pineapple. Duke Street, 9.30. Mr. J. Lymburn.

Sat., Aug. 11—Abbott's Hill. Kaikorai Terminus, 2.15. Mr. I. Sutherland

Sun., Aug. 12—Club Hut. Kaikorai Terminus, 8.30. Mr. E. Hughes.

Sat., Aug. 18—Pine Hill. George Street Bridge, 2.15. Miss N. McHugh

Sun., Aug. 19—Mystery Trip. Wakari, 8.30. Mr. P. L. Moore.

Sat., Aug. 25—Green Island Beach. 2.15, St. Clair Terminus. Miss J. Meggett.

Sun., Aug. 26—Chalkies: Right and Left Branch. Kaikorai Terminus, 9.0. Mr. N. H. Bonsell.

Sat., Sept. 1—Flagstaff Spring. Kaikorai Terminus, 2.15. Mr. J. Niven

Sun., Sept. 2—Brighton, via Chain Hills. 9.0 Roslyn Terminus. Miss R. Beck.

Sat., Sept. 8—Harbour Cone. 2 p.m. bus to Portobello. Miss V. McGavin.

Sun., Sept. 9—Pigeon Flat and Swine Spur. Duke Street, 9.30. Miss A. F. Edmond.

Sat., Sept. 15—Smaill's Beach. 2.15 Anderson's Bay Terminus. Mr. H. Tilly.

Sun., Sept. 16—Swampy, via Rollinson's. Kaikorai Terminus, 9.30. Mr. Stevenson.

Sat., Sept. 22—Campbell's Road. Duke Street, 2.15. Mr. A. Newton.

Sat. and Sun., Sept. 22 and 23—Week-end Horseshoe Bend-Gap. 9.30 train to Waitati. Mr. R. M. Smith.*

Sat., Sept. 29—Whare Flat. Kaikorai Terminus, 2.15. Mr. N. H. Bonsell.

Sun., Sept. 30—Pyramid Hut. Kaikorai Terminus, 8.30. Miss M. Parkhill.

Leaders of trips are requested to appoint a Deputy or notify the Secretary if unable to go.

* Those intending to go on any week-end trip should first get in touch with the Leader.

Please verify Train and Bus times.

BY THE SIGN OF THE ASTERISK.

There may be raised eyebrows at the feature "Map Reading." One can almost hear seasoned trampers saying "Humph, what's this? We're supposed to be trampers—not Boy Scouts; anyone can read a map, anyway." But the fact remains, the science of orientation in unfamiliar surroundings has been somewhat neglected.

Rollinson's track has also been neglected, if the extent and variety of the gorse with which it is adorned is any criterion. Also there are quite a number of other subjects awaiting the attention of working-bees, but Rollinson's should do for a start.

Apologies are hereby made to those who prefer not to week-end, but the fact that four week-end trips appear on the programme results from the nausea induced by the "same old trips—the same old times." Around the Waikouaiti and beyond the Pulpit, to name but two, lies a wealth of tramping country that has tended of recent years to be forgotten. Restricted bus and train travel and water reserves have all conspired to curb our wanderings. So herein our excuse for the appearance of week-end trips in the programme.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT——

CARGILL'S CASTLE—"Otago's Historical Fortress"

Dreams of sweet music on harpsichord and lute—of love, romance and chivalry.

From Tower, by "seeing stone" galleons in offing, thus preparing defenders with crossbow and lance against invaders.

Search for bones of Dinornis in caves nearby. Also lucky purchaser may discover Pirates' "Treasure Trove" in recesses of dungeons.

AWAKE! Thou who sleepest. Opportunity knocks at your door! Vacant possession.

In spite of it all, Cargill's Castle does not appear on the programme.

THE ART OF RIVER CROSSING

In quite a few trips in the Otago hills and mountains we run into the old bugbear of rapidly-rising rivers, or sometimes we just have to negotiate them en route in their normal state.

A lot of people turn their minds to a rope if they are not too sure of the crossing, but I fail to see its advantage except where you can throw it across and secure it on both sides. If a stream is very swift, dragging a person across on the end of a rope can be very dangerous. The danger is in a person getting drowned through being dragged on the end of a rope which is not helping to support him, but to drag him down. Along with this, the water is rushing down and, meeting a body, must either go round it, or as sometimes happens, over. It is hard in these circumstances to keep a head above water, even for a good swimmer.

If one member of a party can cross the river, then it is much easier for the lot to cross in a body, if some are not as strong or sure of themselves.

Still water runs deep, so usually the best spot is just before the river breaks into a small rapid: there is usually a bar at this spot. Take a

straight sapling from a nearby tree, each member of the party to grasp it firmly in front of them at about waist height. Enter the river together, the stick running in line with the current: that is, the party facing across the river at right angles to the movement of the water. Keep this position with relation to the current at all times, and move together. The weaker of the party should be at the head of the stick, and the stronger as anchor at the bottom end. In this action the top member breaks the water from the others, enabling them to concentrate on getting across the river. Although the top party may think he is slipping off his feet, if a firm hold is kept on the stick, the other members will ensure that he is all right and carry him with them. Never enter the water with straps buckled from the pack around the waist—always undo them first. Keep your boots on, firmly done up.

By using this method, rivers that you might not be too sure of can be crossed in safety and confidence.

—R. M. S.

LAMMERLAWS—Continued from Page 5.

After crossing two more valleys we arrived once more on top of the range; and then more valleys on the other side, razor-cut and swampy. Beyond these we arrived at a tree-fringed sheep-yard. Here my feet gave out, and I experimented with sandals—unsuccessfully, because of the swamps.

Cox had by now got going well, so we made a beeline for some trees which argued the presence of a road-line. Two valleys intervened, and so did darkness, so we were drawn southwards towards the light of a farmhouse.

In the morning we awoke beneath a ledge of rock to see the farm only a few hundred yards away across a valley. Although we could hardly walk, we set out to investigate the trees we were originally heading for, and arrived two hours later to find no road-line after all. Just then some musterers appeared, who imparted the heartening news that Clarke's Junction was a bare half-mile distant, which bore out our confidence in our compass.

Soon rain and wind overtook us, but luckily we found shelter in one of three sheds in the next valley. Soon we were frozen again, but after mending my pants where the cold came in, and fashioning puttees out of rotten sack, blue sky appeared as we were leaving. Soon after reaching the Dunstan Road a car stopped, and I managed to persuade Cox that the best of trampers accept a lift on occasion, and soon we were in Outram. After partaking of pies on the river-bank we set out, apprehensively watching the clouds which followed, but never overtook us, on our way to Mosgiel. We had a rest at Saddle Hill, and I had a shave with cold water and a blunt blade at Kaikorai Stream.

It took three days to do the trip which, in spite of its dry appearance on the map, I would not attempt again with less than a week, a tent, waterproof, and warm clothes.

—L. B.

MOKE LAKE AND MOONLIGHT

To eight of us trampers who helped to comprise the "Earnslaw's" deck-load, the sight of Queenstown's wooded promontory spelt the near-end of the day's journey—little did we know what was in store.

Less than an hour later, so effectively had the irrepressible Richard connived with the Mount Cook Tourist Bureau, two cars departed along the Lakeside Road loaded to the mudguards with the Moke Lake Christmas trip and its indispensable pile of junk.

After leaving the shores of Wakatipu the Moke Lake road commences to climb in earnest, and with anachronistic disregard for the antiquity of the hairpin. The bush-fringed road winding high above gleaming Wakatipu had been picturesque; now, as it wriggled convulsively to breast the hills above, it became interesting to a degree. The moon's argent light lent an air of adventure to this last part of the journey which the lights of the leading car did their best to augment, by failing suddenly and without warning in the midst of every hairpin bend, leaving the startled occupants to soulful speculation of the exact depth of the yawning abyss on whose brink the car was hovering.

Contrary to all expectations, the party arrived intact at the far end of Moke Lake, just as the moon was disappearing over the top of Ben More.

Obviously this was no time for pitching tents, so after a light supper of steak and tea, we all took to our sleeping-bags and sought the friendly arms of Morpheus.

Just as friendly was the piebald cow that shortly ambled into our midst, to make for our bread-supply with the accuracy of a trained bloodhound, and for all her faults it must be said that "Pansy" remained friendly right to the last, and even if she did completely ruin one of the tents at a later stage it was absolutely without malice aforethought.

After half an hour, Morpheus made his departure, for the male contingent of our party was reaching for the axe, and Morpheus did not wish to witness bloodshed, not that he need have worried unduly. "Pansy" remained none the worse for collecting the axe fair in the ribs. "Pansy" was thick-skinned in more ways than one, being apparently built on the lines of a tank.

When dawn broke upon our haggard countenances it revealed a valley whose breadth is minimised by the steepness of its confining walls, tussock-clad and adorned with an occasional matagouri and a still more occasional beech tree. The vista seemed to lack the elements of splendour and restfulness, so plans were soon made for the trip up the Moonlight to Lake Luna; but to-day having established base camp, we were determined to rest in spite of the sandflies.

Contrarily, the nearer the Moke approaches its outlet, the closer it is shut in by the walls of Ben More and Lomond, and the more frequent are the crossings.

After the thirty-sixth crossing, the track climbs onto the edge of a deep gash in the earth that remains as a relic of gold-mining activities, and comes into view of the Moonlight Valley.

Looking upstream we could see a broad, grassy terrace high above the river, bordered on the eastern bank by the gentle slopes of a ridge that rises gradually to the summit of Mt. Gilbert, and in the background isolated peaks of the Richardson Range. The nearer slopes dotted with beech trees, and the more extensive covering in the gullies offered a suggestion of parkland—how different from the Moke's shallow rift with its confining crags leaping in confusion to the skyline.

Over on the left, at the foot of Craigellachie, a group of poplars proclaimed the presence of one hut at least, and we looked expectantly for the coil of smoke from a chimney, as one party were ahead. After a day's tramping, no prospect is more attractive than of meeting others, especially if there is a fair chance they will have the billy boiling.

There were three huts under the poplars, but only one open. With an accuracy that would have done credit to a Sherlock Holmes, we concluded from the evidence on the wall and ceiling that the hut had been decorated as recently as December, 1942, "Auckland Weeklies" and sundry casualty lists being the principal motif. The decorator, it seemed, had a melancholy streak. Time also had played a part—in its present state the hut was not alluring. We departed for the track that follows the Deadhorse Creek, descending gradually from tussock slopes to the rippling creek-bed beneath beech trees which belied the waters' euphonious title. By now the shadow of the hills was chasing away the golden glow from the hillsides, bringing in its wake a chilliness to the air, and a realisation that the hut was not so bad after all.

At the same time the other party had traversed the broad terrace above the river, past the Butcher's Creek Huts, and were sitting before a nice cheery fire at One Ton Hut. Subsequent desultory conversation revealed the fact that, unlike Silver Peak, there was plenty of wood at One Ton Hut.

On Boxing Day, Dick and Peter started out in the final epic phase of the journey to Lake Luna. Some suggestion of its nature can be obtained when approaching from Butcher's Creek. After crossing a sea of tussock, the track sidles amongst the flowering manuka on the hillside towards a conspicuous overhanging rock framing the first vision of One Ton Hut, situated on a clearing high above the river where it emerges from a deep gorge. It is here that the fantastic efforts associated with gold mining becomes manifest. Normally a simple ditch running close to the track, beyond the hut it is a steel, semi-circular channel built on a narrow ledge hewn out of the living rock. In theory this is luxury travel for trampers, and indeed it is possible to peer unconcernedly to the boiling depths, safely screened by the edge of the channel. But since it was built, falling rocks have battered the steel and bent the edges close together. In such situations it is necessary to climb out of the channel, and its edges are inconveniently high, and very, very sharp.

In other places the steel work is completely carried away, and the scramble over the loose rocks so high above the river was transformed to a headlong dash to dodge stones dislodged by a herd of goats. Six of us in all negotiated this "hairiest" part of the Moonlight Valley, and upon return there was always the uneasy conviction that many of the rocks littering and deforming the fluming had not been there on the way up. There were times when we did not feel equal to concentrating on enjoyment of the gorge's scenic majesty.

All but one visited the Moonlight Valley and luxuriated in its peaceful serenity, only to find on return to Moke Lake that the local animals still continued their nocturnal visits, having discovered with bovine and equine sagacity respectively, that here at last were humans completely helpless, and quite unprincipled enough to take advantage of the fact. Much sleep was lost, so it was a relieved body of trampers that waved goodbye to the sandflies that took over next morning.

—N. H. B.

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