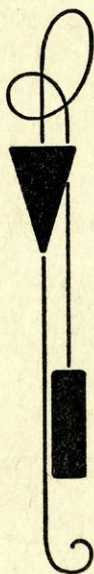


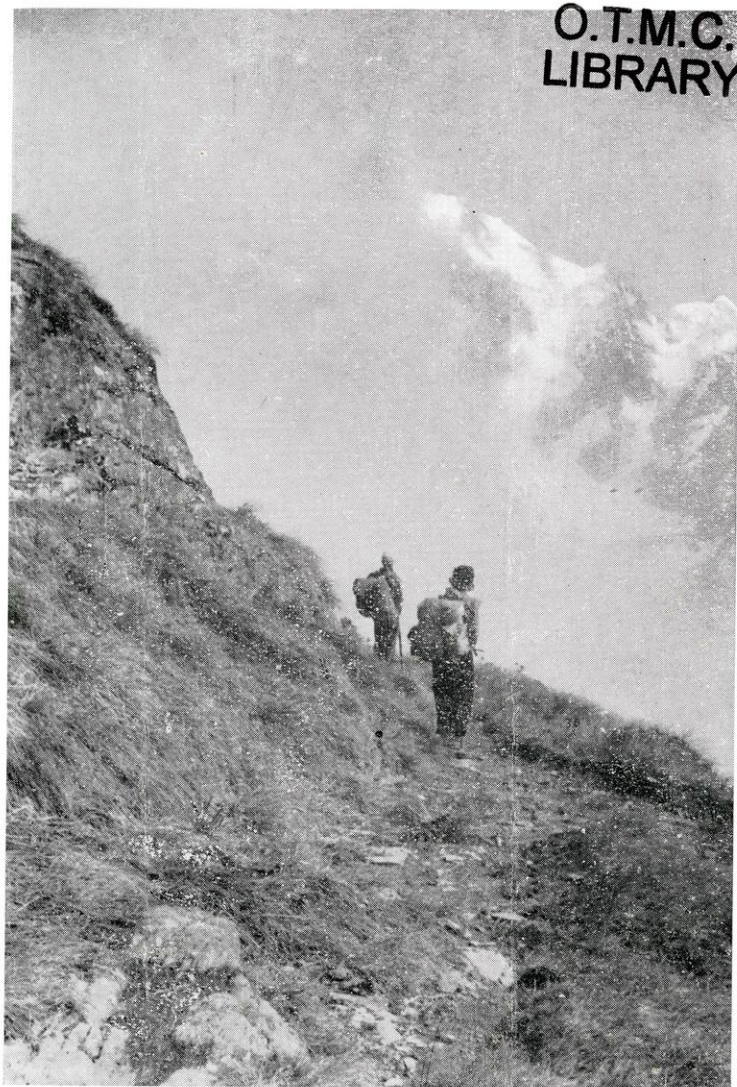
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April 1946

OUTDOORS



The Official Organ
of the
Otago Tramping Club

O.T.M.C.
LIBRARY



MORNING MIST ABOVE LAKE HARRIS

PHOTO—SCOTT GILKISON

OUTDOORS

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

APRIL, 1946

Vol. II, No. 5

All contributions will be gratefully received by Norman Bonsell at 67a Kaikorai Valley Road, who wishes to thank contributors in this issue.

The Club Room on the second floor of the Electric and Plumbing Supplies Building in Stuart Street is available for members on Friday evening from 7.45. Visitors are also welcome.

The Club Hut at Green Peak is available for extended trips. Members free. Visitors a bob.

PERSONALITY PARADE

Personality Parade indeed! Since the last issue of 'Outdoors' no fewer than thirteen of our members have returned, some of whom, incidentally, seem to have mislaid their tramping boots. A month or two ago it was a rare pleasure to go to the clubroom, since one was certain to see one or more of the old faces we used to go tramping with. They are, in alphabetical order, if not in order of dignity: Bert Armstrong, Harry Buckland, Bob Craigie, Tom Foley, Jack Jarvis, May Lucas, Bill MacFarland, John and Peter MacPherson, Jack MacAuley, Avon Potter, Ken Timlin (once more in our midst), Cliff Tresize, and Rod Williamson. The time seems opportune now for our Grand Reunion Dinner.

DEATHS.—I feel sure that the Tramping Club will unite in sympathy with Mr. Niven for the loss of his sister, and with me for the loss of my father in England.

MARRIAGE.—Our heartiest congratulations and best wishes for a happy future are extended to Heather (nee Donaldson) and Keith Wing in their marriage. It is not always that the bridegroom's mother is also an active tramp.

ENGAGEMENTS.—The next in line for the halter—sorry—altar, is John MacPherson who was recently engaged to Miss Tuke Allen. Since she lives in Invercargill, we have not yet seen John's fiancée, but we hope that soon we will. Congratulations to both of you.

Still more recent is the news of the engagement of Nancy McHugh to Horace Tilly. To both of you we extend our heartiest congratulations.

NEW MEMBERS.—There are no less than thirteen new members in this half-year. Many of these are already such familiar figures in the Club that some surprise might be felt that they are new members. They are—Mr. and Mrs. I. Smith, Misses M. Adams, D. Adams, C. Crooks, E. Hunt and N. Kilgour, Stuart Needs, Wilf. Broughton, Gordon McLaren, Roger Harvey, Harry Hunter and Ken Nelson. We hope to continue to enjoy your company on future trips.

BRING AND BUY SALE.—There will be a Bring and Buy Sale on Friday, June 14th, in aid of Club funds. We have already been promised a variety of cakes, sweets and other fancy goods. If you can't bring you can at least buy. (I wonder if anybody would be interested in the original Gas Caliphont.—Ed.).

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

On Friday, March 29th, Chess Champions of 1895 vintage suffered the indignity of being piled unceremoniously under the tables to make room for exhibits of our photographic competition. Some unkind person remarked that it would be unfortunate if a Chess Champion should win first prize. Actually the remark was quite uncalled for since the whole wall was occupied by the exhibits. By popular vote Scott Gilkison's was proclaimed the winner of the first prize of one pound which was generously donated by Mrs. Cameron. Mr. Newton, after appraising the photographs gave a short talk on the principals of photography, for which, very fittingly Scott proposed a vote of thanks, before commencing the stern task of washing up the supper dishes. His exhibit is reproduced within these pages.

MY FIRST TRIP TO THE HUT

(February, 1939)

On Friday night the flash of torches illuminated the track along the ridge-top. Below, on the edge of the Taieri Plain, the lights of Mosgiel twinkled, but ahead a single light showed feebly against the blackness of Silver Peaks, the light of a candle that winked through the window of the hut.

In most places the track was unpredictable to me, even by torch-light, but the other four knew the way from long experience, even where the track left the sharply defined ridge and disappeared into the even denser gloom of manuka bush.

Inside the hut, a crude but watertight affair of corrugated iron with a partition down the centre, tiers of bunks reached right to the roof, and an assortment of junk was strewn over three of them, the belongings of Jack, Pop, and George who had already arrived. Of the three billies that stood next to the fire, two contained tea leaves so it was apparent that they had eaten. This fact was borne out by saveloys and bread wrapped in paper, and butter, jam, tea and sugar, all in tins with the lids off—a chaotic collection that was generously strewn over the table.

A determined pair of hands pushed them all into a more compact mass to make room for more foodstuffs, that would appear as soon as Jessie, Aileen, Bill and Ken could get their packs open. I collapsed on the nearest bunk and regarded the subsequent proceedings with gaping astonishment. After making allowance for the space occupied by the bunks, table and the tremendous pile of firewood there was left only an area of eight feet by five, a space in which five people contrived to cook their supper. Pop, George, and Jack had already retired from the arena, and were lying on the upper bunks with their heads poked over the side, the ceiling was too close for them to sit upright. From time to time contributions to the general conversation drifted down from the roof.

In the middle of the floor Ken was breaking up the firewood. There was a pile of sticks lying beside him too long to go in the fireplace, and he was breaking these one by one by resting one end on a bottom bunk and jumping up and down on the middle until it broke—the wood, not the bunk. Jessie and Aileen divided their attention between the frying pan, the contents of the table and something they'd forgotten to take out of their packs. As their packs were lying on a bunk in the far corner they were continually dodging round each other and round Ken and Bill who had just returned from the waterhole. All these culinary preparations were performed by the guttering light of two candles.

When mention was made of the Gap, I took this to be the regrettable but unavoidable interval between boil-ups. Next day, after following the winding outline of ridges that are broken from time to time by precipitous outcrops of rock which, once surmounted, unfold fresh views of gullies lying far below and draining into a bigger river valley where the folds of the ground are gentler, until at last we looked down upon the beech forest, I realised that my assumption had been wrong. The walk to the Gap was an insight to wide horizons within easy reach of Dunedin.

THE HUT WARMING

Away back last November the idea was first born in the mind of some budding genius. For months afterwards there were rumours of it. For weeks there were oceans of talk of it. Then we experienced a false start. Eventually it came to pass. The famous hut warming was held on Saturday, 23rd March, 1946.

With a song on their lips, mirth in their souls, and lead in their boots the first parties set out for the Club Hut by moonlight on Friday evening. The first official party went via Rollinson's. After being entertained on the way with an exhibition of acrobatic exercises by one member, and with an imitation of a hippopotamus leaving its mud bath by another, we reached Hightop, there to meet a "gang" of the boys who had come via Burns Saddle. Scared of being overtaken and trampled underneath number nine feet, one of the "gang" carried a small red tail light attached to his pack and run from a tiny battery. Ye Gods! At the hut we were met by the indomitable Kenneth whose flashlight photography did such good work the following night.

On Saturday morning we were busy, even the girls tried their hand at painting, and made quite a good fist of it too. (After all, these days, most girls get a daily practice in the art.) With bright green walls and a silver roof shining in the sun the hut is certainly a flash looking abode. A few yards in front a tall flag pole carried a pennant with "O.T.C." on it. The Club was in residence. By afternoon our main occupation was watching the track for new arrivals. First a solitary member, who had come via Swampy, put in an appearance—then the official Nancy L.'s party from Waitati—a crowd from the sawmill track, some from Burns, more from Waitati, and finally the third official party from Rollinson's.

About half-past seven all present piled into the hut and the party began. For those who have not seen the hut since its face-lifting it may come as a surprise to hear that forty members were accommodated quite comfortably with still plenty of floor space to move round. For the festive occasion the rafters had been gaily decorated with coloured streamers and artificial flowers which were artistically draped between hulking big hob-nailers. Pen and ink sketches and a couple of signs added a sense of homeliness to the silver painted walls, which reflected the dancing light of the candles. Even with forty trampers present the place looked spic and span. (Wonderful what a bit of paint will do isn't it girls!).

Ken took up a strategic position at one end with his flashlight, our worthy President sat sedately (for a few minutes only) at the other, while the M.C. carefully wrapped himself securely round an iron bracket and the show was on.

First we honoured the loyal toast, When, after receiving his trappings of office, including gold chain and sword, the said worthy President spouted forth re the work done and the responsibility of members of the

O.T.C. to use and protect their own hut. The toast of "the Club" was then drunk with great gusto. In a similar manner we honoured toasts to "Returned Members", "Absent Friends", "Founders", "Kindred Societies", "Over 30's", "Under 30's", "Future Members", and several others as they came to mind. Interspersed were other speeches and songs. Honourable mention must be made of Scott and his popular ditties, while Ralph's quartet is also due for congratulations on their rendering (from the verb transitive "to rend") of a topical song. One of the highlights was the presentation of Purple Hearts. Richard "cur" de lion, appointed an officer of this ancient order was pleased to confer the badge of his order as a mark of honour to King James, Ray the Vann, W. Stevenson and his faithful female followers, Harry, helper of helpless females, and to Nancy M.

Song and good cheer, mirth and merriment carried the proceedings on while a busy few prepared supper. 'Twas a goodly feast fit for a king, and sufficient to satisfy even the hungriest it richly deserved (Ah those mince pies—if I were but a poet to sing their praise. But enough of food.) Grouped round the fires or on the bunks we sang and ate and drank. We talked and joked and ate and drank. Laughter was in command and held us in her grip. By the flickering light of candles and fires the scene presented itself as typical of the excellent good fellowship which exists among trampers. To finish the evening we joined hands and forty powerful voices roared out the words of "Auld Lang Syne." A fitting finale to a perfect evening.

Next morning after posing for our photographic cranks, Gordon and Roger, to say nothing of Gavin and his libellous movies, the crowd broke up and found their way back to Dunedin by devious routes. Again Waitati and Rollinson's were popular, while eleven of the more energetic tramped home via Long Ridge, Chalkies, Dodds and Bell Hill. And so heigh ho for the next time we have an excuse for a party at the Green Peak Hut.

—"Sweet Adelaine."

'XMAS TRIP: "BEYOND PARADISE"

As soon as the Rees Bridge came in sight, we piled out of the service car and gloomily surveyed our packs, which, contrary to some theorists, looked anything but light. For this was the first time that many of us could remember walking to Base Camp where Mr. Scott, of Temple Peak Station, had already packed the bulk of our food. However, we managed the eight miles to Lennox Falls without actually breaking in half, and before nightfall many tents were pitched around the Hut.

When the curtain of mist lifted next morning the excellence of our base camp was revealed. Situated above the fringe of a beech forest two hundred feet above the Rees Flats one looks across to Lennox Falls cascading from the glaciers of Earnslaw. Although from the hut the roar of 25-mile creek can be heard, there is no sign of the ground falling towards it, instead it seems to rise towards a minor peak not far beyond the sound of rushing water. Following the bent of our curiosity and the track past the water hole, we found, twenty yards from the hut, the lip of the ravine with the water so far below we could not see it. From here it was an interesting walk down to the end of the gorge where beech trees contrive to grow on solid rock. There were some breath-taking glimpses into deep pools far below as we picked our way round the bluffs, and in no part was it possible to reach the water's edge until it emerges on to the river flat. We were greatly impressed by the sight of the still

pools of water emerging from their confining walls, and if only the water had been twenty degrees warmer, some of us would have been curious enough to swim as far as possible between these same walls of rock.

But after all, this first glimpse of nature's majesty was but a cocktail before the feast. On Christmas Day, like the animals in the zoo, we all set out in two by two over the broad flats. Past Hunter's Creek the valley narrows, and when presently we emerged into sunlit glades of beech forest, it seemed to me as if we were walking through a cathedral. After passing the big slip below Mount Clark, a well defined bush track climbs high above the river before resuming its parallel course. At our next emergence into sunlight we found a brand new and unsuspected type of scenery. Close before us a terminal moraine carried down water from the glaciers of the Forbes Range. Beyond it Dorothy, Ron, and I, who held the important but entirely fortuitous position of rearguard, boiled up beside an alpine meadow where every breeze bore the fragrance of tiny flowers. A single tongue of beech forest debauched from the hill-slopes on to the meadow, beyond it all was scrub and Spaniards.

It was with some relief that we found the others still at Shelter Rock Hut, and we lost no time in getting on our way again to Snowy Creek Saddle which we reached at four o'clock. Here Ralph, Gordon, and Alec, who had valiantly carried some of our excess gear, turned back to Shelter Rock. (see Page 8.)

The Snowy Creek gorge on the other side was impressive, but scarcely inspiring as we made our way down towards the snow-bridge. We came in sight of it and it looked good—all we needed was to saunter across the snow on to the easier slopes beyond. As we approached nearer, a sinister doubt entered our minds, the snow had melted from beneath the arch until there seemed perilously little left. None of us had any desire to descend amidst a wild flurry of snow into the snarling Snowy. However, the others were to some degree assured when Ken and I reached the other side and sustained by an improvised lifeline we all eventually traversed the snow-bridge, though the actual degree of safety afforded by a lifeline composed of two pairs of slacks, two parkas, a sleeping bag cover, and a length of string is open to question. Daylight was waning as we faced the suspension bridge to the Dart Hut where we marvelled at the luxury of spring and kapok mattresses.

Next day Shona, Nancy, Horace and Ken continued on down the Dart. Although the weather was wet and blustery I went alone for a short walk up the Dart. About four miles above the hut the valley had already become a barren moraine, with the sparkling Hesse Glacier draped from the hillside ahead. Reputedly the Dart Glacier should make its appearance in a triumphant blaze of white here at a bend in the moraine, but all I could see were a few miserable mounds in mid-moraine. A mile further up the mounds had merely grown bigger. I began to think that the glacier had been carelessly mislaid. In desperation I wandered over to the mounds of rubble, scratched away a few stones and—solid ice appeared. All the miserable mounds were in reality icebergs covered with debris from avalanches. I will admit that I experienced a certain disillusionment, but a little further on I passed through an ice-cave where the ceiling glowed with the green phosphorescence of diffused daylight, and then continued on up scree slopes on the hillside bordering Cascade Saddle. As I had not time to go on to this watershed, I contented myself with a prolonged view of the upper Dart Glacier. Flowing more steeply from the snowfields of several peaks, the branch glaciers converge from behind spurs of the range ahead and flow in one broad sweep from the gigantic fan of ice and so steadily down to the part I had left.

Several days later Ralph, Gordon and Alec, with the dazzling extent of their view from Leary Peak fresh in their minds, succeeded in reaching Cascade Saddle, where they were rewarded with an exquisite view of the Matukituki far below.

Next day, during our trip down the Dart, we saw the Whitburn Glacier, and through the trees and between the spurs of its valley it made a perfect picture, though as we could see only part of it, it did not convey the same sense of vastness and latent power as the Dart Glacier. After a few more hours in the bush, we emerged on to Cattle Flat, which stretches several miles down the valley. From the Forbes Range continual streams pour down across the flat, which is thus broken up into terraces on to which the beech forest sends out tongues of bush. The Forbes Range continues round as a rugged skyline that fades into the bulk of Earnslaw. Thrusting forward from it is a sheer-sided tower of black rock inlaid with sparkling glaciers, which may or may not be Pluto Peak. To the uninitiated these peaks are sometimes hard to define. But on the opposite side of the river the Barrier Range looks kindlier, with a line of unbroken snow softening the outline of peaks which leap incontinently out of the snowfields. For about two hours we walked down the flat and gazed lingeringly at the snow-fringed valley before entering the bush again.

In the cool of the evening we crossed a smaller flat. We had been resigned on leaving Cattle Flat, to leaving the best of the scenery—we could not have been more wrong. We found that the peaks of the Barrier Range had whirled kaleidoscopically into new positions, throwing their lengthening shadows on to the snowfields. Even the beech trees had been endowed with the witchery of evening.

At Dredge Huts we renewed our acquaintance with the sandflies, so we were nothing loth to leave next morning. The question that loomed large in our minds was—would we have to go over the tremendous bluff that hugs the water's edge? But we were lucky—the river was low. Some evidence of the power of the Dart in flood could be seen where the base of a spur had been isolated by flood-waters, while downstream little islets of rock in mid-stream with trees still growing on them, seemed to show that these were parts of the spur that had been washed away. I rather like the picture of whole chunks of spur complete with trees floating gaily downstream. I would like to have watched the phenomenon—preferably from a helicopter.

At length Bonpland and the Sugarloaf peered over the edge of the valley, and eventually we round a bluff on the side of Earnslaw where trees climbed stupendous bluffs and straddling ribbon-like waterfalls made a picture comparable with the over-boosted Yosemite Valley. Past it we could see Paradise ahead down the now broader valley, but surprisingly the track wound round the side of the bluff, and across open paddocks in blazing sunshine we saw the red flowers of mistletoe festooned from the branches of the beech trees.

Slowly, we climbed to a low saddle where we were surrounded by nearby peaks, all striving for dominance, and through a gap in the hills the white, waving crest of the Barrier Range had appeared again as if in greeting. Soon we were in Paradise.

Having completed the round trip to Lennox Falls, little remains to be said, we all wandered back to civilisation as soon as inclination or necessity demanded.

—N. H. B.

OVERHEARD AT DART HUT

"Fancy the Alpine Club being so sissy as to put a hand-rail on the bridge."

PROGRAMME



SUNDAY TRIPS

- June 9—Pineapple Track-Old Club Track-Sanatorium. Duke Street, 9.30 a.m. Percy Moore.
- June 16—Leith Valley-Stone Hut-Double Hill-Waitati. Conveyance to Leith Saddle. Duke Street, 9.30 a.m. Mr. R. B. Hamel.
- June 23—Club Hut. Conveyance to Rollinson's, return Waitati. Kaikorai, 9 a.m. Scott Gilkison.
- Also week-end trip to 'Xmas Creek. Roger Harvey.
- June 30—The Gums-McIntyre's. Kaikorai, 9.30 a.m. Cliff Tresize.
- July 7—Normanby-Mihiwaka-Mopanui. Return by train Purakanui. Normanby, 9.30 a.m. Bill McFarland.
- July 14—Home Guard Hut. Kaikorai, 9.30 a.m. Jim Freeman.
- July 21—The Chalkies. Conveyance to Black Bridge. Kaikorai, 9 a.m. Peter McPherson.
- July 28—Red Hut. Conveyance to Water Trough. Home via Evansdale Glen. Kaikorai, 9 a.m. Maisie Bonsell.
- August 4—Swampy-Ferguson's Creek. Conveyance to Leith Saddle. Duke Street, 9 a.m. Nancy Munro.
- August 11—The Chalkies and Powder Creek. Conveyance to Water Trough. Kaikorai, 9 a.m. Joyce Megget.
- August 18—Club Hut. Conveyance to Leith Saddle, via Ferguson's Creek, return Waitati. Duke Street, 9 a.m. Avon Potter.
- Also week-end trip Mt. Allan-Big Creek. Ralph Markby.
- August 25—Harrington Point-The Heads and Pipikaretu. Queen's Gardens, 10 a.m. Shona Hogan.
- September 1—Whare Flat-Rollinson's Track-Double Hill-Waitati. Kaikorai, 9 a.m. Ray Vann.
- September 8—Laing's Track-McIntyres. Mr. W. Stevenson.
- September 15—Pyramid Hut. Conveyance to Black Bridge. Kaikorai, 9 a.m. Val McGavin.
- September 22—Myseury Trip. Kaikorai, 9 a.m. Horace Tilly.
- September 29—Waikouaiti River-Poillite Hut. Conveyance to Leith Saddle. Duke Street, 8.30 a.m. Norman Bonsell.
- Also week-end trip to Club Hut-Gap-Poillite Hut. Ken Timlin.

SATURDAY TRIPS

- June 15—Organ Pipes. Normanby Terminus, 10 a.m. Miss A. F. Edmond.
- July 13—Laing's Track-McIntyre's. Kaikorai, 10 a.m. Ron Orr.
- August 17—Four Mountains. 9 a.m. train to Purakanui. Miss Tweedie.
- September 19—Chalkies and Boulder Hill. Kaikorai, 9 a.m. George Arras.
- It is advisable that those intending to participate in week-end trips should get in touch with the leader or secretary. Please confirm train or bus times.

Some apology is necessary to those active trampers—and they are many—whose names do not appear as leader. The reason is that there are not enough trips to go round.

ABOUT A NEW CLUB

At the Annual Meeting of the Otago Tramping Club in September of last year a most unusual incident occurred, the outcome of which was the formation of a new club—a club within a club one might say. For the founding of a new club, it was all brought about in a most haphazard manner, and it was not until some weeks after the Annual Meeting that the founder knew that the club was in existence. Since that time, however, club members have taken a most laudible interest in the Under Thirty Club, plying it with advice and criticism in a way that only the broad-minded trumper of to-day can. Unfortunately, members of the U.T.C. have conducted their activities in the utmost secrecy, and it was not until the Editor had bribed their secretary with a tin of Andrew's Liver Salts and two dozen clinkers that the following report was made available. Scanty as it may be, it serves to give some impression of the oddness of this odd society of trampers.

The First General Meeting of the Under Thirty Club was held in the snowgrass near the Flagstaff Trig on Saturday, November 13th, at 3 p.m. The President was in the chair, and there was a fair attendance of members. The first business brought up for discussion was the matter of objects. It was argued that even though the President founded the club with no object in mind whatsoever, it would not be unreasonable to suggest that the U.T.C. have at least one object to justify its existence. After several members had given their views on the subject, it was moved and seconded that the main object should be as follows:—

"That members of the above should at all times endeavour to assist the decrepit or ailing trampler by

- (a) presenting said trampler with a copy of Mr. Freeman's 'Health and Strength.'
- (b) Offering (at least once) to carry the offending swag and, if necessary, the said D. and A. Tramp.

Everyone agreed that this was a most worthy object and as 'Xmas time was approaching there would probably be numerous opportunities for such work.

The President then drew attention to the matter of a qualification test. He stressed the fact that this was a most serious business and apart from the age limit, some other definite qualification was required so as to ensure only the 'correct' type of trampler being admitted to the club. It was duly moved and seconded that no person would be elected if he or she

- (a) habitually used a hot-water bottle on tramping trips;
- (c) had ever arrived at the Club Hut on all fours;
- (c) had not heard of the Tararuas.

It was added as a rider that male members were to be preferred to females as it would in many cases prove an impossible task to ascertain the age of applicants.

As a cold wind was now springing up, the President deemed it advisable to close the meeting and those present shouldered their packs and set off at a brisk trot for Red Hut where a most enjoyable week-end was spent rehearsing Christmas Carols."

—Anonymous.

THE CLUB'S CONTRIBUTION

It now seems appropriate that some reference be made to activities of Club members in the immediate past other than purely in their capacity as trampers.

For so small an organisation, the Otago Tramping Club has good cause to be proud of the record of its members who have from time to time served with the Armed Forces. We have indeed cause to be profoundly thankful that the accompanying list of members who left this Dominion will, in all probability, be identical with the list of those returning.

The only exception to the above statements appears unhappily to be that of Miss L. Davidson who, in France, in the early days of the war made the supreme sacrifice.

To those members whose names appear hereunder we can do no less than wish them the best of good fortune in the years to come.

Bert Armstrong—5 years in the Navy.
Owen Boyd—4 years, M.E.F.
Peter Barnes—3 years, Chatham Islands.
Norman Bonsell—3½ years, Pacific.
Harry Buckland—4 years, Air Force, Canada.
Len Butterfield—Italy, now in Japan.
Margaret Bamford—Went to Greece in the "Mooltan", December, 1945.
Bob Craigie—4 years, Middle East.
Ferg. Dunn—Italy, now in Japan.
Tom Foley—5 years, Navy.
Jim Gilkison—4 years, Middle East.
A. J. Gillan—5 years, Navy.
R. A. Innes—4 years, Middle East.
Jack Jarvis—3 years, Navy.
May Lucas—5 years, N.Z.N.C., Middle East.
Colin Lucas—4 years, Pacific and Middle East.
Scott Hindmarsh—3 years, Middle East.
Charlie Mann—5 years, Middle East.
Bill McFarland—4 years, Middle East.
H. A. Meredith
Alan Mitchell
John McPherson—3 years, R.A.F., Canada and England.
Peter McPherson—3 years, Fleet Air Arm, Canada and England.
Jack McAuley—3 years, R.A.F., Canada and England.
Ron Orr—4 years, Middle East (Awarded M.B.E.).
Bill Poppelwell—4 years, Middle East.
Avon Potter—3 years, R.A.F., Canada and England.
Ted Smith—3 years, Middle East.
Robin Smith—4 years, Middle East.
Jack Stuart—4 years, Middle East.
Jack Stout—2 years, Pacific.
Ken Timlin—2 years, R.A.F., Pacific.
Cliff Tresize—3 years, R.A.F., Canada, England and Burma.
Violet Tucker—2 years, Middle East.
Rod Williamson—3 years, Middle East.
Mary Wilson—3 years, Pacific.
Keith Wing—1 year, R.A.F., Pacific.

COPLAND CROSSING

John and I left Pembroke by taxi with the understanding that we could travel thus easily as far up the Haast road as possible. Creeks had gouged across the road in places, until, four miles past Makarora we were compelled to swag the remaining 16 miles of road. Although an arduous beginning for a trip, our walk was enlivened by lunch within view of Mount Birnam, 4,672 ft., and later, the view of Brewster Glacier beyond the roaring Pyke.

Five miles past the swing bridge over the Wills River we came to the dead tree marking the turning to Bourke Hut.

There were six deer cullers at this hut and we awoke early next morning with the aid of their alarm. Also they had offered the use of their horses for crossing the Haast, an arrangement which was obviously made without the knowledge of the animals, who nevertheless enjoyed being chased round the flats. So we stripped off and clad suitably for wading in boots, pack, and a smile, steeped gingerly into the somewhat cool stream, which in the centre reached to our waists. On the opposite bank we made ourselves respectable again, until John noticed that his army gaiters were still in the hut. All this took time, but as I watched him make his third crossing I could hardly chafe at the delay.

After some time on a good track, we had to push through the bush to the river flats, until we found the track again at the foot of a bluff. For a spell we admired the junction of the Haast and the Landsborough, and then pushed on round Pivot Spur towards the Clarke Hut whose first appearance coincided dramatically with a flash of lightning, a peal of thunder, and the onset of heavy rain, so although it was yet only mid-day, we stayed the night at this very comfortable hut.

On Monday morning good weather prevailed, so off we set with Mt. McFarland standing in all its glory, a whole 8,278 ft. of it. Following a good track we shortly crossed Pivot Creek, and then later found that Roaring Billy lived up to his name, although not enough can be seen of him.

At Thomas Bluff we built ourselves a bivouac that night, and settled down for a peaceful night's sleep. But we reckoned without the mosquitoes who, having found us, put an end to our dreams. Consequently, at four fifteen on Christmas morning we left them, not stopping until at nine o'clock we had our breakfast. Later, as we approached the airstrip, a plane took off and headed north. From the Cron's we heard that it had gone to Waiho empty—bad luck again, for that was our destination.

Next morning we floated over the Southern Alps in the plane that was engaged for us, but mist obscured Cook, Tasman, and the other huge peaks. In forty-five minutes we were at Waiho, making tracks for the lunch table. In our bearded state we modestly chose a table well out of the tourist's eye, only to be shown by a charming young waitress to another table conveniently within the gaze of touristdom. During the afternoon we found that by combining the use of one bach without a fireplace and another with a leaky roof we could be quite comfortable.

Before leaving for Weheka we could scarcely miss seeing Franz Josef Glacier, but words cannot express the graceful splendour of it. On the other hand the Fox is dirty in comparison.

At the Franz Josef a guide from the Hermitage offered to allow us to follow him over the Copland Pass, and we were to have met him at Weheka, but he was delayed so we pushed on to Welcome Flats to await his arrival. On our way glimpses of Mt. Tasman, La Perouse, and Glorious were prominent. Along the Karangarua is a good bush track, though somewhat overgrown with ferns and blocked by occasional fallen trees. Past the swing bridge over Architect's Creek a short, stiff climb brought us to Welcome Flat and the hut, where Mt. Sefton and the Footstool gave us a hearty welcome by clearing the mist off their well made splendour. Incidentally, the Copland River is not crossed till after leaving the hut, which indicates a mistake in the map.

Rain next day brought our exploring to a halt. At Clarke Hut we had been entertained in our forced inactivity by the antics of steers; at Welcome Flat we derived amusement from the friendly Wekas.

Our guide and his friend had arrived at six, soaked to the skin, but we set off at six-thirty next morning. A mist which hung about the Valley we took to be a morning mist. A push up Welcome Flats was easily accomplished, and then beyond a patch of bush was a sight none of us will ever forget. The whole hillside had come down in a massive slip between a-quarter and a-half mile wide, coming down from 5,000 feet above us. The streams through the slip are tepid, we surmised earthquake action was responsible. From Douglas Rock Hut where rats had been busy chewing blankets and mattresses, we climbed steadily towards the head of the Douglas River, crossed the snowfall of Mt. Sefton and, having left the bush behind, observed the chamois roaming around. A zig-zag climb brought us to the foot of the snow—4,700 feet of it to climb. Presently mist descended, mixed with showers of rain, hail and snow. Shortly after snow alone took over, and it was a long, slow plod up towards the Pass, working always to the left. The mist cleared and revealed that we were about 500 feet below the Pass which is the centre of a series of small peaks. On the East side a ridge runs down towards the main ridge, the only one of easy descent. A huge snow drift involved a detour—a climb, a glissade, and a final climb up to 7,400 feet. After ten minutes on the Pass we looked like four snowmen. We plodded along a razor-back in soft snow, and saw the Hooker Hut 3,000 feet below us, and away in the distance the Hermitage. We had roped up at the Pass, now we unroped when we came on to rocks. Cold feet and loose rocks do not go well together, and the sensation of slipping is always prominent. After the guide was half-way down, his friend followed, but he lost control of himself and started to spin. He bowled the guide over who was on his feet again in a matter of seconds, while his friend continued his mad career across some rock, then back on to the snow where he came to a stop and lay still. We thought him gravely injured for blood appeared on the snow. However, after our descent which, I may say, was taken very gingerly, we found nothing worse than a few nasty cuts to his hand and a possibility of eating his tea off the mantelpiece. After a boil-up at Hooker Hut we proceeded down in heavy rain to the Hermitage, where hot baths and bacon and eggs awaited us.

—R. J. V.

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