

TARARUA '98



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THE ANNUAL PUBLICATION OF
THE TARARUA TRAMPING CLUB

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Cover photo: Hugh Barr, *Alistair Betts and Michael Henley on Mt Darby.*

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President's Review

ONCE AGAIN the club's annual gives us the opportunity to reflect on longer or more unusual trips run by the club or club members during the year. Christmas saw alpine climbing in the Mt Cook area while the trampers headed into the Lake Sumner and Kahurangi National Park areas, with kayakers enjoying themselves in Northland.

In the new year we once again ran our very popular bushcraft course followed some time later by the rock/alpine course. These courses are great in that they provide skills to extend trampers' and climbers' horizons as well as encouraging new members to join the club.

The family group is growing in numbers and in the variety of trips offered, with some of the older children completing some challenging trips.

During the summer the re-roofing and painting of the old part of the roof on Tararua Hut was completed to give us a watertight lodge.

Easter trips went to many locations, with at least three parties tramping in the Paparoa National Park, in the Punakaiki area.

Many people are owed a debt of gratitude for their input to the club's activities over this year, and I would like to particularly focus on the trip leaders, without whom we would not have the great range of club trips that we enjoy.

Thanks to all of you,

Alan Wright
Club President

TTC Officers 97/98

The General Committee (August 1997 to August 1998) was:

Alan Wright (President)	Tong Young (Vice President)
Hugh Barr (Vice President)	Denise Church (Vice President)
Peter Smith (Vice President)	Sue Cuthbertson (Chief Guide)Janie
Ohlhaut* (Tramping organiser)	Robert Murray-Brown (Treasurer)
Jenny Gates (Tramping organiser)	Michael Hartley (Secretary)
Rosemary Wilson (Tramping organiser)	Sally Chesterfield†
Nick Crang	Anne Dowden
Hugh Fyson*	Graham Hall
Alison Handley	Jenny Lewis
Jillian Norgren	Michael Taylor

*Janie Ohlhaut and Hugh Fyson resigned during the year.

†Sally Chesterfield resigned during the year and was replaced by Jenny Lewis.

The Sealy Range

Christmas 1997

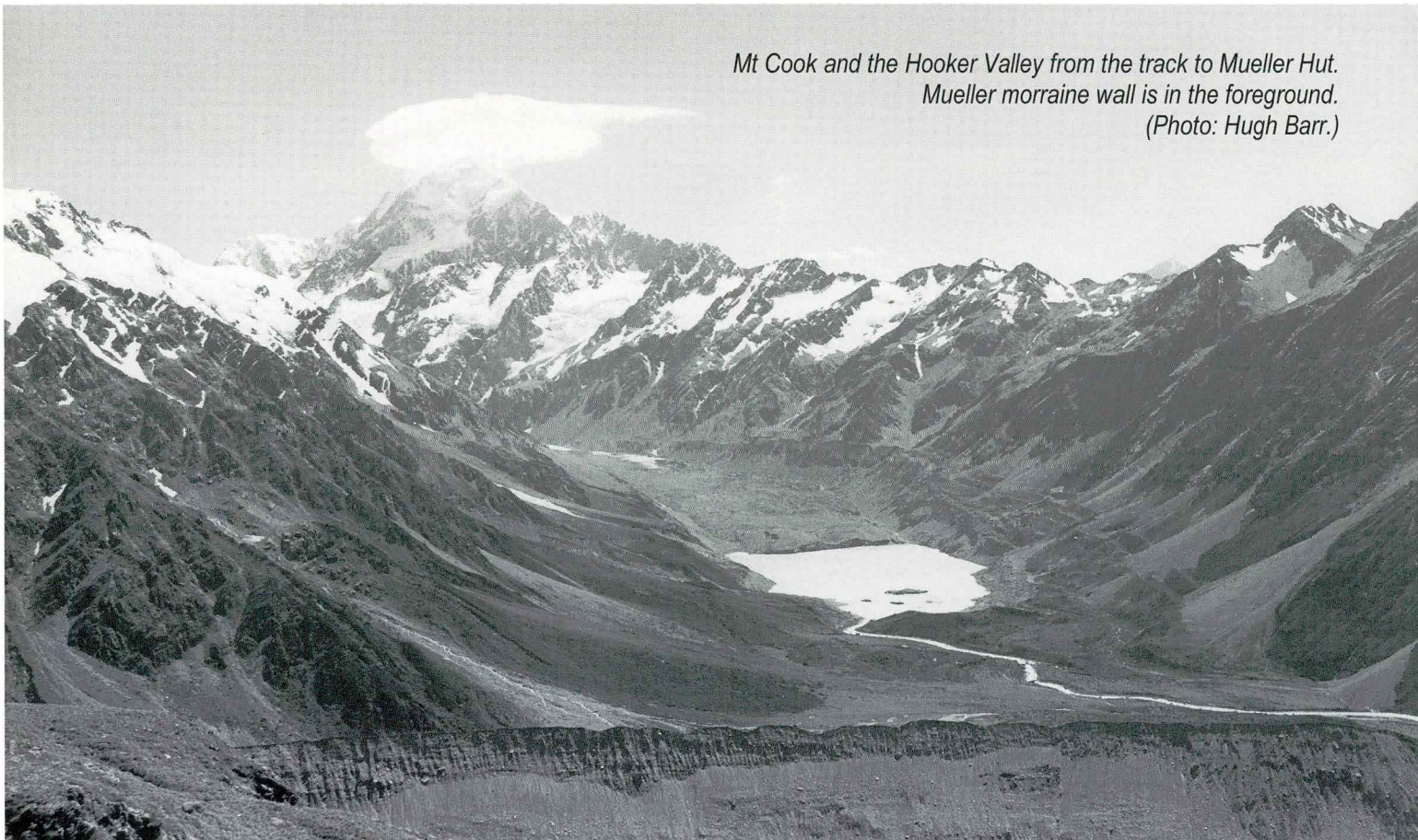
By Hugh Barr

THE SEALY RANGE, in the southwest of Mt Cook National Park, provides some of the Park's best intermediate climbing. It is challenging without being extreme, and a great place to cut your teeth after Alpine Instruction and adjust to a truly alpine environment. Big peaks such as Cook, Hopkins, Sefton and others towering around are an inspiration to persevere.

We arrived at the Mt Cook Visitor Centre on Boxing Day at about noon and set out soon after for Mueller Hut, heavily laden with alpine gear and 6 days food. There were six of us - Alistair Betts (Alpine Instruction 1997), Merle Bruns (from Hamburg - actively

tramping since coming to New Zealand in June, to improve her English), Anthony McNamara (Alpine Instruction 1996), Michael Henley (an experienced trumper and climber), non-member Simon Chapple (a NZAC rock climber), and myself (Alpine Instruction 1961, the leader).

*Mt Cook and the Hooker Valley from the track to Mueller Hut.
Mueller moraine wall is in the foreground.
(Photo: Hugh Barr.)*



The track to Mueller Hut is one of the few maintained tramping tracks in the Park. It is very steep, requiring several rests, but has

‘Very strong northwest winds kept us awake and we heard the occasional avalanche peeling off the Main Divide.’

marvellous views. The first was over the Hooker Valley to Mt Cook, with the usual north-west cloud flowing over the Copland Pass. The second, of the impressive 100 metre high moraine walls of the lower Mueller Glacier, was a reminder of how much

the glaciers have shrunk in the years of global warming. Then the Sealy Tarns, nestled in a small faultline, and the massive East Face of Mt Sefton, towering over us. Keas playing fighter pilots enlivened the view.

Mueller Hut was full with a Saturday night crowd of twenty three, mostly overseas trampers. As well as being the most accessible alpine hut in the Park, it has marvellous views of the peaks all around. We enjoyed brilliant views of a rose-tinted sunset on Mt Cook, across to Malte Brun, and the twinkling lights of Mt Cook Village, 1000 metres almost directly below us.

It was a crush in the hut that night, with eight of us sleeping on the floor. Very strong northwest winds kept us awake and we heard the



*Barron Saddle Hut and peaks of Hopkins (left) and Spence (right).
(Photo: Hugh Barr.)*

occasional avalanche peeling off the Main Divide.

The next morning was fine but 80 km/hour winds were forecast. We walked to the top of Mt Olliver and continued along the ridge, conscious of the steep drop to the Hermitage on the eastern side.

However, the strong wind soon turned us back. We decided to try the easy climb of Mt Annette and headed up the snow of the western slopes. Some Americans, also out from the hut, said the wind on the Annette Plateau was 85 km/hour gusting to 110, according to their wind speed meter.

We soon found this to be true and after being badly blown about, we returned battered to the hut. As forecast, it rained heavily overnight and the next morning. When it eased to light drizzle at about 10 am, we set off for Barron Saddle Hut, at the head of the Mueller Glacier. We were apprehensive about the weather, but pleased to get away from the crowds.

We descended the 400 metres to the glacier via the snow slope, ridge and moraine wall southwest of the hut. The moraine was loose and unstable, and needed some caution. There are no descent places further up the valley. The drizzle then cleared, but it was cool and overcast.

The going up the middle of the moraine was good, although rocky in places, and the weather continued to improve. The views were spectacular, with impressive bluffs and the hanging Sladden and Williams Glaciers to the east, and the icefalls from the Main Divide to the west.

We had a cold lunch opposite the Sladden Glacier and

then made good time up the snow, winding through the crevasses to Barron Saddle.

The foundations of the Three Johns Hut, blown away in a blizzard in the 1980s, were still visible on the saddle. The new Barron Saddle Hut is

a barrel shaped can, well lashed down, and is on a shelf a good half kilometre from the saddle. The last entry in the hut book was from Christchurch-based, ex-TTCer Peter Barnes, a month earlier.

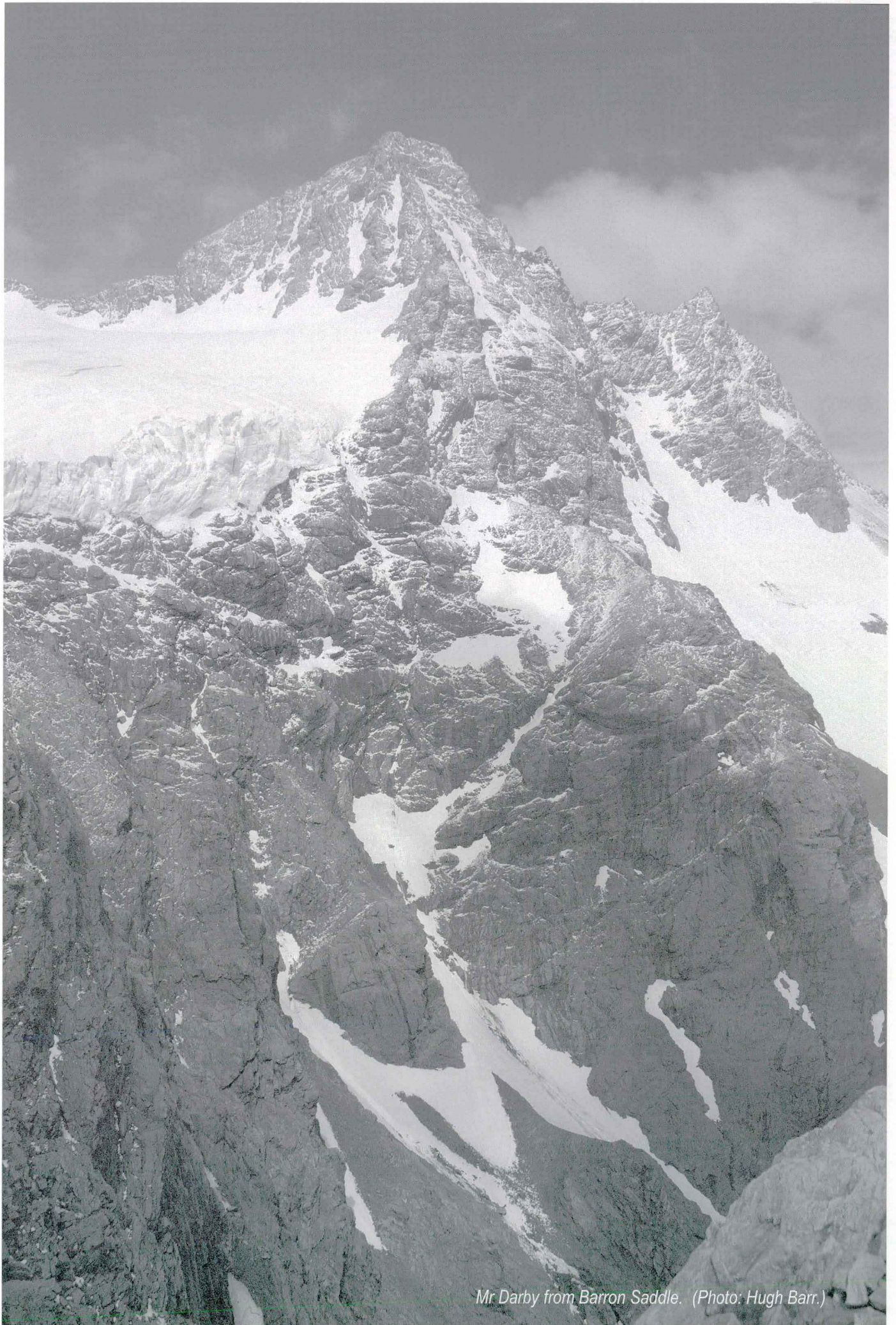
Mt Darby towers impressively to the east of the hut, with the Williams Glacier hanging to its side. We wandered up in the afternoon sun to look at it, and the impressive bluffs on the Dobson Valley side of the saddle.

It snowed 10 cm overnight but cleared away to a brilliant morning. We left at about 9 am to check out the

***'The new
Barron Saddle Hut
is a barrel-shaped can,
well lashed down.'***

***'Because the snow posed an
avalanche hazard, we practised
snowstake and other belays,
and self arrests ...'***

track to the Williams Glacier. Because the snow posed an avalanche hazard, we practised snowstake and other belays, and self-arrests, and after lunch attempted The Scissors, on the Main Divide. Michael began a direct ascent up the ridge, but we soon reverted to an easier, if exposed, step-plugging-sidle across the steep



Mr Darby from Barron Saddle. (Photo: Hugh Barr.)

Dobson Valley snow face, followed by a more relaxed scramble up the southwest ridge to the summit.

We enjoyed intermittent views across to Mt Burns, Vampire and the other Main Divide peaks; the Landsborough; and the partly snow-covered slabs of the

‘Most of us went around the ledge between the bluffs ... enjoying views of Mt Sealy as a spectacular spire’

Spence Glacier, with the Hardie’s Gut route to it. On our descent we enjoyed brilliant blue sky on the new white snow. A young chamois bounded away across the lower Dobson face. It was a straggler from a small herd whose footprints we later found crossing Barron Saddle out of the Mueller. Two Christchurch climbers joined us that night.

The next day was fine and we were all away by 8 am for Mt Darby. Most of us went around the ledge between the bluffs to the Sladden Glacier, enjoying views of Mt Sealy as a spectacular spire. The route up the Sladden was straightforward, with good snow but an occasional small crevasse. We climbed readily up the snow, over the schrund, and along the exposed snow arete ridge to the summit. Tourist helicopters droned around us and across the Divide. After lunch we descended, but not with enough energy to climb any more peaks. There were lots of climbers on Sealy’s snow face. Back at the hut, the evening radio forecast was for more

fine weather.

The next day it was back to the Sladden Glacier, with Alistair and I bound for Sealy, and Simon and Anthony for Jeanette. The steep snow and ice band on Sealy provided good cramponing in the shade, followed by a rock ledge step and sidle, and a short snow walk to the top. It was quite a viewpoint, with the Tasman Glacier peaks, Nun’s Veil, Cook, Sefton, Hopkins, McKerrow, Ward, Dechen, Hooker and others all spread out around us. We admired the view for an hour, then it was back down for a drink in the sun at the base of the snow slope.

We took a look at the lowly Mt Massey, but decided Mt Jean looked more interesting. The plod across to it was hot, with the summer sun streaming down. Simon and Anthony, having climbed Jeanette, were ahead of us on Jean, and lunched with us on their way down. They enthused on their pleasant climb of Jean.

The 35 degree red rock-snow slope was equally enjoyable for us, providing many alternative routes and an easy scramble, in spite of its

‘There were great views of Cook and Sealy from the top.’

steep appearance. There were great views of Cook and Sealy from the top. We had a slow plod through the soft snow back, with a few small slots on the Sladden. Two ex-Auckland University Tramping Club climbers joined us that evening and we shared a celebratory New Year’s Eve drink.

New Year’s Day was a rest day, with some of our party doing a little rock climbing. We headed back

to the Hermitage on 2 January, getting away to our earliest start (5.30 am) and watching a small avalanche off the Bannie ice cliffs from below. We made good time to Mueller Hut and were back at the camping ground about 1 pm.

Copland Pass

For the second part of our trip we planned to cross the Main Divide to Fox Glacier by the classic Copland Pass route. Discussions with DoC confirmed that the track to Hooker Hut was difficult, being cut since 1995 by a deep canyon at Stewart Stream.

This is a consequence of the general retreat of the lower glaciers in the Park and the subsequent collapse of their moraine walls, as the ice holding them up melts. The other classic crossing, via Graham Saddle at the head of the Franz Josef Glacier, is even more cut off now by the Rudolph Glacier's retreat.

We decided to go directly up the Hooker Glacier and then strike up Fitzgerald Gut and up the normal ridge route, which I had been over in 1991. Unwanted gear was posted back from the Hermitage. It was a hot sunny day so we had dinner



*Looking down the Dobson Valley from the top of Mt Jean.
(Photo: Hugh Barr.)*

at the lunch shelter then walked up the Hooker Valley in the cool of the evening, admiring the views of Mt Cook and the mountain daisies and other alpine flowers.

We camped beside the lunch shelter and were kept awake by a strong northwest wind. The next morning we were away soon after 6 am, up the track and around the moraine lake. The route went well, despite some menacing moraine bluffs and very strong winds. The route up the moraine on the true right of the Hooker Glacier was straightforward, as was the way up Fitzgerald Gut. The hard part was finding where to climb out of the gut onto the ridge - there were no cairns or other markers.

A loose looking scree gut proved the best way. Meanwhile, the strong nor-wester could be heard roaring over the peaks, one of the few times I have heard wind roar. The old route down, around the toe of the ridge, had fallen away. We went higher, across steep snowgrass, onto the ridge of the old route.

Progress up the ridge was slow because of the gale force wind. It was stronger than anything we had

the track above Hooker Hut and gazed at us for some time, before moving on. We retraced our steps into the gut. Michael and Alistair returned via Hooker Hut, which turned out a

‘...we decided it was too dangerous and unpleasant and, disappointed, we retreated out of the wind.’

significantly longer and more difficult route, down the moraine wall. The rest of us went back down the Gut and around the lake.

Back at White Horse Hill we stayed at the Canterbury Mountaineering Club’s Wynn-Irwin Lodge, borrowed a car to get some beer, enjoyed a shower and generally relaxed. Thanks CMC. The next day was worse, weather-wise. It would have been no good staying on in hope at Hooker Hut - the mountains are always there for another day. We headed back to civilisation, after a largely enjoyable trip.

‘... one of the few times I have heard wind roar.’

had until then, and there was a very real risk of being blown over. After half an hour we decided it was too dangerous and unpleasant and, disappointed, we retreated out of the wind.

We stopped for lunch lower down, in the lee of the ridge. Two descending guides appeared on

HARPER PASS

Christmas 1997

By Jenny Lewis, Mary Inglis, Sheena Hudson and Diana Barnes.

THIS IS a classic route over a low alpine pass between Arthur's Pass and the Lewis Pass, which follows tracks historically used by Maori, early European explorers, gold diggers and stockmen.

After an early flight from Wellington and a shuttle from Christchurch, we arrived mid-afternoon at Aickens, near Otira, where the track starts. A short walk over farmland took us to the Otira River, our first obstacle.

After an hour's search for a safe crossing of the swollen river, we concluded that camping was the only feasible thing to do. Jenny and Mary approached the local farmer for permission to camp and were



*World War 2 troop truck crossing the Otira River.
(Photo: Diana Barnes.)*

pleasantly surprised to find that he could take us across the river in his trusted Second World War troop truck. It was an unusual and exciting crossing with the flooded river lapping the tray. The farmer really enjoyed this novel use of his truck which normally transports firewood from the Taramakau Valley and he was grateful for our donation.

We camped an hour up the Taramakau Valley and awoke to heavy West Coast rain. We set off to find that the first side stream, Pfeifer Creek, was impassable, which forced us to return to our starting point by the

Otira where there was a small 'bus' shelter. This shelter was much appreciated when it came to cooking.

The sun came out after lunch, tents were dried and a real holiday atmosphere developed.

The next morning we were able to cross the side streams but as the Taramakau was

still high we had to keep to the true left bank, and we were forced to do a lot of bush bashing. After a serious crossing of the Otehake side stream we had a pleasant lunch and decided to push on to Locke Stream Hut, our original goal for the second day. This involved many crossings of the upper Taramakau before we reached the hut

**'... he could take us
across the river in his
trusted Second World
War troop truck.'**



*The Hurunui, going into Lake Sumner.
(Photo: Diana Barnes.)*

in the early evening. During the afternoon we met Sue Triggs and Murray King, who were tramping in the opposite direction. However, most parties seem to prefer to start on the

‘Mary took off one of her boots and tramped this part of the track with Jenny’s sandshoe on one foot... ’

Otira side since the route in the Taramakau is not an all-weather one.

We shared the hut with a friendly party of 10 from Auckland Catholic Tramping Club and a lone trampler who arrived soaked, exhausted and bruised, having come down Townsend Creek which is usually impassable after heavy rain.

Our third day involved a steeper climb over the 963m Harper Pass in misty conditions. The sub-alpine areas of the pass were covered with *Dracophyllum menziesii* and *Ranunculus lyallii*, which made a pleasant, if cool, lunch spot. As we descended from the pass, there was a change in vegetation to flowering hebes and *Celmisia* and at a lower altitude, beech forest. We camped in the upper Hurunui for the night. Here we made a decision to split the party into a faster and a slower group.

For the rest of the trip we enjoyed fine, sunny Canterbury weather. We tramped down the true right of the Hurunui for the next one and-a-half days to Hurunui Hut and the big swing bridge. The going was much easier than on the West Coast side and en route we bathed in the hot springs just off the main track. The hot water was most welcome as the weather had not been conducive to

washing in the rivers. Victor took photos of this memorable event.

Later we met Owen Pearson and his dog who planned to join us for the last two nights. He had brought in some fresh bread to tempt our palates. The track took us over grassy flats, past some old huts, through beech forest and eventually along an old four wheel drive track.

After crossing a swing bridge, our route followed an ill-defined track on the north shore of Lake Sumner until we came to a delightful campspot at Charley’s Point. Due to painful pressure points, Mary took off one of her boots and tramped this part of the track with Jenny’s sandshoe on one foot and her other boot still on the other foot. She looked odd but it allowed her to move easily, without pain. After making camp we wandered around looking at the plant life and taking photos. We were especially interested in the prolific green-hooded orchids.

The next day we followed a well-worn track over the Kiwi Saddle, with a side trip to Lake Marion. A surprise on the track was meeting two people on horseback from Hurunui Station. As this is a Forest Park, dogs and

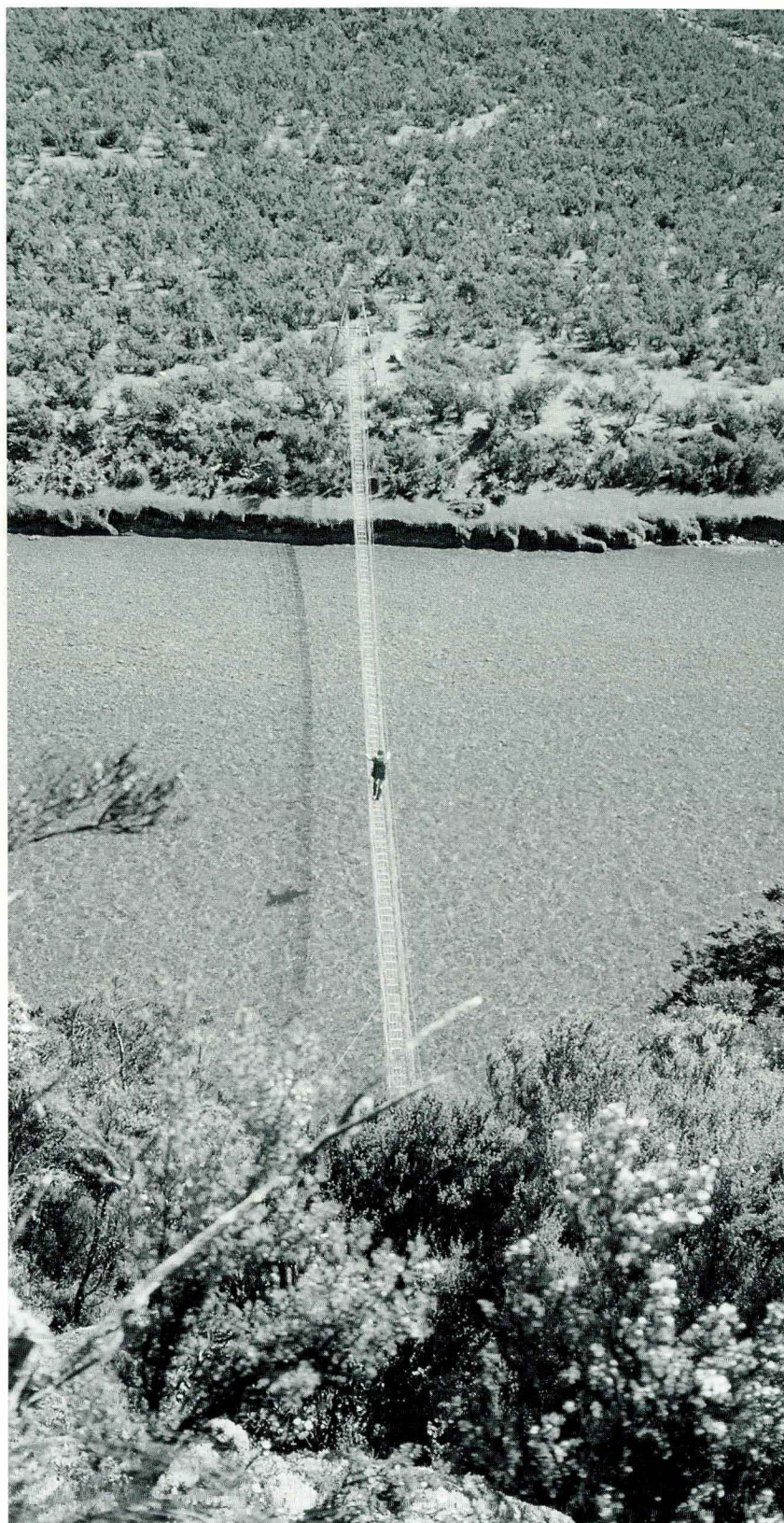
‘... we followed a well-worn track over the Kiwi Saddle.’

horses are permitted. The Hope-Kiwi Lodge was a great place to clean up and relax.

The last day’s tramping was a long, hot trek following the Hope River to Windy Point near the Lewis Pass road. All of us enjoyed a final night camped at Windy Point near the Education Centre. Our shuttle arrived

early the next morning and took us on a sight-seeing trip around Hanmer Springs on our way back to Christchurch.

The trip members were: Mark Casey (leader), Diana Barnes, Vivienne Healey, Sarah Hooker, Sheena Hudson, Mary Inglis, Barbara Marshall, Jenny Lewis, Victor Negrin and Jillian Norgren.



*Swing bridge across the Lower Hurunui River, above Lake Sumner.
(Photo: Diana Barnes.)*

Rees/Cascade Saddle/Dart

Family trip, Christmas 1997

By Peter Smith

A gust of wind off the lake at the Tekapo campsite ripped the tent. We slept the rest of the night under the van - not a good start to our trip. The next day we drove to Wanaka and the DoC office. Our plan was to climb to

Cascade Saddle from the Matukituki side, and then down to the Rees. However, DoC reported ice and snow on the Cascade route, with crampons and ice-axes essential and another southerly blast expected that night which would probably bring snow



*Crossing Muddy Creek at the beginning of the Rees.
(Photo: Peter Smith.)*

down to 1300 metres. It was no place to take children. Lunching on the waterfront, we considered the alternatives and eventually made the decision to do the trip in reverse. The snows might melt in a week and if not, we could return down the Dart.

We set off, over the Crown Range to Glenorcy, where we weighed up our transport options. With 13 of us, we were able to bargain a little and it was agreed that we would catch the bus to Muddy Creek the following day, and it would pick us up from Chinaman's Bluff eight days later.

The overnight rain and fresh snow on the mountains had swollen the rivers. Muddy Creek was quite milky. We crossed Bridges Creek and went onto Ford's Fall where we had some well-earned lunch - it had been an early start. We had learnt from previous Xmas trips that the children are likely to be ravenous on the first day, so we had plenty of extra Taranua biscuits for them to devour. Two four-wheel-drive vehicles drove past us, going up the valley. We caught them up at 25 mile creek. They had been fly fishing and had hooked a trout but had lost it when the line broke - well, that was their story! There was a poignant plaque by the creek to two trampers swept away on 21 Dec '95.

Up ahead we could see the Earnslaw glacier with a slab break along its lower half. We set up camp at the park boundary. It was 4.30 pm and time to get an evening meal on the way. The sun was very warm and we had to retreat to the shade to eat.

The next day, the sun appeared late and so did we. Tents were moved across to the sunny area to dry. A kea flew in across the tree-tops. We set off, over the footbridge and along the

track. There were several windfalls along the way, and a great camping area at Step Flat. We stopped for lunch in a grassy glade and then it was up to the Shelter Rock Hut. There was a lot of debate there - the children wanted to stay at the hut, but others felt it was better to head up the valley a little and camp, so that the next day



*Walking down the Snowy Valley to Dart Hut.
(Photo: Peter Smith.)*

would not be so long. We continued on and found a place to camp. Two pairs of keas visited us during the evening; one had the remains of a rabbit hind leg that he kept throwing in the air and trying to catch.

The following morning we were up and away by 9 am. We tramped for a couple of hours up the gut, then up the final climb to Rees Saddle. We enjoyed splendid views up the Snowy, across to the Tyndall

Glacier and Mt Tyndall, and down towards Dart Hut and the Whitbourne Glacier behind. The weather was glorious. We had a lunch break for a couple of hours before we continued our way down the Snowy to the summer footbridge. We had seen many alpine flowers since leaving Shelter Rock Hut, but the carpet meadow of Mount Cook lilies and speargrass just across the bridge was very special, a blaze of colour against the snow-capped backdrop.

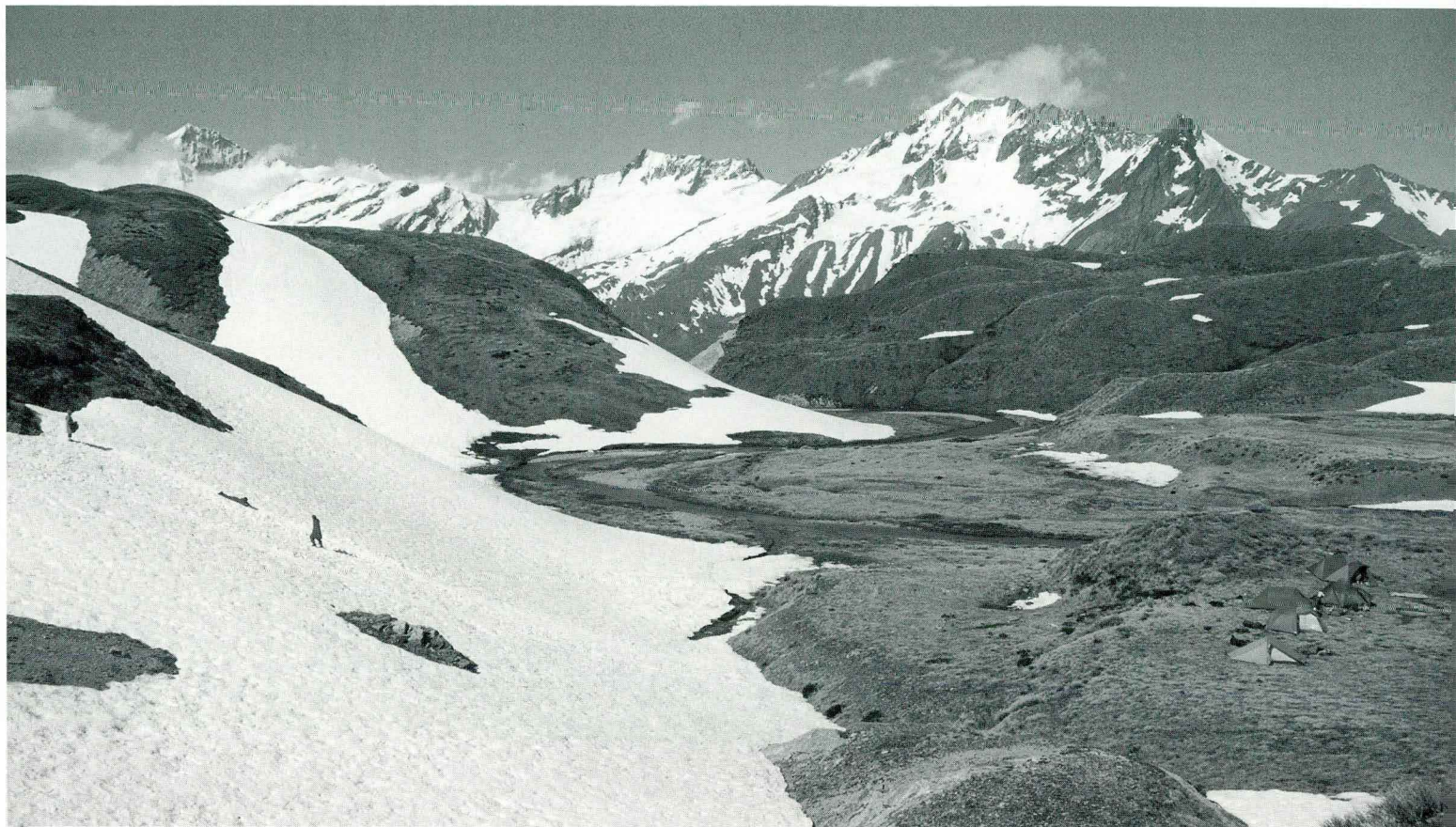
We headed down to Dart Hut and set up a campsite just before the bridge. The hut had been pretty full since Boxing Day - one night there had been 70 people in and around it. We left at 10.00 the next morning with the intention of going

up the valley to camp, and up to Cascade Saddle the next day. We stopped for lunch almost opposite the Hause Glacier and met several people who had come across from the Matukituki West Branch. They told us that getting over was relatively easy now, and you didn't need crampons or ice axes. Some of us were keen to go up and try, while others preferred to return via the Dart.

As we continued up, avalanches were coming off the Marshall Glacier. We met Sarah White and Lars Pedersen, who had come across from Aspiring Hut. Onwards and upwards, we passed the terminal moraine of the Dart Glacier and continued onwards until finally we crossed over the first ridge and were



*Climbing up to Cascade Saddle with the Dart Glacier behind.
(Photo: Peter Smith.)*



Campsite on Cascade Saddle. (Photo: Peter Smith.)

onto the saddle itself. The evening cloud was coming in and Mt Aspiring was in mist. We could just see French Ridge Hut.

It was 6 pm by the time we dropped into the valley to set up camp on a shelf above the river, with a stream coming down from the top. We had heard that the main river can get polluted. As we looked at the mountain vista, a chamois came up on the opposite ridge, looked at us, sat down, then went off but returned to watch us before finally going on its way. The wind was starting to get up a bit as we ate dinner and viewed the magic panorama of the mountains before retiring to bed.

The next morning, some wanted a rest day while others were keen

to head up to the Pylon and down the Culler's route to the Matukituki before the weather closed in. Hogbacks had been in the sky the night before and the weather would probably not last. Some of the party left, while others rested. With spectacular views they reached the Pylon but the choice of descending with children on snow grass and some snow was not on, so the party returned to the campsite by midday.

Now was a chance for us all to relax. The children slid down the gentle snow slopes at the back of the campsite, while the parents shouted words of encouragement or read. The sun shone all day and we enjoyed the panoramic views Tyndall, Rob Roy, Avalanche, Aspiring, Liverpool and Robert. Keas swooped

across the skies. Few people seemed to be crossing, although occasionally you could see a figure or two appearing at the Pylon. Some of the party were keen to leave before the weather broke, but others felt it would last another day. We watched the changing hues from the setting sun. The wind got up in the night, buffeting the tents.

The morning was again spectacular, with hardly a cloud in the sky. We broke camp and left about 10 am. A trapper who had come up from Dart Hut said the weather forecast was for increasing winds and late afternoon rain, but clearing the next morning. The clouds were rocketing across the sky. Some of us had polyprop long-johns and gloves on, not because it was cold, but to prevent sunburn.

We descended into the wind's blast. We tramped along the river side, clambering over rocks until we reached the campsite. There was little shelter, even in the trees. So, taking heed of the children's advice, we decided to check the hut. With children double-bunking and a couple on the floor, we could fit in. The children were taken gold sluicing by a holidaying DoC officer from Kapiti. He was hoping to find enough gold for his future wife's wedding ring. Going to bed the weather still looked good, but the forecast was for 75 kph winds and rain - after six brilliant days, the weather had to change.

The rain came in at 5 am, bringing a few campers scurrying into the hut. The warden, Michael, a French Canadian, came in at 8.30 am to post the weather report. Everybody crowded around in anticipation. Most



*Walking down the Dart River.
(Photo: Peter Smith.)*

of the heavy rain should be over by mid-afternoon. The rain got heavier. Should we go? We were packed up and ready. At 10.30 am we took the plunge and headed off, a few trampers having left before us. The rain was steady and persistent as we tramped down the track. We erected the fly for our lunch break, then continued on down. We had a short stop at the stream before Cattle Flat and found that the sandflies were back. We continued down to Rock Bivvy, where two trampers called in who had come up from Sandy Bluff, having arrived by jetboat. They said a couple of the rivers up from Daleys Flat had been difficult to cross. We hoped the river levels would drop by the time we had to cross them the following day.

By evening, the rain had stopped and the mountains cleared. Two families pitched their tents and the other family pitched their inner tent in the rock shelter.

We had another lazy start the following day, continuing across Cattle Flat and into the bush. After lunch we arrived at Quinns Flat and Daleys Flat, where the streams had subsided considerably and were fairly easy to cross. However, the sandflies in this area were diabolical, or was it just that we weren't used to them? We continued down until about 4 pm, when we stopped to put up the tent just before Sandy Bluff. The sandflies immediately attacked. The tents were erected in record time, and most of us took refuge inside. Chores and toiletries were hurriedly done, completely kitted out.

The next morning we were up at 7 am, to hopefully beat some of the sandflies. The thought of another night camping if we missed the bus, in a spot where the sandflies would probably be worse, was a great

incentive to the children to get going and we left at 8 am, the earliest so far on the trip. We tramped up Sandy Bluff, with a climb up the ladder, and then out onto the flats. The noise of half a dozen jet boats zooming up the river meant we had come out of the park and our week of serenity was coming to an end. We had lunch just before Chinaman's Bluff, finishing off the last Tararua biscuit and looking at the waterfall coming from The Unknown Lake. Then round the bluff, where we expected our journey to end. A small surprise - the river had changed its course and bus couldn't get that far up the road. We walked for another 2 km, arriving at the bus just after 2 pm, a few minutes late. That evening we celebrated the success of our trip with a Stone Grill dinner in Glenorchy, the children ravenously devouring adult portions. In reflection it was a great tramp, excellent weather, and pure magic up on Cascade Saddle.

***T**he group were: Ray & Carol Molineux with Anne (12), Stephen (10) and Claire (8); Peter & Christine Whiteford with Andrew (12) and Aaron (7); Peter Smith & Trish Gardiner with Stuart (13) & Nigel (9).*

Mana Island Rev

By Barbara Marshall

First of all, a brief history of Mana Island from a sheep farm to the scientific reserve and shelter for endangered wildlife that it is today.

Mana Island was run as a private leasehold sheep farm for a century, until the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries took it over to use as a sheep quarantine and breeding research station in 1973. Management was transferred to the Department of Lands and Survey in 1978 and they ran it as a temporary cattle farm, pending a decision on the island's future. In May 1986 all the cattle were removed and the following year the newly formed Department of Conservation took over management. The tree planting programme commenced in 1988, at first with very small parties from the Forest & Bird Society.

Takahe were released in 1988 and in 1989 they were moved temporarily to Kapiti Island, when the mice eradication programme started. Mana Island is now entirely rodent free. The wharf has been removed and no boats are allowed to land.

Little Spotted Kiwi were released in 1994, followed by North Island robins in 1995. In 1998 concrete gannets were installed on a northern cliff face, in the hope that gannets would be attracted and form a colony, but so far only one or two have been observed in the vicinity. In 1998 Duvacel's geckos, green geckos and large spotted skinks were released. Mana Island is home to a variety of other wildlife, including Cook Strait wetas, gold striped geckos, MacGregor's skinks, sooty shearwaters and variable oystercatchers.

TTC involvement with this programme commenced in 1988 when DoC asked whether the club would be willing to help pull out the old farm fences on the island. A small group of six was needed, and so began the Huts & Tracks Committee's commitment to work parties on Mana. I have fond memories of Keith Wood rolling up an

Vegetation Project

enormous bale of fencing stretching up hill and down dale. Michael Bartlett erected a 'corral' for the enormous pile of rubbish, which included huge loads of rusty barbed wire, and it had to be taken off by barge - the last load only went last year! Even to this day, we spend some of our work party weekends collecting rubbish from the beaches - the wire and fences are all cleared now, but the plastic has taken over big time. On one beach cleanup we found a rubber dinghy washed up and we had to leave it to be collected by tractor as no-one was able to carry it back!

The Huts & Tracks Committee has been involved with the revegetation programme from 1990 onwards. The number of trees planted each year for the last few years has been 25,000 to 30,000, the aim being to leave large areas of grassland unplanted to provide habitat for the takahe. As the planting programme has intensified, the small TTC group has been joined on the weekends by other groups from TTC, other tramping clubs, Forest & Bird, and other community groups. The trees are grown from seed on the island; sometimes it is not easy to persuade enthusiastic tramping bods to prick out small seedlings on a wet day!

Last year there was an unexpected cake to celebrate the planting of 250,000 trees on Mana and the oldest person present was asked to cut the cake. Keith Wood reluctantly performed this task, an honour well-deserved as Keith has been a dedicated work party member from the beginning of the programme.

The Waikoko Wetland restoration commenced in 1998 and TTC members have been involved in the planting of wetland plants.

My sincere thanks to all TTC members who have given time to the work parties on Mana. It is hard work, especially in windy weather, but your enthusiasm and giving up weekends of your time has helped enormously towards the goal of re-vegetation of Mana Island.

AROUND (ANOTHER) MOUNTAIN

Labour Weekend 1998

By Stuart Brown

THIS TRIP was planned the previous Easter, when a few of the group did the 'around the mountain' trip at Mt Ruapehu. On the last day someone said, "That was a great tramp - what can we 'go around' next?"

Egmont/Taranaki was the obvious option and because none of us knew much about the area, the idea was enthusiastically taken up.

The week preceding the trip saw two record rainfalls in the Taranaki area. A couple of concerned calls were made by the DoC centre at Dawson Falls, asking what areas we were considering tramping in, as some sections of track and a crucial bridge were out of commission. The decision was made to amend the trip from a medium-grade tramp right around the mountain to an easy-medium trip from Dawson Falls, travelling anti-clockwise to the Kahui road end. This encompassed about two-thirds of the 'round the mountain' circuit and avoided the washed-out footbridge near Waiua Gorge Hut.

Friday arrived with the tail end of a southerly blast. The trip started with the long-weekend rush to abandon Wellington and migrate. A late arrival

at Konini Lodge, which was very full, saw everyone finally safely together, along with Mary Inglis's easy-medium group who volunteered to do a car shuttle for us.

We awoke early Saturday to lovely clear views of the snow-covered mountain. Despite the proposed 9 am start, everyone was ready to go by 8

am. The conditions were good and after climbing a confusing array of tracks in the bush for an hour or so, we emerged at the next road end, 'The Plateau'.

Within half an hour of leaving I had ripped up the (new) itinerary

because everyone in the party was keen to take the high-level (summer) route, particularly because of the prospect of a little snow. In fact, we were soon in about six to eight inches of snow.

We entered a long concrete tunnel and a deep u-track across the Manganui Gorge, with signs warning against stopping because of rock avalanches.

'Within half an hour of leaving I had ripped up the itinerary.'

Soon we were at Manganui Lodge and watching three keen snowboarders threading their way down the deserted skifield.

As we continued on, rocky outcrops towered above on the snowy mountainside, the larger aptly named 'Warwick Castle' and later, 'Humphries Castle'.

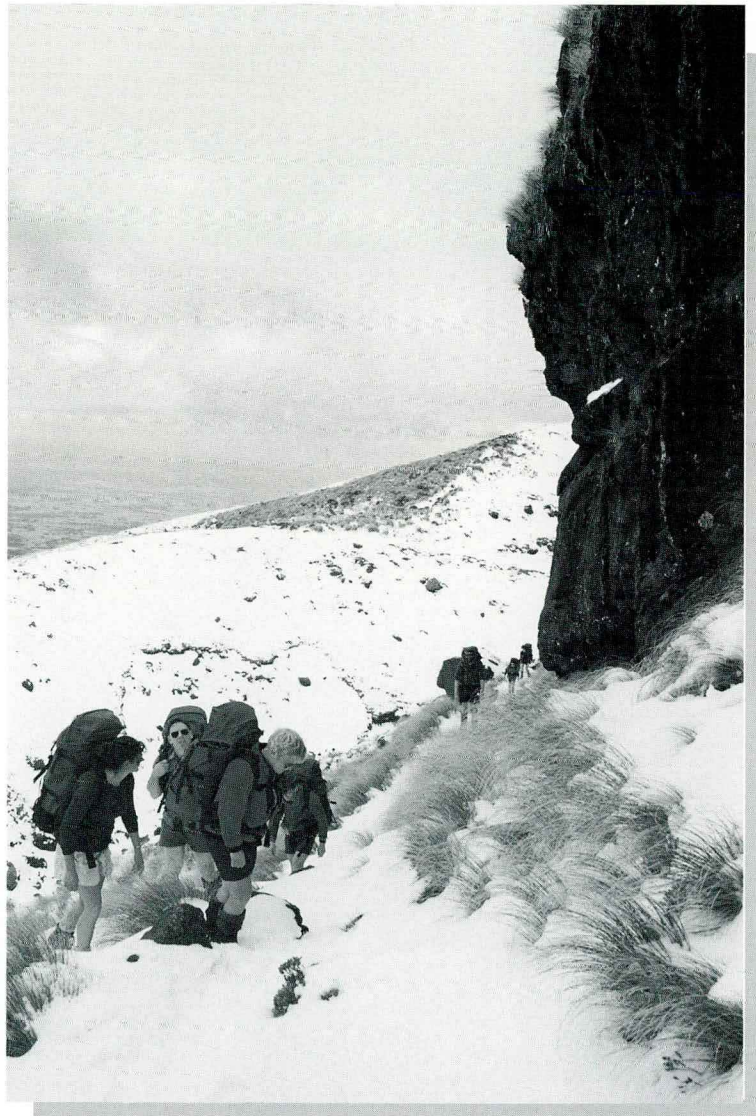
We had lunch at the Taranaki Alpine Club's Tahurangi Lodge, followed by a snowball fight with the residents. In calm and mostly overcast conditions we pressed on for Holly Hut, which had been the Day 2 destination. The clear outlook for miles over the Taranaki plains and the changing alpine landscape provided for a pleasant afternoon's tramp. Views of the Pouakai Range and the large Ahukawakawa Spagnum Moss Swamp signalled the proximity of the hut.

Holly Hut, named after the mountain holly which grows around it, is a large DoC Lockwood hut of 38 bunks. Some of our group made a side trip to Bells Falls and the spagnum moss swamp (30 minutes below). The swamp, like much of Mt Taranaki, is botanically interesting, with a wide variety of plants adapted to the acidic soil conditions and low temperatures. The rest of the party lay on their bunks in the afternoon sun, chatting and snoozing. An undisturbed night was had by all our party, despite the hut being full to overflowing.

Sunday was going to be another good day, weather-wise, so we were off by 8 am, heading around the western side of the mountain. We walked through tall alpine scrub and eventually climbed into tussock, dropping periodically into great scarred gullies. Sections of the track had been washed away in the recent heavy rain and there were some steep descents and ascents. In places

huge boulders sat embedded in the mountainside, casually strewn around where the mountain had spat them out centuries before.

Due to the DoC warnings of a missing bridge, few of the 30-plus other Holly Hut inhabitants were travelling this route. Our group had a number of discussions about what might or might not happen when we came to the washed-out bridge just before the Waiaua Gorge Hut. But problems are meant to be solved so we adopted a "we'll cross that bridge when we come to it" attitude!



*Day 1 - Walking in light snow en route to Holly Hut.
(Photo: Ian Howat.)*

Later in the morning, having dropped back down into tall scrub, the skies darkened and thoughts of parkas were becoming urgent when Kahui Hut appeared around a bend. This is a six bunk hut but has a lot of floor space. It provided an ideal spot for a brew and an early lunch until the sun came out again.



Day 3: After climbing up the Brames Falls Track we made our way through leatherwood under spectacular bluffs. (Photo: Ian Howat.)

The afternoon tramp was through kamahi and totara forest which at times was heavily hung with moss - 'goblin forest'. The track was very muddy and we crossed small streams as well as bigger ones in open, shingly gullies. We passed the old Oaonui Hut site, which still retains its foundations and chimney. The dreaded footbridge was reached soon after and while undercut, was sound. Minutes later we were at the Waiaua Gorge Hut which sleeps 16 and is a new, spacious Lockwood design.

The remainder of the afternoon was spent enjoying the sun and unobstructed views of the mountain's western slopes. An amazing sunset had cameras working overtime. Finally, a game of Kings and Peasants saw the end of another great day.

'... we adopted a "we'll cross that bridge when we come to it" attitude.'

The only other occupants of the hut, two Stratford dairy farmers, got up and left at 5 am on Monday. One of our group also got up, having mislaid his watch and thinking it must be breakfast time!

The weather was still holding and by 8.30 am we were descending the long aluminium ladder and steep trail to the bottom of the gorge. After climbing 30 metres up the other side we had a long ascent up the Brames Falls track. It travels past the very top of the falls and we could look across at the torrent of jetting water, an arm's length away.

The last section of the ascent is particularly steep, to the base of some spectacular bluffs. Enjoying magnificent views of the Taranaki Plains, we sidled below them, passing through low leatherwood.

We continued on through open country,

crossing a couple of difficult gullies. The wind picked up from the west and parkas were needed for the first and only time, as it was trying to snow. We had lunch in a sheltered spot overlooking Lake Dive and the Beehives - two distinctive blobs of larva which cooled over volcanic vents centuries ago. At 1500 metres, this was nearly the highest point on our trip. We continued on around the Upper Lake Dive Track under grey, rocky alpine slopes offset by patches of bright snow.

Eventually we reached the Fantham's Peak staircase, which is hundreds of metres of wooden stairs descending down past the Hooker Shelter, or upwards towards Egmont Alpine Club's Kapuni Lodge. We found the steps to be comfortable seats and lay back on them, savouring the last feeling of wilderness. Finally the possibility of coffee and scones at the tourist lodge below became too much to resist and we began the long, knee-jarring plod down.

At about the bush line a large stone memorial seat beckons you to sit, view Fantham's Peak and contemplate the great mountaineering achievements of Sir Edmund Hillary. Nearer to the carpark the tracks are predictably wider and frequented by day walkers. We finally emerged from the shrubbery into the carpark and the smell of coffee and scones.

This sounds like the end, but really this story has to close in Wanganui later that evening, with 10 tired, happy trampers, showered and squeaky-clean thanks to the generosity of the DoC staff at Dawson Falls, in a cosy Chinese

Restaurant, seated around a large table piled high with steaming hot dishes of food, knocking back cans of beer and ginger beer, feeling very satisfied that they did, in fact, go right 'around the mountain'.

"Hey, that was a great tramp. What can we 'go around' next?"

The trip members were: Carol Kelly, Anita Famularo, John Henry, Jenny Sanders, Anne Nelson, Tony Older, Paula Carryer, Logan Murray, Ian Howatt and Stuart Brown (leader).



We lunched in a sheltered spot overlooking Lake Dive and the Beehives. (Photo: Ian Howatt.)

Six Go Trekking in Nepal

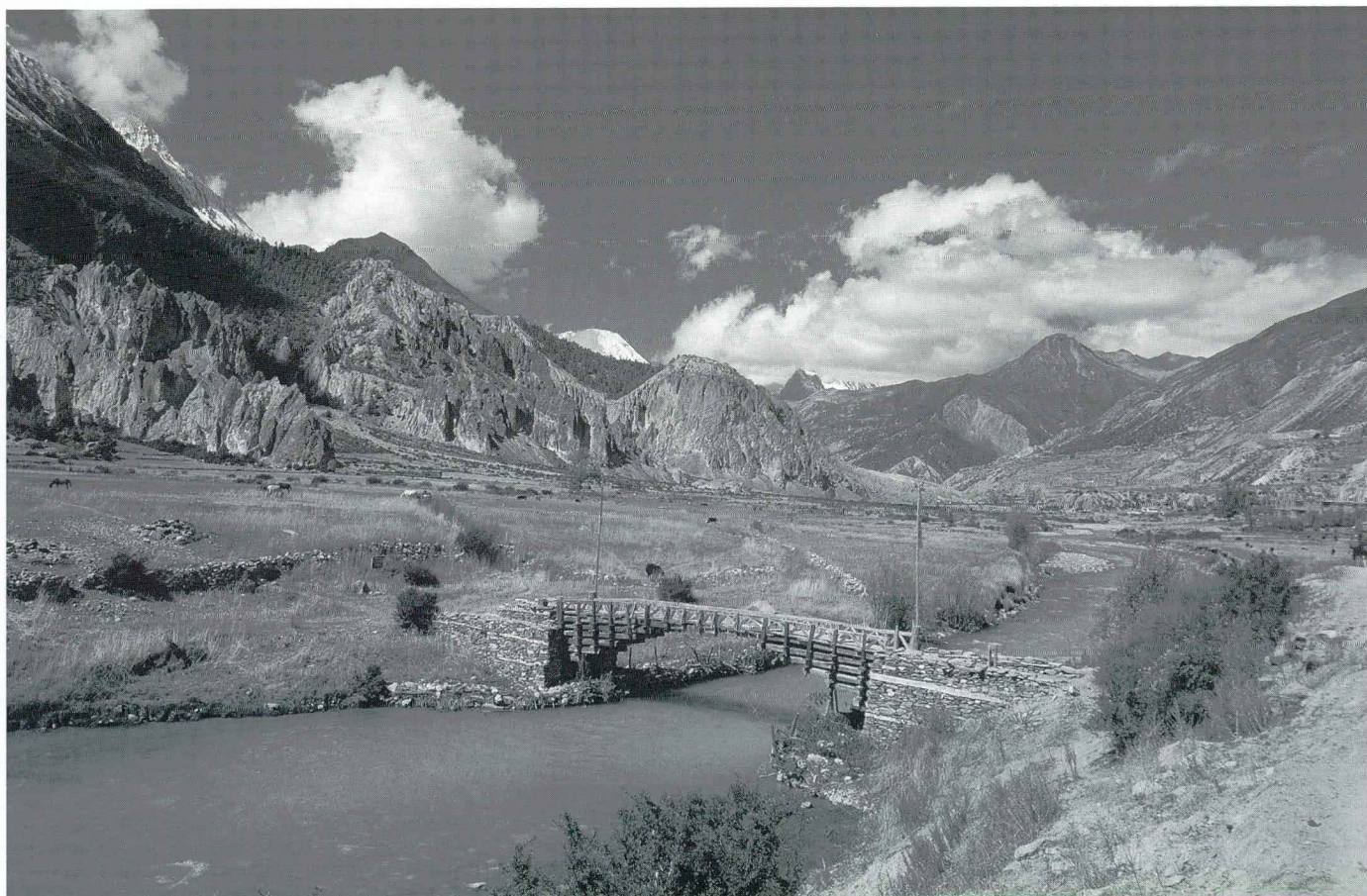
September/October 1998

By Ron Stutter

THE APPROACH to Kathmandu airport was far from boring. Our plane bounced around, tipped three or four times from side to side, was hit by a flash of lightning, then touched down relatively smoothly.

Four of us - Helen Mitchell, Catherine Ward, Oriana (Pip) York and myself - flew into Nepal from New Zealand via Singapore and later in the day Oriana and I returned to the airport to meet up with our two daughters, Orlena and Kate, and Kate's partner Mike, who arrived from the UK. Helen, Oriana

and myself were TTC members and Orlena and Kate had relinquished their memberships when they left New Zealand to embark on their OEs. The purpose of Catherine's visit was to catch up with Nepalese friends in Kathmandu and the rest of us planned a month's trekking and climbing.



Marsyandi Valley. (Photo: Helen Mitchell.)

The first morning our main priority was to organise visa extensions and trekking permits at the Immigration Office and then to exchange our US dollars for Nepalese rupees. The trip we planned was a classic long-distance trek known as the Annapurna Circuit. It starts up the Marsyandi River Valley, a sub-tropical ecological zone, then leads up to Manang, which lies in an alpine

‘... everyone on the bus screamed as we tipped so far over to one side that passengers became airborne.’

zone. It then crosses the Thorang La (a 5416m pass) and continues down to Muktinath, the first village west of the pass. Muktinath is in a side valley which leads to the Kali Gandaki River Valley where the land becomes extremely dry. The trek follows this valley to the trail end at a main road where we could catch a bus to Pokhara.

Helen and I planned a small detour before the Thorang La. We intended to climb Pisang Peak and Chulu West (both around 6150m) and then Khatung Kang (6500m). It is normal to use a trekking agent to arrange the necessary climbing permits and base camp services (ropes, cookers, tents, etc). The agent I had used a number of times in the past was planning on being in Australia when we arrived in Nepal so I decided to try a Kiwi, Jamie McGuinness of Himalaya Trekking, who lives part of the year in New Zealand and part in Nepal. Based on our experiences with him, I would never use him or his company again.

Helen left for Begnas Tal on the third day, where she would start her walk to a planned rendezvous with us about a week later. The rest of us departed the following day for Besisahar, on the bus from hell. The first part of the journey, to Dumre, was fairly uneventful. After Dumre, however, the road was extremely rough. At one stage everyone on the bus (including locals) screamed as we

tipped so far over to one side that passengers became airborne. With the river nearly a kilometre below, vertically, we thought the Nepalese were absolutely crazy to take buses over such a rough road.

That evening, while I was wandering about Besisahar, Oriana, Orlena, Kate, and Mike negotiated a deal with a porter named Huri ('Hurry') to carry some of their kit. One of his conditions was that they met his family before they departed. He told them, "*We live just five minutes walk back down the trail*". This wasn't Oriana's first trip to Nepal, so she knew how long five Nepalese minutes could be and since I wasn't around at the time, I was

‘We were passed by 50 or 60 Tibetan exiles.’

volunteered. I departed just before 6.00am the next morning. It took about an hour each way - a good warm-up for the first day on the trail.

We were passed by 50 or 60 Tibetan exiles on our second day trekking. They were travelling in the opposite direction, having crossed the Himalayas from Tibet and

travelled down via Mustang, crossing the Thorang La, then continuing down the Marsyandi Valley, detouring through the jungle whenever they neared one of the many police check points. They were of all ages down to about eight years old, in bare feet and with just the clothes they stood in.

A thunderstorm started while we were having lunch. Though we didn't realise it at the time, it was a sign of the unseasonably bad weather that lay ahead. By arriving in Nepal in late September, when the monsoon invariably ends, we had expected to be guaranteed clear, fine days. This was not to be.

Further along the trail there was plenty of evidence of monsoon damage from previous years. Just after the village of Jagat, large sections of the track had been cut into the sides of steep gorges, way above the river, to avoid floods, and at Bagachap we saw the remains of devastation caused two years previously when a huge landslide had ripped through. It had flattened 17 houses and killed several people, some of them trekkers. The locals say it is not possible to sleep there due to the sound of ghosts screaming in the night and porters will generally refuse to stay. Consequently the newly

'... it is not possible to sleep there due to the sound of ghosts screaming in the night.'

improved village of Dangyu a little further along the trail is prospering.

A pattern of clear weather in the morning and cloud in the afternoon became established. We met up with Helen during our lunch

stop at Chame. Due to her serious photography addiction, she had needed to hire a porter (Gyaljen) to help carry her five cameras and 10 kilograms of film. Helen was in good

'Luckily she escaped with just extensive bruising.'

spirits despite having slipped while crossing a waterfall and fallen about seven metres. Luckily she escaped with just extensive bruising.

The alternative route Helen had taken from Begnas Tal not only avoids the dangerous road into Besisahar, but is renowned for superb views from the ridge between Nalma and Baglung Pani (in fine weather, that is - which, unfortunately, Helen didn't get).

When we reached the village of Pisang, at 3200m, the temperature was noticeably cooler. We went for a stroll to Upper Pisang and back, to help with our acclimatisation. Upper Pisang had a distinctly medieval feel and it was interesting to see marijuana growing wild there, like gorse grows in New Zealand.

The following morning the temperature had plummeted and when we opened the curtains to check the view, the 1000m high rock face we had passed the previous day had turned white. Today's stroll was to Ghyaru, at 3670m, again to help with our acclimatisation. When we eventually arrived everyone was feeling rather breathless. After gorging ourselves on piles of food we headed back down to Pisang where we were lucky to get our first clear views of the surrounding mountains.

The next day Oriana, Orlena, Kate and Mike continued up the Marsyandi Valley. Helen and I planned to rendezvous with them later in the trek.

Helen and I retraced our steps up the steep switch-backs to Ghyaru, this time with full packs. We planned to meet up with Jamie McGuinness and two other New Zealanders, Brett Longley and Richard Minson, who would be joining us to climb Pisang Peak and Chulu. Brett and Richard were both from Wellington, but despite several attempts at getting together prior to leaving New Zealand, we had only managed to speak with them over the phone.

In Ghyaru Helen and I stashed our packs and continued up another 400 metres or so to some prayer flags. While the route we took probably wasn't the easiest, the views were quite spectacular. Back in Ghyaru, Jamie, Richard and Brett had arrived, along with three others Jamie had invited. While two of them - Andy (UK) and Reid (Australia) - were climbers, we were concerned that Jolee (USA) had never been climbing before.

Over the next few days it became clear that Andy, Reid, and the two Kiwis were really cool dudes and that we should get along well with them. Andy had an exceptionally well developed sense of humour and was a joy to have around.

We were pleasantly surprised when the weather dawned fine the next morning. We assembled outside our teahouse at about 9.00am to await an old man we had met the previous night who had said he could show us a shortcut that led directly onto a spur that in turn would lead us to our Pisang Peak base camp. He



Kate crossing yet another bridge. (Photo: Ron Stutter.)

never turned up, but instead sent a boy who was probably his great-great grandson. Off he went, with us puffing

‘... in the mornings a sheet of ice would completely cover the inside of our tent.’

along behind. All was well for the first 30 minutes or so, until we rounded a spur and he stopped, and pointed, and said, “There is the track.” “WHERE?” “There.” “THERE !” “Yes.” “HOLY-SHIT !!!”

About three hours later about three hours later we reached the ‘spur’

and continued up to about 4300m to set up base camp. Before we could reach our campsite it started snowing and the temperature dropped rapidly. The porters Jamie had organised to be there with our tents on the previous day were way below us, still on their way up. In an effort to stay warm until our gear arrived we started preparing tent sites, but by the time it did, there were one or two very cold people in our party.

Later that day a Swiss climbing team arrived and set up camp nearby. They hadn’t bothered with ‘all that time-consuming acclimatisation rubbish’ that we had been into. They planned on heading directly to the



Battling to get tents up at Pisang basecamp. (Photo: Ron Stutter.)

summit the following day, bagging it, and heading out for the next one on their list.

Early next morning, as it continued to snow, their entire team headed down to the valley floor, with most of them suffering altitude sickness.

The nights we spent on the mountain were very cold and in the mornings a sheet of ice would completely cover the inside of our tent. At high altitudes the body does not have the ability to carry the same amount of oxygen that it would at sea level, at least not until it has acclimatised fully. Consequently blood circulation is inhibited, which results

in your extremities feeling the cold a lot more than normal.

We headed up to check out high camp (at just over 5000m) and leave a stash of climbing hardware. We started down again after only a short stay, thinking that it would be unpleasant to have to walk back up again the following day carrying heavy packs.

The next morning after a late breakfast, or was it an early lunch, we shouldered the remaining gear and in lightly falling snow headed back up to high camp. The late start meant we would need to spend less time at high camp, thus reducing



Resting on the way up to Pisang high camp. (Photo: Ron Stutter.)

the risk of altitude sickness. That evening the eight of us crammed into a large Macpac dome tent for dinner. Four of us, including Helen and myself, had mild headaches, and Brett's face was very swollen, especially around his eyes. These were all possible effects of altitude and needed to be monitored.

Within a short time it started snowing again, and navigating our way down became difficult in the low visibility. At base camp we reorganised our hastily packed kit then continued to the valley and Pisang village in pretty quick time. After a brief stop for Coca-Cola, and to leave details of our intentions with

'... navigating our way down became difficult in the low visibility.'

The snow started to get heavy, coinciding with the increasing wind. That night I wore two pairs of socks plus my inner boots in my sleeping bag. The wind made it difficult to sleep and I lay for quite some time wondering if it would be possible to get back down to base camp the next day, let alone climb further. If we didn't summit I wouldn't be too disappointed - we had always viewed this first climb as a warm up/acclimatisation climb in preparation for Chulu and Khatung Kang.

We departed at 3am in clear but breezy conditions with the thermometer sitting on minus 20°C. Neither Helen nor I could feel our toes. About half an hour into the climb Jolee, who was climbing below us, suddenly blacked out. Possibly the cold, or the huge space below, became too much for her. Jamie, who was some distance above us with the other four, didn't seem too concerned and simply shouted to the sherpas way below at high camp to come up and get her. Helen and I helped get Jolee down to high camp where the sherpas made her hot drinks and looked after her. Because the weather was deteriorating rapidly, we decided to continue down to base camp.

one of the porters who had stayed behind in the village, we headed further up the valley to Ongre, our rendezvous for the Chulu climb. We were lucky to have clear weather on this section of the track and enjoyed spectacular views of Annapurnas II and IV, and Gangapuran and Tilicho Peaks.

Some of the porters were already at Ongre, having been sent ahead a couple of days previously to organise supplies for the climb. The rest of the team were due the following evening so we figured this should give us a bit of time to do some overdue washing and have a rest, our first in fourteen days.

Shortly after midday one of our sherpas arrived with news that the others should be in Ongre by that evening, having also turned back on Pisang Peak because of deteriorating conditions.

Soaking up the sun on the teahouse roof, I looked up from writing my diary and was astonished to see Huri sitting opposite me, with tears in his eyes. I immediately knew there had been some sort of problem. While my anxiety soared, Huri related the events of the previous 24 hours to me in

frustratingly minute detail. Eventually his drawn-out tale confirmed my suspicions: Oriana had succumbed to severe altitude sickness.

She had had a brief encounter with altitude sickness some years back and as a result had gone to extreme lengths when planning this trip to avoid a recurrence. It wasn't to be. The trekking group had reached Letdar the previous evening. Some time after 2.00am Oriana had woken and gone outside to use the long-drop. Without warning (which is very unusual with altitude sickness) she was hit with an incredibly bad headache that rapidly developed into acute cerebral oedema. We learnt later that this happens to fewer than 0.5% of altitude sickness victims. Mike and Huri had immediately evacuated her down to Manang.

Whilst Helen packed my kit for me, I hastily organised an emergency evacuation flight for Oriana from Ongre, which has a STOL (short take off and landing) airstrip. I then headed off for Manang with Huri, who had been up all night, trailing behind. We arrived an hour later, in about half the time it usually takes.

With night falling, I found the teahouse Oriana was staying in and was relieved to discover her condition was improving. As the story

‘Mike carried two packs and little Huri carried Oriana on his back.’

unfolded I learned that the others had packed her kit immediately after she had been hit with the cerebral oedema. Mike had carried two packs - his and Oriana's - down the mountain trail and

little Huri carried Oriana on his back. After passing through many villages they were eventually able to wake someone who hired them a small

‘Oriana was immediately put into a Gamow bag.’

pony, complete with a 'driver' to lead it. Apparently staying on its back was rather difficult, but things improved once they rigged a make-shift saddle. Ice on the trail, combined with a pony keen on glissading whenever the opportunity arose, kept Oriana's mind off her main problem.

They arrived at the Himalayan Rescue Association Post in Manang about six hours after leaving Letdar and Oriana was immediately put into a Gamow bag. Patients are zipped into this large air-proof bag and it is then inflated using a foot-pump. This increases the pressure inside the bag and has the effect of simulating a lower altitude. Normally a patient responds within 30 minutes, but it took nearly two hours and a syringe of dexamethazone before Oriana started improving.

The next morning Mike departed at 6.00am to head back up to Letdar, hopefully to arrive before Orlena and Kate started coming down. The new plan was for the three of them to continue up from Letdar to Phedi the following day. Huri and I hoped to catch up with them later the same day, subject to Oriana continuing to improve so she could make her way down to the STOL airstrip at Ongre and fly out to Pokhara, where she would recuperate before re-joining us later on the trek.

Later that morning the climbing party arrived at Manang and

over lunch we agreed on a tentative plan for me to re-join them for the climb of Chulu after I had seen the girls and Mike safely over the Thorang La. This would mean I would return over the pass and try to find Chulu base camp from a description given to me by one of the sherpas, the only person from the group who had been to Chulu previously. No problem for anyone who had completed a TTC bushcraft course!

The next morning Oriana was clearly out of danger so I set off with Huri at 6.00am for Phedi. As we entered the village of Guusang an hour later we met the climbing crew, who had spent the night there, so we joined them for breakfast. We lost an hour but it was well worth it for the freshly baked cinnamon buns. We

arrived in Phedi about midday and were reunited with the girls and Mike.

We set the alarm for 2.30 the next morning. It would be a long day, over a high, fairly steep pass. We were away by 3.30am, heading UP UP UP in lightly falling snow, eventually reaching the 5416m pass. We didn't stay long for photos because it was a chilly minus 7°C. The descent from the pass to Muktinath was steep, but not difficult.

The others were looking forward to sleeping in the following morning, but I would need a 3.00am start to get back over the pass, down to Letdar, and up to Chulu base camp where the climbing team would be. Unfortunately I had diarrhoea during the night and the next morning, feeling tired and dehydrated, I had no option

The route to Thorang Phedi. (Photo: Helen Mitchell.)



but to stay on and reassess things later that day.

When Orlena, Kate and Mike eventually arose, we went for a leisurely stroll around the village and ended up at the police check-point where they got their trekking permits checked and stamped in preparation for their departure the following morning. My thoughts were now shifting to the peak Helen and I had really come to Nepal to climb, Khatung Kang.

While the trekking permit stampathon was in full swing Gyaljen turned up, much to our surprise. Another 200 metres back up the trail came Helen and she was extremely angry. She said Jamie had announced at breakfast that she would not be going above high camp on Chulu, and in fact would not even be staying at high camp because he believed she had suffered altitude sickness during the climb on Pisang Peak. I was astonished, considering Jamie wasn't even with Helen and I during the climb. Helen was extremely upset and said the other climbers were stunned by the whole proceedings.

Before we had departed from New Zealand I had prearranged with Jamie that a porter would bring our kit for the Khatung Kang climb to Muktinath and had agreed with him in detail what it should include. When we arrived in Kathmandu I had reconfirmed this with him. I was beginning to feel quite excited at the prospect of the impending climb and could not believe my eyes when the porter arrived with our kit an hour later and we opened the bags to distribute the gear. There was no rope, no cooker, and no dehydrated food. I was furious - Khatung Kang was, for me, the focus of my trip to Nepal and I knew there was now no way we could

do the climb. After much discussion the decision was made that Helen and I would join Orlena, Kate and Mike and trek around the remainder of the Annapurna circuit.

'I knew there was now no way we could do the climb.'

That night Helen's porter bought her a bottle of 75% proof apple brandy (local brand, of course). She shared it with Mike and Kate but I stayed well away from it, knowing from experience that anger and alcohol are not a good mix. Well, I stayed mostly away.

We left Muktinath (with various degrees of hangovers) just after 7.00am. Walking downhill was a real treat and we arrived in Kagbeni about two and-a-half hours later for brunch. In the Kali Gandaki Valley the wind picked up, quite strongly, after about 11.00am each day. Sunglasses were essential to guard our eyes from small, wind-blown pebbles. It didn't take us long to fall into the pattern of departing early each morning to get most of the walking over before the daily wind started.

In the four or five days we spent trekking down the valley, we passed through some interesting villages. In Jomsom, a popular starting point for commercially organised treks, we headed directly to the *Magic Bean* for real coffee, chocolate brownies, cold cheesecake (from a fridge) and more, which we ate while we sat in the sun watching suicide pilots swooping in with plane loads of tourists. At Marpha we visited an ancient distillery where a man sat cross-legged, smashing

apples with a large wooden mallet, and the filtration system consisted of old socks tied over the end of the supply pipe.

We planned to reunite with Oriana at Tatopani and after we checked in to the Trekkers Lodge there we set up a gigantic sign - 'ORIANA' - at the entrance. She arrived about an hour after us and didn't even see the sign, but heard our raucous laughter coming from the garden bar and immediately turned off the track. Oriana was looking fit and well again but said it was the first day she had actually felt good in the week since she had succumbed to altitude sickness.

We spent the next few days heading down towards the trail end where we would get a bus to Pokhara. The overcast weather was still with us and it snowed heavily the night we stayed at Gorapani - very unusual at that altitude in October. We walked in snow for the best part of the next day.

After staying a couple of days in Pokhara, eating and relaxing, we caught a bus to Chitwan National Park where we spent a few days in the jungle photographing wildlife. Then we had a day in Kathmandu before it was time to head for the airport and our flights back to New Zealand and the UK.



Kali Gandaki River Valley. (Photo: Ron Stutter.)

Queen's Birthday Weekend Lodge Trips

By Jenny Lewis

QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY Weekend lodge trips have run for six years, since 1993, with a new venue each year. In 1999 the trip will revisit a previously hired lodge, as six seems to be the number of accessible lodges of suitable size, location and cost. So, in this annual it is timely to record why these trips started, which areas they go to, and what they achieve.

In the 1980s a few members suggested that the Club might consider buying some land close to a tramping area, such as the Tararuas, with the aim of building and maintaining a Club lodge on it. To test this idea, a few 'mini lodge trips' were scheduled on the Fixture Card.

The trip to Waikuku Lodge, in the Haurangis, was particularly memorable. It was over a weekend close to the Winter Solstice and the tramping was a great success, with snow on the top of Mt Ross. On the Saturday evening we had a communal meal and even a 'Father Winter Solstice' to distribute small gifts. Waikuku is a converted farmhouse and while each person got bunk space, the party of 24 stretched the kitchen facilities and the small lounge to the maximum.

There were several reasons for the popularity of this winter lodge trip. People liked having interesting day



*Waterfall and ice in Tongariro National Park (1995).
(Photo: Jenny Lewis.)*

tramps, followed by warmth, good food and company, and the comforts of electricity on the long winter evenings. Being able to drive to the lodge door on the dark Friday night added to the attractions.

The Waikuku Lodge trip opened up the possibility of pleasurable winter weekends of socialising and tramping similar to those enjoyed over the long summer weekends. Long winter nights in chilly huts or even colder tents do not appeal to all trampers!

The search began for larger lodges, in as many different areas as possible. To make the travelling worthwhile, the three-day weekend over Queen's Birthday seemed the obvious winter choice.

The number of people on Queen's Birthday Weekend lodge trips has been between 30 and 40, and they have included members and prospective members. The Saturday and Sunday evenings are pleasant social events when people can mingle over drinks and nibbles, a communal meal, cards, games and reading. A bunk, showers and heating are assured. Costs for the accommodation have varied from \$5/night/person at an Outdoor Education Centre up to \$16/night/person in a National Park lodge. The cost of the shared dinners has been about \$8/dinner/person, including drinks!

The trips have achieved several things. First and foremost, the tramping has



Six suitable lodges were located. Three are close to the Ruahines, two on the west side and one on the east. The other three are each in a National Park - Tongariro, Egmont/Taranaki, and Nelson Lakes. (Booking details are given at the end of this article. The family groups also run trips to these lodges.)

*A social evening in Wakarara Lodge (1994).
(Photo: Jenny Lewis.)*

been wonderful. On most trips there has been new snowfall and the delight of waking up to a pristine, white world. For several people this is the only time of the year when they tramp in these magical, snowy landscapes.

Secondly, for a few who only do day trips, the lodge trips are an opportunity to enjoy socialising in the evenings and the experience of staying overnight on a club trip. Thirdly, a range of graded day trips have been offered, from easy to medium-fit, and even including climbs on Mt Ruapehu and Mt Egmont/Taranaki.

At present there is no enthusiasm for a Club lodge. The initial expense, maintenance costs and the fact that it would be in a fixed position, are all disadvantages. Because at present we can hire a range of lodges at very reasonable cost, visit several locations, and use private transport, Queen's Birthday Weekend lodge trips are likely to run for a few more years.

*Leader 1993-1998: Jenny Lewis.
(Thanks to Ginny Murray-Brown, who was co-leader in 1996 and 1997.)*

Lodge details

1993 Sixtus Lodge (west side of Ruahines, 80 km from Palmerston North).

Booking: PO Box 1987, Palmerston North.

1994 Camp Wakarara (east side of Ruahines, 35 km from Waipukarau).

Booking: The Secretary, C.H.B. Outdoor Education Committee, c/- 11 Windsor Road, Waipawa.

1995 Taumarunui High School Lodge, Bruce Road, Ruapehu (Tongariro NP).

Booking: The Secretary, Taumarunui High School. PO Box 216, Taumarunui.

1996 Konini Lodge, Dawson Falls, (Egmont NP).

Booking: Dawson Falls Visitor Centre, Manaia Road, Stratford.

1997 Rotoiti Lodge, St Arnaud (Nelson Lakes NP).

Booking: DoC, St Arnaud, Nelson Lakes.

1998 Kawhatau Outdoor Education Centre (west side of Ruahines, 21 km from Mangaweka).

Booking: DoC, Broadway, Mangaweka.



*Above the bushline on
Mt Taranaki (1996).
(Photo: Jenny Lewis.)*

Obituaries

Enid Winifred Powell (née Pilbrow) (1907 – 1998)

By Bruce Popplewell

I first met Enid soon after I joined the New Zealand Alpine Club in 1960. She, and her husband Ian, were part of that venerable group who got to sit in the comfortable seats in the front row at the monthly Wellington Section meetings. They were both very kind to shy young mountaineers and went out of their way to make me feel welcome. This, of course, was typical of Enid, who never had a cross word about anyone or anything. She was known to her family as “Kitten” and, although she had no children of her own, she was a generous and loving aunt and great-aunt to all her nieces and nephews – one of her nephews reports that his children thought she was amazing because she was the only old person who wore sneakers!

Enid was born in Ashburton on 25 June 1907, the second of eight children. After her schooling she worked for Patchings, an Ashburton canvas merchant, and while there she qualified by correspondence in accountancy. About 1944 she felt like a change and moved to Wellington to work for a number of years for the Red Cross.

Enid’s love of the mountains began during family picnics to places like Erewhon in the Rangitata. Several of her brothers (two of whom were lost in World War II – a great

grief to her) were members of the Canterbury Mountaineering Club, but most of her early tramping was apparently done in the company of other young women in the Ashburton Tramping Club (no doubt thanks to the well-known attitude of the CMC to women in those days!). About this time too, she took part in several guided climbs in the Cook region.

After her arrival in Wellington in 1944, Enid lost no time in joining local mountain clubs: the New Zealand Alpine Club in 1944 (she advanced to full membership in 1947); and the Tararua Tramping Club in October 1946. About this time too, she met her future husband Ian (a founding member of the Hutt Valley Tramping Club) and they were married in 1952. By all accounts they took this event very much in their stride – Ian was heard to remark, when invited on a climbing trip scheduled for the weekend of the wedding, “Sorry, I can’t make it – I’m too busy getting married!”.

Enid and Ian were very much a pair, both in stature (five foot nothing in their socks!) and in their personalities. They were almost inseparable and most of their climbing and tramping trips were done together. Enid, although perhaps not as well-known as Ian, was no mean mountaineer herself; in earlier years she climbed

D'Archiac and, together with Robin Oliver, made the first traverse of the Two Thumbs Range. Robin later reported that, thanks to her size, she was able to save the day by wriggling through a particularly difficult section!. Her climbing exploits, during her most active years, are vividly described by John Brown (of the New Zealand Alpine Club) who writes:

“In the New Zealand Alpine Journals of the early 1950s I have found reference to an Easter trip to Aylmer and Malte Brun by a party including Enid Pilbrow and Ian Powell. What a great combination that proved to be! In 1955 there were climbs of Sealy and Dasler Pinnacles. My first trip with the Powells was to the Rees at Xmas 1956. It deluged for 14 days continuously. We neither saw a mountain nor climbed one, but the trip was an eye-opener for me. Strangely, without the benefit of huts (but with the expertise of the Powells), it proved possible to remain dry, comfortable, and well-fed under such conditions. And there were hilarious arguments over campsites. The Hopkins next Christmas was no better weatherwise – and the campsite arguments continued. We experienced a 500 year flood in the North Huxley. Hearing the boulders crashing down the swollen river made us thankful we did have a good campsite. This was followed by a burying in snow in the North Elcho (it was even snowing at Lake Hawea). Finally, the weather came right at Christmas 1958 and it was delightful sitting on top of Murchison Peaks such as Broderick, Phyllis, Sidney King,

and others. In the Hopkins again, on a brief visit to the NZAC meet in 1966, Enid and Ian accompanied us up the Huxley. At Christmas 1968 in the Rees, it was Clarke and the East Peak of Earnslaw. Possibly Enid's last climb (at the age of 62) was of Ella from the Matakītaki about 1969, accompanied only by Ian.”

Even when their mountaineering was over, Enid and Ian continued actively tramping and rediscovered trout fishing. Together they organised and led two non-guided Himalayan treks and in the late 1960s and early 1970s became experts on the Kaweka Ranges when they acted as unofficial research assistants on Mavis Davidson's twice-yearly expeditions to complete her studies (started many years before) on Sika deer.

Throughout her life Enid was very interested in plants (particularly native ones) and gardening. She and Ian were long-standing members of The Botanical Society and enjoyed many trips with them. Her garden was full of plants that she had picked up on her various trips and she was responsible for much of the planting (including the propagation of the plants) and maintenance of the garden around her local Anglican church in Porirua East.

Enid had a lifelong love of the outdoors — her tramping and climbing career spanned more than seven decades. She was a kind and gentle person, always keen to welcome and assist others. Her companions on tramping and climbing trips remember particularly her unfailing good humour and her ability to make the dullest meal interesting with her “secret

ingredients". Her love of life and sense of humour remained, even in her later years in a Rest Home. John Brown remembers her smiling up at him when he took her arm to help her down some steps at her 90th birthday party in 1997 — "Just like old times," she said, recalling her habit of selecting the tallest men (or those

known to be most sure-footed) when there was a river to cross.

I would like to thank all who have helped by recalling their memories of Enid, particularly John Brown, Mavis Davidson, Trevor Park, Brenda Neill, and Enid's sister Winifred Bonifant, brother Eric Pilbrow, and nephew Neil Pilbrow.

Ethel Millier

16.07.1897 - 30.06.1998

By Ian Baine

The club lost its oldest living member in June when Ethel Millier died. Ethel was 16 days short of her 101st birthday.

Ethel Millier joined the TTC within the first year of its foundation and was an active tramper for many years. She is remembered for her keen mind and lively sense of humour. These two qualities made her great company on trips. On one tramp, Ethel is said to have tucked her frock into the top of her bloomers, to avoid getting it caught up in some lawyer creeper. After being somewhat told off for this, Ethel took to wearing shorts on tramps, which she borrowed from her brother-in-law. It was stated at her funeral that she was the first woman in the club to wear shorts.

Ethel was born in Dunedin and came to Wellington at the age of five in 1902. Her family joined St John's Church in Willis Street soon after their arrival and Ethel remained a member of the congregation until her death 96 years later.

Ethel trained as a shorthand typist and attained a position of responsibility in the Labour Department, with 35 girls working under her leadership. She later spent six years working as a secretary in Parliament, including in the office of Sir Keith Holyoake.

Ethel was an enthusiastic member of the club all her life and always attended special events. Her last club outing was the 75th Jubilee gathering at Victoria University in 1994.

With the passing of Ethel Millier, the club has lost another original member and a link with the foundations of our club. There are now precious few left.

