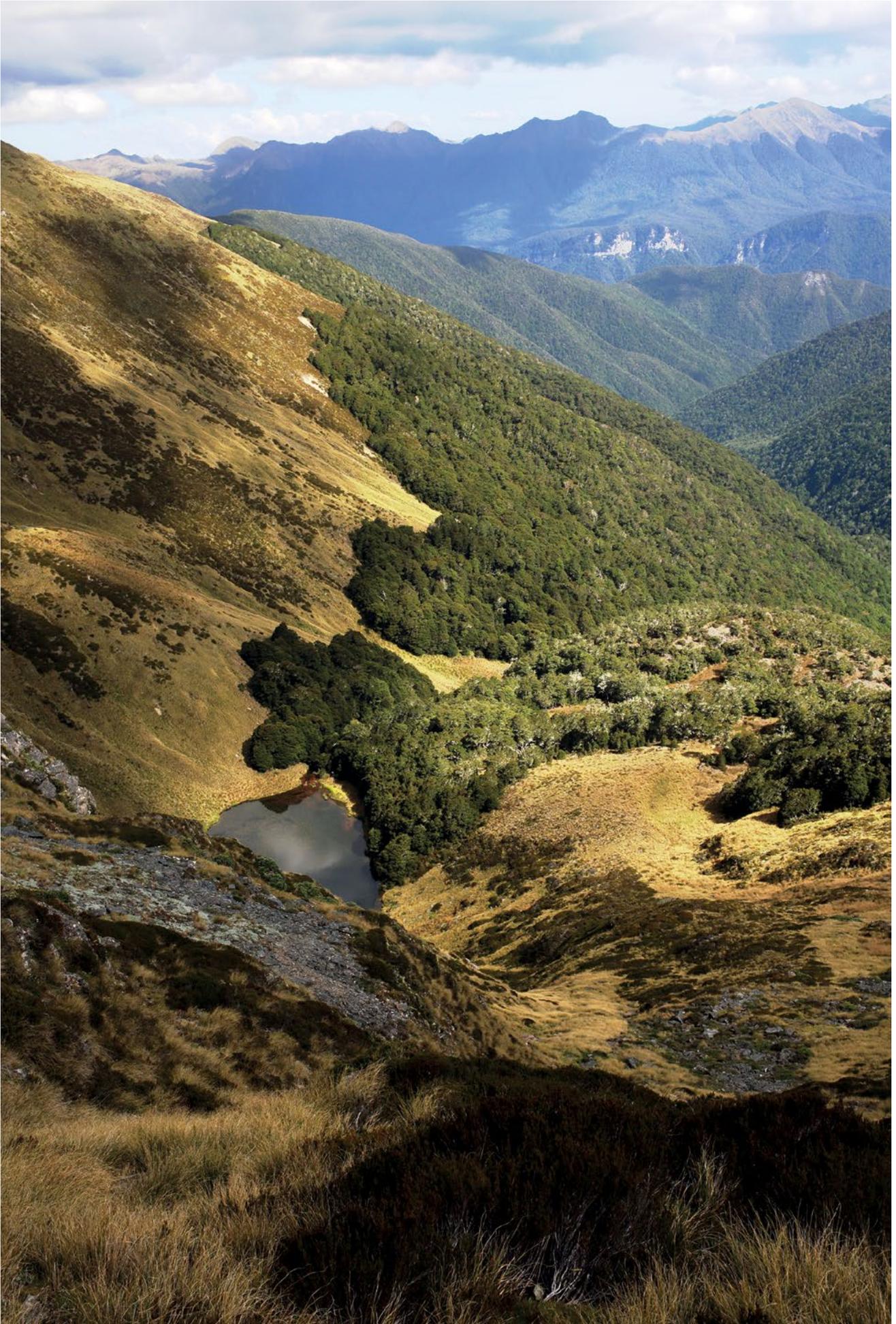


ANNUAL OF THE TARARUA TRAMPING CLUB

# Tararua



2018



Camp site tarn, south of Pt 1541 on Kakapo Spur, looking southeast (see page 18) PHOTO: MARTIN KENNEDY

# **Tararua**

## **2018**

### **Annual of the Tararua Tramping Club**

VOLUME NUMBER 65



# Contents

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Covering the period November 2017  
to Labour Weekend 2018.

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**Front cover:** 'Table Mountain' on the  
Remutaka Range. Wednesday 25  
April. Climbers, top to bottom:  
Tim Workman, Colin Cook, Mike  
Arnold, Franz Hubmann, Nina  
Sawicki, Patrick Arnold, Sarah  
White. Photo: Paul McCredie.  
*See page 24.*

**Back outside cover:** Whakatikei  
River, 7 February. Top, l to r: Franz  
Hubmann, Colin Cook, Peggy  
Munn, Tricia French, Sieny Pollard,  
Middle: Peter Morten, Susan  
Guscott, David McNabb. And  
Robin Chesterfield checking the  
depth of the pool. Photo: Jenny  
Mason.

**Inside front cover:** Camp site tarn,  
south of Pt 1541 on Kakapo Spur,  
looking southeast. Photo: Martin  
Kennedy. *See page 18.*

**Inside back cover:** Dinner at Rangipo  
Hut. Photo: Jenny Mason.  
*See page 36.*  
What shall we do next? Planning  
session at Top Hut. From left:  
Peggy Munn, Lynne White, Chris  
Munn, Janette Roberts.  
Photo: Tony Black. *See page 22.*

## **Note from the Editor**

Thank you to all the contributors  
who offered their material.

This is my last Annual; I started with  
the 2013/14 issue.

- 4 Stewart Island/Rakiura *Lynne White*
- 6 Kaimanawa Trip *Peggy Munn*
- 8 An Idyllic Week at Tasman Saddle *Nina Sawicki*
- 10 The Old Ghost Road *Muriel Christianson*
- 12 The Timber Trail *John Hill*
- 14 Climbs from Pioneer Hut *Sean Buchanan*
- 16 Bushcraft 2018 *Peter Barber*
- 17 Life and 50-year Members
- 18 It Happens! Kakapo Spur *Stu Hutson*
- 20 Northern Tararua Range *Paul McCredie*
- 22 Hakatere Conservation Park *Peggy Munn*
- 24 Table Mountain, Remutaka Range *Colin Cook*
- 28 Northern Tararua Circuit *Warwick Wright*
- 30 Patterson-Evans Memorial Bridge *David Ogilvie*
- 32 The Lure of Gold *Rowen Crawford*
- 34 Three Wednesday Easy Medium Trips  
*Michele Dickson, Lynne Pomare*
- 36 Round Ruapehu in the Snow *Russell Cooke*
- 38 Obituaries: Dennis Gee, Ken Mosley, Gerald Jones,  
Jan Nye, Alison Handley and Janet Mary McMenamin

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# Foreword



Patrick enjoying Anzac Day on the 'Table Mountain' trip.

PHOTO: NINA SAWICKI

Hello Trampers!

Gosh, has it been a year already! These days do run away like wild trampers over the hills ...

And run we have. And cycled, walked, tramped, climbed – and no doubt had the odd unintended swim during a river crossing every now and then as well. Those tend to remain undocumented, however some of the better adventures are included here in this year's TTC Annual: *Tararua*. It's great to have a publication in which to include the longer-form

trip reports, the reports which are too long for the monthly *Tramper* but give a much better record of those multi-day epics or the 'several day trips from one base' type adventures.

We've got a good mix again this year, ranging far and wide and covering all three of the country's main islands. I think Lynne White must win the prize for 'farthest south' with her trip to Stewart Island/Rakiura, while Sean Buchanan might win the altitude prize thanks to his trip in to (or up to) Pioneer Hut and above (pipping Nina Sawicki, I think).

That's not to say that trips have to be going to extremes to be worthy, as we know the Tararuas are a fantastic playground and as always, this year's Annual includes stories from our club's 'back yard', and then extending into the middle of the North Island through the Kaimanawa Ranges, around the mountain, and a bike trip over the Timber Trail.

Of course, the mainland doesn't miss out. In addition to the climbing trips we have stories covering the Kahurangi and Westland areas of the South Island. While Peggy and Chris Munn specialise in the multi-day trek through rarely visited parts of the country, this year they're a highlight again with a report on the trips they led over/around the Hakatere Conservation Area.

Finally, I'd like to thank David Ogilvie for his hard work in putting the last few Annuals together. This will be the last under his editorship, and I'm glad to say we have a new volunteer for next year's 'centennial' edition. The authors of the upcoming centennial book have stated that the past Annuals provided them with a valuable resource for their research. I'm sure that this current edition will be just as useful to whomever might be putting the 200th anniversary book together.

Enjoy.

**Patrick Arnold**

President



# Stewart Island/ Rakiura

December 2017

Lynne White

Sand dunes en route to Long Harry Hut PHOTO: LYNNE WHITE

I had two more Great Walks to complete: Rakiura Track on Stewart Island and the Wanganui. I know the Wanganui is a river, but DoC classifies it as a walk so I must 'do' it. Plans for this fell apart with an exceptionally wet 2017 Easter so I turned my mind to the Rakiura Track. This looked fine, but on the map was something longer and consequently more exciting, winding its way around the northern coastline of Rakiura/Stewart Island, the North West Circuit; 125 km in 10 days, completely do-able. I studied the weather for different times of year, compromising between rainfall,

temperature and availability – December looked perfect!

Despite my confidence, my announcement that I was planning to walk the North West Circuit in December was greeted with a degree of scepticism by other, more experienced, trip leaders – or was it a dose of reality? I was warned of the dreadful Foveaux Strait ferry crossing, endless mud, shoes lost in quagmires, and days of rain, not to mention the terrible sandflies. Even the DoC brochure has a photo of someone cheerfully ploughing through a mud bath, advising that “Mud is widespread, thick and often knee-deep on the track ...”. You can't say we weren't warned.

Nothing daunted, five other hardy souls said they were keen to come so travel was arranged: fly to Invercargill, bus to Bluff and ferry to Oban where we would carbo load with an evening meal and breakfast at the exotically named South Sea Hotel before a ten-day diet of de-hy meals and variations of highly calorific but preferably light snacks. We bought gas in Invercargill to avoid the anticipated mark up on Stewart Island, only to discover that the Oban Four Square and even the local DoC office were cheaper. One lesson learned.

Our first night was spent at the more modest Stewart Island Backpackers where the receptionist, noting our age, said there were a number of local day walks we might be interested in. Oh no, we're doing the North West Circuit, we replied. It's always cheering to dispel pre-conceptions.

All the planning and careful packing in the world cannot get you away from the fact that ten days of food is very heavy. We took a shuttle to the start of the track at Lee Bay rather than the winding and hilly road walk. It was good to



Start of the Rakiura Track at Lee Bay, still full of enthusiasm

PHOTO: LYNNE WHITE

get started even though it was misty with limited visibility, but that's a given for tramping!

The walk to Port William Hut is very civilised as it is part of the Rakiura Track but we then turned off to Bungaree Hut, the first of our eight back country huts; only North Arm Hut at the end of the track had to be pre-booked, as it is shared with the Rakiura Track. To our surprise, there were few people on the track or in most of the huts and we walked for days with pretty much ourselves for company. One exception was Christmas Village Hut where most trampers stay for two nights; the hut is at the foot of Hananui/Mount Anglem (980 m), the highest point of Stewart Island, which four of us did as a scenic day trip while the other two had a rest day. Staying two nights has the added advantage of allowing you to eat two days' food without carrying your pack any further – a serious consideration!

The huts are amazingly well positioned overlooking rivers, beaches, sea inlets and panoramic vistas; except for Freshwater Landing Hut, which has none of these attributes and is memorable only for being small, cramped and rather dark! It was somewhat redeemed by being the starting point of Rocky Mountain Track, a side walk for those with the energy, that led to a rocky plateau with views over Paterson Inlet and is a nesting site of New Zealand dotterel.

We really felt as if we had been gifted some prize accommodation. Ok, you generally couldn't sit outside because of the sandflies, but could have ritual cleansing sessions in the river or sea before dashing back indoors for stage one recuperation (soup) and to feast on the scenery. At night we crept about looking for kiwi that we sometimes heard calling and were thrilled to eventually find them foraging in the daytime near Long Harry, East Ruggedy and Masons Bay huts.

The North West Circuit Track never gets above 400 meters but don't be fooled – it goes up and down remarkably often, plunging steeply into gullies before rising equally steeply up the other side and then repeating the exercise all over again. The quality of the track is variable, sometimes



Marilyn confronting a kiwi on the track PHOTO: BRUCE RICHARDS



Gerald on Rocky Mountain with a view to Mason Bay PHOTO: WAYNE PERKINS



Tarn on Hananui/Mount Anglem PHOTO: LYNNE WHITE

drifting pleasantly through native forest and other times challenging us with roots, rocks, mountainous sand dunes, long rocky beaches, long sandy beaches and the occasional small slick of mud; we were lucky – Stewart Island had no rain for about 10 days before we arrived and then it rained only once, in the night, whilst we were on the track. So, no mud!! We may not have had the real Stewart Island experience but it certainly made tramping a lot more pleasant.

Our last night was at North Arm Hut which we shared with a very well-behaved school party from Mount Aspiring College. We bathed in North Arm where the water was 10°C above normal – lovely for swimming but alarming in terms of global warming. By this time, we were low on food and had just enough energy to march back into Oban and straight to the nearest café.

Some of us went to Ulva Island bird sanctuary the next day; a gentle ramble with a well-informed guide. Marilyn and Bruce washed clothes and prepared for a stint on Ulva as DoC volunteers.

Highlights of the trip included seeing kiwi in the wild, the unexpected and abundant rimu, stunning beach vistas and views of offshore islands, not to mention two calm crossings of the Foveaux Strait.

#### TRIP MEMBERS

Gerald Leather, Wayne Perkins, Bruce and Marilyn Richards, Anne Webster, Lynne White (trip leader)

# Kaimanawa Trip

November 2017

Peggy Munn

Route from Junction Top to 1660 PHOTOS: PEGGY MUNN

Sienny and I met Devon at the Urchin Track road end just before noon and walked up to Urchin in beautiful bush with lots of birds. At the top we admired the fabulous views of the Central Plateau mountains, Lake



Devon and Sienny on Thunderbolt. Route from 1660 on the left.

Taupo and the Kaimanawas. After a late lunch we set off for Waipakihi Hut.

It was quick and pleasant travel along the tops but progress slowed in the bush on a narrow undulating track. It was a relief to emerge back onto the wonderful, open, rolling country so typical of the Kaimanawas. At the junction with the Umukarikari track, we turned right and headed for the hut, arriving at 7 pm. There were father and son hunters from Putaruru at the hut; pleasant guys but rather reticent. Goodness knows what they thought when three women turned up who spent the evening discussing cancer while they played cards. With the fire going, the hut was cosy and we relaxed after a long day.

After a good sleep, we set off for the big day up along the tops. The deeply rutted old track to Junction Top was hard work. Once over the steep section and out of the scrub, the track was easier with sidles. We reached Junction Top in time for morning tea. Permission is needed from Helisika to cross private land from Junction Top to 1660.

We turned south on a footpad that was often a bit vague but overall it was easy travel. Each time we saw a peak in front of us we could see a sidle track around it. What joy compared to relentless ups and downs but eventually we had



to climb to gain the ridge junction at 1660 m. With good weather, the route finding was fun. Passing the big cairn at 1660, we lunched out of the cool breeze.

We could see the route to Thunderbolt in the distance. It was going to be a long trudge. There was no escaping the climb up through horrid scrub which finally gave way to easier scree. After Thunderbolt were two more bumps before we finally hit the easier ridge that would lead to the turnoff to our campsite in the barren Parakakariki basin.

We spent some time searching for a campsite close to water. Any flat ground was generally boggy but we eventually decided on a reasonable site, pitched camp and then it started to drizzle. We hunkered down under Devon's fly for hot drinks and dinner before retiring for the night.

The drizzle came and went all night. As we would be having a short day we didn't need to hurry so stayed under shelter until, getting restless, a clear moment came and so we packed up. But the weather hadn't cleared so toggled up in parkas and overtrou we headed back up to the ridge. There the drizzle returned which briefly became hail but fortunately, no wind.

It was a lovely route over Motutere. Sprinkled with old cairns, we could see the way ahead even in limited visibility. After a brief morning tea, we started the descent to the bushline.

The track down through the bush was steep and slippery in places but still pleasant. We hit the bottom to find the track went straight into the Waipakihi River. There was a

wee stash of crocs under a tree; someone trying to keep their boots dry we supposed.

The drizzle held off as we ambled down the river with two more crossings before we found a track on the true right that led to the turnoff to Urchin. We passed several campsites littered with rubbish. It was quite shocking to see that people hadn't been able to carry out their food packaging.

We arrived at the turnoff, had lunch and pitched camp. The campsite was also seriously impacted by rubbish and was not really a pleasant place to stay. The drizzle returned. We were glad it had been a short day and we weren't out in the rain.

We woke on our last day to fine weather. The climb onto the ridge to Urchin was certainly steep but with the advantage that the climb was over and done with quickly.

We cruised back along the tops to Urchin and paused for a break. A hunter appeared and stopped for a chat. He was on a mission to get down into the Waipakihi and clean up the campsites. His job was to gather up the rubbish and GPS the location of the piles for a DoC helicopter to come to pick them up. The theory was that if the campsites were tidy at the start of summer they might stay that way. We enjoyed the good track back to the carpark, pleased that our trip had been a success.

#### TRIP MEMBERS

Peggy Munn (leader), Devon Polaschek, Sieny Pollard

Campsite at Parakakariki Headwaters.



# An Idyllic Week at Tasman Saddle

November 2017

Nina Sawicki

Above: From the Upper Tasman Glacier, Mt Walter (R of picture), Elie de Beaumont (centre), east face of Hochstetter Dome (L of picture).

Below: Looking south to Aoraki from the east ridge of Mt Green PHOTOS: NINA SAWICKI



Anyone who has driven through South Westland on a clear day will have been captivated by the peaks of Elie de Beaumont and Tasman standing like broad shouldered giants. As a parent of young children, I had long dreamed of the possibility of standing on these summits on annual South Island holidays so the prospect of a week at Tasman Saddle with a week of continuous fine blue bird days was rather intoxicating. The forecast promised a stable strong high for the week. I woke at 3.00 am in Unwin Hut to drive my good friends Penny Webster and Jim Davidson to the start of the track up the Hooker. They were heading for Empress Hut planning a grand traverse of Cook, excited but apprehensive anticipation was washed over their faces in the dawn light: and it was infectious! I returned to Unwin for a few more hours sleep which of course eluded me.

Gavin Lang of First Light Guiding joined me at Unwin about 10 am and we patiently waited in the usual morning queue of climbers, guides, instructors and students waiting to fly up to the high alpine huts. Given the fabulous forecast we could not believe that we had the Tasman Saddle Hut to ourselves for the first three days. The previous night we had been discussing with Simon Middlemass (resident warden at Unwin) the safety and siting of Mount Cook National Park's high alpine huts; Simon had produced a historic geological

article on alpine huts' safety. Tasman Saddle had been cited as one the safest. Even so, the rear fire exit is situated at the back of the hut where it descends over a bluff. Even more concerning is that the front egress is where the fuel is stored. So aside from any apprehension about the climbs ahead, the challenge of feeling safe in the hut was perhaps my first priority.

We did two warm up climbs on the south ridge of Aylmer (2699 m) and then Hochstetter Dome (2834 m). The climb of Aylmer was quite special as Gavin had celebrated his wedding on its summit several years back so he took a video with a "declaration of love" in preparation to send to his wife Jin for their anniversary in a few weeks.

We were delighted to hear on the radio schedule on our second night that Penny and Jim had successfully completed their Grand Traverse of Mt. Cook. Our next objective was Elie de Beaumont (3109 m) which is the northernmost 3000 m peak in the Southern Alps. We took the Anna Glacier route cited as 2+ in the guide book and it keeps close under Mt. Walter. Being early November, this was an early season climb, even so, it was marginal due to the crevasses starting to open up. It was very icy as we ascended so despite there being an "easy snow ridge" to the summit I found it quite challenging and reinforced the often-forgotten learning that route guides are just guides and ever changing depending on conditions. It was more challenging than my experience of the Linda Shelf on Mt. Cook.

We were joined that evening by a party of SAR members who had been friends for years and had come to enjoy their annual ski tour meet-up at the head of the Tasman. They were a "barrel of fun" and came well stocked with tasty treats and whiskey. It was particularly special to meet up with Phil Melchior, a SAR leader who had come to help with the search of Michael Taylor in the upper Wilkin on New Year's Day in 2012. I really appreciated being able to say thank you in person once again to him. Despite my personal pledge not to drink alcohol in the hills, the lure of the whiskey was too much. The frivolity and jokes of course intensified.



Returning to Tasman Saddle Hut in the early afternoon looking down Tasman Glacier.

Our next objective was Mt Green (2837 m) via the east face and NE ridge (grade 2) from the broad plateau between Mount Green and Walter. This broad plateau is accessed via the prominent SE Ridge. This provided us with spectacular and rather dizzy views over the western névés. It took about five pitches from the Tasman Glacier and again we encountered icy conditions so I was quite puffed arriving at the top of each pitch. We encountered a schrund at the bottom of the east face which was a bit tricky to cross and even trickier on descent. I chose to slide down over it with my whole torso so as to spread the load on the softening snow. I positioned myself well down the slope when Gavin approached it providing a counter-weight to protect him should he slip into the schrund. Once safely across, we ate our lunch on the broad col intoxicated with the alpine beauty. We had contemplated a climb of Walter as well but I was tired by this stage so we headed back on the slow trudge to the hut across the softening snow. I find counting to 500 before looking up helps pass the often-exhausting walk back in the afternoon sun on the glacier. We had one more potential day of climbing but for the first time ever I resented not having a bad weather day to rest so we headed out a day early back to the village and had a much-needed feast at the Hermitage buffet.



From the summit of Mt Green looking to the NE ridge of Elie de Beaumont from Tasman Saddle Hut.



Nina on the summit of Elie de Beaumont, Aoraki in the distance.

PHOTO: GAVIN LANG

# The Old Ghost Road

7–11 January 2018

Muriel Christianson

The Old Ghost Road stretches between West Buller and Mokihinui River catchments. Developed as a cycling and tramping track, it commences at the Lyell camping ground in the Upper Buller Gorge and finishes in Seddonville, on the south bank of the Mokihinui River, halfway between Westport and Karamea.

With an old reconnaissance survey map for a road between Lyell and Mokihinui, Marion Boatwright, who had built the Rough and Tumble Bush Lodge on the banks of the Mokihinui River, began with the seed of an idea to redevelop this road as a track for cyclists and trampers. Marion had moved from North Carolina to the West Coast with his wife Susan Cook from Christchurch. They built their lodge in this remote area of reclaimed farm land.

Gathering a team of enthusiasts, with support from the Buller Region branch of DoC, Marion commenced exploration of the track. His book “Spirit to the Stone: Building The Old Ghost Road” details the challenges encountered in completing the trail. The book can be purchased from the Rough and Tumble Lodge; copies are available in huts along the track. Track exploration and development commenced in 2007. The grand opening of The Old Ghost Road was held in Westport in December 2015. The track represents a remarkable level of foresight, achievement and perseverance from those involved.

The Old Ghost Road is an 85-km journey traversing majestic native forest, open tussock tops, river flats and forgotten valleys. It is part of the New Zealand Cycle Trail, and an outdoor museum, with relics from 19th century gold exploration. Along the track are remains of the townships, Lyell, Gibbstown, Zalatown, and Seatonville. There are six huts; four can be booked and have a range of facilities, including gas cooking, composting toilets and water tanks, two have basic facilities and do not need to be booked. The bookable huts are Lyell Saddle, Ghost Lake, Stern Valley and Specimen Point Huts. The other two are Goat Creek Hut and Mokihinui Forks Hut. There are regular marker posts along the track showing the kilometres travelled and the distance to the next hut.

We flew to Nelson on 5th January, arriving to pouring rain. We spent the night at Tasman Bay Backpackers, enjoying an Asian meal. Saturday was spent exploring the Nelson market and local shops. On 7th January we made an early start to the Lyell camping ground to begin the first stage of our tramp. Once on the Old Dray Road, we made our way up the graded track to Lyell Saddle Hut. Challenges along the way included crossing two gated slips where cyclists were asked to walk their bikes. We walked at



Land bridges over the “Suicide Slips” PHOTOS: JEANETTE MARTIN

a steady pace, taking 6 hours for this part of our trip. Lyell Saddle Hut was a welcome sight. We were impressed with its facilities, with 11 bunks and two summer sleep outs. A small bearded goat was enjoying the site.

We were joined in the hut by a father and son who were cycling the track. At all the huts along The Old Ghost Road we met opportunistic weka looking for any food scraps that came their way.

Day two involved climbing a graded track to the high point of the journey. This part of the track passes Bald Hill and Mount Montgomery and has amazing views to the west with a view of the open cast Strongman Mine, and out towards Murchison in the east. Rocky Tor and Heavens Gate provide striking scenery. For this exposed part of the track we were lucky to have warm temperatures and little wind. There was an 800-metre section where cyclists were asked to walk their bikes, with a narrow track and steep drop offs. Parts of this track are graded as “MTB Grade 5 expert”. The track continued to Ghost Lake Hut, taking us 4½ hours. The

hut has 12 bunks and two summer sleep-outs. Ghost Lake was a small tarn set amongst spectacular mountain scenery. We were joined by cycling family groups at this hut.

Day three took us over a zigzag track with sharp bends and sheer drops heading to the Skyline Ridge. We travelled along the Skyline Ridge in mist. At the end of the Skyline Ridge, we came to the Skyline Steps where cyclists need to carry their bike down a steep drop. These steps were manageable for trampers but could present a challenge for cyclists. Our destination, Stern Valley Hut, again provided good facilities with 10 bunks and two summer sleep-outs. The trip took us four hours. We met again with the cycling families sharing the track.

Our fourth day was to be the longest, 23 km. From Stern Valley Hut we walked over the Boneyard on the way to the Solemn Saddle, then made our way down through beautiful beech forest to Goat Creek Hut where we lunched, joined by the ever present weka. The weather was deteriorating, commencing the rainy part of our journey so we did not linger.

From Goat Creek Hut we journeyed through beech forest to the Mokihinui Forks Hut where we had fabulous views of the full force of the river with rain rapidly adding to its volume. A short walk then to Specimen Point Hut; this was a 7-hour day. Along the way we met a runner, making her way into Stern Valley Hut. One of the track maintenance crew at Specimen Point Hut was upgrading toilets in time for a mountain run where marathon runners would complete The Old Ghost Road track in one go. A bit dispiriting for those of us tackling the track over five days! Overnight the roar of rain and the Mokihinui River alerted us to spending our final day in wet weather.

On the final day between Specimen Point Hut and Rough and Tumble Lodge the track has many bridges, fourteen over waterways and three land bridges over the "Suicide Slips". The heavy rain made us aware of the potential for flooding. Our final day was warm and wet, with cascades over our track in a number of places. It was interesting to look at the site of Seatonville Township, with admiration for the old gold miners and their families who made homes in these relatively inaccessible places. The name "The Old Ghost Road" was certainly appropriate! This day was a 4½ h walk. Spending our final night at the Rough and Tumble Lodge provided welcome luxury, with the opportunity of a beautiful meal, showers, and comfortable surroundings amid dense West Coast bush. There was the opportunity to use a private outdoor shower overlooking the Mokihinui River in full force.

Along the way we enjoyed meals planned by Jeanette and Dianne. These included meals, the envy of the cyclists, based on rice, pasta and lentils, and using vegetables such as dehydrated kumara and kale. Taking fresh cucumbers as extra vegetables was highly successful with these surviving the warm humid weather. Desserts consisted of biscuits and rice puddings.

We had surprised some of the cyclists by making good progress early in the mornings, the cyclists taking longer



Above: The Alpine route to Ghost Lake Hut.

Below: The Mokihinui River in flood.



than expected to catch us. This was in part due to the need of cyclists to walk a number of portions of the track.

Then back to a gloomy Nelson and more rain; Wellington on arrival was fine and 24°C. All in all, a great tramp, and highly recommended.

#### TRIP MEMBERS

Muriel Christianson, Dianne Lee, Jeanette Martin (leader), Howard Symmes



# The Timber Trail

December 2017

John Hill

Crossing a suspension bridge PHOTO: PETE SMITH

The Timber Trail is a two-day cycle ride through the Pureora Forest Park, north west of Taupo. It was one of John Key's initiatives to promote cycling and tourism. It is difficult to imagine such a track being built without considerable government finance.

Late last year the club was approached by the management of the recently completed Timbertrail Lodge, offering members, as an introductory promotion, 15% discount for a group of ten riders or more on their standard package, comprising accommodation on the trail, all meals and a shuttle service for the riders and their bikes. Sixteen club members responded – a perfectly balanced team of four couples, four single women and four single men – and shortly before Christmas, sharing cars, and carrying our own bikes, we drove to Ongarue just off SH4 north of Taumarunui.

We left the cars in a safe car park in Ongarue, and along with our bikes, were driven to the lodge located about half way along the trail at Piropiro. The Lodge was very comfortable, brand new, without being flash. We had the option of twin rooms with shared bathrooms or twin rooms with ensuite bathrooms. There is a large comfortable lounge with a bar and a dining area where dinner was served that night.

The 85 km trail is rated grades 2 and 3 (easy to intermediate) and is a mixture of purpose built single track, winding its way through the trees, and re-used original logging tracks and tramways. The track crosses numerous deep ravines, necessitating eight large suspension bridges,

the largest of which crosses the Maramahaha River and at 141 m long and 53 m above the river is New Zealand's longest suspension bridge. The original podocarp forest had been partially logged, but in 1979, as a result of pressure from conservationists, logging was halted and the area declared a reserve. The trail passes through original native forest, exotic forest and a huge amount of regenerating native forest. Along the route there are numerous information boards covering the history of the area with historic photographs and information on the fauna and flora.

We were shuttled to the start of the trail at Pureora on our first day, which was gloriously sunny. The first 4 km is fairly easy going as the track winds its way through beautiful original forest. The next 4 km starts to climb through an open regenerating area and was decidedly hot in the sun.



Mount Pureora summit PHOTO: PETE SMITH



**Morning tea** PHOTO: JIM GIBBONS

We were glad to get back into the shade for the largest climb of the ride up to the highpoint of the trail at 980 m. At this point there is a side track up to the summit of Mt Pureora (1165 m). Leaving our bikes beside the main track and taking our sandwiches, we walked up to the top. Optimistically signed as “20 minutes” the badly eroded track took closer to an hour, but we were rewarded with panoramic views over the forest while we ate our lunch. We were relieved that the afternoon was easier going with a gradually descending track back to the lodge at Piropiro. Towards the end we were picking up some old tramways which made the cycling easier.

Tired and hot we appreciated hot showers, and cold beers in the lounge, and dinner cooked by someone else. Sitting out on the large deck with our drinks, watching the sunset over the forest at the other side of the valley, it was hard to believe that the forecasts for next day, including from the Norwegians, were for rain.

Next day was heavily overcast but dry as we set off on the second half of the ride. The first 30 km undulates but is slightly easier riding, a large portion following the line of old forestry tramways, passing through several quite deep cuttings and one tunnel at the Ongarue Spiral where the track loops round and passes under itself. There are also several suspension bridges on this section. After about an hour the rain started but was not much more than a mist, barely requiring our wet weather gear. By lunchtime it cleared, nobody got wet, and the afternoon gradually brightened.



**On the trail** PHOTO: PETE SMITH

The last 15 km, including the spiral, is almost non-stop downhill and a real buzz, requiring almost continuous breaking. About 5 km from the end the track emerges from the forest and the remainder of the ride is along a dirt road through farmland, finishing at the Ongarue car park in good time for the journey home.

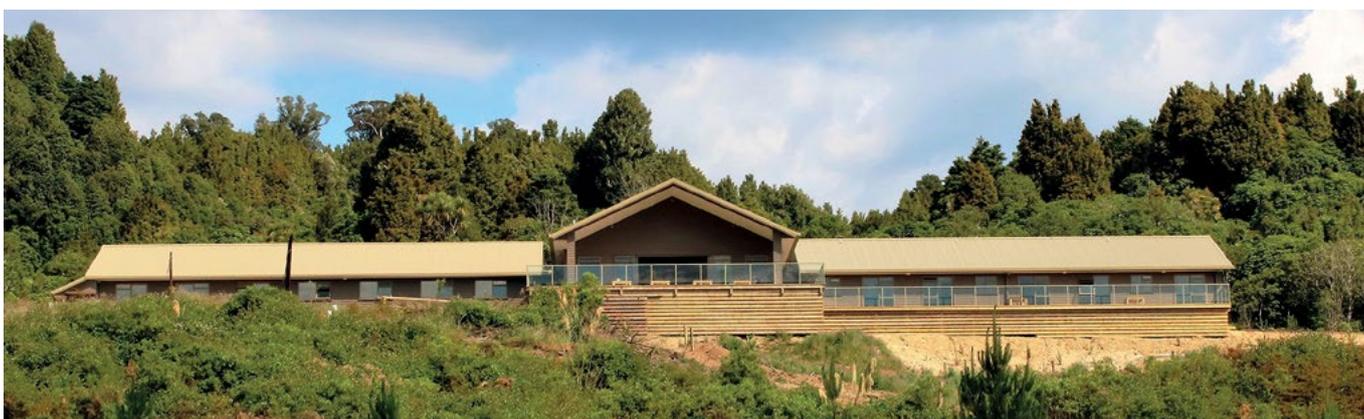
Most of the group stopped for the night at Ohakune, only a short drive, where we had the use of a couple of ski club lodges for accommodation.

Next morning about half the group rode the Old Coach Road trail from Horopito back to Ohakune, using a car shuttle, before returning to Wellington in the afternoon. Although taking only about two and a half hours this turned out to be a challenging and very attractive ride through beautiful forest featuring both old and new railway viaducts on the North Island Main Trunk Line.

Despite one or two minor tumbles everybody managed the Timber Trail unscathed and without getting wet. Accommodation at the Timbertrail Lodge ([www.timbertrailodge.co.nz](http://www.timbertrailodge.co.nz)), along with their shuttle service and meals, was an easy and very comfortable option for undertaking an excellent ride.

#### TRIP MEMBERS

Paul Armstrong, Andrew Carman, Jim Gibbons, Susan Guscott, John Hill, Ray and Carolyn Jenkins, Gerald and Chris Leather, Jeanette Martin, Jane-Pyar Mautner, Cheryl McDonald, Pete Smith and Trish Gardiner Smith, Bill and Alison Stephenson



**The Timbertrail Lodge** PHOTO: JIM GIBBONS



Above: Aoraki/Mt Cook and Mt Tasman as seen from the summit of Lendenfeld Peak.

Right: Paul Climbing to the summit of Mt Haast PHOTOS: SEAN BUCHANAN

# A quick trip to Pioneer Hut

December 2017

**Sean Buchanan**

It's amazing how quickly you can completely switch your surroundings.

My day had begun with a late start and relaxed breakfast in Wellington and just 6 hours later, Paul Maxim and I were standing on the porch of Pioneer Hut, high on the Fox N ev e and deep in the heart of the Southern Alps.

We were returning to the area in the hope of climbing Mt Tasman – a dream peak of ours. However the view we saw on our chopper flight in from Mt Cook village told us immediately that the climb was not going to happen. The North Shoulder route that we wanted to climb was completely broken by an impassable schrund. De-glaciation is taking its toll on the big alps.

Oh well. There's a lot of other great climbing still accessible in this area and we adjusted our plans. We had two days

of hot, clear weather to make the most of.

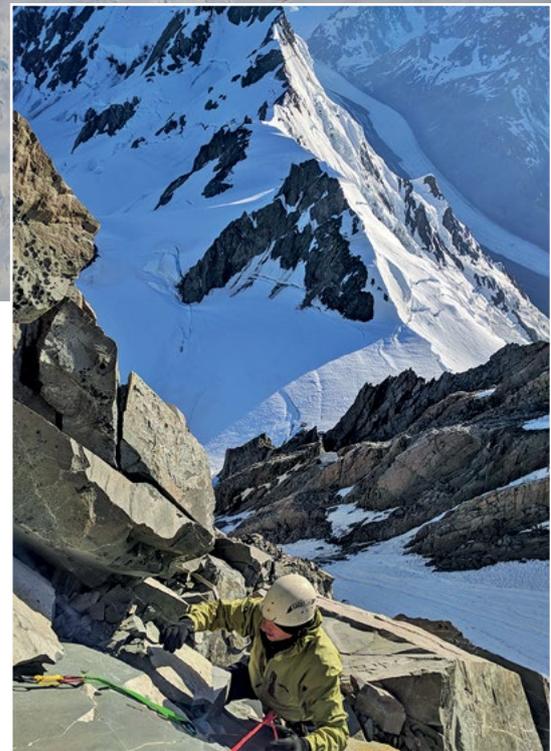
The freezing levels were much too high for efficient travel on the glaciers as we set off from the hut at 2 am the following morning with only the slightest freeze in the snow underfoot. We crossed the Fox N ev e under the toe of Mt Haast and weaved a path through crevasses up to Marcel Col. From here we travelled east along the Main Divide to the high peak of Mt Haast (3114 m). We reached the summit (a crumbling stack of broken rock) with just a couple of rope lengths. This was a new 3000 m peak for us and we felt pretty pleased with ourselves.

After a while spent enjoying the view we returned to the col and ascended the big snow slopes to Lendenfeld Peak (3194 m), familiar territory for Paul and me. By now the sun was out and it was getting really hot. We slogged back

across the glaciers in the heat of the day, with no wind and empty drink bottles. We sunk deep in the snow with every step and felt like men lost in the desert.

For our final day we climbed Grey Peak (a 2882 m bump on the Main Divide between Mt Haast and Mt Haidinger) as an easy day out. Again we got away very early to make the most of the slight freeze and we made it to the Main Divide for a stunning sunrise. The position gives a superb view down to the Tasman Glacier and is a real gem of a peak. A climb of Grey Peak would be a perfect introduction to the area for a new climber.

We caught a late flight back to Mt Cook village that afternoon before the next storm rolled in. It was a short but sweet trip.







Above: Sean on Grey Peak at 5:57 am, with Mt Haidinger (3070 m) prominent PHOTO: PAUL MAXIM  
Below: Paul on Grey Peak at sunrise at 6:06 am.



# Bushcraft 2018

## Peter Barber

We had three evening sessions in the TTC Library, then the bushcraft weekend at Waerenga Hut in April. The students found it to be a comprehensive course that was both informative and enjoyable, and that the tutors responded to the differing capabilities of the students. They particularly enjoyed the camaraderie, the map and compass work, and the river crossing practice.

PHOTOS: PETER BARBER

### STUDENTS

Ruth Crawford, Heather Evans, Ken Joe, Jack Morris, Adina Nachum, Rissa Ota, Anna Shum-Pearce, Daniel Taylor, Amanda Trueman, Wendy Marie Williams

### TUTORS

Peter Barber, Helen Chapman, Alan Graham, Chris Munn, Peggy Munn, Bharat Pancha



L to R: Ruth Crawford, Rissa Ota, Adina Nachum, Bharat Pancha.



L to R: Helen Chapman, Peggy Munn, Wendy Williams, Chris Munn.



Looking for the water intake for Waerenga Hut. L to R: Anna Shum-Pearce, Alan Graham, Ken Joe, Daniel Taylor, Jack Morris.



L to R: Adina Nahum, Jack Morris, Alan Graham, Ruth Crawford, Wendy Williams, Heather Evans.



L to R: Chris Munn, Jack Morris, Bharat Pancha, Ruth Crawford, Wendy Williams, Heather Evans, Alan Graham, Amanda Trueman.



Behind L to R: Peggy Munn, Wendy Williams, Helen Chapman, Chris Munn, Anna Shum-Pearce, Rissa Ota, Bharat Pancha. Front: Adina Nachum, Amanda Trueman, Heather Evans, Jack Morris.

# Life and 50-year Members

## LIFE MEMBERS as at 31 October

Ian Baine  
Hugh Barr  
Michael Bartlett  
David Castle  
Colin Cook  
Sue Cuthbertson  
John Gates  
Chris Horne  
Janet Keilar

Carol Kelly  
Alan Knowles  
Jenny Lewis  
John Nankervis  
Brenda Neill  
Vivienne Radcliffe  
Peter Smith  
Alan Wright  
Tong Young

## FIFTY YEAR MEMBERS

As at 30 October 2018 the following 53 people have been members for at least 50 years

Alan Bagnall  
Jill Bagnall  
Ian Baine  
Stan Bathgate  
Paul Bieleski  
Graeme Claridge  
Judith Claridge  
Dave Clark  
Ewen Clendon  
Rowen Crawford  
Win Crawford  
Jim Cruse  
Tony Cunneen  
Lindsay Cuthbertson  
Alec Day  
Al Donoghue  
Cecil Duff  
Tania Dyett  
Max Feist  
Margaret Foden  
John Foden  
Margaret Fyfe  
Bill Gates  
John Gates  
Christina Gibbs  
George Gibbs  
Paddy Gresham

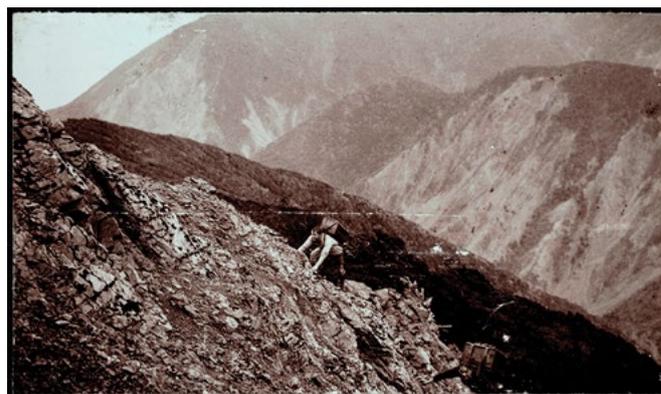
Wayne Griffen  
Phil Harris  
Trevor Henderson  
Jan Hopper  
Maarten Janse  
Willem Janse  
Michael Jones  
Janet King  
Frances Lee  
Margaret Maynard  
Roy Molineux  
John Nankervis  
Brenda Neill  
Kath Offer  
Barbara Ogilvie  
David Ogilvie  
Celia O'Neill  
Peter O'Neill  
Beryl Rodgers  
Kath Satory  
Allan Sheppard  
George Spencer  
Bill Wheeler  
John Wild  
Beryl Wood  
Tong Young



# Where we go tramping



Beating a retreat from Matthews South Saddle at the Mukamuka Stream turnoff. Back view of some of the 21 members who attempted summiting Mt Matthews on 10 October during a gale that peaked at 111 km per hour at Kelburn PHOTO: JIM GIBBONS



A member of the Dept of Lands and Survey surveying party climbing on all fours up a ridge on Mt Matthews with a box of instruments weighing 80 lbs strapped to his back. Photo taken about 1913 by H. E. Girdlestone (1879-1918). Albums relating to surveying, tramping and climbing REF: PA1-Q-913-08-4. ALEXANDER TURNBULL LIBRARY



John Hill and Rosemary Wilson, City to Sea survivors, 6 June, during a southerly gale and a temperature down to 6°C PHOTO: DAVID OGILVIE

# It Happens! Kakapo Spur

Stu Hutson

Looking southeast from near Mt Mytton. Mt Kendall in the distance on the right PHOTOS: MARTIN KENNEDY

Martin Kennedy and I planned to start from Cobb Reservoir, walk up Mt Peel, along Kakapo Spur, down to Roaring Lion Hut, up to Lake Jewel, back to Roaring Lion Hut, up Roaring Lion River to Breakfast Creek, climb between Mts Ranolf and Prospect, drop into the Cobb, up the Lockett Range, through the lake area, and finally back to the Cobb Valley.

**Day 1:** We set off from the south end of Cobb Reservoir with 25 kg packs, passed Myttons Hut towards Mt Peel (1654 m) on a scorching hot day. After just over an hour we hit the ridge on Peel Range. We scrambled over steep bits, plodding along, encountering a group of kea. From Mt Peel we continued towards Mt Mytton aiming for Kakapo Spur.

Passing Mt Mytton (1535 m) we realised it would take a few hours to get around the bluffs. We found a tarn to camp beside in the south basin under Mt Mytton. We were thankful to find water in such a lovely spot. We had lots of drinks, ate, relaxed and eventually went to bed as night fell.



Mt Mytton area. Looking east along the Peel Range from the north side of the junction with Kakapo Spur.

**Day 2:** We rose early, ate porridge and drank lots of water. While getting the water I slipped into a hole and hurt my ankle. On the way past Mt Mytton we looked at a rock bivvy that Martin knew of.

We realised we made a good decision the day before as we ended up scrambling, bouldering, sidling (on the northside), and summiting the Kakapo spur. This took about 2.5 h.

The sun was cooking us big time. Martin's boots were rubbing but we didn't stop to sort it out. The sun got hotter and our water began to disappear. We continued south along the ridge, for a short time through trees, but mainly in the open, then over boulders, sidling around bluffs, climbing down steep stuff and walking pleasantly in the grass. By the time we reached #1541, I'd had it. We spotted a tarn 200 m below so went down to camp for the night; see inside front cover.

We were dehydrated, so drink, drink, drink, then set up camp and relaxed. Ducks were on the large tarn, including a blue duck in the bushes. Weka were calling from the bush and we heard kea on the bluffs, and ruru at night. A perfect camp site. A plastic tarp had been left there; a hunter's camp site we assumed. Martin dressed his blister. After dinner we went to bed, asleep in seconds.

**Day 3:** We drank heaps, ate, packed and set off early to climb back to the ridge before the sun baked us. That took an hour.

We continued south along the ridge, gradually descending. In the bush we struggled to see any features so referred to the map and compass, staying pretty much on the ridge. Sometimes it was open under the trees, other times we had to push through undergrowth. At times good animal routes helped.

We slowed as we neared #1261 because the route was not

obvious; we'd already had a couple of false starts. I used my phone and Backcountry Navigator to find the correct spur. We used it again on the lower half of the spur. By now our water had gone and we were desperate. We navigated into a dry stream to drink out of puddles; what a relief! Then we skirted around bluffs for the Karamea River valley. We finally found a track that led to Roaring Lion Hut, just as it was getting dark. It had been a 12 h tramp covering 12 km. We were knackered. Martin's blister had gone nuts and his knee had erupted in pain; we were a hobbling mess.

At the hut were two Frenchmen who had flown in to fish. They greeted the stumbling apparitions but we had eyes only for water. We drank, drank, drank, and drank, then said hello. They were fun to talk to.

**Day 4:** We decided to have a rest day in the lovely old school hut. I gave Martin some strong anti-inflammatories and strapped his knee. We discussed using the PLB, or flying out with the Frenchmen, but held off to see how he felt next day.

We needed to find the easiest way out. We decided to go to Karamea Bend Hut and use a gentler track. We spent the day washing, eating, reading, and watching hilarious weka family. By the end of the day Martin thought he could hobble out, and my ankle had recovered. It rained later so we were worried the forecast storm might have come early.



En route to Karamea Bend Hut. Looking south from Kakapo Spur towards the northern edge of the Garibaldi Plateau area.

**Day 5:** A fine day and a new year. After drugging Martin up and saying goodbye to the weka, we headed upriver for Karamea Bend Hut, sometimes in the river, sometimes sidling on the banks. Once I started to float down towards deep rapids; we had linked up so Martin prevented this. Other times we did the splits scrambling over boulders.

Eventually Martin's leg started to give him hell so I gave him my walking pole. We stopped for lunch and fed the sandflies. We heard kea and saw didymo blooms. When we reached the maintained track, it was like walking on a lawn. It was a shorter day so we were not tired. We saw lots of Powelliphanta land snail shells. Time for Martin to dress his massive blister and to rest his knee.

**Day 6:** Martin's knee needed more time, so we had another rest day. The resident weka unsuccessfully tried to steal my boots, tent pegs and Martin's porridge. The sandflies were pesky too. We spent the day reading, eating, drying our gear



Splugeons Rock bivvy.

from yesterday's swims, and talking to a couple of people who turned up.

**Day 7:** I took some of Martin's heavy stuff. It was a pleasant walk along the Leslie River section of the track. I stumbled along under the weight while Martin hobbled and limped. We must have looked a sight. We eventually reached the bridge and refueled before climbing the hill.

We ground our way up on a hot, muggy day. After a few stops we made Splugeons Rock bivvy and its lovely spring stream so we drank deeply. I had a little sleep after lunch while Martin went to the lookout to entertain a kea.

We eventually made it to the Tableland in booming thunder and warm rain then on to Balloon Hut. Off with packs and wet clothes, on with the pot for some well-deserved soup and tea, and up with Martin's leg. There was a crew from Auckland there doing a great tramp, and some Germans, so we had an interesting evening.

**Day 8:** The Germans slept in while the rest of us were up and off. Martin was drugged again but this time his leg was not behaving so he had to hobble with rest stops along the way. We passed Lake Peel and Myttons Hut again on the way to the car.

Despite Martin's injuries, and not following our original plan, it had been a great tramp. Martin's injuries were seen to at Takaka Hospital, but we were satisfied that we had managed his injuries well enough not to resort to using the PLB.



Stu heading down to Lake Peel



Resting near Mt Dundas, with Arete and Pukematawai in the background PHOTO: P. MCCREDIE

# Stairway to Heaven

Paul McCredie

Upper Mangahao River – it was hard to see the attraction of this fixture card listing. Clambering over boulders, grovelling through leatherwood, under a baking summer sun, on the way to ... where exactly?

‘It’s a chance to explore a seldom visited watershed of the northern Tararuas’ explained Franz. My eyes glazed over, a Bannister crossing or hut bagging Carkeek and Dorset under the guaranteed blue sky of Anniversary Weekend had more appeal. ‘Besides, the 1936 map marks an alpine garden at the headwater forks’ he threw in.

‘I know you like a bit of history with your tramping and there’s bound to be a story behind the garden ... should be an easy exit up Brockett Stream without too much bloodshed – Google Earth shows a leatherwood-free run to the tussock tops’ he added, in a final roll of the dice.

I was dubious but a quick email to John Rhodes, fountain of knowledge on all things Tararua, produced an exquisite map of the earliest known exploration up the headwaters of the Mangahao. Drawn by Les Adkin in 1928, it detailed the first ascent of Mt Dora (Pukematawai) via the upper Mangahao.

Research into the adventures of Adkin leads to the National Library and his astonishingly comprehensive three volume magnum opus *The Tararua Annals*. More akin to the dead sea scrolls of the ranges, these meticulously handwritten trip reports, accompanied by lovingly detailed maps, provide a portal into an era of discovery and wonder, a time when every tramp into the mountains was an exploration into the unknown, not to mention the chance for tramping immortality with naming rights to virgin peaks, streams and spurs up for grabs.

On the Diederich-Scanlon search in 1927, Jim Butcher had been excited by the river scenery he encountered in the upper Mangahao. He invited Adkin and his uncle, and Will (Denton) to accompany him back for a more thorough investigation the following year. This map was the result.

Butcher was a founding club member and had a reputation for doing his own thing. A lean wiry pipe smoking tramping machine with a weakness for mulligatawny soup. It was said he could catch a train, with quarter an hour to spare, from anywhere in the Tararuas. Adkin was similarly individualistic, the farmer at the Ohau

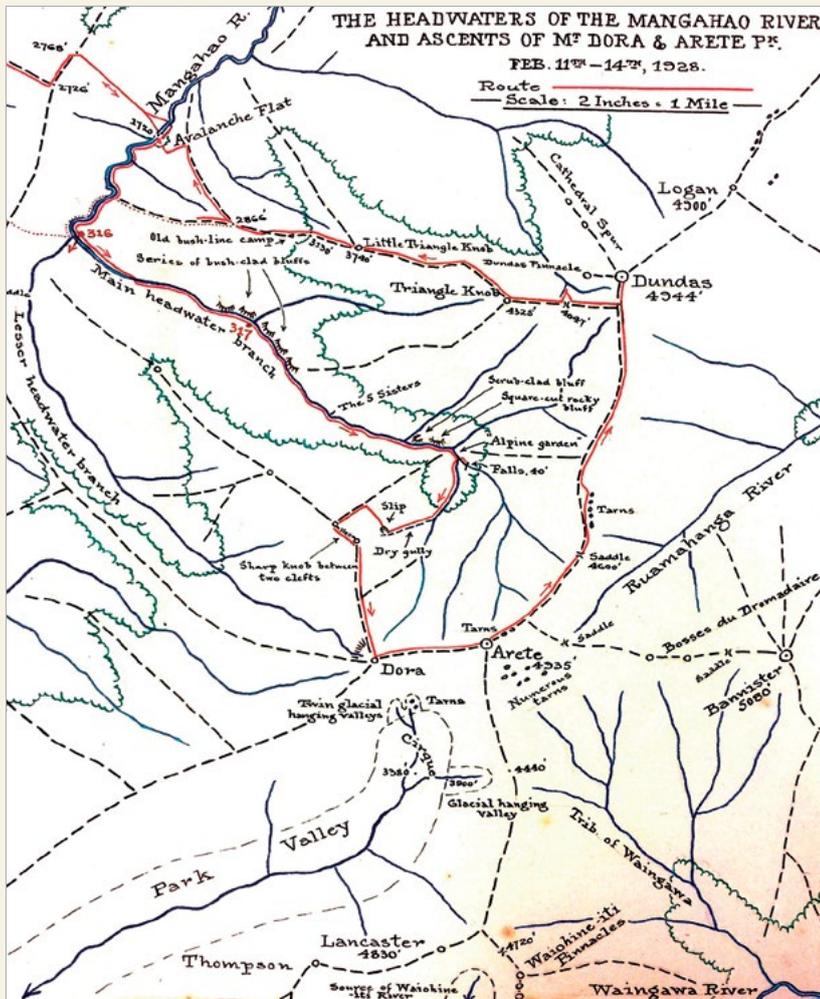


111. Huge massed boulders, with potholes, at Hart lke junction

The old Mangahao Staircase: J Butcher (l) and GB Wilson (r), taken by L Adkin after 1928.



The old Mangahao Staircase: 2018 PHOTO: PAUL MCCREDIE



DRAWN BY LES ADKIN IN 1928

road-end already well known for his pioneering crossings of the northern Tararuas.

With Denton nursing a wrenched knee, Adkin and Butcher left their campsite at Avalanche Flats early on the 13th February 1928 and headed up the Mangahao. By 7.40 am they had reached the major forks and were heading into virgin territory of the TR branch.

Immediately the scenery changed. Steep banks closed in and the river boulders exploded in size and number. 'Words fail to adequately describe the ensemble' wrote Adkin (it didn't stop him trying). 'A masterpiece of river scenery ... a great staircase of majestic boulders embellished by floral and botanical decoration of almost infinite variety combine to make a scene of unspoiled grandeur probably unsurpassed in the Tararuas'. Heady stuff and just the thing to get me signed up for the trip.

On Sunday 21st January 2018, ninety years after that first ascent, five inquisitive members found themselves clambering up the rugged river that had so impressed Adkin and Butcher. Sure enough, the 150-200 m bush clad bluffs on either side were towering. At one point we passed a bare rock slab, square-cut and so dangerously overhanging that Adkin was encouraged to 'hurry past'.

The 'Staircase' was obvious. The boulders shot full of pot holes – 'carved into them by the gyration of pebbles under the swirling action of water ... often up to two to three feet

deep' were still to be seen where the river cascaded over upturned monoliths. As for the 'Five Sisters' – a row of pointed boulders in alignment, they went unnoticed. Perhaps winter floods had dislodged them over the years.

Botanising as the pair went, Butcher was particularly taken with a bush of *Olearia ilicifolia* (mountain holly), which at that time was not included in botanical lists of the Tararua Ranges. Such was his interest in flora that in later years Butcher's Karori garden boasted most, if not all, the alpine plants to be found in the ranges.

At 8.55 am the valley broadened and the steep bluffs receded. Adkin and Butcher arrived at the upper most forks to be greeted 'by a veritable alpine garden ablaze with flowers' of *Senecio* (mountain daisy), *Ranunculus* (buttercup), *Ourisa macrophylla* (mountain foxglove) and *Euphrasia tricolor* (eyebright). Sprinkled throughout were *Cordyline indiviga*, *Olearia nitida* and *Aristotelia*.

Sadly, nothing of this dreamscape remains. Deer, goat and pigs have seen to its total destruction. If it wasn't for the 1936 map, the wasteland of grasses and boulders would not have warranted a second glance on the way through.

It was time for us to figure out an escape route. In 1928 Adkin and Butcher spotted a seriously steep stream to the right. They used it to ascend onto a spur that led to an unclimbed peak which Adkin named after his sister, Dora. Brockett Stream on the other hand curving out of sight looked a risky choice – Franz better be right!

Tim led off up the winding, steeply stepped water course. A couple of hours, only a few bush bashing sidles and no scratches later, we were back slapping and taking in the views from the saddle between Triangle Knob and Dundas. This was the old route used by early trips from the Pipe Bridge to the tops. It was now a simple matter of traversing the main range south to Arete and then west across to Pukematawai. From there it was plain to see a spur snaking back down to Te Matawai hut which we'd left early that morning.

It was humbling to think that here, ninety years ago, Butcher had a eureka moment. Forget the Deception Spur/ Avalanche Flats/Triangle Knob/Dundas route, the future lay below him. For evermore trampers would go up the South Ohau, climb the spur we call the Yeates track to Te Matawai hut and then onto Pukematawai where we stood. That was the future.

#### THE MODERN-DAY HISTORIAN TRAMPERS WERE

Franz Hubmann (leader), Gerald Leather, Paul McCredie, Martin and Tim Workman

# Hakaterere Conservation Park

March 2018

## Peggy Munn

West Coast rain thwarted our planned trip so a plan was hatched to visit Hakaterere Conservation Park east of the Alps. This involved a wide-ranging route starting at Cameron River, crossing Wild Mans Brother Range into the Hakaterere and Big Hill Range into the Potts, before crossing back to the Cameron.

**Day 1:** As we drove up Lake Heron valley towards Cameron River we saw our first impression of a vast, naked landscape. With our minds still occupied with West Coast tangled vegetation and a confined horizon, the scale was bewildering.

With the goodwill of Mt Arrowsmith Station, we set off under a hot, blue sky with heavy packs glad the good track did not cross the swift river.

We stopped by Spean Stream to assess our route over Wild Mans Brother Range next day. The stream fell down an impassable gut so we devised a route up the side to bypass it. After climbing through moraine we emerged on a boulder field and there, in a grassy patch was Cameron Hut, firmly tied down to survive any weather.

We learnt a lesson for the rest of the trip. All day exposure to the sun and not enough water knocked us about.

We noticed a fine-looking scree slope behind the hut that looked a better route over Wild Mans Brother Range. The map indicated such and the hut book had several accounts of people crossing via #1616 at the head of the scree slope. We gave it a go.

**Day 2:** Poor visibility delayed our departure but we made quick progress up the scree. At #1616 we found a cairn and in low cloud spotted a faint footpad sidling towards Spean Stream headwaters although it soon ran out. We maintained a steady sidle and as the cloud lifted we saw our saddle and

cairn; the last route indication we saw for the rest of the trip.

We admired the view into the Hakaterere especially the continuous scree slope. It took no time to descend and Lynne found a good route through the tussock to the river. After lunch on a pleasant grassy knob we crossed the river, staying on the true right, not risking crossing lower down. After a mixture of straightforward terrace or river bed travel we arrived at Top Hut early afternoon – a most enjoyable day.

The old corrugated iron musterers' 10-bunk hut was full of character. There was a large open fireplace but almost no firewood. Water was from a spring nearby.

We spent the afternoon in the sun, absorbing the landscape, especially the towering hulk of Wild Mans Hill directly opposite. The crossing into the Potts started from the hut but there was mention in the hut book about a crossing back up the Hakaterere at #1755, however that seemed like a big day.

**Day 3:** We decided to trust the forecast which was for rain and stay put. But what to do? Why not walk down to Wild Mans Hut, ensure we could cross the river and check out the number of bunks in case we came back via Boundary Creek. With a cold southerly signaled, we would forage for firewood.

Chris made a swag from an old 25 kg seed sack and our light rope. Within minutes the drizzle arrived in our faces. We made a couple of stashes of matagouri to collect on our return, found we could cross the river, then hit the old farm road that led to Wild Mans Hut.

The hut, still owned by Mt Arrowsmith Station, was quaint and cluttered but it did have 6 bunks. It had a wood burner with a wetback and water tank. There was a fine wood box with firewood, and a toilet attached called Wild Mans Thunder box. We reasoned that with road access, it was easy to bring in wood so a few pieces wouldn't be missed.

We were wet and cold after walking into the drizzle. Carrying the sack back proved to be difficult as the weight caused the thin rope to cut into Chris's shoulders. A waratah solved the problem and we slung the sack onto the bar and pairs of people took turns carrying it back to Top Hut. We ended up with a good supply of wood. With the fire going and a couple of clotheslines, we devised a new plan for the



The headwaters of the Hakaterere River. From the left: Janette Roberts, Peggy Munn, Chris Munn PHOTO: TONY BLACK





Above: Crossing the Big Hill Range from the Hakatere.  
From the left: Lynne White, Chris Munn, Tony Black, Janette Roberts.  
PHOTO: PEGGY MUNN

Below: The wood raiding party, Wild Mans Hut.  
From the left: Chris Munn, Peggy Munn, Janette Roberts, Tony Black,  
Gerald Leather PHOTO LYNNE WHITE



remaining days. An idle afternoon now favoured the longer route via #1755 over Big Hill Range.

**Day 4:** Gerald was feeling poorly so decided he would wander down to Wild Mans Hut where he could have a fire and keep warm while waiting for our return.

We headed back up the valley to the stream that led to #1755. Easy stream travel revealed interesting rock formations including pinnacles resembling slumped meringues. We reached the upper basin after detouring round a waterfall.

When it got too gnarly, we climbed onto a shoulder of rock from where we could see the saddle and commenced a long sidle across scree. It was horrendous scree, very unstable and included a challenging rib of “weetbix”. Progress was slow and on reaching the saddle, we were in cloud with a freezing breeze. We took off on a scree run down to a stream where we shivered through a quick lunch.

We moved off as fast as cold bodies would allow into the headwaters of the Potts. The rocky streambed was easy to negotiate and we made fast progress down to the broader valley floor. Suddenly we came upon a gorge. With careful negotiation, we finally emerged onto the last stretch before

Potts Hut. It had taken 8.5 hours with the longest stretch being about 10 km down the river but we were chuffed with what had been an interesting day.

**Day 5:** After much discussion the general consensus was to climb up to Dog Range. The track ascends to a long saddle with two pretty tarns and lovely reflections of the Arrowsmith Range. A 300 m zigzag climb on a rough road brought us out onto the top of Dog Range. We stopped for lunch with a huge view of the Rangitata round to Lake Clearwater and beyond.

Heading back, some of us took a turnoff to a lookout point and fantastic view all the way up Potts Valley. We descended to the hut to find Chris had the fire going and Tony had taken off to recce the route for the next day. The hut stayed warm as the sun went down. We celebrated Lynne’s birthday with fruit cake and Chris’s whiskey; it had been a good day.

**Day 6:** We left for the crossing back to Top Hut via Stumpy Stream clad in storm gear. Tony’s route started off okay but we were soon struggling through waist high tussock and concealed spaniard. The drizzle eased but it remained cold. Eventually our high terrace met the stream and it was easy travel to the saddle. We had a quick scree descent to Stumpy Stream, then a steep drop to the Hakatere. After refueling at Top Hut we marched purposefully down to Wild Mans Hut. And there was Gerald chopping firewood. He was fine and on the previous day had scouted various options for our last day. After a cold crossing, we were thankful for the fire and a tank full of hot water for washes all round.

**Day 7:** We proceeded with our plan to cross over Pyramid and take the direct route down the other side to the car park. We followed the farm road down valley until it started to climb and at its highest point we left it to ascend Pyramid (1748 m). We had a final slippery scree sidle before cresting, then wandered along to Pyramid. A fantastic view of the full Arrowsmith Range and the huge bulk of Wild Man Hill.

Then we plunged downhill back to the road. Once we could see the high terrace above the Cameron we left the road, crossed the terrace, climbed the fence and faced the challenge of descending through matagouri to the Cameron. The first attempt failed but another spur a little further on did the trick. It was very steep, involved dodging matagouri and finally squelching through a swamp to hit the Cameron track. A short walk brought us back to the van; above the van was a much shorter, easier descent to the carpark.

It had been a most interesting trip. Although the front country is well used, the upper valleys are like a well-kept secret. There is little evidence of human presence; no tracks, footpads, cairns. It felt like true wilderness tramping experience, good navigation skills are required – all the more fun.

#### TRIP MEMBERS

Tony Black, Gerald Leather, Chris Munn, Peggy Munn (leader), Janette Roberts, Lynne White



# Table Mountain

Colin Cook

Above: Table Mountain from the north, 2018 PHOTOS: COLIN COOK

Below: Patrick descending 2018.

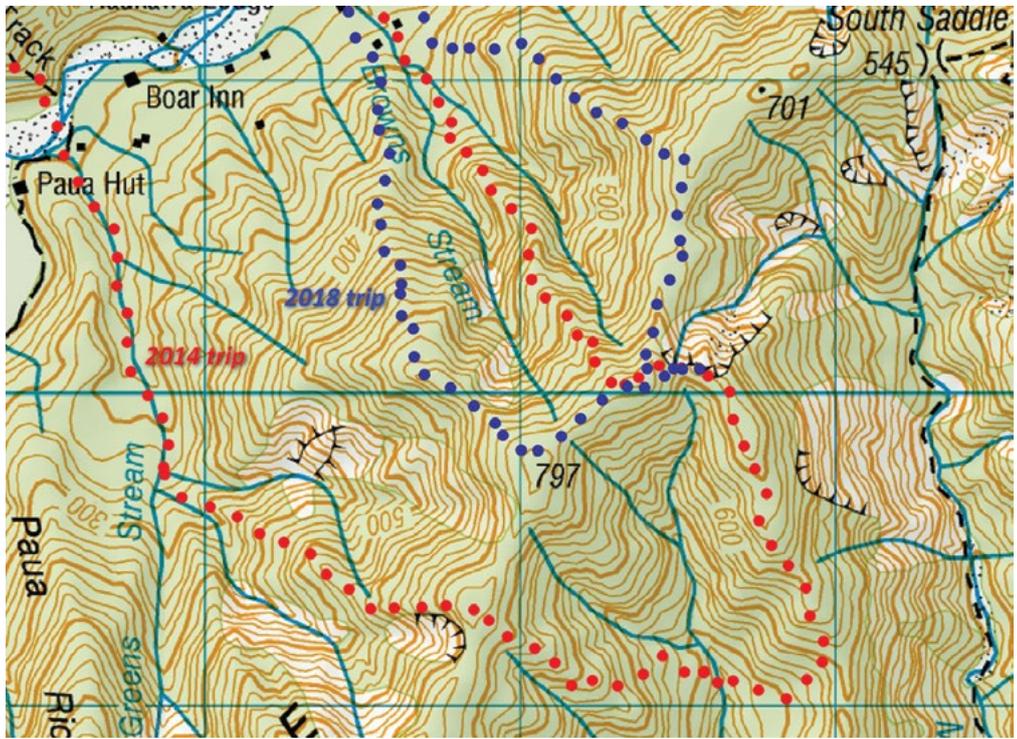


The feature some today call ‘Table Mountain’ may have formed in the January 1855 Wairarapa earthquake (estimated magnitude 8.2) which caused severe landslide damage in the southern Remutaka Range with the greatest amount of damage (in terms of estimated cubic metres of slip material) found in the valley of the Mukamuka Stream (1).

‘Table Mountain’ lies southwest of Matthews’ South Saddle on the watershed ridge dividing the Mukamuka and Tapokopoko Streams and only a couple of hundred metres east off the Remutaka main ridge (2).

There can be little doubt the ‘mountain’ has been visited by generations of trampers. My first brush with it was on a Peter Jagger-led trip in November 1998 when we crossed the South Saddle, descended the Mukamuka as far as the second side stream on the right, climbed a spur to gain the watershed ridge then sidled the feature’s steep west side to reach the main ridge and descend the spur to Browns Stream Forks.

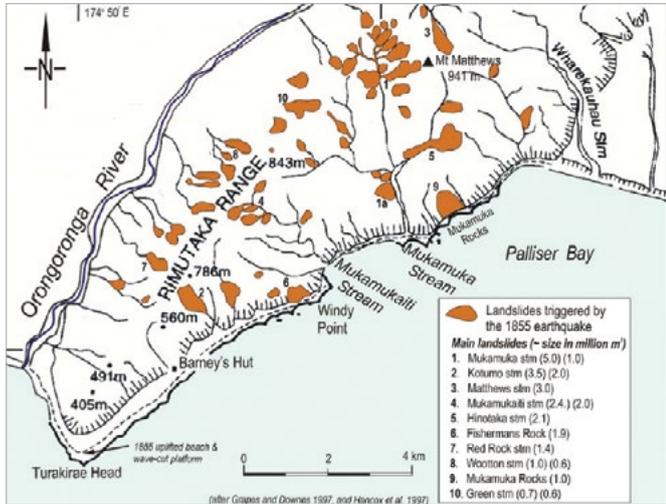
Years later David Ogilvie again drew my attention to the feature, remarking how clear and salient it was when viewed from Papatahi, from high up the East Whakanui Track, or indeed from near trap #11 in the saddle on that track, and from near the Sunny Grove end of the Whakanui Track. He



Left: Both trips annotated.  
 Below: On Table Mountain saddle, 2014. L to r: Robin Chesterfield, John Thomson, Lynne White, David Ogilvie, Warwick Wright.

used the name ‘Table Mountain’ and thought it worthy of a visit.

So, in March 2014, a TTC party approached from the south dropping first into Tapokopoko Stream via a spur fairly unique amongst all the seaward Orongorongo ridge side-spurs in bearing only tussock/grass down to about 600 m. Lunching near the stream we then gained the Mukamuka/Tapokopoko watershed ridge top and moved north towards Table Mountain, still clearly table-shaped when viewed from this side but bush covered and not so striking in appearance. We climbed to the (table) top finding it to be quite narrow and not at all like a table. Massive slips on Matthews’ west face which presumably originated in the 1855 earthquake dominated the view to the east. These slips don’t reach down to the Mukamuka valley floor but are



(1) Map showing landslides in the southern Rimitutaka Range thought to have been triggered by the 1855 Wairarapa earthquake. See Hancox, G. T. “Landslides and liquefaction effects caused by the 1855 Wairarapa earthquake: then and now.” *The 1855 Wairarapa earthquake symposium*. Vol. 150. 2005.



(2) In this photo taken by G. T. Hancox in 2005 and published in his article referenced above, the view is looking south down Mukamuka Stream with Matthews’ South Saddle in centre foreground. The Remutaka main ridge running south rises to the right from the saddle then veers left. Further along this section just off the ridge to the left Table Mountain is clearly visible. (Tapokopoko Stream enters the Mukamuka on its true right just above the far most slip.) Scars of 1855 landslides extending from ridge crests to valley bottoms are clearly evident. A photo on page 17 shows these slips in 1913.



Above: Table Mountain from the south, 2014 PHOTO: DAVID OGILVIE

Below: Valley of Tapokopoko Stream showing descent spur (with tall grass near the top), 2014.





Above: Slips on Mt Matthews, 2008.

cut off by narrow, bushed side-gorges which may account for their surprising lack of profile in tramping circles. Proceeding west from the tabletop, party members variously resorted to two, three, four and five-point techniques to cope with the brief steep and exposed descent before climbing to the main ridge and following the spur down to Browns Stream Forks.

On Anzac Day 2018 (a Wednesday) a club party again visited 'Table Mountain' this time climbing to Bump 797 on the main ridge behind Waerenga Hut, moving northeast along the ridge then sidling precariously across to 'Table Mountain' (see front cover). We lunched, fittingly, on the (table) top, again enjoying the fine views before moving back to the main ridge and east along it to return to the valley floor via Jans Track.

#### 2014 PARTY

Robin Chesterfield, Colin Cook (leader), David Ogilvie, John Thomson, Lynne White, Warwick Wright. John's trip report may be found in the *Tramper*, May, 2014

#### 2018 PARTY

Mike Arnold, Patrick Arnold, Colin Cook, Peter Crosland, Tricia French, Franz Hubmann (leader), Paul McCredie, Nina Sawicki, Sara White, Tim Workman. Paul made a video of the trip which may be viewed at <https://vimeo.com/267061488>

Below: Patrick lunching on the top.



# Northern Tararua Circuit

Warwick Wright



This trip was contingent on the availability of suitable weather, which eventuated on 18–20 March when only three of us were available. On Sunday afternoon we left Putara road end, soon crossed a swing bridge, then followed a pleasant track beside the true left of the



Above: Wayne crossing the upper Ruamahanga River

PHOTO: WARWICK WRIGHT

Top: East Peak from near West Peak PHOTO: DAVID OGILVIE

Mangatainoka River. We met two parties coming out; the only people we met. After crossing another swing bridge, we climbed steadily for almost 400 m to the junction where tracks lead north to Herepai Hut and south to Roaring Stag Lodge. After climbing for another 30 minutes we crossed a small saddle and climbed to Herepai Hut. Having the hut to ourselves gave us room to spread out and relax.

Next morning was mainly fine after a cloudy night so the scrub and tussock were wet on the climb to Herepai. After stopping to photograph the Stan Evans memorial cross, we headed west across a saddle and up Ruapae. Partly cloudy weather enabled views, mainly to the north. On the way to East Peak there was a surprising amount of up and down travel given that East Peak (1355 m) was only 76 m higher than Ruapae.

After morning tea on East Peak we turned west and dropped about 250 m to a saddle at the headwaters of Chamberlain Creek before regaining most of the height to arrive on West Peak. This section was easy to navigate as we could see West Peak throughout, but the route through the scrub was quite tough to follow. From West Peak we headed south-west along Dundas Ridge. This section was one of the highlights of the trip, offering great views to the west extending out the Tasman Sea, and east into the Chamberlain Creek catchment. However, one could easily see that this section would be challenging in bad conditions, being exposed in all directions. A week or so either side of

**Top: Warwick and Wayne scrambling over Pukemoremore (1474 m)**

PHOTO: DAVID OGILVIE

**Middle: David climbing down off Pukemoremore** PHOTO: WAYNE PERKINS

**Bottom: David descending West Peak towards Walker and Pukemoremore** PHOTO: WAYNE PERKINS

our trip two people in this area triggered their PLBs to be rescued.

Lunch was taken on Walker with a good view of Cattle Ridge as well as the way ahead along Dundas Ridge. Like the ridge between Ruapae and East Peak, there were lots of undulations just to achieve a net gain of 82 m between Walker and Pukemoremore. On the rocky scramble over Pukemoremore were glimpses of Dundas Hut, as passing cloud broke. The turnoff (1419 m) to Dundas Hut was 59 m lower than Pukemoremore, so we were disappointed to find yet another saddle between the two. The turnoff (1419 m) sign read "Dundas Hut 10 min", but it took us more than that just to reach the side track down to the hut, then another 10 minutes down to hut.

We enjoyed sitting in the late afternoon sun at the beautifully sited and recently renovated Dundas Hut. Next morning we climbed back to the marked route to begin a long descent that crossed a couple of small mounds. The route passed through low scrub and tussock allowing good views of the way ahead, but travel was quite slow because careful checking was required before placing each footstep to avoid hidden ankle traps and pot holes. We reached a stream, turned left and crossed forks to climb to a marked sidle track that led to the Ruamahanga River. At some point we lost sight of the occasional markers. Not a problem we thought, just keep traversing at a roughly constant elevation and we would eventually rejoin the track. However, we reached a point from which the river was visible but the way ahead looked dangerously steep, so we backtracked for a while to an old slip face. Descending this we found the track markers about 30 m below. Travel was then straightforward, but a lot of time had been lost!

After crossing the river there was a long, steep 600 m climb through dense low foliage to gain Cattle Ridge. Lunch was taken about two thirds the way up in the sunshine, looking across to Dundas Hut. After gaining the ridge we headed north, descending to Cattle Ridge Hut. There were deep ruts on the track to the hut, many obscured by tussock. Careful footwork avoided problems but it occurred to us that this would be tricky at night or in cloud. After inspecting the recently renovated hut and taking some refreshment we took advantage of good phone reception to contact home base before the steep descent to Roaring Stag Lodge. After another refreshment break on the verandah of the this beautifully sited hut, we commenced the attractive walk to the road end, arriving as light was fading. The long drive home was broken by a food stop at Burger King in Masterton.

#### TRIP MEMBERS

David Ogilvie (leader), Wayne Perkins, Warwick Wright



# Patterson-Evans Memorial Bridge

Although this article seems to be about the Victoria University of Wellington Tramping Club (VUWTC), many people involved with the construction of the bridge are current members of the Tararua Tramping Club. Some of the information is from Peter Jagger's book *The Chain at the Tararua Peaks and Bridges in the Tararuas from 1907*; this will be on the club website shortly.

The route from Kaitoke to Cone Hut requires crossing the Tauherenikau River. The original track was on the true right bank. A bridge crossed the river linking the Reeves and Omega tracks from 1924 to 1931. After that trampers would usually attempt to cross the river shortly before reaching Cone Hut. The Memorial Bridge was to make this an all-weather trip; it lasted a little over 10 years. When the bridge was no longer usable, a track was built down the left bank of the river and trampers usually crossed near Allaway Dickson Hut where Block XVI track started. A bridge was built near this crossing in 1993 but its foundations were undermined in 2002. The current Tauherenikau Bridge, built in 2007, is about 100 metres up from Marchant Stream.

Dave Patterson and Bryce Evans were members of the VUWTC. They perished in a storm between Hector and Field Peak on the way to Kime Hut in May 1958.

In March 1959 John Thomson, Vice-president of VUWTC, wrote to the Director of Forestry:

Dear Sir,

... The parents of those two boys have suggested that some form of memorial be erected in the Tararuas. They wish it to be for the greater safety of trampers and all those who go into the hills. Our club is keen to follow up this suggestion ... thought of building a bridge over the Tauherenikau River. ... We have investigated possible sites and think that a suitable place could be found just above Cone Hut. A bridge here, together with the one I believe the Army is to build at Totara Flats over the



Evans Patterson memorial bridge PHOTO: KERRY POPPLEWELL

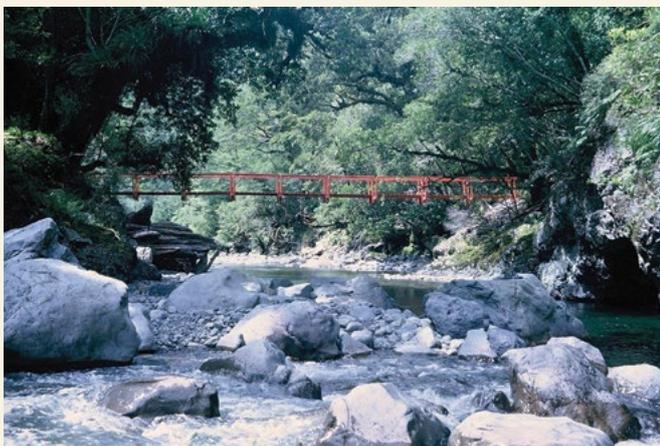
Waiohine River, will make the common Kaitoke-Totara Flats-Masterton trip one that is safe in the matter of river crossing in all weathers.

The parents of Bryce Evans and David Patterson will be glad to put forward a considerable sum of money – £200 or more. What the Club will need, then, is help in the engineering side, and if possible, help in air-dropping materials. It is here that we should be very glad of your assistance. ...

The request was favourably received. The NZFS District Ranger replied:

... Your proposals regarding the erection of a Memorial bridge over the Tauherenikau met with approval at the recently held Tararua Forest Park Advisory Committee meeting. ... Would you please submit to me your proposals regarding finance, plans and proposed building procedures. This Service would then be prepared to assist with design etc.

The Army was not in a position to construct the bridge for another 3–4 years, so VUWTC members proceeded with both design (by engineer George Caddie) and construction.



Evans Patterson memorial bridge 1960 PHOTO: DAVID OGILVIE



Bill Stephenson and Peter Barry attempting to salvage wire rope from the 1920s bridge (photographer unknown).



In November 1959 NZFS approved VUWTC's plan and granted a 50% subsidy for the cost of materials. The bridge was completed by June 1960.

George wrote in the VUWTC 50th Jubilee publication (1971) that:

The timber was delivered to Popplewell's at Naenae in the first term of 1960 and a variety of people cut, bored, painted, marked and bundled it up. Finally, in the May holidays the material was flown in and a couple of weekends in June were sufficient to get the bridge built. ...

It was a couple of years before I saw the slide of the bridge and realised it had been hung on different trees from the ones I had selected. Over the years the right bank trees, one in particular, sagged slowly but surely under the weight of the bridge. Measures to halt this sagging have occupied the club on numerous occasions since. ... In 1967 it was found to be quite usable and appeared likely to remain so if some maintenance work was carried out. This would have involved renewing hanger support bolts, painting some of the timbers and possibly completing the prop for the tree. But before any of this was done, that tree on the left bank collapsed and the bridge was in the river. It has since been attached to a new tree and hoisted into position again where may it long continue.

Bruce Popplewell recalls the process of shifting the bridge components from his parents' house to the old road end shelter hut at the base of the Puffer: three of us (Bill Stephenson, Keith McLeod and I) camped at the site for



Memorial cairn, 21 May 2011 PHOTO: COLLEEN DAVEY

several days to guard the materials until the helicopter arrived.

Bill Stephenson recalls: many of the construction efforts were carried out by Bruce taking his Bradford van (with me as a passenger) full of material, up to Wall's Whare, then providing a taxi service to others who had gone to Matarawa by railcar. That was the quick way in to the bridge site. On one occasion we tried to cross the Waiohine at Wall's. I was downstream and shortest member; we gave up when I floated. On another occasion the river was again too high, so we went up to Totara Flats to cross, carrying cement and a steel anchor. With that sort of weight, you provide a good solid anchor for the rest of the party. We reached Cone Hut just in time to continue home.

Syd Moore remembers several working parties at Bruce's parents' place, being most impressed by the organisation of the construction project, and great pride at the final outcome.

People who helped with the repair of the bridge early in 1970 and who are now TTC members included Peter Radcliffe, Ron Kum, Bruce and Kerry Popplewell, with Peter noting that repair work took almost as long as the original construction.

The bridge is shown on Tararua Forest Park NZMS 274 1st edition 1977, but not on the 2nd edition in 1978. A bronze plaque was mounted on a concreted cairn beside the bridge on the true right bank. In May 2011 Colleen Davey and Alan Wright were in a party that found remains of the bridge, including what had been the anchor point. About five metres upstream from the bridge site they found the cairn, very overgrown, but sadly the plaque was missing. Shouldn't it be replaced?

#### COMPILED BY

David Ogilvie with contributions from Bill Stephenson, Kerry and Bruce Popplewell, Syd Moore, Alan Wright, Michael Bartlett and Jenny Mason

# The Lure of Gold

Rowen Crawford



Above: Welcome Rock, looking across to the Eyre Mountains, and down to the Mataura Valley. This was a crossing and meeting place for miners, hence the tradition of a bottle of whiskey lodged beneath the Rock, which is STILL carried on today [yes it's a single malt] PHOTOS: ROWEN CRAWFORD

Below: The Mud Hut.



In 1862 in the Nokomai, James Lamb dug with his pick and shovel and sluiced 30 ounces of gold in three weeks: today's value: \$50,000!

South of Queenstown by 64 km is the hamlet of Garston. Up the Nevis road for 8 km you'll find the Southland Ski Club hut, best described as deceased, but weatherproof. At 1000 m asl the Welcome Rock-Roaring Lion track starts. Privately owned by the runholder, the O'Brien family, it traverses high above the Mataura and Nokomai valleys; bare of trees, just high rolling red tussock for the 27 km walk.

In 1898, gripped by the lure of gold, 30 Victorian men had the dream of channelling water from the Nevis, 47 km to the Roaring Lion field, and they succeeded, in 3 years! They dug and blasted, installed siphons and fluming pipes. Pay was £2 a week, enough to buy a pair of gumboots. Water flowed

**Top: The Mud Hut.  
Middle: Pipe line, flumes.  
Bottom: Old abandoned dray.**

to the works at 800 litres per second. After two companies went bankrupt, the Sew Hoy family maintained the water race for 50 years, employing six race men. No Europeans would work in those conditions, so people from south China were hired. Four huts were built into the slope where they spent their time, after having paid the £100 poll tax (for Chinese only).

Win and I started at noon from the historic ski hut on Nevis Rd, following anticlockwise the only sign we saw, the iced puddles crunching underfoot, on to Slate Hut which is new, holds two tightly, and has the traditional whisky for worthy travellers! Onward along the unmarked track, although only in snow would you lose it, past diggings and riffling evidence, until we came to a mud hut, a sod race man's hut, Chinese built and snugly inserted into the slope, with four old wood and sack bunks and a fire. It was frosty and the deer were moaning down in the Nokomai. With no sleeping bags (reduced weight for our advanced years) we maintained the fire through the night.

We set off before dawn (it was warmer moving) along the water race which was mainly intact, the track being on the top side, just like the races around Mt Blanc in France. After an hour I blacked out and fell unconscious. Win came back to find me, I recovered, and with a broken rib, we set off again for 5 hours to the road end.

The fluming pipes still stand and a long row of shovels (banjos) grace parts of the track. Lee Sum's old hut site is marked where he died one winter and not found for some time. It was a long slog along the gurgling race way until the Nevis road was reached, and then it wound uphill increasingly. The views were really great, over the Eyre Mountains and tussock for everrrrr ...

The 27 km round trip reaches an altitude of 1100 m at Welcome Rock. The track is shared with mountain bikers who travel in an anticlockwise direction. It cost us \$100 each for two days, including one night at Mud Hut. Contact: Tom and Katie O'Brien, [www.welcomerock.co.nz](http://www.welcomerock.co.nz)



# Three Wednesday Easy Medium Trips



## Carrad's Farm

6 December 2017

MICHELE DICKSON

This was the second of Hadley's EM traverses of the ridge west of Ara Harakeke. These trips were carefully planned after gaining permission to access three properties. We acknowledge the kindness of the property owners.



Top: North of Carrad's farm above the coast heading for Pukerua Bay.  
Bottom: On Carrad's farm, overlooking Plimmerton and Whitby.

PHOTOS: MICHELE DICKSON

From Plimmerton Railway Station Hadley's route took us through Motuhara Rd, The Track, the Reserve, Reserve Rd, Cluny Rd, the property of a club member's daughter, Taua Tapa Track, two corners of Airlie Rd, the bush of the second property owner, over the stream, then over the fence and into the property of the third owner. Next it was a steep gully climb to the skyline for views of the South Island, Mana and Kapiti Islands. Looking east down gullies, Plimmerton, Camborne, Mana, Pauatahanui Inlet and Whitby lay beneath us. The traverse north was over dry farmland, past steers and above a couple of little west-facing gullies with protected bush. On to Raroa Reserve and Pukerua Bay Station including the lovely little Hidden Valley concluded the short but fun trip.

### TRIP MEMBERS

Hadley Bond (leader), David Campbell, David Carnegie, Robin Chesterfield, Michele Dickson, Emily Friedlander, John Hill, Rob Joiner, Chris Leather, Christine Leighs, Jan Nye, Lynne Pomare, Penny Salmond, Bill Stephenson, Jim Sutton, Lyn Taylor, Rosemary Wilson



The group on British Peak, l to r: Hadley Bond, Paul Armstrong, Ed Campton, Joanne Gapes, Peter Reimann, Emily Friedlander, Rosemary Wilson, David Carnegie, Ray Markham, Christine Leighs, David Campbell, Daphne Dashfield, William Dashfield, Michele Dickson (leader).

PHOTO: DIANA BARNES

## British Peak

24 January 2018

MICHELE DICKSON

Providing a little variation from the Skyline Walkway in the Karori section is the traverse of the prominent ridge to the west, the highest point of which is named British Peak (375 m). The ridge lies between a branch of the main Makara Stream and the North Makara Stream, and is part of the “Otari Farm”, owned and farmed by the Pierce family. Permission is always gratefully obtained for scheduled TTC trips. One of the interesting aspects of a trip including the southern end of the ridge is a visit to the small but strikingly grand stone memorial built by Russell Pierce in memory of his parents who founded the farm. For the EM trip on this occasion, a circuit was made starting from Johnston Hill, part of the Skyline, around the ridge, over British Peak and a few tracks in Otari. Views of Makara Hill to Ohariu Bay and Valley were seen.

## Maelstrom Madness

11 April 2018

LYNNE POMARE

When it was clear that a Graces Stream trip would be inadvisable I hatched a plan called Wahine 50th Anniversary Memorial trip, roughly following Chris Horne’s route described in the 2017 Tararua Annual. After a recce on 10 April in conditions closely resembling those of 50 years ago, I was frozen to the marrow despite wearing full storm gear, so I wondered if anyone would turn up next day. How could I have doubted those trusty, gutsy TTC EM trampers?

The forecast was almost as miserable as the day before. We thirteen met inside the Airport to avoid the gale force south wind. Leaving the airport, we ran the gauntlet of a bemused line-up of taxi drivers looking for anyone who’d

managed to land. Heads down, we staggered south beside the golf course fence, uphill past the entrance to the sewage treatment plant and up steps through the south end of Kekerenga Reserve, snatching great views over the airport and environs. We watched a ferry pitching into enormous white caps.

We dropped down the enormous sand hill to Tarakena Bay then, via the Eastern Walkway, around to Oruaiti Reserve where we lunched in a bunker with zany décor created by graffiti artists. Finishing at Seatoun’s Wahine Memorial Park in horizontal hail, we remembered those lost fifty years ago, the survivors, and all who toiled to save them. Café warmup followed.



This photo of the group was taken by Paul McCredie at the south end of Oruaiti Reserve with surf churning over Barrett Reef in the background. From left: Michele Dickson, Wayne Perkins, John Thomson, Mike Crozier, Doreen Launder, Justin Kerr, Mary Perkins, Peter Smith, Lynne Pomare (leader), Trish Gardiner-Smith, Josef van de Veire, Peter Reimann.

Paul later circulated his video “Maelstrom Madness”; link: <https://vimeo.com/269535493>. It is fabulous and could be subtitled “You can’t beat Wellington, full stop”.

# Round Ruapehu in the Snow

Russell Cooke



Waihohonu Hut at night PHOTOS: JENNY MASON

We planned to travel at the start of the weekend so people who had not been on Alpine Instruction could learn some ice-axe and crampon skills. The weather didn't play ball so on Tuesday 10 July 11 of the 12 crowded into the club van and drove to Ohakune. Devon drove from Hamilton; we picked her up near the DoC office then drove up the mountain to the parking lot where the walk to Waitonga Falls begins. There was lots of snow but chains weren't needed.

By 1:10 we were walking on the Round the Mountain Track in cold rain. Signs indicated 3 hours to Mangaehuehu and as experienced trampers we thought we would beat that, but the snow and conditions meant that it took the full three hours.

A family was already in residence, with wet clothes hanging everywhere. Adding the clothes from 12 damp TTC trampers meant the hut was more like a drying room.

The forecast looked better albeit with indications of high winds at night. It looked ugly to the south in the morning but gazing east suggested that the day's tramp might not be too bad. We left in clear conditions, in ankle-deep snow through the scrubby trees, and slowly turned east and then north. This was very picturesque with the snow-dappled trees, clear sky ahead and dark clouds behind. Then we were in open country, great snow-tramping, no crampons or ice axes required, just clear skies and great views over the Desert Road and the Kaimanawas. The only gorge is that of the

Wahianoa River, a descent of 80 m and a climb of 100 m.

Then it is a gentle climb of 80 m over 2.5 km to Rangipo Hut at 1556 m. It was OK on the track, but a few steps off meant chest deep in a snow-drift, requiring much energy and a little assistance to get out. By 3.30 we were at the hut. The previous hut had plentiful bags of firewood, but unfortunately, Rangipo was being done up and the bags were full of rubbish. We managed to get a fire going. Having the fire in the middle of the shared area is great, allowing many to sit around it. The icy conditions meant trips to the



Setting out across the Desert.

toilet needed to be carefully navigated, but the major issue was the total lack of running water due to the frozen tank. Collecting snow and melting it on the stove became the major preoccupation for the late afternoon and evening.

The forecast proved to be correct with strong winds rising in the night, but fortunately these had largely gone when we left, a little later than normal as we'd allowed time for the wind to drop. The snow was thick but the weather was good as we sidled the mountain before dropping into the Whangaehu River (with signs to not linger in case of a lahar, which took time to read). The next feature is crossing Tukino Road, about 2.5 km from the valley.

From here we descended to the flat snow covered Mangatoetenui valley. We traversed this for 3 km before stopping for lunch at the bridge over the stream. The stop was pleasant with running water and plenty of sunshine. The next section was picturesque as we covered a number of gentle ridges and valleys moulded by the covering of snow. We followed the small stream and at 1100 to 1200 m the snow was thinner with scrub on the side of the track poking up brightly into the sunshine. Passing the Ohinepango Springs, which two of the party visited, we climbed out of the small valley to the new, new Waihohonu Hut at about 2.45 and indulged in the luxury of running water, solar lights, plenty of firewood and sufficient space to swing many cats. The skies cleared in the evening and we had wonderful views of the mountain. Jenny took wonderful exposures of the stars.

Next morning was clear as we left the hut at 8.45. There were only patches of snow around but due to the cold clear night there was quite a bit of ice which meant that at least one of us had a spill. The frost-heave was the biggest I have ever seen as we walked beside it.

The track proceeds up a valley for over 6 km, climbing up towards the Tama Lakes. We had lunch near the turnoff and proceeded to the Chateau arriving at 2.00 pm. We had booked a shuttle and after a little confusion (time for coffee) we were driven to Scoria Flats and re-entered snow territory. We dropped steeply for 1500 m into the Whakapapa Valley, arriving at the eponymous hut at 3.15 pm.

Once we settled in and had a brew we realised that while there was a huge amount of firewood most of it was still in large helicopter bags. Most of the remainder of the afternoon was spent emptying these bags, using a human-chain to move the wood and pack it into the wood shed. Looking down valley the sunset was particularly delightful.

We left at 8.30 next morning, climbed up to the Round the Mountain Track and headed south. We had clear skies and good visibility of the summit but the wind was cold at exposed points. Most of the ground was still snow-covered, but not as deep as on the east. This section features a series of valleys, ridges and sidles as we crossed the Matatote and Manganui-o-te-Ao Rivers (without too much difficulty), then descended the extensive staircase to Lake Surprise.

The lake surface was a mixture of ice and water with lovely reflections in the afternoon light. What surprised us, even though some of us had done the trip before, was



Crossing the Whangaehu.

the steepness of the drop to the Mangaturuturu River. This descends via a running stream and much care was needed to get down to the flat valley. The flats by the river were traversed and much to our relief the river was easily crossable. We were at the snow-surrounded hut just after three and were pleased to see extensive sacks and stacks of wood.

The next, and last morning of the trip was fine at the hut but looking to the still clear summit, wonderful but concerning lenticular clouds formed a nimbus around the mountain. It took about 30 minutes to reach the base of the cascade where we had to climb through rocks and ice. What made it particularly difficult were not these obstacles but the very strong wind funnelling downstream into our faces. Slowly but surely, we climbed the slope, but even when we reached the top members of our party still had items blown off their packs.

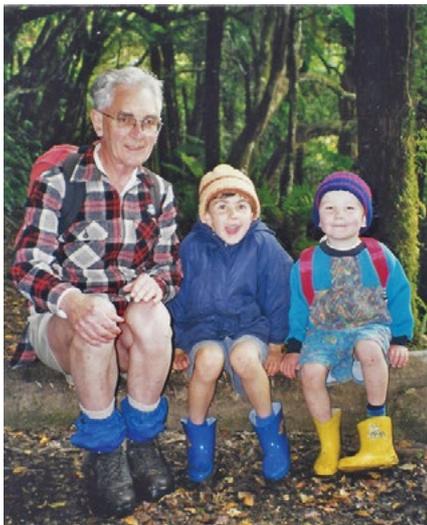
We reached Turoa Road at about 10:15, pleased to have completed the circuit. Well, not quite, as the majority of the party decided to return to the van across country from the Massey Hut; Chris and I thought we would give our older knees a break and wander slowly down the road to where the van was parked.

We reunited and descended to Ohakune for lunch, said *au revoir* to Devon and headed back to Wellington. The trip had been a success, wet weather on day one, but after that clear days through walkable snow. It made a great case for winter snow tramps.

#### TRIP MEMBERS

Lois Buckrell, Helen Chapman, Russell Cooke, John Dement, Tricia French, Gerald Leather, Jenny Mason, Peggy Munn (leader), Chris Munn, Devon Polaschek, Janette Roberts, Lynne White

# Obituaries



## Dennis Gee

1928–November 2017

Dennis was born in East London, emigrated to New Zealand in 1955, and joined the club in 1956.

Most of Dennis' tramping was in the late 1950s–early 1960s. This included doing the Haast Pass before it became a road. He would lead two-week tramping trips, once being re-supplied half-way through by air drop.

He met his wife, Marjorie, while on an Auckland Tramping Club weekend hut working bee on Mt Ruapehu. Two children (Michael and Diane) followed, and Dennis' focus was then on getting them tramping, which began as soon as the youngest, Diane, could walk.

The most memorable trips with the children were in the Travers Valley. The longest was 9 days in January 1974. For Dennis, this meant a phenomenal initial load in his mountain mule pack as the young children could carry very little. A base camp was made at the confluence of Hopeless Creek and Travers River with day trips from there. During this trip we listened to a strange bird sound for over an hour. Back home we heard the same distinctive sound on national radio as part of the birdsong recordings, announced as being the call of the North Island kokako. Presumably this may have been one of the almost extinct South Island kokako.

The Milford and Routeburn tracks followed as part of the 1974/75 Tararua Tramping Club Christmas Family Trip. Dennis was good at passing on tramping

wisdom, such as when to turn back in bad weather, or stay put for a day rather than crossing a swollen river or attempting to go over a pass in poor conditions.

Marjorie was instrumental in getting the TTC mid-week day trips started, and Dennis and Marjorie were active participants on the Wednesday trips for many years until they moved to the Kapiti Coast eight years ago. Knee problems reduced Dennis' overnight tramping activities prematurely. Day trips with grandchildren were the last trips he made in the bush.

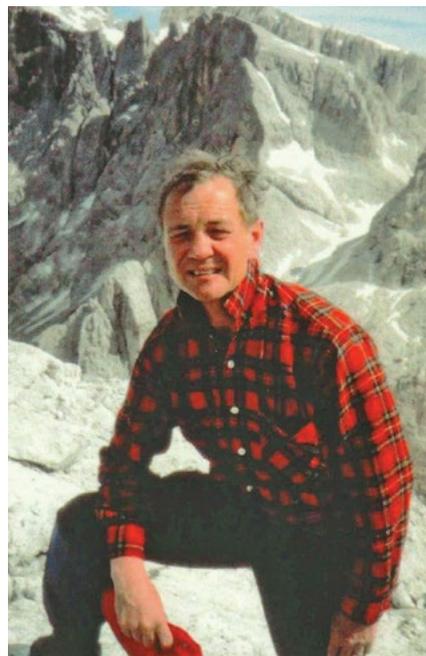
**By his son and daughter: Michael Gee and Diane Carter.**

## Ken Mosley

July 1931–June 2018

Ken was born in Liverpool, England. He was evacuated aged eight to a family in north Wales as Liverpool was the target of much bombing during WWII, spending many years away from his family. While in Wales he received the leg injury which affected him for the rest of his life.

When he returned home his father built him a bike and he was soon enjoying cycling holidays throughout Britain and Europe. He joined the YHA which led to more adventures in the hills and a social life with weekend dances. Fortunately, his leg injuries didn't seem to hamper these activities.



After school Ken took an engineering apprenticeship at a nuclear power plant near Liverpool. He won a scholarship to study full time, gaining a doctorate in engineering.

During a hiking holiday in Austria Ken met Hilde and her father, George, also dedicated hikers and mountaineers. They spent many holidays in the mountains together. Their friendship developed and they married in 1972.

Ken, eager to develop his engineering career, applied for jobs overseas. He gained a position with DSIR and moved to Silverstream. They missed the mountains of Europe and Britain so often travelled back for hiking holidays with friends and Hilde's father.

Ken joined the TTC in 1994. He was a keen photographer and the club's photographic competitions encouraged this interest.

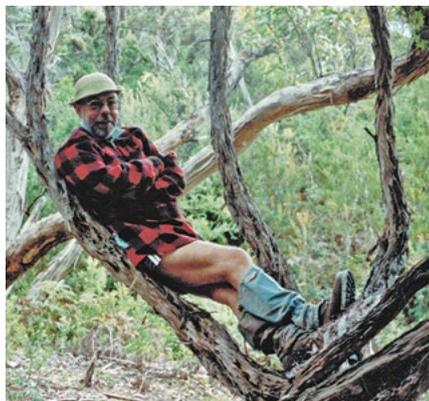
I met Ken in 1997 on an Easter trip led by Warwick Hill to Granity Pass, Kahurangi National Park. We tramped along the Lookout Range, up Bulmer Creek to Lake Bulmer, through Poverty Basin and back to Granity Pass. Ken's leg slowed his progress but he was determined and managed some tricky tramping on that route. Around the evening camp fires there would be a singsong. Ken had a particularly good voice as did Stuart Hudson so between us we produced a loud chorus under the stars.

My next contact with Ken was at the Tuesday club nights. He made the effort to get there despite his progressing difficulty walking. He used public transport so I would give him a lift on his return journey to Wellington Station or Lower Hutt where he caught a bus or taxi for the rest of his journey to Silverstream. On these journeys we would enjoy chatting about films he had seen, his great love of cycling and the singing lessons he enjoyed on Tuesday afternoon, en route to club meetings.

Sometimes I would see him with Hilde at their favourite haunt, the Lighthouse Cinema in Petone. Often, while enjoying a cup of tea Ken would be writing poetry. He was working towards publishing a book.

**Julia Fraser**





## Gerald Jones

25 December 1932–  
4 October 2018

Gerald was born in the south of England. After becoming an accountant, he set off on a world tour. After returning home he moved to Australia, then deciding New Zealand seemed more attractive. He settled in Wellington, working as an accountant in public and private organisations, finally on his own.

Gerald joined the TTC in 1975. From 1982–84 he served as treasurer, then on the general committee for another two years. In 1984 he became auditor for Wellington Association of Mountain Clubs, then treasurer from 1989 to 2003 when WAMC wound up. Gerald was the rock that ensured the process was as tidy as possible. He conscientiously distributed excess funds as directed.

Gerald participated in many club trips. On the 1987/8 Christmas Meet of 60 club members in the Rees-Dart area, he led the easy group. After months of planning, the trip was on. As we left the clubrooms after our last pre-tramp meeting Gerald commented “This group has completely reorganised my plans.” Not surprising: his party of 8 included mostly strong-minded older trampers with 100s of years of experience amongst them. He accepted it with his usual good humour.

Gerald traveled overseas to visit family and friends and for tramping. His tramps included a trek in the Garhwal Himalayas in India, a month-long trip to Tasmania which included a 6-day Table Mountain to Lake St Clair tramp and an 8-day guided walk along the South Coast, both with club friends. He walked parts of the Appalachian Trail where his friendly nature made meeting others easy. He was preparing to go to the Chatham Islands this December.

Gerald also helped with maintenance on club huts, particularly Waerenga where he often saw the New Year in with friends. His woodworking skills were a great asset. The construction and

swinging of the new door at Cone Hut are evidence of his skills, as was his coffin, which he made in his basement.

Gerald belonged to a Brooklyn walking group. One feature of their walks was the collection of rubbish along the way. He was a great walker, often seen in the city wearing his faded red parka, or in very wet weather, his red/black Oringi parka and leggings.

SeniorNet was an important part of his life in retirement, both as a tutor and in the organisation.

Gerald had a quiet, humorous way and enjoyed philosophising. He had an enquiring mind, always trying new things, especially with his computer. He installed solar panels but found selling excess to the national grid was not as lucrative as expected. He encouraged others to carry through their ideas too. He helped start a support group for older folk made redundant.

**Compiled by Kath Kerr with input from Michael Bartlett, Kath Offer, Peter Smith and others.**

## Jan Nye

On 22 September Jan began a much-anticipated trek in the mountains of Ladakh, the ‘Land of the High Passes’, described as “among the most stunning parts of the Indian Himalayas”. On 6 October, after tramping and biking through spectacular scenery, reaching altitudes over 5500 m, she died high in the mountains.

Jan joined the TTC six years ago and soon became a dedicated trumper, organising her work into a four-day week to be available for Wednesday tramping. As a regular member of the Wednesday medium groups she became well known for her gung-ho enthusiasm, determination and cheerfulness in the most trying conditions. She pushed herself, not daunted by the tumbles, cuts and grazes which are part and parcel of the toughest tramps. But Jan was also supportive and encouraging for those who were finding the going tough, a trait that was a feature of the rest of her life.

Jan’s memorial on 25 October was well attended by her tramping mates. The words used by people representing many aspects of her life were remarkably consistent. They spoke of a person who was loyal, generous and kind; compassionate and caring; loud and funny; vivacious and vibrant; pushing the boundaries! One friend said “things were always more fun when you were around”.

Jan threw herself into the TTC, leading trips which were super-organised, a good challenge and fun. Her most recent



PHOTO: ALAN KNOWLES

bit of fun was when she led a trip into the Belmont hills in June, the day Bill Wheeler turned 80. At lunchtime, out of her pack came a cake, green bow tie with big white spots, balloons and party poppers to really make Bill’s day.

For a number of years Jan led the social committee. As a TTC friend said, “things always ran more smoothly when you called the shots, organised the quiz night, the photo competition (with Rob’s expert help), compiled our phone list, or coordinated events. Your influence on general committee was eagerly awaited, and your involvement in the planning of our centennial next year has been so very much appreciated. You emailed minutes the very day you left for India and sent a suggestion for a trip on the next fixture card when you got there.”

Many of us say Jan died as she lived, having an adventure, doing something she loved, having fun, and rather dramatically. We have been told that she died in a “stunningly beautiful” place, and a Buddhist puja ceremony was held for her at a picturesque monastery. This seems right.

Life won’t be the same without Jan and neither will the TTC. Our thoughts are with Rob, Jane and Amy, and Jan’s extended family.

**Chris Leather**

## Alison Handley

20 June 1952–  
21 October 2018

Alison’s life was full of friendship, laughter, learning, kindness and challenges. She enjoyed a happy childhood on the family farm at Waitotara.

Alison completed a BA at Victoria University and later went to Teachers College. She spent two years working for the OECD in Paris, completed a



Master of Public Policy, had many roles in government departments, one of her most enjoyable as senior policy advisor for the Ministry for the Environment. She continued her love of learning by completing Boatmaster, Coastal Medic, Ocean Medic, Ham radio licence and Coastguard diesel engine maintenance courses.

Alison joined the TTC in 1993: "I'd already been tramping with friends but was keen to go further afield and tackle some "grown up" tramps." Within 4-5 years Alison completed Alpine Instruction, climbed a couple of peaks and completed three 7-8 days tramps.

I met Alison on the social committee, for Alison the start of several years of committee involvement, and President from 1999 to 2002. Her people, organisational and strategic skills were a great asset. Alison led several trips of which I have wonderful memories, and getting fit for our Easter and Christmas trips. The Queen's Birthday weekend Richmond Range/Pelorous River trip; the Goat Stream spur recce and finding ourselves temporarily lost with limited daylight (Alison was President at the time); the well organised Taranaki lodge trip where 20 of us meandered along the Whitecliffs Walkway (see *Tararua 2005/2006*); and finishing a day trip with a swim in the Waiohine River and impromptu picnic dinner with billy tea.

Alison worked in the community to make life better for the disadvantaged, beginning in the 1970s with the construction of a UK style adventure playground in Newtown; in the 1980s being involved in a group to improve boarding house accommodation; then in the 1990s on the organising committee for the Downtown Community Ministry book fair. Alison's enthusiasm brushed off on her friends with several becoming regular book sorters.

A new chapter in Alison's life commenced when she met Ron Lovell, a keen sailor. They were married in a beautiful garden on a hot Wairarapa day. They did many trips together including a sailing trip around the Pacific Islands. They moved to Mana, near the sailing club and the train station, with a productive garden and beautiful sea views. Alison loved spending time with the grandchildren.

At Alison's farewell, her friend Maria described how Alison had many circles of friends and loved joining them together to enjoy Arts Festival shows, plays, movies and parties.

I loved Alison's positive outlook, dry sense of humour, her willingness to help others and I am richer for having known her. I will miss her not only as a dear friend but as someone who brought much joy and love to Ron and their wider families.

**Vivienne Healey**

## Janet Mary McMenamin

1947-22 October 2018

Janet came to tramping later in life. Having joined Bob in what proved to be a 30-year tempestuous, but loving partnership, she had little choice but to take up this vigorous activity.

Janet joined the club in February 1998. As a born again trumper, already in her forties, it was not an easy introduction. I remember an occasion in her early tramping days on a trip around Mt Ruapehu, where she decided that enough was enough for that day. The



Mangaturuturu Hut was another two hours away, the weather inclement, but reason would not prevail. I had learned that Janet was a determined, and, may I say, a strong-willed person, and not always open to reasoned argument.

With this in mind, I unpacked my emergency tent fly, pointed to some nearby scrub and indicated that I would look forward to seeing her for breakfast at the hut the next morning. My bluff worked and after lightening her pack a little, drying some tears and a bribe of a night at The Chateau, we trudged on.

This led to many enjoyable tramping trips, with all the Great Walks covered a number of times. Amongst her favourite multi-day tramps were the Leslie, Karamea circuit; Harpers Pass, Rees, Dart circuit; Waiau Pass and Travers Saddle circuit. Janet was a regular on Sunday trips and enjoyed leading the City to the Sea trip over a number of years. She was always ready to help others and to pass on her newly found skills.

Her hard-won tramping experience led to many enjoyable long-distance walks in Europe on an annual basis. Amongst these was a memorable one across Switzerland from Chur to Montreux, comprising 21 days traversing fifteen 1200 m plus passes.

Another was our recent tour de Mont Blanc, which traverses three countries with much up and down effort. A further tramp was along the E5 long distance path from Konstanz in Southern Germany through Austria, the Dolomites to Verona in Italy; a distance of some 630 km over 33 days. These European tramps were often self-guided, as we found the guided variety were too tame. After all, anyone used to the Tararuas is capable of tramping anywhere in the world! Over the last few years we also experienced

the Kungsleden (King's Trail), a hiking trail in northern Sweden which runs from a starting point 300 km north of the Arctic Circle, the Stevenson's Way in France and treks in Albania and Montenegro. Sadly, our planned tramps in Norway, England and Andorra for this year did not eventuate, as Janet's life was taken by an aggressive cancer over a short three months.

**Bob Cijffers**



Dinner at Rangipo Hut (see page 36) PHOTO: JENNY MASON



What shall we do next? Planning session at Top Hut. From left: Peggy Munn, Lynne White, Chris Munn, Janette Roberts (see page 22)  
PHOTO: TONY BLACK



Whakatikei River. Top, l to r: Franz Hubmann, Colin Cook, Peggy Munn, Tricia French, Sieny Pollard, Middle: Peter Morten, Susan Guscott, David McNabb. And Robin Chesterfield checking the depth of the pool PHOTO: JENNY MASON

