

HERETAUNGA TRAMPING CLUB (INC.).

"POHOKURA".

BULLETIN NO.61

AUGUST 1952

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ANNUAL MEETING OF THE F. M. C., 1952

Report on non-fatal Accident on Mt. Elie du Beaumont,
August 27th, 1951.

Report on non-fatal Accident - Bealey Glacier,
21st October, 1951.

Report of Accident sub-committee of the Executive of the
F.M.C. concerning the death of J.O'Reilly, Mt. Carrington,
January 4th, 1952

Annual Meeting of the F.M.C., 1952

Owing to power cuts the meeting opened in the flickering light of three candles interspersed by the flash-bulbs of a stray press photographer. As is usually the case the formal agenda was only a part of the meeting and a good many interesting matters came out in the informal discussion.

In both ways there was a good deal about the advisability of circulating findings in the case of non-fatal rescues and searches. There are still snags in the operation of S.A.R., and the same sort of difficulties crop up that we have met with in the past. The general opinion was that open criticism by clubs of the other organizations involved wouldn't be helpful.

Mr Brockett of the Tamaki T.C. brought forward their suggestion for the setting aside of wilderness areas and the limitation of huts and tracks. There was some criticism, but quite a body of support and the F.M.C. have been asked to

discuss making wilderness areas a matter of policy.

The safety talks broadcast last Christmas were generally approved and the Broadcasting Service are enthusiastic about them. It is proposed that they should be developed on a wider basis, to cover more tramping interests, on a district as well as a national basis, so club members had better start working out their scripts.

The meeting was noteworthy for the wide representation covered by the delegates present, and for the number of nominations for the committee, which made the choice of candidates extremely difficult. In the upshot there were three changes from last year's executive, a Nelson representative (B.C. Moss) coming on for the first time, while Geoff. Wilson (Auckland) and myself returned to the committee after an absence. There was a good deal of informal discussion about the need to know more about the qualifications of candidates. In particular fuller representation of the Deerstalkers' Association should be considered by delegates next year, otherwise the executive gives a fair cover both of interests and of districts.

A proportion of meetings will continue to be held in Christchurch in spite of the slim financial resources of the Federation. There was general agreement that the maintenance of contact with the South Island clubs was an important factor. A further financial hurdle is the necessity of reprinting Safety in the Mountains, as the big increase of membership (now approaching 10,000) with the affiliation of the Deerstalkers' Association has upset the calculations upon which the 3rd edition was published. Delegates were unanimous that clubs should be called on for the maximum levy (i.e., with subscription, 6d per member).

N. L. ELDER.

The constitution was altered to include the position of Patron and Mr A.P. Harper was unanimously elected first Patron.

Other officers were elected as follows:-

<u>President.</u>	B.D.A. Greig	Wellington
<u>Vice-Presidents.</u>	A.D. Mead	Auckland
	T.R. Newth	Christchurch
	H.J. Stevenson	Oamaru
	N.M. Thomson	Levin
<u>Hon. Secretary.</u>	R.C. Jefferys	Wellington
<u>Hon. Treasurer.</u>	M.M. Davidson	Wellington

<u>Hon. Auditor.</u>	C. McAllister FPANZ	Wellington
<u>Committee.</u>	L.D. Bridge	Wellington
	R.D. Dick	Christchurch
	N.L. Elder	Hastings
	G. Harrow	Christchurch
	A.H. Hines	Wellington
	B.C. Moss	Nelson
	F. Newmarch	Wellington
	R. Syme	Hawera
	G.B. Wilson	Auckland

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REPORT ON NON-FATAL ACCIDENT ON MT. ELIE DU BEAUMONT, AUGUST
27th 1951.

So seldom does anyone in a party of two fall a rope's length into a crevasse and survive to tell the tale that the following account by one who did so is published as a warning.

"We left de la Beche hut on ski for Mt Elie de Beaumont. at 4.30 a.m. on August 27th. The snow was in good skiing condition until the lower icefall on the Anna Glacier was reached. Here a layer of gritty snow over crust made the surface unsuitable for seal skins. We stopped at about 8,800 feet under a large crevasse which ran from the rock wall of Mt Walter across the icefall to a steep snow slope. As this slope ended in an ice wall we decided to remove our skis and put on the rope. I walked about 100 feet from the break to where the snow appeared uniform and tested with my ice axe. It went to the head in snow, so driving my axe well uphill I made a long step over what I judged to be the weakest spot. The snow collapsed around me and the rope cut along the edge of the crevasse until held. I fell about thirty feet.

The crevasse was very wide and deep. The weight of my skis and pack made me hang head downwards. I managed to rid myself of the skis and pack and righted myself.

After some difficulty I managed to cut a step or two in the wall of the crevasse. Because of a large overhanging cornice I could not climb directly upwards in the line of the rope. The rope was embedded in the overhanging snow and my companion on the surface had difficulty in getting it free and into a position clear of the overhang. Once this had been accomplished I was able to cut steps in firm ice to the top of a slab which gave access to the surface. Two hours after the fall I was out."

SUMMARY: Ski mountaineering in the high alps in winter is an undertaking far beyond the capabilities of the average climber

or skier. It combines the difficulties of high climbing under winter snow conditions with the short hours of daylight and extremely low temperatures, plus all the attendant risk of injury by ski-ing on steep unfamiliar slopes with varving snow surfaces.

The party should consist of at least three members to allow one to go for assistance should any of the party be injured. This is most important where ski is being used. An injured person cannot be expected to live for long in wintertime even with a simple fracture unless constant care and attention can be administered. Clothing and equipment must be of the very best.

The party climbed on ski in a heavily crevassed area to a height of 8,800 feet unroped. At this stage their ski-ing ability was such that they could not handle the conditions and at this point a retreat should have been made. However, the party removed their skis, fortunately put on the rope and proceeded with the climb afoot. Large crevasses do not fill up in the winter, they just bridge over. The lighter and dryer the powder snow, the greater span it will bridge. A person who has his weight distributed over a relatively large area by skis has a much better chance of staying on the surface than the person on foot.

It was now only a matter of time before the leader of this party would break through. They did in fact only cover the short distance of thirty yards. They approached a suspected area with the rope running parallel to instead of at right angles to the line of the crevasse, with the result that when the "break through occurred, instead of going only shoulder depth or at the most a few feet, the leader finished up by dangling head downward on the end of thirty feet of rope. It was most fortunate that the shape of the crevasse permitted the cutting of steps up to the surface again. Had the sides been perpendicular and parallel with the overhanging cornices of a broken bridge a fatality would have resulted. Even prussik slings and the knowledge of how to use them would have been of no avail because the party was using a nylon rope. Prussik slings will not grip a nylon surface. Nylon is very strong, light and handles well under all conditions but is not suitable for a two person party operating alone.

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REPORT ON NON-FATAL ACCIDENT - BEALEY GLACIER, 21st OCTOBER 1951

The following account of an avalanche involving a party on the Bealey Glacier fortunately without fatal results is detailed as an example of the dangers inherent in snow followed by warm rain as a fruitful source of wet snow avalanches.

On the Sunday of Labour weekend 1951 one member of a party of six was caught by an avalanche in a small couloir near the bottom of the Bealey Glacier.

WEATHER : The preceding week had been nor' westerly turning to snow on the Friday night, about 6 inches falling at Arthur's Pass. Since the Saturday morning the weather had been Easterly with low cloud and frequent showers. At the time of the accident these had cleared apart from occasional light drizzle. The surface snow was disappearing fast.

AVALANCHE: The party was ascending the glacier, intending to practise step-cutting, belaying etc. Just above the lowest ice-patch was a couloir of height about 100', slope 30° (possibly less), width 10 to 15 yards. The party began to ascend this (unroped), and was spread over about 30 yards. The rearguard had just reached the foot of the couloir when an avalanche occurred. This appeared to be a wet snow avalanche. The front two members of the party were near the top of the couloir: one turned and ran, succeeding in reaching the bottom before the avalanche - the other made for the rock wall at the side, and was wedged into a slight angle in the rock at shoulder depth.

EXHUMATION: This took about an hour and a half, during which several further falls occurred in the basin above, but none came down the couloir. All the work had to be done with ice axes from above the victim, though he accomplished much of it. He was in shorts. On removal he managed to walk to the road, and was taken by car to Arthur's Pass, where he was treated for shock. His main injuries were snowburn of one arm and one leg.

ASSISTANCE: A runner was sent back, who met another party coming in. They arrived about 5 minutes before the victim was freed. A member of that party returned to Arthur's Pass to commandeer a car and rescue equipment, which was too late to be of use. Thanks are however due to those who organised it.

CONCLUSIONS: Although the party had seen no debris, other parties in the area later reported having heard or seen avalanches in the locality the day before. Considering the weather the Bealey Slide was not a good place to be with an inexperienced party.

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REPORT OF ACCIDENT SUB-COMMITTEE OF EXECUTIVE OF F.M.C.
CONCERNING THE DEATH OF J. O'REILLY, MT. CARRINGTON?
JANUARY 4th 1952.

This accident concerned one of a climbing party of two, the leader being an active and experienced member of a tramping club and O'REILLY although on his first climb in the Alps, an active

tramper.

The party appeared to have been reasonably well equipped when it left CARRINGTON HUT to proceed up the WAIMAKARIRI river with the intention of climbing MT. CARRINGTON. The party roped up about 400 ft above the river and continued climbing until 1120 am when deteriorating weather caused the party wisely, to abandon the climb. The party remained roped until about 200 ft above the river on the return journey. At this stage the party proceeded unroped to descend to a ledge running across the top of a low bluff above the river. In the course of descent, O'REILLY, whilst temporarily out of sight of his companion, apparently slipped and fell over the bluff to the final easy slope running down to the river where he died. Everything possible was done for him by his climbing companion and later by the leader of the party.

The manner in which O'REILLY lost his footing will never be known but the accident lends force once more to the rule that the rope should never be taken off while the possibility of a slip remains, if that slip should result in an accident. It must be further stressed that the possibility of a slip is likely to be greater at the end of a climb, in consequence of this the rope will often be worn on the return journey well below the spot where it was put on during the ascent.

When a party is climbing unroped, it is a wise precaution when a short harder pitch is encountered, for the party to close up, thus securing the benefit of mutual assistance should this be required. "Backing up" is the essence of team work in climbing.

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CLUB EVENINGS.

The Social Committee have been putting in some hard work which has resulted in a varied and interesting programme.

- 24/4/52: Coloured slides of the Hermitage and surrounding district taken by Muriel; also slides of mountain flowers taken by Tony Druce.
- 3/5/52: A talk on Devon by Jim Gibbs.
- 22/5/52: Exhibition of square dancing.
- 19/6/52: A talk on wapiti hunting by Mr. Jack Hall of the Deerstalkers' Assn.
- 31/7/52: A talk by Miss Hogan on a "Trek through Sikkin", and coloured films shown by Miss Mardon of their work at the orphanage in Kalimpong.

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CLUB TENTS: The Club has acquired two three-man tents at a total cost of £9.12.0.

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No. 426. WAIKAMAKA - KAWHATAU - HIKURANGI. (Easter). April 11-14th.

A good party of fifteen left McCulloch's Mill at 11.20 am. heading for the Waikamaka Hut. An hour's steady tramping took us to the forks where we boiled up and had lunch. The weather was beautiful and quite hot. 1.10 pm. saw us on our way with our immediate goal, the Waipawa Saddle, in view and looking just a stone's throw away. This of course didn't fool the older members, but some of the younger ones were surprised at the amount of "sweat" they lost before they stood on the Saddle (4353'). Here we met and had a chat with members of the Wellington Tramping and Mountaineering Club, who were heading for Howlett's via Tussock Creek. A sharp wind was blowing in from the west and we did not like the look of the weather. We arrived in dribs and drabs at the Waikamaka hut, but all were in by 3.45.

Some of the tents were pitched and a few of the boys slept outside, but most of us made use of the hut. The big party made cooking a slow job in the morning, but we managed to get away at 9. The weather was overcast and not at all promising for the coming night, which was to be spent under canvas.

Our purpose this day was to tramp via Rangi Saddle, Rangi Creek and the Kawhatau to Trig Creek, establish a camp somewhere there and then climb Mangaweka (5687'). We arrived at the saddle at 10.30 and were disheartened at the sight of the mist closing in and the feel of the sharp northwesterly wind. We dropped down into Rangi Creek, arriving at 11 am. We boiled up and most of the party had lunch. At last we managed to get the party moving again with the weather showing signs of breaking. 12.45 saw us at the Kawhatau and another 15 minutes at the junction of Iron Peg Creek.

Here there was a beautiful camp site, so we unloaded the tents etc.. Seven of the party stayed and set up camp while the rest of us set off for Mangaweka. Taking Trig Creek we followed it almost to the source and then took a spur and arrived on top at 3 pm. Four then turned back for camp while four of us headed for Hikurangi J. (5652'). Two of this party reached the trig while the other two stopped to shoot and skin deer. The weather had once again deteriorated and looking towards Hawkes Bay we all predicted a grim night. With the four of us together again and mist sweeping across the tops driven by a cold easterly, we decided to drop down an unnamed creek. After negotiating a waterfall we arrived in the river and followed it up to camp, arriving just at dark.

During the night the weather cleared and clouded over alternately, but except for a few drops we had no rain and finally woke up in the morning to be greeted by Jack Frost. 8.30 saw us on our way, eight returning the way we came, arriving at the hut at 2.30 pm. after a very easy day. The other seven of us tried a new route straight up and over the Mokai Patea Ridge. We climbed almost straight up in dense scrub, finally reaching the top to be rewarded by a grand panorama of peaks and also the sight of a nice low saddle between us and the Mokai Patea instead of a ridge as shown on the map. There was nothing for it but to make the best of it, so off we went making as much use of the deer tracks as possible. We finally reached the saddle after crashing through acres of leatherwood. Alf and Jim set off with the billy and came back with some water so we boiled up and had lunch at 1 pm. Wasting no time we set off and after climbing through scrub and leatherwood reached the top of the Mokai Patea Ridge at last and were very

pleased to see the good old Waikamaka Hut. We dropped down on to a shingle slide and finally arrived at the hut at 4.20, minus many pieces of skin. A hard day, and quite an enjoyable one, but I don't recommend our route.

On Monday, eleven of the party left at 8.30 making for the road via '67', '66', '65', Armstrong Saddle and Shut Eye Shack. The other four went back to the road through the Waipawa Saddle and down the Waipawa River. Those of us who went around the tops crossed the Waikamaka Stream at the hut and climbed up the spur on to '67'. There was a keen wind blowing from the west and parkas were donned in a hurry. We were on top of '67' at 9.45, and set off for '66' at 10 am. An easy half hour saw us on top of '66' (5650'), to be truly rewarded by a magnificent view. There wasn't a cloud in the sky and we all had a good look at our Rushine Ranges. Hawkes Bay was also very clear; however a cold westerly wind soon had us moving and we arrived at Armstrong's Saddle at 12.15. There is quite a large tarn in the saddle, so we decided that this was the place for lunch and set to.

It was 1.20 before everybody was satisfied and packed up ready to go, so we set off at quite a brisk pace along the ridge to Shut Eye Shack, arriving there at 2.5. We stopped just long enough for a photograph or two and set off for the road. Although the track was not very clear we had very little trouble following it and eventually reached the road at 3.45, where we waited an hour while some of our members rendered assistance to the Wellington Tramping and Mountaineering Club whose transport had become bogged. A good trip, enjoyed by all.

No. in party, 15.

Leader, Bob Woon.

Kath Elder, Helen Hill, Pat Bolt, Pam Dyson, E. Ansell, Alf Dixon, Graham Crooby, Ian Berry, Brian Moore, Jim Gibbs, Vic Aycock, Colin Coates, Peter Pattullo, Dick Burton.

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No. 427.

WHITTLE'S - HOT SPRINGS.

(nzac week-end.) April 25-27th.

In spite of a really nasty weather report eight of us assembled at Holt's intending to spend the week-end in the Northern Kawokas. We decided that we would head for Whittle's, go over the Black Birch and perhaps camp in the Makahu saddle. From there we would make for Trig J and then North in an endeavour to reach Venison Top and look for another way home.

We arrived at Whittle's rather damp, to find the Black Birch covered in thick mist - definitely not the place for us, so we decided to head for Cook's Cottage. After finding our way through a maze of bulldozed roads we finally arrived on the banks of the Makahu River with the cottage just over the other side. The cottage was occupied by a couple of chaps who were logging some pine trees just behind. One of these put us on to the right track for the Hot Springs, so away we went with Hughie doing his best to drown us. We followed a very clear track across three valleys and three saddles to find ourselves on the banks of the Mohaka. We continued on our way till the smell of sulphur told us that we were nearing our goal, and at last we found the spring. Its warm water was rather intriguing after the cold rain that Hughie had been sending down for so long, and we played around here for about half an hour.

It was now getting late, so we hunted around for a camp site and finally found one (or should I say we just camped) right on the edge of the river. Everything was wet and the rain was still pouring down as we pitched our tents. Stew was cooked and eaten in the rain, after which everybody climbed into the sack, thankful that at least something was dry.

It was still raining the next morning so no one got up early. After breakfast we headed back, fully intending to sleep in Hastings that night. However, before we reached the truck the sun was shining so we decided to camp beside the truck for the night. Once again our plans were changed, when the occupants of Cook's Cottage told us that they were moving out and we could spend the night inside if we wished. All but two of the party made use of the hut.

The following morning four of us made an early start up the Makahu intending to have a look at the Kaweka Flats. The stream was up and a little dirty, but there was nothing formidable about it and we made good time. About 11.20 we arrived at the junction of the two main streams and took the right hand one. Ten minutes later we came to a waterfall and climbed up and round it. There was a big deep pool just above it. We went on to the top of the ridge hoping to get a view of the Kawekas, but unfortunately mist and low cloud obscured everything. We turned back, lunched at the forks, and headed for the truck, which we reached about 3 pm. We were back in Hastings by 7 o'clock.

No. in party: 8.

Leader, Bob Woon.

Helen Hill, E. Ansell, Graham Grooby, Peter Smith, Ian Berry, Dick Burton, Derek Conway,

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No. 428.

KAHURANAKI.

May 11th.

By 7.15 eight had turned up at Holt's and we were away for the concrete bridge on the Elsthorpe Road, a little beyond Horseshoe Bend. The weather was good with a cool breeze. We arrived at the bridge at 8 am. and proceeded up a bulldozed track for about half a mile, then out on to open grass country and sidled along the main ridge leading to Kahuranaki. We arrived at the foot at about 10 o'clock. We climbed Kahuranaki by the extreme right hand spur, reaching the summit at about 10.30. A cold S.W. wind had sprung up which made things rather uncomfortable on top. After deciding against continuing to Silver Ridge we returned to the basin at the top for water from a cattle trough and so to lunch on the Hastings side of the summit. There was a really good view from this spot, Mahi Peninsula, Tarapouui, the Kawekas and most of the Ruahines were very clear.

By 12.30 clouds were approaching from the S.W. and, thinking lower altitudes were advisable, we decided on a search for the limestone caves reputedly on Kahuranaki. We scoured two creeks for the caves with no result so returned to the truck and went further on along the Elsthorpe Road and asked at a farm whether or no there were any caves in the area. A rather hazy idea that they were somewhere on the hills produced very little satisfaction, so we turned round and started back, asking on the way at a second farm with no better result. By this time the sun was going down,

so we decided on the homeward trek, arriving in Hastings at 5.30 pm.

No. in party, 8.

Leader, Jim Gibbs.

Doris Torbett, Pat Williams, Don Rowe (T.T.C.), Ian Berry, Graham Grooby, Brian Moore, Les Moore..

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No. 429.

KIWI - KAWEKA.

May 24th-25th.

There was snow on the ranges and even a light fall as we were crossing the Blowhard - the first we had been in for a year. After a quick change we left the truck at 11 am. and headed for the Smith-Russell track. From the roadhead to Kiwi Hut along the new track the time was three hours. Just below Clem's rock and among the fuschia trees, we had a boil up. Water was gathered by drips into a mug from a nearly dry creek. From the boil up site to the tops is a hell of a drag. At odd times on the way up this particular part of the track a hoarse croak would tell the next in line to keep his boot out of his ** eye. On the way up from Clem's rock we were in the snow. The beech trees were a pretty sight and the photographers started recording the trip from here. Deer tracks were plentiful and freshly made.

Kiwi Hut was in excellent order and we soon thawed out over a fire. Some spent a cold night in the bags but others snored through in pence. Up with the lark and a fire already going strong, thanks to one cold, stern person. We left the hut with a shudder at 8.30 am. The visibility was exceedingly good. Ruapehu, Ngauruhoe and Tongariro were seen covered in snow, and from the base of Ruapehu to the Kawekas was a continuous mantle and objects could be recognized beyond. Owing to the cold wind we had but one halt on the tops and made Kaweka Hut at 12.00. We spent a lazy hour at the hut and left at 1.15, arriving at the road at 2.55. On the way out we saw Pat and Helen's party on the Kiwi track. We left the Pine Tree at 4.00 and arrived in Hastings at 6.30.

No. in party: 9.

Leader, Peter Smith.

Les Moore, Ken Thomas, Ian Berry, Brian Moore, Bob Woon, Jim Gibbs, Graham Grooby, Derek Conway.

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No. 430.

POTAE via GOLDEN CROWN.
(Queen's Birthday week-end.)

May 31 - June 2nd.

After a late start we reached the turn-off to the Island Top at 9.35, parked the truck down near the bridge, left the road and arrived on the bank's of the O'Hara at 11.25. We were now well behind the schedule that I had drafted for the first day, so we set off at a fairly fast clip for Matthew's Hut where we were to pick up Doug. We arrived at the hut at 12.40 to find that Doug and his friends, Stan Chapman and Bill Goldfinch (members of the Deerstalkers' Club), had a brew almost ready. A good drink, something to eat, and we set off at 1.45 for the Golden Crown Spur. Solid going found us near the top at 4.25, but a long way short of our camping place, so we looked around and finally camped at 5 pm. after rather a strenuous day.

9.15 on Sunday morning saw eleven of us setting off with light packs in

an endeavour to reach the Cullers' Camp and so get a view of our original goal, Potae, and return to camp the same night. We cut the Cullers' Track at 10 am. and followed it due south, arriving at Apias Creek at 10.15. We rested, leaving at 11.15 and came across a camp in the bush at 11.50. The travelling on the tops was very good with the weather clear enough to get good views. We were nearing the Cullers' Camp when we came upon four stags. Doug got three, and as there was water handy we decided to boil up on the spot and have lunch. The weather began to deteriorate by the time we were due to leave at 1.45 pm., we could see several showers around and a cold westerly was making conditions a little bit unpleasant. Norm showed us a number of landmarks and then we headed back, arriving in Apias Creek at 3 pm. An hour's tramping along the boggy Cullers' Track brought us to the top of the Golden Crown. A few nasty moments in the bush and then a cry - "I see a blaze" - and we were on our way back to camp, arriving at 4.45. The boys who had stayed behind hadn't been idle and there was a cup of tea waiting for us. We also noted a good pile of dry firewood.

During the night the wind from the west reached gale force bringing a deluge of rain with it. Tents were blown down and most of the party got at least a little wet.

Leaving our camp at 9.20 we followed the stream for a little while and then sidled out to the top of the ridge, finally arriving at Matthew's Hut at 11.30. Those who wanted it were loaded up with as much pork as they could carry. Thanks for this are due to Doug's two friends Stan Chapman and Bill Goldfinch who killed the pigs in the bush and carried them in to the hut. We left the hut at 1 pm. and easy tramping saw us at the O'Hara at 2.45. The climb out of the O'Hara over we headed for the road arriving there at 4 pm. We reached Hastings at 6 pm. with another good trip behind us. Most of the members were in new country and although our goal was not reached we were quite satisfied.

No. in party: 15.

Leader, Bob Toon.

Kath Elder, E. Ansell, Helen Hill, Derek Conway, Dick Burton, Norman Elder, Jack Holloway (State Forest), Ian Berry, Graham Grooby, Les Moore, Ken Thomas, Jim Gibbs, Doug Reid, Don Kirk.

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No. 431.

BLOWHARD BUSH.

June 8th.

Private transport was used for this trip and the party left at 7 am. 8.15 found us at the turn-off where we had a boil up. Following this we set off with no particular object in view and made rapid progress through burnt-out manuka, a relic of a fire some years ago. Several deer were sighted, but as we had no rifle they were left unmolested. An extensive patch of red tussock caused excitement to the botanists of the party and photographs were taken and long names used, much to the bewilderment of the uninitiated.

At this stage very cold rain and wind arrived and as we were only a short step from the cars we hurried to their shelter. The rain went as soon as it came and we decided that as the day was still fresh we would drop off some young trees that the Forestry Service were planting and have another go. The second try was more successful and after lunch we

set off into the bush and eventually reached a clear hill where we had a good view of the Bay and the back of the Black Birch Range. We sat there for a while and then left to see if we could find a hut which we were told was on some flats back towards the road. However after a prolonged search we failed to find that hut, although we did find the ruins of another very old hut just a few yards in from the bush edge. Leaving this we returned to the road and after inspecting an isolated clump of beech left for home, arriving at 6.30 pm.

No. in party: 14.

Leader, Ken Thomas.

Kath Elder, Pat Williams, Pat Bolt, Doris Torbett, Pearl Smith, Norman Elder, Bob Woon, Peter Smith, Graham Grooby, Les Moore, Brian Moore, Rex Chaplin, John Groome.

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No. 432. BIG HILL - RUAHINE - NO MAN'S - HERRICK'S.

June 21-22.

We left Holt's at 6.40 am. on Saturday in good weather bound for Big Hill Station, and arrived there at about 8.30. By 9 am. we were packed up and ready to start the long trek to No Man's. We set off in cold, frosty weather up the 'Jeep and Landrover' road over Big Hill with good views of Hawkes Bay, the Whakararas and snow-covered Central Ruahines. Having crossed the sheep yards at the foot of Big Hill we had our first boil up before starting the long pull up to Ruahine Hut. A nearby stream furnished water for a very welcome cup of tea ... the last before No Man's.

There was a slight delay after the boil up as we took the wrong track at first, bearing too much to the left. However, we realized the mistake before it was too late and returning to our resting place to look for the correct track soon found it, and this time set off in earnest on the right track, winding our way up and up seemingly without end. The track up the spur is good and well defined, but once at the top it runs out altogether into open tussock grass, leaving no defined route at all. However Bob and Ken recognized some bush to the right and we soon found the track again and were through and at Ruahine Hut by 1.15. The hut is in a very dilapidated condition, but could probably sleep three, possibly four, in case of emergency. We thought of a boil up but decided against it as Bob said he had once seen a dead pig in the water hole.

From Ruahine Hut we climbed to the summit of Rakautonga (3372') and thence along the long, open ridge to Lessong's Monument. On the way we noticed a very unpleasant looking mist approaching up the valley, so after a slight rest in some bush we pushed on, determined to beat the fog to No Man's - we hoped. At the head of this vast valley we bore to the left and soon picked up the track through the beech bush, and thence into the open again for a few minutes, only to see the mist getting thicker, so we dived into the bush again still hoping to beat the fog. At last things were getting clearer, at least to Bob and Ken they were. Ken said that there should be a tarn somewhere near and Bob remembered a broken gate, both of which were soon encountered. Then we knew there was not far to go and Bob and Ken were certain of the way, so frankly it was a case of 'to hell with the fog and let it do its damndest' - and it did!

We arrived at No Man's at 4.40 pm., a really welcome sight; in reality a small corrugated iron shack, but to our somewhat tired and very hungry bodies it seemed like a floodlit mansion ... especially now that the fog was

becoming thicker. Unfortunately there was very little dry wood in the hut, but we got a fire going with what there was and soon had a mug of hot soup with that wonderful odour of stew not far behind.

Probably, strictly speaking, No Man's is supposed to be a five-man hut, but there were eight in our party. With weather such as it was no one was keen on sleeping out. So No Man's was converted from a two-tier-bunk to a three-tier-bunk hut by the simple, if somewhat cramped expedient of Bob and Ian sleeping on the floor under the two bottom bunks, whilst I perched myself, with a certain amount of assistance from Bob, on the 'bookshelf' above the right-hand bunk. However, cramped or not as the case may be, everyone claimed a good night's sleep.

We rose on Sunday morning at about 7.30. We knew it was only about five hours to the truck so there was no great hurry. The weather was rather overcast, but clear of fog. So after getting some wood together for the breakfast fire and another lot to leave in the hut, we had something to eat, entailing the usual crush round the fire. We packed up in leisurely fashion and someone suggested a mug of tea before saying farewell to the hut. Someone else asked what the time was - 10.40!! Tea was off, packs were on and eight bodies streaked out of the door.

This time we were bound for the Iron Peg, Ohawai and Herrick's Spur. After a short time we reached the Iron Peg and so to Ohawai and Herrick's without event. Once at the three orange discs, denoting the beginning of Herrick's Spur, there began that long, long descent down the famous (or infamous) Spur. The beginning of the track through the bush was well marked by a working party last year, so no difficulty was encountered in finding the way. About half way down we met Norm and a herd of Kiwis coming up. After a few words they continued up and we continued down to meet Stan Woon, Doris Torbett, Des O'Neill and Pat Williams, also on a day trip. After a few more words we continued on down, climbing at times, but usually slithering down or fighting through manuka or bracken to arrive at Herrick's Hut at 2.30 for a boil up and very welcome cup of tea. At 3.30 after being joined by the other two parties, we left for Big Hill Station and the truck, after an excellent trip in fair to moderate weather.

No. in party: 8. Leader, Jim Gibbs.

Mrs. Ansell, Bob Woon, Ken Thomas, Brian Moore, Les Moore, Graham Grooby, Ian Berry.

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No. 433. MAORI ROCK - KOHINERAKAU. July 6th.

Lack of transport prevented us from going into the ranges, so we decided on a bicycle trip to Kohinerakau. Seven of us set off at the blissful hour of 8.30, and left our bicycles at the road's end. A stroll across country brought us to the creek, where we paused to drag a sheep from a watery grave; and the boys insisted on demonstrating how to catch crayfish with a grass loop. We soon reached Maori Rock, climbed it from various angles, then dropped into the valley and boiled up. A short climb took us to the trig on Kohinerakau, and a pause to admire the extensive view. The only incident on the return trip was that each of our bicycles had mysteriously developed one flat tyre. We stared hard at some boys we passed down the road, but they stared back unblinkingly. Not proven

No. in party: 7. Helen Hill (leader), Pat Bolt, Doris Torbett, Pearl Smith, Ken Thomas, Bob Woon, Philip Bayens.

No. 434.

OTUMORE.

July 19-20th.

The Howlett's fixture was shifted to the head of the Moorcock in hopes that the weather would allow a party to go south on to the Ngamoko Range and possibly another to Howlett's via the divide.

A Saturday 1 pm. start only allowed us time to camp a little above the Stag's Head, just as well for it was a wild night - rain, wind and frost - and though the snow was retreating the Pohangina 'Dog-kennel' would have been pretty uninviting.

Sunday was thick and cold. We all went up as far as the Dog-kennel and most ploughed on through soft snow to Otumore, but visibility was about a couple of chains and the wind cutting so we were out fairly early. Large flocks of white-eyes both at the Dog-kennel and well up on a snowy ridge were an unusual and puzzling sight.

No. in party: 12.

Acting leader, Bob Woon.

Kath Elder, Pat Bolt, E. Ansell, Helen Hill, Norm Elder, Graham Grooby, Brian Moore, Les Moore, Philip Bayens, Peter Smith.

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No. 435.

KAHURU NAKI.

August 3rd.

After having jacked everything up to transfer the trip to the abandoned Burns Range fixture, it was a blow when on Saturday evening first the truck and then the leader folded up. Fortunately Ian was prepared to do a short run, so the trip was quietly switched back to Kahuranaki. The nineteen starters (the number being swelled by the welcome reappearance of Molly Young with a couple of friends) accepted the change philosophically and climbed aboard at Holt's.

To cover some new country we took the Maratotara Road, left the truck near the school and headed across country to a spur leading up to the N.E. corner. We left this just below the limestone cap and sidled left to locate the hut last visited by the club in Sept. 1938. The hillside was bone dry and some ugly threats came from the thirstier souls, but the hut was finally located on the extreme S.E. corner, tottery but still standing, and water, of a sort. However thirst was forgotten with the discovery of two occupants, opossums. After a spectacular battle of wits (the wits by no means all on one side) and some Tarzan-like displays by Peter and Allen (the opossum usually one tree ahead), the second opossum was dispatched and tramping resumed.

Visibility was poor at the trig as light cloud and haze had drifted over after a perfect morning, so we came down early and there was plenty of time to have another boil-up at the river and still return in broad daylight.

No. in party: 19.

Acting leader, Norm Elder.

Pearl Smith, Barbara Maultsaid, Jennifer Maultsaid, A. Buck, E. Ansell, Molly Young plus 2, Ian Berry, Jim Gibbs, Philip Bayens, Roy York, Allen Cowan, Bob Woon, Stan Woon, R. Berry, Doug Reid, Peter Fattullo.

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SECOND OXFORD SEARCH.

A phone message came through from S.A.R. on the evening of Sunday 6th. July asking us to alert twelve searchers for a plane missing the previous evening between Masterton and Ohakea and reported in the Pohangina area.

As the club has not been in that area since just after the fire of 1946, none of the present active membership is acquainted with that part of the Ruahines, so our first thought was to alert at least one team from Ashley Clinton. As this had already been done through the Tamaki T.C., Bob Woon and Doug Reid raised our full quota from the H.T.C. and Hastings Deerstalkers' Association. Napier R.E.C. were also notified and they alerted a two-man team with their light-weight set.

The weather was still bad on Monday and though Keith Severinsen took the Ashley Clinton party as far as the Pohangina Hut, and Levin and Wellington parties operated in lower country round the Mangahao dams and Pahiatua Track, we were still waiting for air reconnaissance. This gave an opportunity to check over notes of previous searches, and stocks of maps; air/ground signals and first-aid kits were assembled. A start was made with the recruiting of follow-up parties and some girls alerted for the various odd jobs that are inevitable at base and advanced bases in a big search. R.E.C. added a truck with roadhead battery and mains sets.

Little fresh news came through on Tuesday, but a meeting that evening enabled us to check up on preparations and possibilities. One valuable point came up, from our experience in the Howlett's search, the importance of checking over local information on the spot by people who know the country. At Ashley Clinton we gathered enough information to transfer the search from the Saw Tooth to the head of the Oroua, where the plane was actually found. A similar check of the Pohangina reports was suggested to Bill Bridge and this was carried out the following day by Andrew Fuller (M.T.C.) with Police and Air Force. In consequence a party was sent in up Short's Track on the Ngamoko Range on Thursday, led by Jack Body (M.T.C.) They were turned back by soft snow at 2000ft. after a late start, but made their objective next day and satisfied themselves that a reported object was not part of a plane.

Meantime, with a high-country search in prospect we were beginning to worry about the shortage of ice-axes, and asked the police to make a radio appeal. This resulted in eight ice-axes (and one ordinary axe) being delivered to police stations and post offices from Woodville to Wairoa, and a further four or five from club members and ex-members - a most satisfactory result, for which the search committee is very grateful.

With the southerly gale easing off and cloud lifting towards the weekend an intensive search seemed imminent. Plans for searching the head of the Pohangina were discussed with Dannevirke, arrangements made to establish the R.E.C. base at Havelock North and we were contemplating moving our parties down to Ashley Clinton for a flying start, when word came through that air search was being abandoned at nightfall and S.A.R. shutting down.

After standing by all week this was a great disappointment. We considered making a reconnaissance on our own, but even under good conditions Tunopo would have been about the limit of our range and we were short of transport. The following week a party went in as far as Otumore but the weather was thick and they got no further.

PRIVATE TRIPS.SILVER PEAKS.

May 18th.

By 7.15 am. a party of eight assembled at Holt's and we were away in good weather for Silver Peaks. After only one enquiry we found that the station holder was Mr. Williams who readily gave permission for us to go over the range. We found a suitable spot to park the truck at the foot of Trig 1150' and set off. Over easy grass country we arrived at the trig and found a cold S.W. wind, so dropped down into the Hawea Stream for a boil-up at the foot of Trig 1326. After lunch we climbed 1326. There is not much height in it really, but what there is is all in one lump making quite a steep climb for about half an hour. From the top we had a really good view of Kahuranaki, the Kawekas and Ruahines, Rangi, Three Johns, 66, and Armstrong's Saddle all showing up well. After about half an hour on top we came back to the Hawea Stream and followed it out to the road and so back to the truck. It was then only about 1.30, so we decided on a further search for the somewhat elusive caves in the Kahuranaki area. So we returned to the concrete bridge and decided to search the ridges immediately in front. We reached the first small ridge - nothing! We searched the second ridge - nothing!! We went right over the main ridge and almost to Maraetotara Valley: net result not even a rabbit hole. So we returned to the truck, reaching Hastings at 5.45 pm.

No. in party: 8. Pearl Smith, Pat Williams, Ian Berry, Peter Smith, Brian Moore, Les Moore, Graham Grooby, Jim Gibbs (leader).

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FURTHER TRAINING OF THE YOUNG.

May 25th.

I had long promised an 11-year old nephew to introduce him to snow, so when on Saturday the ranges were heavily coated, we planned a hurried expedition next day. This consisted in the end of my brother, Pat Bolt, myself, the aforesaid eleven-year-old, and his eight-year-old sister who refused to be left behind. We left early, and reached the willows at Kuripaponga by 8.30.

Along the Kaweka track we debated which way was quickest to snow and our first glimpse towards Kaweka hut showing little snow, we decided on climbing up to it on 4,100. The eight-year old clambered up quite happily, even though we had to crawl through dense manuka, and we finally reached the top to find it under heavy snow. We boiled up just above the shingle slide, but the projected snowman was reluctantly abandoned because the children's hands were so cold. They had not realised before that snow is actually freezing! A mist coming down drove us rapidly down the slide, which was greatly enjoyed by all, and we reached the road in time to be home by 5 pm. - milking time for Ted!

Party: Pat Bolt, Ted Hill, Barbara Wallace, Bobby Wallace, Helen Hill.

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KIWI HUT.

July 13th.

This was a party formed hurriedly on the previous Friday night and Saturday morning.

On arrival at the Willows the weather seemed dirty over the Kawekas, thick mist enshrouding Cook's Horn. However by the time we had had tea and something to eat the clouds seemed to be lifting, so we decided to make for Kiwi Hut.

We set off at about 8.45 for the Smith-Russell track and the summit of 4100'. On the way through the manuka Ken disturbed a pig which scuttled off through the scrub quite harmlessly. We found the track easily and ascended to Clem's Rock where we halted for a rest. It was then that we heard voices behind us asking where the **** the nearest water was !! Someone replied, with equal vehemence, that he thought it was about $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours ahead ! Little did they realize that they were passing a stream within about two minutes' walk of their actual position at the time !

After a chat with this shooting party we continued up 4100 and on to Kiwi Ridge and the snow. There was not much in the way of snow, two or three inches in places on the SW slopes, the N. slopes being quite clear. By now the weather had cleared into a glorious sunny day, quite warm. We arrived at Kiwi Hut in time for lunch during which time Alf Dixon and his scouts arrived from Kaweka. By 2 pm. we were away again, this time on the return trip. We had plenty of time and so set a nice easy pace, admiring the view and watching for Ngauruhoe to go into action. Apart from a small whiff of steam, she was very quiet.

Once at 4100 we decided on the shingle slide rather than the Smith-Russell track, both for a change and for quickness, and arrived back at the Willows at 4.50 and away to Hastings, arriving at about 6.45 having completed an excellent trip in fine, sunny weather.

Party: Pat Bolt, Helen Hill, Ken Thomas, Jim Gibbs, Des O'Neill (leader).

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KAWEKA - COOK'S HORN.

July 27-28th.

This trip was another "Friday night decision". Meeting at Holt's at 10pm. on Saturday we arrived at the Willows in perfect weather at about 11.45. While having a boil-up there we were approached by three deer stalkers and a small boy who asked if they could share the hut for the night. At 1 pm. we were away, making a detour to the lakes for photos of the Kawekas. The snow seemed fairly well down and also fairly thick, so we were hoping for some good photos on the Sunday. We arrived at the hut at about 4 pm.

A fair night was spent in the hut, though one of the stalkers felt cold at 2 am. and consequently got up and re-lit the fire and made tea. The small boy of course, was more awake than anyone and wanted to go off after deer there and then. I don't mind saying he very nearly did not leave the hut at all, let alone go out deer stalking at 2 am.!!!

Sunday broke into a perfect day with brilliant sunshine and a fair westerly breeze. It was to be a fairly leisurely day, so at about 9.45 we set off for 4325. The snow was slightly higher than we had previously thought, and we did not encounter it until we reached the bushline at the back of the hut. From there on there was a good covering of hard, frozen snow and ice. The going

was slippery in places, but generally speaking conditions were excellent. We reached the junction of Cook's Horn Ridge and 4325 and unashamedly sat down for threequarters of an hour. The view was perfect, with Cape Kidnappers, Titikura, Tarapomui, Tartarakino and the Southern Urewera all clearly visible in front, with Ngauruhoe and part of Ruapehu at our backs. At about 12.30 we wandered back to the hut for lunch and left again at about 3.15 for the road. All told, a good trip in perfect weather.

Party: John Mitchel, Jim Gibbs, Dick Burton (leader).

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AORANGI.

9th-16th May.

As with tramping, only more so, the great thing about botanizing is the way one trip leads to another. When we found cedar on Ngamatea in the Tikitiki Bush and then the great cedar forest away to the west beyond Moawhango, we naturally doubled back to re-examine the cedar forest of the western Ruahines. Hence the Pourangaki trip last January. In May the next step was to have a stab at the intervening forest, the biggest block in the Ruahines, which stretches unbroken from the Rangitikei River to the divide and from Mokai Patea to Mangaohane.

It is rough country with scrubby forest and big limestone scarps and gorges, better tackled in summer. However the weather held up reasonably well and short days and cold winds were the main drawbacks.

We had already been along the Potae track and down the Waiokotore while Tony and Mick had traversed the Ohutu Range to Titapue, so this time we didn't aim at a deep penetration, but merely to work our way round below Aorangi. Accordingly we camped the first night on Racecourse Flat, where the whole Rangitikei pours through a 15-foot slot of great depth. Below this the river gets very gorgy and we were forced up on to one of the leading ridges which radiate from Aorangi. This was interesting so we stuck to it, climbing through open totara forest with an open grassy floor till the denser upper forest took its place. Cold drizzling rain made conditions fairly bleak and when we bumped up against the final cliff-face we took advantage of some dry overhangs, practically caves, to camp without further ado. After scratching out the loose soil we constructed sleeping ledges for the whole party, five and a fire in No. 1 Aorangi Crescent, the remaining five in No. 3. Nobody rolled off in the night, though cave-dwelling was voted a bit cool and draughty for standard practice.

In the morning we found that quite a fair deer-sidling went round below the cliffs, giving a good view of the country below, so we followed it. The day improved though it remained cold and overcast and visibility was fair. Deer were plentiful in the open gullies which ran down into the bush. One gap, a main highway, led on to the top, elsewhere the cliffs were continuous. One interesting find was one of the big, carnivorous snails (*Paraphanta*) having a tug of war with an enormous earthworm.

On reaching the N.E. corner we came out on to the Mangaohane tussock and here were baffled by the complete disappearance of our previous route to the summit. After a bit of scrambling we desisted and set off eastward along the bush-line to pick a camp-site for the night.

Next morning rain protracted the cooking of breakfast but the weather

Cleared later and there were even glimpses of sunshine. We continued eastward across a saddle in the Ohutu range, then under Rakaunuiakura to the cullers' hut at "Ruahine Corner", where the Potae Track starts. After a comfortable, but crowded night half the party left to return to civilization and the rest of us broke up, the two geologists heading north for a deposit of lignite near Otupae, while the rest of us went south to have another look at the bush along the Potae track, then followed the bushline north along the Ika awatea face, intending to meet at the Makirikiri Hut, only known to us by hearsay. Here the map was at fault. We arrived at dusk to find no trace of the hut, nor of the geologists. We had both tents so made ourselves comfortable and trusted they had found the hut.

Fortunately we changed our minds in the morning and instead of cutting across to the lignite seam to pick them up, decided to keep down the other side of the stream and locate the hut first - just as well, for we met them coming back with full packs. They hadn't found the hut and were beginning to be anxious about our whereabouts. Had we not met we might have wandered round for hours in this featureless, rolling country with few established tracks. We soon found the hut, but having lost half the day pushed on and camped near the lignite, which was duly found - interesting no doubt, but hardly combustible.

We picked a very picturesque camp-site and when snow started to fall it added to the effect, as we sat round a roaring fire and discussed the universe. It soon stopped however and the sky cleared and we were hardly into our sleeping-bags before a hard frost shut down. Some claim to have slept, but it was a pretty numb party that assembled for breakfast.

It was a fairly long trek out in the morning via the Hermitage, the Arcady Block and Moemoe so that we didn't start on the road home till 3 pm., after a very welcome civilized meal offered us at Mangaohane Station.

N.L.E.

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RUAPEHU.

6th-11th July.

A party of twenty H.T.C. and Aerial Mapping left Hastings en route for the skiing grounds on Sunday morning about 9 am. After about a mile we discovered we had left the party's hard won cash behind. We returned amid much cross fire from the spectators. Our next attempt to get cracking took us as far as Parawera, where the bus conveniently packed up. Something had broken around the big end area, so a three-hour wait with a pub and hot spring laid on. How time flies! The relief bus arrived with a puncture in the rear wheel. Parawera mud tastes good; try it sometime, but use a plate. Away toward Taupo we sped about 4.30 pm. A hurried count of the passengers on board after a few miles revealed the party were all present and sober.

Taupo for dinner and all the hash bars crowded out with skiers returning home after a week-end skiing or climbing. The party drifted around the burg and most of us got some tucker of sorts. We were told that conditions were good.

The Château's lights loomed out of the rain at 11.30 pm. The party had two rooms at Whakapapa and three in Long Lodge. After about an hour everyone was settled in and fed.

Monday morning dawned a brilliant day. Two of us left the main party and moved into the Manawatu Hut, together with three packs, skis and a sledge named The Thing. A sledge should be a good means of transport if you have straps to

keep the gear on with. We didn't. We pulled The Thing about half way in half the time it would take to carry the stuff ten times the distance. Sorry, you'll have to work it out.

The hut was in excellent condition with everything laid on, from pillows to pressure cooker. There is sleeping accommodation for about twenty-four souls with more space on the floor. A coal range heats the hot water system. Three primuses and two Colman pressure lamps supply the means for a quick meal and lighting. A frig. is built on to the wall of the hut outside and opens into the main room. In a small room into which the one and only door opens is a work bench and storage space for skis, wet clothes, etc.

When you haven't been on skis for a year, strange things happen for a while. The planks seem to want to fly in the air while your body takes their place on the ground. At times the sunlit scene seems to have a lot of stars and other bright objects floating around. After a couple of hours you decide it's time to adjust the skis. This is just an excuse to get the blasted things off your feet. Ah! a doze in the sun and the devil takes care of his own - your skis are going flat out down the mountain on their own. Well, when this happens there are three things to do: (1) go flat out after them; (2) sit down and admire the way they clean up skiers further down; (3) stroll down after them and give vent to your feelings. Usually we combine (1) with the latter part of (3).

The rest of the party we found ski-ing over the ridge and just below the ski room. The Thing was doing a good trade on some slopes of 50 deg. and upwards. After an hour or so the snow at the bottom of the slope thawed out and The Thing wouldn't quite make it. It came to a dead stop from about thirty mph. Some really good spills occurred. The sledge held two and the rear passenger got some thrills shooting clean over the one in front, when they met the soft snow.

Tuesday, another good day with conditions perfect. The main body at Whakapapa arrived about midday and missed out on a good morning. After lunch a sledge built on a pair of skis was dug out of the snow alongside the hut. This sledge knocked spots off The Thing and we had a lot of fun on it.

Wednesday and the weather still holding good except for a gale from the south. The main party in the morning went for a tramp to the Taranaki Falls, arriving up at the ski-ing ground in the early afternoon. There was a small jump built up about two feet high, but it might as well have been twenty for we all sat counting stars most of the time. A run of about 100yds. down a gully behind Manawatu Hut and over the jump and a hell of a lot of hoof prints and grooves to ski over, if able, then 100yds. of flat going to some short steep slopes leading into the gully below the Auckland hut.

Thursday was spent by the two in Manawatu Hut packing and cleaning up. The Whakapapa-ites went tramping to visit the local sights and made the ski-rooms about 3.30. Another look into Manawatu Hut and a brew completed the day on the mountain. That evening there was a film show in the basement of the Château - enough said.

A week of really good weather. Up on Friday morning around 5.30 and on our way home by 7.30 am. via Wairakei Valley. Seeing the Valley in winter is rather a let down in one sense as we miss out seeing some of the geysers working, owing to the steam condensing quickly in the cold air. After a visit to the Huka Falls and a feed at Taupo we hit Hastings about 7.30 pm.

Peter Smith.

DEVIATION ON THE WAIKAMAKA ROUTE.

On the way back from the Waikamaka Hut in the course of a private trip in July, two of the party, in an effort to dodge the leatherwood, climbed from the Saddle part way up Three Johns and then raced down a shingle slide back to the Waipawa. They say this route has definite advantages over the usual one.
Ask Stan Woon.

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S O C I A L N E W S .

Muriel Shaw and Sandy Lowe were married early in June. We extend to them our best wishes.

Derek Conway went off to camp at Linton for a few weeks.

George Lowe is back in New Zealand. He will have returned to Hastings by the time "Pohokura" is published.

Philip Finch is doing interesting survey work in Marlborough. The following is an extract from one of his letters:- (dated 15/5/52 from Blenheim).

... "I've just had a very interesting three weeks about fourteen miles on the Rotoroa side of Murchison. There is a Hydro Scheme to put an 18" tunnel from Lake Rotoroa to the Mangles River, a distance of six miles. The P.W.D. require the ends and the line to be accurately fixed on the ground. This is being done by second order trig observations, tying the line on to the existing trig work. The instrument in use - on loan from the Marlborough District where trig revision is in progress - is a Wild T3; it reads directly to points of a second, which is very small. There are only three of these instruments in N.Z. (new price about £800-£1000). It was used on the primary triangulation all over N.Z. In its case it weighs 38 lbs., and the legs another 18 lbs.

Most of the trigs require over a 1000' climb, the highest was Mt. Murchison 4800ft. This was above the bush line up in the snow grass and tussock. There was an excellent fault line, between the bushline and top, a drop of 6 ft. or more, fairly recent I should think.

Most of the trigs were covered in beech forest, some of it fairly heavy. Bird life was very interesting, bell-birds, tuis, tomtits, robins, rifleman, bush canaries, and a weka - the latter being very fond of pulling the tops of one's socks.

The ultimate programme is to divert part of the upper wairau into Lake Rotoiti, from there to Rotoroa, and from Tutaki a tunnel straight through to the Buller at Longford. It's going to be a fairly large scheme."

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N E W M E M B E R S .

At the last three committee meetings, the following were elected as club members:-

Misses Pearl Smith and Patricia Williams, Messrs. Ian Berry, Colin Coates, Jim Gibbs, Brian Moore, Mrs. Edna Ansell, Misses Alison Elder, Barbara Maultsaid, Jennifer Maultsaid, Dr. H.G. McPherson, Messrs. Graham Grooby, Leslie Moore, Roy York, Ray Thomas, Miss Pamela Dyson, Mr. Philip Bayens.

EXPLORATION IN NEPAL.THE BARUN GLACIER AND ARUN RIVER.

(The following is an extract from one of George Lowe's letters, dated July 7th.)

We've been exploring again and as I never returned to Namche first, I set off with Eric, Charles Evans and Ed. on this last journey in what I stood up in plus only a sleeping-bag, lilo, down jacket and a few exposures in my camera. In fact I set out with less than I would have for a weekend tramp to Kiwi Hut.

It happened like this:- After the descent from Nup La we crossed a high pass to the Khumbu to the Swiss base camp, a mile or so from the W. Cwm icofall (we missed the Swiss by a few hours as they evacuated that morning), then after a quick journey to the foot of the famous icofall we started down the Khumbu on the two-day journey to Namche where we dreamed of a long rest and some fresh food. My trousers were just able to cling on with me cutting new holes in the belt, I had become so skinny. We talked about eggs, big chunks of meat and even gleaming bowls of rice were high on the list.

The Khumbu is an attractive valley and we spun along rapidly, stopped for a drink of yak milk at the first herd, then buzzed on and in the afternoon we dropped into trees and greenery and stopped for the night with only a few hours of walking to reach Namche. We had just settled in when Eric walked in upon our camp with two Sherpas carrying his kit and twenty-four days' food and asked us to join him in exploring the Barun and then following the river to the huge Arun River and so down by a new route to the Nepal border and out. He told us that all the others had left Namche and were trekking to Katmandu. We accepted Eric's plan as this was a very special exploration which Ed and I had hoped to do this year. And so cutting adrift any wishes for omelettes, potatoes, milk and fresh greens, we hitched our belts, filled our bellies on a brew of tsampa tea and set off up valley to cross high passes over the S. and E. flanking ridges of Everest and so get into the Barun glacier - an unexplored ice stream between Everest and Makalu (27,790ft. and fourth highest in the world). Makalu had never been approached before and reaching the head of the Barun and looking into Tibet from there would, for us, complete a circuit of Everest over its highest passes. To cover this in colour and do it all within six weeks appealed to Ed and me - it seemed we were getting all the cream of exploration and we liked it.

On 10th June we headed up a side valley from Khumbu and went along a valley under the five-mile wall of rock between Lhotse (27,890ft.) and Nuptse (25,700ft) which nowhere drops below 25,000ft. It's just a sheer black and grey wall, too steep to hold any snow, and it extends up to where a ridge runs south off Lhotse. We hoped to cross direct into the Barun, but found no feasible place. On 12th June we climbed the ridge further S. and looked into the Hongu valley, which is unexplored, and got ourselves and our loads down and camped by a huge glacial lake (about 500 acres).

The crossing was fun - we had to double pack 70-lb. loads over 19,400ft. We took a dump of food up on the 12th to within 400ft. at the foot of a rock wall. Next day we carried up the rest and then Ed and I tried the walls. Ed got up a long ledge and we pulled up the loads and people and reached the top at noon. The Hongu side was even steeper and covered with broken glacier. We fixed a hand-rail rope and cut steps into an ice chute and by cutting

platforms and me sliding gingerly down a 100ft. at a time on crampons we lowered everything in four relays to an avalanche fan and then fixed it in big bundles and towed it down to the rocks. Then with everyone carrying 140 lb. each we staggered to the lake and camped. Here we met Charles Evans who with two Sherpas had come into the Hongu to meet us and join the Barun exploration. With his carrying power added we were slightly more mobile and next day (14th) crossed the Hongu Glacier and up 800ft. of steep loose rock to a saddle which we thought would put us in the Barun - but we walked out on to a huge snow plateau at 20,500ft., ringed by attractive snow peaks. On the 15th the four of us climbed one of these peaks and by altimeter it was 22,560ft. We took compass bearings and fixed our position and could see the head snowfields of the Barun and the point we hoped to reach. We saw that if we crossed the plateau (5-6 miles) we might be able to find a pass and drop down to the Barun.

Next day we crossed and climbed a difficult ice-fluted peak (21,800ft.) and saw a gap that was possible. We descended and lowered the gear and Sherpas down a rock wall and got down a difficult 1,000 ft., then descended a steep tributary glacier and on to the rough and tumble Barun ice stream, at about 17,000ft. This was a strenuous day. We were now right under Makalu and feeling very pleased with ourselves. The monsoon was building up and every afternoon the wet clouds crawled up the valleys from India and Nepal and it snowed at night. We had one classic thunderstorm with lightning which made any other thunder-and-lightning display that I've experienced look mild. I couldn't stop thinking, as I lay being dripped upon, that I was glad there were no bigger mountains in the world if it meant bigger thunderstorms!

Next day we set out for the head of the glacier. The rough travelling over moraine, ice gullies, rivers on the ice and pinnacles, together with Eric's being sick made that day tedious in the extreme. Cloud closed in early and we camped near the head not knowing where we were exactly. Next morning the fog cleared for only an hour and we took bearings and headed on to the ice by a fantastic route through pinnacles and lakes in the ice and up and up in the mist to the saddle at over 20,000ft. It began to snow and we didn't get our view. The saddle was hard, hard ice, too slippery and gluey to pitch camp and we descended to a safe avalanche-free point and pitched camp here. Then it snowed and snowed and snowed. The snow was soggy and wet and leaked through the tent.

Next day we retreated, wading in knee-deep, new snos, falling in up to the shoulders in masked crevasses and generally having a bleak retreat. The monsoon was really on us and we got out and down to grass level and then hitched our belts, very seriously this time, because we were going to try to follow the Barun glacier and river to its junction with the Arun River, 17 miles away. We were at 18,000ft. and the junction was 4,000ft., and we guessed with that fall there would be gorges galore and formidable jungle. But this sort of thing is bread and meat to Eric who thinks that this way of finishing a trip, by exploring to the very end, is the choicest delight, with the greatest savour and spice; so we set off with nine days' food still left.

Although in rain the terrain was easy - grassy, lateral moraine walls, and we covered many miles. We forded the Barun river a mile below the terminal - and it was cold! (The first wash my feet had had in two months). Late that day we had paused for a spell when Eric and Ed both said together, "Look! there's a man!" To us alone in that lonely valley this was arresting and I was about to rush off shouting to attract him because we wanted information. If there were people, then there would be tracks and yaks, and yaks meant milk and dai (curds). But Eric stopped me and told us to hide! Then he explained

how a similar situation had occurred with him in the Karakorams and how on approaching the men, they, taking them for wild snowmen, had run away. So there we were, within a quarter-mile of people who - as we could see through Charles's monocular - were putting up a shelter for themselves while the flocks grazed the new grass, and we dared not approach them openly. As Eric pointed out, if we tumbled down a valley from the snow towards them, who knew that nothing ever lived up there, they would naturally take fright. The Sherpas caught us up and we told them to go ahead cautiously out of sight and interrogate. By the way, we were out of Sherpa country amongst Nepali herders and we didn't talk the lingo. The Sherpas set off and when half way one of them couldn't resist the temptation and for the first time he shouted luridly and showed himself. The result was funny. We saw them stop then, startled, they lit out, first to try and cross the river, and failing, then down valley with the most obvious signs of panic and desperation. Eric said, "Let's catch them or they'll alarm the whole valley population who'll hide and we'll get no information or food." Ed and I dropped packs and set out to cut them off, but we never stood the slightest chance against them, barefoot and filled with mortal fear of the Yetis after them. We couldn't help seeing the funny side of it, as well as the serious (for us), and roared with laughter with the Sherpas.

We followed their tracks which led into a gorge where the river boiled against rock walls. We climbed high over the top and lost them. We went on down and then saw a lone figure with a load of firewood. We hid and unloading one Sherpa we sent him off alone to scout around and go past the figure and approach him from down valley, so that if he ran we could rap him - very cunning! Ila, the Sherpa, crept up to within a few yards and called out in Nepali and managed to greet him without his taking off. He called us from hiding and we talked with him about tracks, bought some curds and ate it on the spot like wild men, and with his instructions we went on and camped near the first stone hut of a yak herder amongst the most beautiful natural flower garden. The hillsides for miles were covered with azalea bushes which were in glorious full flower. I hope the pictures come out. We bought a sheep - an old ram was all they'd sell us - I killed it with a kukri and skinned it with a blunt pocket knife and we cooked and ate all the back legs and one side of ribs, just the four of us.

Well I can't tell in detail the whole trip, but there were incidents galore. Next day we found the blue mountain poppy again, some wild onions and wild snubarb which we scoffed raw! The descent of the upper Barun gorges was easy with a rough shepherds' track, marvellously scenic, like the Hollyford country down south. Then into the lower Barun gorges - boulders and conglomerate sides, a roaring mad, dirty unfordable river and eerie Scotch mist for two days, with wet camps and mosquitoes. Then, foiled in getting down the river all the way, we had to climb from 7,000ft. through evil rhododendron and leech-infested jungle, the sort with exotic wax flowers and huge black or navy blue lilies with evil smells and cruel-looking leaves, huge forest trees and wet, rocky stream-beds as the route through. This was arduous plus, and the leeches in our boots and down our necks didn't help, either.

Up we went for two days and over a gap about 14,000ft. to a high lake surrounded by rhododendrons in bloom and acres of primulas of every colour. This garden of wild flowers is the most impressive that I've ever seen. This part of the journey in contrast with the snow and ice and the evil cloying growth in the jungle, the clear lakes and fresh flower gardens, was one of the grandest experiences of the exploration. From there we reached the Arun by descending a long hummocky ridge on a rough track. Back to huts and fields of corn, young rice and pumpkins and potatoes just coming through. At 4,000ft. by the mighty

Arun it was hot and we felt the rapid change rather sadly. We bought some young maize cobs and had twelve each! then eighteen eggs and made them all into a glorious omelette and scoffed it. We stayed the night in a village and slept outside the houses in the open, to avoid the fleas. We bought a chook and a pumpkin and some hard beans and ate again. The sleep outside was just in under-pants and singlet (that's how I travelled out in the heat, usually minus both later with a loin cloth fashioned from my dilapidated silk scarf) - and the fleas came out and chewed us; lice from the fowls got into our undies and we couldn't get rid of them until I burnt them the other day, and mosquitoes enjoyed the suck of blood with a super high haemoglobin content. On awaking Ed recoiled at the sight of a leech gorged with blood and about three inches long and as round as a forefinger lolling too full to move near his head. His hair was matted with blood where the foul thing had attached itself and sucked itself full all night.

Next day we had to cross the main Arun by a rope bridge and so get on to a coolie route with good tracks available. The bridge was upstream and we set off through fields with leeches on every stalk of grass and bush - all reaching and wiggling to feel for us. A side river had been washed out and the bridge gone with the overnight rain and we spent four hours cutting saplings and bridging this across a rock defile like a smaller edition of the Huka Falls. Once across the crazy bridge it had the added charm and excitement of a fancy rock climb that could only be done with bare feet, the big toe in a tiny hole and whatnot. An afternoon of heat and climbing in which one of the Sherpas, an old crook with staring eyes and a constipated walk, found the going so hot and his load so heavy (about 35lbs. at this stage) that he collapsed and went delirious. We took his load, revived him, and when he could stumble along he walked off the track, so the other Sherpas tied a string around his neck and led him like a dog, tugging him back when he flopped off the track and laughing like hell at him.

We reached the rope bridge across the Arun at 6.30, all tired, hungry and sweaty. The river was 300 yds. wide, turbulent, dirty and very impressive - but not half as spectacular as the rope bridge across. A crazy swing of three ropes V-fashion high above the water and laced occasionally with struts of flax rope from the hand-rails to the foot rope. The method of crossing was to walk the tight-rope barefoot and steady yourself with the two hand-rail ropes. Wow! is it sensational! Once you get the hang of it it's easy, but with the river tearing along underneath and the whole structure waving with your movement it's very hard not to decide that the river is standing still while the bridge is moving away at a swirling eight knots. The Sherpas nearly died of fear and some locals carried their loads across while Ed and I tied up the delirious old man. He was dribbling and blubbering and saying prayers and shutting his eyes all the way over and we just managed to hold him up when he trod on space. He would groan. We carried him mostly, he being roped in slings and only a foot in front of me and a foot behind me. I think he was so miserable that falling off would have been a pleasurable escape from it all. With a good night's sleep and an extra ration of food and no load he revived and completed the whole journey out.

And so once across the Arun we marched for seven days, starting at 4 am. and going until 10 or 11 am. and then in the cool evening 5 - 7 pm. and doing ten to fourteen miles each day, we came out to Dhankuta, then Dharan where we got on to a jeep - all of us - and ploughed through thirty miles of mud track. This thirty miles took 9½ hours of steady pushing and riding, to Jogbani on the Indian border. We took a train for 24 hours to Raxaul (the train broke a piston drive shaft and we boked on the plains for 5½ hours before a relief engine towed us away). From Raxaul it was two days' journey by train, truck and walk to Katmandu, the capital. And now I've been here for a day at the Embassy living luxuriously, eating, sleeping, and drinking cocktails (last night) with the adviser to the King of Nepal.

FIXTURE LIST.

<u>Date:</u>	<u>Place:</u>	<u>Leader:</u>
August 31st.	<u>Burns Range.</u>	Pat Bolt (4239, home)
September 13-14th.	<u>Puketitiri Hot Springs - Makino Spur.</u>	Peter Smith (2846, work)
September 28th.	<u>Māraetotara Stream.</u>	Kath Elder (2968, home)
October 11-12th.	<u>Makaroro - Te Atua Mahuru, return via Maropea and Gold Creek.</u>	Bob Woon (7543, home)
October 25-26-27th.	<u>Howlett's - Waikamaka (or bust!) (Labour Day week-end).</u>	Derek Conway (3066, home)
November 8-9th.	<u>Cairn Trip.</u>	Stan Craven (2891, home)
November 23rd.	<u>Lake Runanga.</u>	Jim Gibbs (6211, home)
December 6-7th.	<u>Cape Kidnappers.</u>	Angus Russell.

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CAIRN TRIP: REMINDER.

The annual memorial trip to the Kaweka Cairn will be run on the week-end November 2th-9th (see above.) Stan Craven will be the leader.
All past and present members are particularly invited to come.

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No one who has read George's letter will be surprised to hear that he has been included in the team for the 1953 Everest Expedition. We congratulate both him and ourselves. It is not given to many clubs to have such a famous Vice-President. We wish him a successful climb and a safe return.
(Editor).

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NOTICE TO MEMBERS: ANNUAL MEETING.

The seventeenth Annual General Meeting of the Club will be held in the Girl Guide Rooms, Queen St., on Thursday 9th October 1952, following the club meeting which will begin at 8 pm.

Members are asked to make a point of being present at the meeting; and also to send in nominations in good time.

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