

HERETAUNGA TRAMPING CLUB (INC.)

" P O H O K U R A "

Bulletin No. 72

April, 1956.

President:

N.L. Elder,  
43, McHardy Street,  
Havelock North.

'Phone 2968

Hon. Secretary:

Miss U. Greenwood,  
Duart Road,  
Havelock North.

'Phone 2569

Club Captain:

Derek Conway,  
609, Massey Street,  
Hastings.

'Phone 3056

Hon. Treasurer:

Peter Wood,  
St. George's Road S  
R.D. 2, Hastings.

CLUB TRIPS.

No. 519

MAKARORO (Trial Search)

26 -27 Nov. 1955

With both the Club Captain and his predecessor otherwise committed and the St. John Ambulance unable to raise a party the plan of operations had to be considerably simplified. This time instructions were left at base (Janet) to ensure that the police, ( who again had offered to keep a log of the search at the watch house) received due notification that a party was lost. Two lightweights (Kevin Simmons & Jim Trumper) were taken upstream to the search creek, 10 minutes above Gold Creek, given instructions and sealed envelopes detailing their injuries and turned loose. By this time a full gale was blowing, but the side valley seemed comparatively sheltered.

The recce. party with R.E.C. support was due to leave the mill an hour and a half later and the original intention had been to keep the rest at the mill till they were wanted, but this was complicated by a car load of late starters taking a short cut in via Glenny's Road. Consequently it was decided to concentrate all searchers in the search camp for the night.

Recce parties found the creek negotiable for  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour up, then traversed the boundary ridges, finding no hot clues, but delimiting Sunday's search area to the upper part of the valley with a final sweep down the sides of the lower valley using all searchers.

This would have located the missing party in the last phase, say about noon, but while moving into position on Sunday, somebody smelt smoke and the first rescuers were at the scene of the "accident" at

8.40. With the arrival of the support party from Hastings and the recall of the searchers from upstream, the rescue operation now commenced. Dr McPherson who had supplied a grislev list of injuries had made the valuable suggestion that a request for medical advice be wirelessly out, but it took over 2 hours for instructions to come back, by which time the rescue party had very sensibly made their own diagnosis and started to move their worst injured patient. The operation terminated with his arrival at the search camp on the Makaroro after a 2½ hour carry at 12.38.

Communications forward were excellent apart from a spot of trouble with one of the 208 sets and the advanced base at roadhead was kept closely in touch with the progress of the search. Communication back to Havelock was complicated by the gale which brought power and telephone lines down round Hastings making the transmission of messages both tedious and difficult.

Victims: Kevin Simmons, Jim Trumper.

Recce Party: Owen Brown, Dick Clark, Jim Glass, John Phelps & 4 R.E.C.

Search Party: Edna Ansell, Jenny Chaplin, Robin Fargher, Ray Thomas, Laurie Cantwell, D. Rule, Sandy Crotter.

Support Party: (Sunday) Pat Bolt, Susan Waters, Peter Wood, Hal Christian.

Advanced Base: Norm Elder & 4 R.E.C.

Main Base: Janet Lloyd.

Total: 19 & 8 R.E.C.

--- ooo ---

No. 520.

WAIKOAU

11th Dec.

The party arrived at Waikoau and waited a little while for the arrival of the leader John Groome, who lives out there.

We soon got moving and after following the railway track for a short distance we dropped down into the Esk River. We waded down it for a while during which several of the party got rather wet, as the river was deep and slippery in places.

We arrived back at the house in time for an extended lunch hour.

Later in the afternoon we all piled onto the truck and visited the Hawke's Bay Forests, and so had a very interesting afternoon.

No in party: 13.

Leader: John Groome, Sub-Leader: J. Hare

N. Elder, F. McBride, Kevin Simmons, Bruce Taylor, Jim Glass, Jenny Chaplin, Owen Brown, Alan Berry, Angus Russell, Edna Ansell, Judy Hare, John Groome, Ian Berry.

--- ooo ---

No. 521.

NGARURORO. River Instruction

21st Jan.

We left for Kuripapango at 7.20 a.m. This was meant to be a picnir trip with instruction in river crossing. It turned out to be just a picnic. Everybody was too lazy to move, the weather being rather hot and windy. On arrival at the Pine tree we decided to follow the Waikarakaro stream down into the Ngaruroro. The going was pretty

good for a start. We moved along a clay river bed, slippery in parts but not bad, till we struck a second waterfall, not quite as high as the one known to the club. We sidled that one and then the trouble started. The stream got narrower and deeper till we struck a small gorge which forced the majority to go along the ridge. Some of us followed the river which eased out towards the Ngaruroro. Eventually we got to the Ngaruroro where we rested our tired limbs. After a while we got enough energy to walk down the river, and coming to some sort of a rapid where no sensible tramper would ever cross, the H.T.C. started practising river-crossing by means of a rope. Various methods were tried out which showed us the tremendous support a rope can give. Some of us got washed off our feet, but by hanging on to the rope were able to regain our footing. We left the river about 4 p.m. and got onto the road where Ian Stirling, who had been to Mrs Macdonalds', picked up our packs, which he dropped at the Pine tree. Quite a surprise awaited us there. The wind had picked up the canopy and dropped it a little further on in the scrub. We got the canopy as well as ourselves on board and set off for home.

No. in party: 13.

Leader: Els Bavens.

Jim Glass & brother, Jenny Chaplin, Peter Hurford, Alan Berry, Jack Landman, Heather Cameron, Derek Conway, Marie Valler, Marion Berry, Philip & Els Bavens, Rob Dominicus.

--- 000 ---

#### WAIMARAMA - KAIRAKAU

Transport difficulties on top of an extra gloomy weather forecast decided us to turn this trip into a working party. The trav of the truck needed our attention.

--- 000 ---

No 522

BLOWHARD - DONALD RIVER

18th Feb.

We arrived, or I should say stopped, about a hundred yards from the point where we meant to leave the road. I don't know quite what happened but the truck just stopped and it seemed to take all the mechanically minded males to right it. When the truck looked as if it might be sufficiently all right to take us home when the time came we set off down the pack track over the Blowhard. An uneventful walk except that where a few deer seemed to have made identical tracks we took the wrong one. However we arrived down at Lawrence Hut in time for a boil-up and lunch which was a very leisurely affair. After this everyone seemed very sleepy and disinclined to move. All the women and one male set off down the Donald River while the rest of the party lay on the bank. We didn't go very far for there was not much time, and when we arrived back at the hut the rest of the party had already left. An uneventful walk back to the truck, and so home.

No. in party: 13.

Leader: Judy Hare.

Ray Thomas, Owen Brown, Alister Moffat, Alan Mummery, Alan Berry, W. Romanes, Helen Hill, Edna Ansell, Joyce Stanley, Geraldine Loftus, Jim Glass, Bruce Taylor, Judy Hare.

--- 000 ---

No. 523.

WAIKAMAKA ( Working Party )

3-4th March.

Last year an enthusiastic working party cut some piles to replace the rotted ones under Waikamaka Hut. Our party had been instructed to finish the job. Eight people, rather loaded up with crowbars, creosote and other impressive articles, finally reached the hut about 1 p.m. and after a hasty brew started in. We made up in enthusiasm for a noticeable lack of proper tools, and perhaps a slightly less noticeable lack of experienced builders. By tea-time the hut had been levered up along the eastern wall, and four new piles and a bottom plate inserted into position. The cooks were most enthusiastic about the 8 inch gap between the hut and the ground, as the fire burned madly and the smoke almost all went up the chimney! Just as the stew was being served two new recruits arrived in, having left Hastings at mid-day.

The night was enlivened by the families of rats which now occupy the hut; they explored us and our packs quite thoroughly. A torch switched on on one occasion showed a line of four proceeding bonnet to bumper along the rafters.

It was raining next morning, but work continued. Some dug pile holes with a crowbar and an empty tin; some levered the hut up on long poles; some coaxed new piles into place and measured levels with a bottle with a bubble in it. As the fireplace threatened to fall in, the cooks laboured over an open fire in the rain to produce a brew, and for lunch a liquid concoction that contained whatever food everyone had left.

At 10 a.m. the hut was standing on four piles and a lot of holes. By 12.30 all was finished; at least we had only 2 piles left over, and an 8 inch gap all round the hut to fill in. So we left that for the next working party and went off home very satisfied in spite of the pouring rain. The truck ran out of petrol at Onga (it was still raining too) and a local farmer gave us some petrol and a haul with his tractor; so we didn't get back to Hastings till well after dark. It was still raining.

No. in party: 10.

Leader: Helen Hill.

Owen Brown, Dick Clark, Jenny Chaplin, Kevin Simmons, Graham Hare, Al Moffat, Peter Hurford, Joyce Stanley, Rex Chaplin, Helen Hill.

--- 000 ---

No. 524.

PUKETAUTAHU

18th March

We left Holt's at 7.50 a.m. and after one false turn reached Dartmoor Station. The truck behaved fairly well - just a few sub-

terranean rumblings - and after passing through six gates we arrived at Dartmoor woolshed.

In about an hour and a half we had climbed to the trig on Puketautahi, by which time Norm had collected his ferns and the party could relax. After a snack we dropped down to the Tutaekuri and selected a spot for lunch which we had in royal style - rock melon from Dick and mushrooms picked up en route and fried in butter. Lunch lasted a couple of hours and afterwards those feeling fit went with Norm up stream collecting more specimens. The rest of the party, who were getting fat for Easter, rested by the stream! The sky had clouded over by this time, but we had a pleasant laze and enjoyed watching four energetic Kiwis float downstream fully clothed hanging on to a log.

About 2.30 p.m. we made our way back over the hill, Norm's party catching us up enroute, and reached the woolshed about 4 p.m. after a very lazy but pleasant day.

No in party: 16 & 4 Kiwis.

Leader: Marianne Culpan.

Elizabeth Weismar, Els Bavens, Philip Bavens, Alister Moffat, Owen Brown, Norm Elder, Doug Napier, Geraldine Loftus, Dick Clark, Kevin Simmons, Graham Hare, Judy Hare, Frank McBride, Jim Glass, Pat Bolt, Marianne Culpan.

--- 000 ---

#### INTERNAL AFFAIRS - WILD LIFE BRANCH

To be paid for a holiday in the hills is rather unusual or maybe it depends on what one defines as work and play. Whatever the case, I was employed by the Government from October 28th to December 10th as a deershunter at a weekly wage of £7.5.0 plus 7/6 for every deer tail taken. My block was that which is known as Big Hill, covering an area bounded by Gold Creek in the south and No Man's Hut to the north. Quite a large chunk of country - at no time did I feel crowded!

My first job was to take an air drop at a site in the Makaroro River and another north of Piopio. Food, tentage, ammunition and all the bits and pieces that go to make a camp are all parachuted into the area, saving a great deal of time and expense. Once these air drops were taken and parachutes brought out to the base at Wakarara Mill, all that remained was to establish camp and begin shooting. For four of the six weeks I worked alone. The Field Officer brought in a "mate" for me, but he became a bit discouraged and went out after a fortnight's work.

Although alone, life is full of interest. By the time one does the camp chores, cooks and shoots the day is over leaving little time in which to become bored, and, provided the eyes are open to it all, the wild life will provide a never ending source of interest and amusement.

Just a short note on the purpose of deer control, for some reason must be given to justify the killing of these shy, graceful animals. "Erosion" is a word with which we are all familiar, but few understand any of the many ways in which it may commence. If a farmer overstocks

grassland a wet winter will see his land washing down the nearest creek and exactly the same principle applies to bush country. Deer, feeding on young undergrowth, grass etc. remove the very covering which binds the soil and allows rainwater to cascade off the hills forming the raging yellow torrent of a river in flood. A clear example of this can be seen in the Waipawa river which in a few short years has become a rocky riverbed that floods without warning. It is of little use raising the stopbanks another foot; rather should we attempt to check the initial cause.

The following are a few extracts from my diary for which no excuses are made!

28th Oct. Left Mill at 9.30, arrived Makaroro Camp at 12 o'clock. As I came around a bend on the way up I all but walked over six wee ducklings. What a consternation! Mrs Duck took off upstream as usual, with one wing dragging as though broken, while the little balls of fluff took to the water like so many corks and bobbed their way downstream. I watched them come ashore, shake themselves and waddle off in as dignified manner as a waddle will allow.

30th Oct. Arrived at airdrop about 2.30 p.m. and had a boilup, then collected 'drop. Pitched a tent just inside bush and stowed supplies away..... It is such a pleasant evening that I am sleeping out tonight. Have just finished a half billy of soup and a quart of tea and am writing this by the light of a candle pushed into the ground. It is indeed a still night and "Ruru" the owl has just glided to a tree above me. When I turn the torch at him his eyes glow like coals and I do not feel at all lonely. Here comes the moon!

2nd Nov. Did not rise until about 7.30 this morning as I felt a bit tired for some reason. Spent all day erecting Fly, etc. There are no walls with this Fly so decided to build log wall and spent morning cutting these. As I did not want to cut timber at river edge, climbed to top of slip directly behind camp and cut four logs about 18" diameter and some 15 ft long. Sniped the butts and dropped them down slip (about 100 ft). Was a little worried as one made directly for tent. However it came to a stop against a rotten log. Did not finish these till 1 p.m. so knocked off for a brew then. In afternoon, cut, brought to site and erected framework for Fly and Tent. Unpacked airdrop after this was done. Lost two tins of condensed milk which broke open spreading their contents through the sacks but on the whole it is pretty successful.....

3rd Nov. Took the rifle for a walk towards evening but after about an hour and a half in bitterly cold rain and not a smell of deer, morale dropped to zero so returned to camp and cooked evening meal.

10th Nov. Unpacked airdrop at camp yesterday then left for No Man's Hut at 2 p.m. Weather very misty from the Hut Ruin, visibility about 100 yards. Had not been along this way before and had a bit of fun finding main ridge from where track comes out onto tussock. However sorted that out after about three quarters of an hour and pressed on. Shot a stag along the way and by about 6 p.m. reckoned I was far enough along the Divide to look for the No Man's Ridge. Spent about half an hour in and out of gullies then dropped down and spent night just inside bush edge. Awoke at first light this morning (4.30 a.m.) and was pleased to see the mist had cleared. Or had it? A few wisps

floated in from the west so I crawled out into wet shorts, packed up and away. Of course I had turned off too soon the previous night and about half an hour brought me down to the hut.

Had breakfast and unpacked supplies from airdrop then decided to have a look around as mist had by then dispersed. Left at 9 a.m. and went down ridge to just before Hollowback then dropped down to river and up to tops again by way of middle arm off Herrick's spur. The watershed of this area is full of deer. Shot one on spur down to river, four on Herrick's and three on tops. Arrived back at hut at 7 p.m. put on a stew and had a bath. Yes a bath, in half a kerosene tin. It rained very heavily just after chopping firewood and fetching water so I reckon some one is looking after me!

There is nothing quite like the noise of rain on an iron roof to lull one to sleep so off I go.

20th Nov. While doing a careful bush stalk this morning I spotted three stoats having the time of their lives. Standing quite still I watched them for 10 minutes or so. They were doing a follow-the-leader chase, falling over one another in great style. One would lie in ambush and leap out on another, the result being a mix-up of brown bodies which twisted and turned until one raced away with the others in hot pursuit through pools and ferns with no quarter given. Some form of wrestling took place as they stood to one another on hind legs using forelegs as arms. Got a bit more detail on their colouring which is a greyish brown with a chest and belly of purest white and to add a little distinction, about half an inch of black on end of tail. They really are an amusing and exceptionally clean looking animal which I could have watched all day. Several times they approached to within three or four feet of me as they played until finally one scented me, gave a curious clucking whistle and dived amongst some tree roots from where a brown head would pop now and again to see if I was still there.

14th Dec. (Last entry, written at home).

And the Ruahines are behind me - tussock tops and all. I guess the seagulls still come upstream. Big red stags and graceful hinds pursue their daily existence in high winds or hot sun; feeding, ever feeding, eating away the very covering which binds these hills until the tiny rivulet becomes a forceful stream and the stream a rushing muddy torrent.

But the harsher side of nature recedes and an association with the hills is rather like the last contact I had with them. The sweet clinging scent of clematis wafted far out on the river bed; beautiful, mysterious and above all something which money cannot buy.

W. Romanes.

--- ooo ---

NEWS FROM THE F. M. C.Fiordland National Park

The Tourist Department has been authorised to make a charge for all persons using the Milford Track. Grants have been made to improve the track from the road to the mouth of the Iglington River and for the further improvement of the Lake Manapouri-Doubtful Sound track. The suggested reopening of the Lake Manapouri-Dusky Sound Track is under consideration. A seven year lease has been granted D.J.Gunn over the five hut sites on the Hollyford- Martins Bay Tourist Route that he operates. Additional precautions are being taken to prevent the disturbance of the notornis.

Tongariro National Park

Further grants have been made for the extensive motor camp at Whakapapa, to provide facilities at the Mahuia motor-camp and for the establishment of a camp on the Desert Road. A further £1,000 has been allocated for the access road into Mangatepopo hut and a grant for work on the track linking this hut with Ketetahi Springs.

Mr E.M.Wilson, the F.M.C. representative on the Mt Cook National Park Board, has supplied the following details:-

The first meeting of the above Board was held on 26/27th July 1955. The preliminary work of the Board concerns the re-opening of all tracks including the improvement of the access track from the Ball Hut to the Tasman. Most of the tracks have fallen into disrepair and in the case of the Hooker Track it is necessary to spend considerable sums on repairs to the swing bridges as well as to major repair work to the track which is at present in a dangerous state to other than mountaineers. Permission has been given to a private Company to form an air-strip to operate a scenic flight service. It is now possible for outdoor clubs to build huts in the National Park and this summer the Canterbury Mountaineering Club and New Zealand Deerstalkers Association will each build a base hut in the vicinity of Foliage Hill.

Urewera National Park

Some enquiries have been made concerning this Park, and the future of certain areas around it. Last year the Park, consisting of some 120 thousand acres, was created and comprises the watershed areas of Lakes Waikaremoana and Waikareiti. Negotiations are still proceeding with the Maori owners outside the Park boundaries, and although it is hoped that the ultimate boundaries of the Park will embrace much of the Urewera proper, exactly how much is impossible to say at the present time.

The Ernie Smith Route

The Otago Section of the N.Z.Alpine Club advises that it is still



very concerned about the hazards of the Ernie Smith Route. It is essential that tramping and climbing parties going to this area, realize the dangers of the crossing before they undertake it with insufficient equipment and knowledge. The "turnoff", i.e. when proceeding from the Dart, the "turnoff" to descend to the Matukituki, has been recairned. Please note that on no account should parties descend before reaching the "turnoff" cairn. This is how fatal accidents have occurred in the past, and until an alternative route is found, extreme care must be used in keeping to the correst route.

#### ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION

Three of the New Zealand observers who were in the Antarctic this summer are now back in New Zealand: Dr.T.Hatherton, Lt./Cdr. W.J.L.Smith and B.M.Gunn. They have carried out most useful reconnaissance work on foot in the McMurdo Sound area, looking for a suitable base site for the New Zealand Expedition. They also did some aerial surveys but found journevs on foot to be much more effective owing to the difficulties of judging the nature of the ground from the air. They did not have much success in finding a good site until a final long journey up the Ferrar Glacier was undertaken. This was done by the three men together. They were away for 10-12 days and covered over 150 miles. They penetrated well up the glacier to an altitude of 500 feet. On the way back an excellent base site was found at the foot of hills to the south of Butter Point. This site is on rock, is reasonably spacious, has geed access to the sea over permanent ice and is handy to a suitable landing site for aeroplanes. They were taken to and from the foot of the Ferrar Glacier by U.S. Navy Hellicopter. These men did excellent work under difficult conditions. The results they achieved are most encouraging.

Harry Ayres is expected back from the Australian Expedition soon, while Sir Edmund Hillary and J.Miller will not be back till April.

The team for the New Zealand Expedition to go south next summer is probably to consist of seventeen men, plus an I.G.V. scientific party of five, total twenty-two. The party of twenty-two is to consist of a field sledging party of 8, 3 airforce personnel, and a base party of 6. The position is as follows:-

<u>Field Party</u>	: Sir Edmund Hillary (Leader)
	H.H.Ayres (Mountaineer and dogs)
	J.H.Miller (Surveyor)
	B.M.Gunn (Geologist)
	M.Ellis (Engineer)
	R.A.Carlyon (Surveyor)
	Two men yet to be announced.
<u>Air Personnel</u>	: (R.N.Z.A.F.)
	Aq./Ldr. Claydon
	1 other pilot and a mechanic to be chosen.
<u>Base Party</u>	: Dr. Balham (Meteorologist)
	P.D.Mulgrew (Radio Operator)

A Diesel Engineer, a second Radio Operator, a Cook have yet to be finally selected. Medical officers in the Field & Base parties have also not yet been chosen.

I.G.Y. Party : Dr T Hatherton and 4 others yet to be announced.  
(Lt./Cdr. Smith is not an Expedition member, but went South as a New Zealand Naval Observer).

It is of interest to the Federation that at least 5 members of the Field Party are members of affiliated Clubs.

It is disappointing to report that the Ross Sea Committee has still not yet purchased a ship. Negotiations are going on in London.

The public appeal has been resumed after closing down during the Christmas period. It is hoped that the target of £100,000 in donations from the public will be reached during the next few months.

#### REPRESENTATION OF CLUBS IN THE FEDERATION

The new sub-committee set up to investigate the above decided to start again and determine

- (1) the need, desirability, or demand for a change from the existing system and
  - (2) The best method of effecting such a change, if any.
- Their conclusions, simply stated, are as follows:-
1. No club is pressing strongly for greater voting strength although two clubs, at least, would support any move in this direction.
  2. No real need for a change has been demonstrated except perhaps the desirability of reducing numbers of delegates at the Annual Meetings.
- No person, or Club, has suggested that the Federation is operating unfairly. What is best for all clubs is being accomplished - no small club is being victimised and no big club is being bled to provide the necessary running expenses. Individuals in the various clubs have the same benefits available to them regardless of the size of their club, and their personal contribution is a very small one.
3. A re-scaling of votes to give the larger Clubs more votes would automatically reduce the value of the votes held by everyone else, (like watering the currency). Few Clubs were willing to sacrifice any of their voting power, and it is impossible to strengthen some without weakening the balance.
  4. There is evidence of some sort of apprehension that the F.M.C. as a whole might some day do something to the detriment of the minority. In a different way is the feeling for protection against weight of numbers where a minority "group" is yet stronger in total than a lot of small interests. Past records show both these fears to be groundless, yet they still persist. To settle them, your executive proposed that any matter of any consequence shall in future be settled by a substantial majority of "two to one", rather than the bare majority in the past.
- The only other alteration to the existing system is the proposal to give Club delegates the right to operate two of their Club's votes if they so desire. Travelling expenses are so high that Clubs in areas a long way from the avenues of meetings should not need to send (save)

all.

two delegates when one will do, and the practice of co-opting "stand-ins" locally, has many disadvantages. Clubs will nevertheless be asked to provide maximum possible representation.

Concluding this discussion on Representation, it does seem that the present system is working very satisfactorily and that the proposed safeguards are the simplest methods to ensure that the Federation continues to operate for the overall benefit of all the Clubs.

--- ooo ---

NEAR SEARCH: Thursday 19th January 1956.

4.30 p.m. and I had just returned from disposing of twenty-two sheep carcasses when a 'phone message came through from Waipukurau Police via Hastings Police, concerning a missing deer-stalker in the Ruahines. While the information was being confirmed, a 6-man team was alerted by 'phone and at 5 p.m. told to report to the Hastings Police Station as soon as possible with sufficient gear etc. for four days, excluding food.

As Norm was in the Ruahines slightly north of the area in question a call upon him was virtually impossible, so I was spokesman for the club at the Police Station with perhaps more enthusiasm than was necessary.

We were told that two cullers had been operating near Pio Pio and on Tuesday morning one (inexperienced) said to his mate, "I shall see you this evening," and walked towards Pio Pio. That night a thick mist fell and he didn't return even on Wednesday night, so the mate on Thursday took off for Wakarara Mill and reported by 'phone to the Police.

At 6.30 p.m. our full team was ready (except for the food list) to leave by private car to establish base at the Mill. From here an early start the following morning would have seen the search party in the vicinity of Pio Pio via Colenso's Spur with an advance R.E.C. radio set reporting back their findings. As the weather report was good an Air Search for Friday morning was also contemplated.

Then came a 'phone message at 6.45 p.m. to say that the District Ranger had flown over Pio Pio at dusk and had seen the missing man who appeared to be fit and well.

So our search was only a near search, and the following day was almost the hottest on record with temperatures approaching 100 deg. F.

In conclusion I wish to thank the members of the search team, Constable Colburn of the Hastings Police, the R.E.C. of Napier, Dr. MacPherson, and Mrs. Conway, for their quick and willing co-operation.

DEREK CONWAY.

--- ooo ---

Accident Report Concerning the Death of F.J. Bruning, Who Died in the Mountains at Arthur's Pass on July 9th or 10th, 1955

On 9th July, 1955, two trampers descending from Mt. Cassidy became separated in the alpine scrub above Arthurs Pass during the late afternoon. One of the party reached Arthurs Pass township some time after dark, but the other, Geradus Johannes Bruning, did not arrive. Next morning, the Park Ranger, on being notified, arranged a search and the body was found at the foot of the Bridal Veil Falls.

COMMENTS

1. "It is unsafe and foolish to tramp ..... alone" (Safety in the Mountains 1953, pp 8 - 9). A party of two should never separate.
2. The responsibility for ensuring that a party of two do not separate is the responsibility of the man in front who must at all times make sure he is being followed. How closely followed depends on the circumstances, but in thick bush with darkness approaching, the party should be visible to each other. It is an elementary rule that the man in front for the time being, in the absence of a recognised leader, automatically becomes the leader of the party and he must accept this responsibility or let the other man lead the way.
3. The party was in-experienced and there was an inadequate safety margin for the trip carried out under winter conditions.
4. The party was inadequately equipped and the deceased should have had a parka and particularly a torch because of the short winter daylight.
5. Although it is not certain that death would have been prevented by early rescue, it is regrettable that a search was not initiated sooner.

Accident Report Concerning the Death of J.G.Kennedy who was Involved in an Avalanche in the Dobson Valley, 4th August, 1955.

J.G.Kennedy, Field Officer, Internal Affairs Dept. was in charge of a party shooting in the Dobson Valley on the 4th August, 1955, the party was working along the western slopes of the main valley. Kennedy was highest and the two other members were spread successively below him. During the afternoon Kennedy was involved in an avalanche, but the accident was not seen by his companions. His footsteps were followed subsequently and they showed that at about 6,000 feet on the shady side of a gully, he had apparently become caught in an avalanche and carried down it to his death.

COMMENTS

1. This accident happening to an experienced man emphasises the risk

of a snow slope avalanching in winter.

2. A knowledge of the time of the previous snowfall, the weather since the snowfall, the present weather, the angle and lie of the slope in relation to the sun, and the type of snow should all be considered in assessing the degree of consolidation of the snow and the liability of the slope to avalanche.

--- OO● ---

(The following is a letter to Norm and Kath Elder from George Lowe - Ed.)

"Theron"

At Shackleton Base 78deg. South.  
29th January 1956.

Dear Kath and Norman,

I have been absent so long now that I feel I must have been scrubbed from the H.T.C. membership. But it makes little difference, I still count myself as one.

This voyage has proved a long and eventful one and I have recorded little of it - but here is a résumé with a bias on the mountains that have come into the story.

We sailed from London 14th November on a cold grey November day, nosed down the Thames and then anchored for a whole day at Gravesend as someone had blundered and our special stove pipes for the Aga cookers had gone astray. A tug brought them to us and we pushed off.

For about ten days I was sick as hell and I prefer to forget the run to Cape Verde Islands. We stopped only 8 hours at St. Vincent (Cape Verde Is.) and headed South to the equator. The days were hot and calm and I felt much better. The ship is small and very tightly packed with deck cargo. Apart from three full holds we had twenty thousand gallons of high octane fuel in 44-gallon drums on deck. On top of these drums, which stood on end and made a complete platform, we had 24 dog kennels, two Auster aircraft (one in a crate and one mounted on floats), a Sno-cat in a 3-ton crate, 60 oxy-acetylene bottles, 2 tons of T.N.T.,  $\frac{1}{2}$ -ton of flares and Verey light cartridges, boxes of detonators, aircraft spares, skis, a surf boat, 80 barrels of caustic soda and something else for making hydrogen for Met. balloons, several tons of heavy metal matting for the hut foundation in snow, 6 telegraph poles, 6 crates of asbestos-covered chimneys, 4 tons of raw whale meat (bought in S. Georgia) and later 60 tons of seals that we shot in the ice and used as dog food. And a notice saying "No Smoking"..... This pile had the deck about 14 feet underneath where we, 34 of us counting the crew, plus 24 wild huskies and 12 growing pups used to move about.

In a month we reached Montevideo and met up with Ed Hillary and Bob Miller who had flown from Auckland to meet us. They left N.Z. as we were sailing down the South American coast arriving in Monte with a couple of days to spare after flying to Fiji, Hawaii, and then to Vancouver, thence to Mexico City, Lima, La Paz, Buenos Aires and Montevideo. This it appears is the shortest present route to S. America and a good argument for an Antarctic air route.

In Vancouver Ed and Bob were taken for a five-hour flight in a ski-wheeled Beaver aircraft (the type they will use down South this year) over the Coast Range of B.C. Mostly around Mt. Waddington (13,000 ft.), a magnificent mountain in a comparatively untouched range.

Montevideo is a sailor's port - hot and rather sordid as any docks are. The main interest were the masts of the Graf Spee which just stick up above the water in the River Plate estuary.

Five days later we reached South Georgia. This is a magnificent island, 60 miles long and all mountains with great glaciers going down and calving into the South Atlantic Ocean. The latitude is the same South as Edinburgh is North (55 deg.) but because of the Antarctic convergence of currents and the winds it's Antarctic in character. The mountains are 9000 ft. high and all virgin. The peaks are very glaciated and mostly difficult although the highest (Mt. Paget 9,750 ft.) is rounded and easier at the top with difficult approaches. The weather is the most formidable obstacle. We arrived during a rare clear spell but had snow later. I climbed Mt. Duse, a rock peak 2000 ft. above our anchorage and got some good photographs and a breath of good mountain air.

We took on fuel and water and test flew the Auster (on floats) and sailed for the Weddell Sea. In three days we were in light pack ice and by Christmas Day we were in heavy pack and although we didn't admit it until New Year's Day we began to be stuck in the ever-tightening grip of the drifting pack ice of the Weddell Sea.

22nd March,

Thames Estuary, England.

Sorry - a big gap, and now we've nearly finished the voyage. We berth near the Tower of London tomorrow at 10 a.m.

My intention was to tell you more about South Georgia - it's a place with great character. The mountains are superb and the fringe near the sea is lush with green mosses, tussocks and various bidi bidi types of vegetation. There are no trees or even scrubby bushes but the growth is really active in summer, especially so in February when we returned.

Every type of South Atlantic sea bird seems to congregate around the island, especially the albatross family and many types of delicate petrels. Seals and whale abound and there are three shore-based whaling stations in beautifully sheltered harbours on the north side. Apart from Shackleton's epic crossing of South Georgia in 1916, no one has taken an interest in South Georgia's interior until 1951, when a Duncan Carse arranged a private survey party and has done so far four expeditions covering the whole of the island. His parties have man-hauled and back-packed over most of the glaciers and made a fairly good basis for a map. They have climbed none of the main range of peaks, which are almost worthy of an expedition in themselves. The whaling business is fascinating - and sad as they are magnificent animals.

To go over the month in the ice now seems tedious. Mostly it was full of disappointments and hard work digging and blasting out, only to be disappointed again and again. The ship was badly damaged - we have over 50 broken ribs and the side is bent and twisted and we had a large hole near the bow. When we finally broke free at the eleventh hour the joy was great and we set our noses south and the captain went into the ice with great determination. His decision

to steam for four hours along a chain-wide lead between two towering piles of rafted pack ice was his most daring move - and came off with great success. we reached 78 deg. South ly 29th Jan. and chose a site.

The unloading was hectic - always 16 or 18 hours a day. We had a fierce Northerly storm which swamped our landing site and tore the ship from her moorings. I was ashore and the ship drifted off into the murk with the captain shouting that he would return. We waited along the ice front as the sea smashed against it and rose in great splash waves as against a breakwater in heavy sea. The splash froze on us as ice as we waited. The ship appeared butting floating ice and edging against the ice, as she came in scraping against the ice edge; the captain had to get close enough for us to jump aboard and not so close that the ship's weight would break off the ice. The waves and swell were lifting the ship 6 feet above our reach every couple of seconds and our boarding was pretty wild and hair-raising. Five blokes were up the hill ashore and were left as we moved away from the ice edge with the waves breaking over and lashing around the crates we had abandoned.

The north wind brought in pack ice and in a few hours over two miles of loose pack had jammed up against our landing site, calmed the sea, and cut us off from the boys ashore. Next day the wind changed and the ice pack moved away and the ship got back and we rescued everything, most of which was damaged by sea water.

The rest of the unloading was harassed by the continual menace of the ice pack moving in again. We sailed with only one hour's notice on 7th. February as the ice came in with new ice forming between the loose pack.

The voyage back has been long and wearisome - mostly rough. South Georgia was a good break, 3 days for welding and hull repairs, then to Montevideo and north to Madeira - a lovely island where we all had a wonderful welcome. And now London tomorrow.

I hope the first day cover arrives safely. Good luck to all.

Yours,

George.

---ooo---

#### CHRISTMAS CARDS:

The Club was very pleased to receive Christmas cards from the following:

George Lowe: A special Royal Geographical Society edition with a sketch of the southern portion of the globe showing the proposed route from the Weddell Sea to the Ross Sea drawn in a thin red line which in any A.A. map would indicate quite a fair road for cars (?).

Ed & Louise Hillary: This also had the South Pole touch as it bore the inscription "Trans-Antarctic Expedition N.Z. Inc."

Jim Gibbs: Who shattered the club by announcing in his card his engagement.

Pam Hansen (née Dyson), from Canada.

Nora Finn (Christchurch), and D'Arcy Williams (New Plymouth).

---ooo---

PRIVATE TRIPS.STEWART ISLAND.

The Mollyanner Tramping Club (semi-disintegrated) spent its summer holiday at Stewart Island this year. A rather tedious journey by ferry, bus and train took the six of us (four from Wellington and two from Christchurch) to Invercargill on 5th February and next morning we left early by train for Bluff where we boarded the steamer for Half Moon Bay. In spite of a strong southwest wind and overcast showery weather, the 2½ hour crossing was not rough. We found ourselves a pleasantly sheltered spot supporting the funnel, which in return supplied comfortable warmth to our backs.

We had arranged to stay at "Moturau Moana" about a mile from Half Moon Bay. This is a South African dutch type of house, built by Miss Baker (whose father was an early New Zealand surveyor) and donated, together with a large garden and 35 acres of native bush reserve, to the Government a few years ago. Small parties - mainly 'varsity students, botanists, geologists, etc. - can be accommodated and meals are provided - freshly caught fish and crayfish being often on the menu. As there were only five beds we took a lilo and sleeping bag for the sixth member of the party.

The weather, after a long fine, warm spell, decided to make sure we did plenty of tramping to keep warm, and we had fires most nights. It was both cold and showery for most of the eleven days of our stay; this, however, had the added advantage of keeping us almost sandfly - and entirely mosquito - free. There are many lovely walks, through bush and skirting inviting sandy beaches and bays with pleasing views. We managed to cover almost all the half and whole day trips from Half Moon Bay; spent a day on historic Ulva Island in Paterson Inlet, climbed the second highest mountain on Stewart Island, Mt Rakeahua, 2217', at the head of Paterson Inlet.

Ulva Island is covered in glorious bush with a wealth of bird life. Having lunch near the jetty we had to fight for our food with three wekas and a number of seagulls. Anything edible put down carelessly was instantly snatched by one of the cheeky fowl. Wekas were as tame as hens all over the island. There were numerous bellbirds, warblers, parakeets, robins, native pigeons, tuis and many others. One evening we saw a flock of about 50 pigeons near Moturau Moana and there were frequently numbers feeding on five finger berries in the garden.

To climb Rakeahua we left on a perfect morning by launch from Golden Bay on Paterson Inlet and an hour and a half's trip took us as far as low tide would permit. From here we walked 45 minutes over tidal flats to the bottom of the track. This proved to be well graded, mostly through bush, some leatherwood and finally open country to the rocky top in 2½ hours. From here there were magnificent views in all directions. The whole of Paterson Inlet lay below us to the east, Mason's Bay on



the West Coast in the opposite direction; northwards were the Ruggedy Mountains and Mt Anglem, 3200', the highest mountain on the Island wore a cloud hat; to the south was a jumble of rough, hilly country. We were unfortunately too late for the flowers, a few very dwarf Spaniards, the odd celinisea and a tiny hebe were all that remained. A chill wind hastened the eating of lunch and we made the descent in  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours for a boil-up at the bottom, where the launch picked us up at high tide.

Round the coast the dominant shrub is "mutton bird" shrub, a large-leaved senecio, which grows quite tall. The main big trees are rimu, miro, rata and kamahi (*weinmannia racemosa*) which, contrary to its North Island habit, grows into a really big tree - 70 to 80' tall. There are many lancewoods, Konini and tree ferns, the latter being *Dicksonia* and another similar type, no black or silver being seen. Of the many coprosinas, "stinkwood" was the most in evidence.

Three (fool?) hardier members of the party had three quicks dips in the sea, but the other half was content with the application of hot water to the anatomy. Our eleven days flew by all too soon and on a lovely day we reluctantly left this lovely isle to return to the crowded cities.

Half Moon Bay has a number of general stores and a modern Post Office. The ferry runs both ways on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and an amphibious aircraft lands on the Bay and runs up on the beach - 2 hour's flying time from Invercargill. There is a licensed hotel, a large boarding house and one or two smaller ones. The only so-called camping ground is an exposed foot-ball field on top of a ridge with no facilities or amenities. It is a pity that to reach Stewart Island there is such a long and tiring journey (unless one flies) from the North Island.

Party consisted of:- Molly Molineux (H.T.C.) now Wellington, Nancy Tanner (H.T.C.) - the "Mollyanners" - Frank Bodley (ex H.T.C.) now Wellington, and three friends made on last summer's Doubtful Sound tramp.

N. TANNER.

### SPENCER MOUNTAINS.

We decided to fly down to Blenheim to give us more time in the mountains. What a way to travel! We left Napier at 11.30 a.m. At 3 p.m. we had changed our clothes, left our good ones in a taxi office and had reverted to that most uncertain means of travel, hitch-hiking, to take us the sixty miles to Lake Rotoiti.

Wednesday, 28th December - By midday we had all reached Lake Rotoiti and after a quick lunch we were on our way along the side of the lake. But it was slow going with 60 lb packs. After a quick swim, we reached the head of the lake and pushed

on for another hour before making camp. That evening we had the first of many excellent stews and the sandflies had their first taste of us. While sitting round the fire we thought we saw a cat.

Thursday, 29th December - Early morning mist soon cleared to give us a cloudless sky for the rest of the day. We had good going most of the day up this most beautiful valley, over grassy flats or under tall beech trees full of many birds, a change after the birdless bush in the Rushines. Feeling a little the worse for wear, we decided to call it a day when we reached the Nelson Tramping Club hut which lies on the eastern flank of Mt Hopeless. Sandflies increased as we went up the valley.

Thursday, 29th December - The packs didn't seem to get any lighter and today our aim was to establish our base camp in the East Sabine river. We pushed on up the river to the large tussock basin at its head. Sidling high up under the massive rocky form of Mt Travers we gained the saddle, 5900', about mid-afternoon. As the weather was still fine we had a good view of Mt Franklyn which we hoped to climb in the next few days. Through another basin, then by a good spur we reached the river where we found a ready made camp site. In a tin were the names of two previous visitors belonging to the Manawatu and Auckland U.T.C. Sandflies in greater numbers still.

Friday, 30th December - Best day today so we lay in bed late and had a leisurely breakfast. Spent the rest of the morning washing our clothes and sunbathing. A kea got a bit too inquisitive and settled on one of our toes while we sunbathed. In the afternoon we went down the river to inspect a slit gorge, which must have been about 100' deep by about 10' wide at the top.

Saturday, 31st December - Today we had a go at Franklyn. The weather after all this time had begun to break, but it was not as bad as all that. We went down stream to the gorge, then struck west up the steep bush slope. After climbing several rock cliffs we reached the bush line. An hour's wait for the mist to clear, then on up over the tussock on to the rock ridges. We skirted the top of a large scree which we had in mind for our way of retreat. Then on to the western ridge which got the better of us after half an hour. We had a quick lunch and then went over on to the eastern ridge which we scrambled up for some time. We weren't very happy and as time was getting on we decided to leave Mt Franklyn for another year. We found the scree gave us a quick method of descent right down to the valley floor. That evening we celebrated New Year's Eve with a large camp fire. A good time was had pulling down dead trees and putting them on the fire.

Sunday, 1st January, 1956 - We struck camp and were away by eight. We had our last look at the gorge and pushed on into the Sabine itself where we found the going very good over

shingle or grassy flats. Where the river turns west on its last stretch before reaching Lake Rotoroa, we had to climb high on the south bank to avoid yet another gorge. Back in the river we came across a very old slab hut which would still give good shelter if needed. We camped near by.

Monday, 2nd January - We had our first rain of the trip during the night but it soon stopped and all that remained was a heavy mist, which stayed with us all day. We travelled by compass up the broad flat spur behind our camp. First it was the old fallen timber that made our progress slow, then mountain beech growing not more than a foot apart. In the end we reached the bush line in just about the right place. On we pressed with visibility down to about 100 yards. We tried knocking the drops of water off the tussock to get a drink but in the end gave it up and went on thirsty. We hoped to strike one of the alpine lakes which should be just over the ridge, but which ridge? There seemed to be ridges all over the place. We had just about given up hope when after scrambling over yet another ridge we heard running water. A quick scabble down through the mist brought us to a most beautiful stretch of clear water tucked away in the tussock. It must have been about four hundred yards long and was fed by a small stream. Our camp was pitched on a small flat overlooking the lake.

Tuesday, 3rd January - Today seemed brighter with not so much mist about. After a quick swim at what must be a record height for the club (6000') we were on our way again over more rock ridges till the going became easier as we approached Mt Robert, the Nelson ski grounds. We passed the now idle tow and their well equipped huts then on down the well worn track back to Roto-iti.

After a day's rest at the lake we travelled once more to Blenheim, then flew on to Napier after what we all thought could not have been a better trip.

Party: Alan Berry, Alan Mummery, Jim Glass.

#### COPLAND PASS - GRAHAM SADDLE.

Errol Lockhead, Dave Close and I left Hastings on the morning of Wednesday, 14th December. Drizzle seeped into the load on Errol's car, but it was an indication of the beautiful weather to come. Next morning the Prefect drove over the Port Hills from Lyttelton and we headed - via the Chrichchurch provision stores - for the mountains.

8 p.m. found us at the N.Z.A.C. Unwin Hut, 2 miles below the Hermitage. Here we stayed for three days trying out our feet on the local slopes, 4000' one day, about 6000' the next. Then a Sunday afternoon walk to Hooker Hut with Cook towering above us. Monday was misty - the day off was welcome. The hut primuses helped us to rid ourselves of our last whole vegetables, etc. A 6 a.m. start saw us off on the long steep climb up to Copland Pass, 7000', where after a lunch break, Dave and I trotted along to Main Divide south to Madonna, 7600'.

Then down into the West Coast via the Copland River but drowsiness and darkness overtook us fast before Douglas Rock Hut. We slept on the track in company with wekas and keas.

Dave's sunburn demanded another welcome rest-day in the luxurious bush surrounding Douglas Rock Hut. Then, Thursday, off on the long hike down river to the road. It must be about 25 miles but, to the delight of the mosquitoes of "mosquito alley", we didn't quite make it, spending the night instead as their "guests". A very early start the next morning took us to the road in an hour in time to catch a lorry heading 30 miles north to Franz Josef motor camp.

Errol left us here and, after watching his speck of a plane vanish into the Southern Alps, Dave and I prepared for our departure the next day for Almer Hut. Walking up the ice of the Franz Josef in overcast weather was pleasant, but the long, weary pull up the steep 1200' tussock slope to the hut had no relief except the keas. There were four of us to enjoy Xmas at Almer Hut. What a glorious site for a hut! The tangled mass of the glaciers sweeps round and below us while away to the N.W. the main divide peaks dot the skyline. On Boxing Day, Dave and I climbed Mt Drummond, about 8500', and gazed down into Westland and across at the giants Tasman, Cook, etc. The following day was murky but daybreak saw us away and 9 a.m. gave us a view from the top of Graham Saddle, 8759'. We then descended into the mist and snow of the Rudolf Glacier, emerging, rope still intact, 4000' and 6 hours later near de la Beche Refuge.

The main part of our trip was over but after a day's rest I took in the Minarets, 10058', while Dave headed for Ball Hut. After 60 minutes sleep, 3-4 p.m., I staggered into Ball Hut and next morning a borrowed alarm clock sent me on my way walking the 12 miles to the bus at the Hermitage. And so our holiday had ended, but as the mountains faded into the blue distance, plans were forming for a return trip next summer.

Hal Christian.

#### THE MUELLER TO THE HOOKER. (The long way round.)

We had an excellent trip down South. "We" being Snow Williams, John Harrison, Peter Beveridge and myself. Found a way eventually into the Landsborough by way of Christopher Col, (out of the Mueller) climbing Mt Bannie on the way and a virgin knob over Mt McKerrow. With the weather still holding we crossed Douglas Pass into the Douglas and from there into the Copland by way of Welcome Pass. Spent two days in a high camp during unsettled weather waiting for a climb on Sefton, then, as "Hughie" dug his toes in, moved down to Douglas Rock Hut in the Copland. We really got the works that night as a cracking thunderstorm moved over the area.

Our next move took us up into the Strauchon, over Baker Saddle into the Hooker and out to the fleshpots. The others, unfortunately, had to go home at this stage but I hung around and got in a climb of the Low Peak on Cook in unsettled weather.

WALLY ROMANES.

( The foregoing is an extract from a letter written by Wally Romanes to Norm Elder. - ED. )

### S O C I A L     N E W S .

Births: To Hal and Heather Christian - a daughter.  
To John McIntyre - a daughter.

Marriages: Margaret Haycock to Murray Pepper.  
Colleen Fisk to Harold Debbage.

Engagements: Hugh Elder to Marian Derby.  
Jim Gibbs was so excited that he omitted to tell us the name of his fiancée. However, by the time this is published her name will be Gibbs as Jim said they were to be married on April 14th. They are sailing for N.Z. on May 31st or soon after.

John Reid has reached London. He ran into Jim in Piccadilly and has also seen Cath Stirling.

Wally Romanes is harder to keep track of than George Lowe. The papers generally tell us what George is doing. But Wally, having left for overseas, was suddenly seen one day in Napier! The boat he is on was loading there.

Tom Oosterdyk is now in Wellington, studying music.

Molly Young is in Rome at the moment.

Nancy Tanner has returned to Hastings.

George Lowe is with us again for a very brief spell. He has written us an account of some of his adventures which are printed elsewhere in this copy of "Pohokura".

NEW MEMBER: We welcome Frank McBride to the club.

### RE-UNION IN JANUARY 1957:

The response to our circular concerning this has been most encouraging; but there are still about 35 ex-members whom we have not been able to contact. Any more addresses forthcoming?

### CLUB EVENINGS:

At Club evenings we have seen slides of Hal's trip to the Southern Alps; Dave's trip to Australia; Derek's trip to the Dart - Rees area a few years ago; and at a special evening up at Norm and Kath's, George showed us glimpses of the many and varied places he has visited in the last few years.

O.H.M.S. - BOTANICAL EXPEDITIONSBotanical Truants

Christmas on the home front has its unfamiliar distractions. A puzzling group of cliff plants flower about then and the chance sighting of two new colonies started a hunt which took us from Tutira to Turnagain.

Banks found one at Cook's original landing in 1769 and Colenso found the other and botanists have been worrying at them off and on ever since.

As far as we have gone (there is more to be done up north) Banks' plant comes south as far as Waipatiki on the coast and Patoka Hill inland. Colenso's is on the coast from Napier Bluff to Turnagain, but all round the Northern Ruahines from Pohokura to Poporangi, there are colonies of queer plants neither one thing nor the other.

Turnagain was part of a two day collecting trip over hilly back roads with a surprising number of small country pubs. One snag down there is the complete absence of drinking water - had to take billies to the nearest pub in the finish. The Cape is a dirty big papa bluff, with a bouldery beach and a lot of kelp in the surf and is probably only negotiable at low tide.

We found what we were looking for and also a smaller relation, for seed of which a research worker in Seattle is screaming. This was the end of our botanical holiday as we were due for serious work in the Ruahines, except that coming off Pohatuhaha Kath picked up yet another form of plant wanted in Seattle - not seen before in the Ruahines either.

No Man's - Hut Ruin

18th - 23rd Jan. 1956.

Went up Golden Crown in mist and rain and in trying to take a short cut across to the cullers' track disgraced myself by walking in a circle - for the third time hereabouts. Reached the track by compass, considerably chastened and completely soaked, and made No Man's after dark. The old track down from the Iron Peg has been reopened.

Our main job to find out what is happening to the bush on the plateau. This meant a certain amount of exploring, but mostly running round bogs and probing with a piece of fencing wire, then sinking pits to bring up samples of pickled timber. What was interesting was that there were two layers of pumice, the lower probably 3000 years old, and we brought back pieces of log from well below this with the bark still on, and even grass pressed over them. Our specimens (enough to build a decent fire) are being identified and perhaps carbon-dated.

Visited Hut Ruin and Wally's camp (now abandoned for a Piopio site) and came out over Pohatuhaha - not so hot in a gale of wind. Goats on the trig and down the spur. The rock face half-way down gave some trouble and seems to have got worse. The bottom has grown up in scrub and finding our way on to the track from Matthews in the dusk was a bit of a flounder. It runs high up the slope of the range, partly along the "wave line", with deep dives into cross-gullies. The Sentry Box end is well cut and marked, but the middle section poorly marked and overgrown with thickets of stinging nettle. Some pretty good navigation by torch-light took us through the worst of this, but at 9.30 we had had enough and dossed down at a creek an hour from the hut, and came out next morning.

Air Drop

It was a surprise to find No Man's Hut stocked with something like a couple of hundredweight of assorted food stuffs, about half of them tinned dainties. An assorted population of rats, mice and opossums were very much at home, and very noisy, but after Bob had rushed out in the small hours and shot an opossum doing acrobatics on the chimney the nights were more peaceful. Still more surprising was a second air drop. An Auster made two visits dropping 15 - 16 padded sugar bags loaded to about 40 lbs, most of them with japara parachutes about 4' square. Quite a number landed in the creek and Dick retrieved one from a tall beech over the ridge, but a large dent in the roof suggests that an earlier drop had scored a bullseye.

As no one was on the spot we collected a dump outside the hut, say 6 cwt, to the obvious surprise of the plane on a recce the following day. One drawback to this tinned manna from heaven is the enormous tin dumps that are accumulating round huts - one benefit is the use of tins to mark the track across the featureless stretches of scrub-tussock on the plateau.

Rangiwahia

6th - 9th Feb. 1956.

The results of the No Man's bog were so interesting that we could not resist for long the temptation to have a look at the bogs near the Rangiwahia Ski Club Hut and try out our new probe - a six foot steel rod. Only made Rangiwahia Hotel the first night as we were late and the weather ahead murky. Some work has been recently done on the track, a wire run across the big slip and the suspension bridge re-anchored, but a nasty little chute between them is the biggest hazard. The tractor track is not recommended locally; the hut is fairly weathertight still but two windows were broken and the chimney had collapsed.

Got some useful work done the first afternoon, hoping for the weather to lift overnight and give us a good day for another job, an examination of the Oroua bush line, but the following morning was a stinker with mist, wind, and heavy rain. However, time wasn't wasted as it gave a chance to make a rough check over results and the weather lifted encouragingly in the afternoon, so we hopped up on to Maungahua, with even gleams of sunlight on the tops, but we were unlucky with our breaks and only got dim glimpses of the Oroua Valley and Otumore. It was still misty when we came out next morning. Looked up John Oakden, secretary of the Rangiwahia Ski Club, who is keeping things going there, and then home to attend the H.T.C. committee meeting.

Sentry Box

16th - 18th Feb. 1956.

On our way out from No Man's with a load of fossil timber we had mislaid one specimen at our last night's camp. Coming off Pohatuhaha we had picked up a strange plant. - And we had never found the Sentry Box site. So we went. Took the Minx right in to the Matthews take off, found the specimen and, thanks to information picked up at the Mangerton Camp, located the doll's house bivvy, made of iron from the Sentry Box.

On our return the weather did the dirty on us, a steady drizzle turning the access road to a bog. After 100 yards we stuck and had to walk out for help. At Master's Hut we picked up a note from Dick Clark also after the same fossil, but unfortunately in the flurry of getting under way,

overlooked another note in the car and didn't realize that he was still in at the Ohara with a survey party. "Jim" at the Mangelton Camp came to the rescue with a Fordson, but after trouble floundering in it was obviously going to be no picnic coming out. However, we battled half way before giving up, then flagged the survey party whose Land Rover made short work of the tow. By this time it was dusk, the Ohara was up and we were very glad to accept the survey party's hospitality for the night.

Oroua

27th Feb. - 2nd March.

Of the 5,000 trees planted at the head of the Moorcock we could only find some 100 wind-blown, deer-bitten spruce after a couple of searches. Our route lay south of Otumore, just had a glimpse of the country from the trig with cloud pouring in, then mist, rain and leather-wood for the rest of the day. Pitched a very wet camp on a river flat. Heavy rain in the night and after dawn the river rose fast, 15" in 4 hours. We couldn't get across to work on the other bank and a trip upstream involved a high side in the first mile. Found an empty cullers camp on the next flat upstream and fixed our position on the map.

Next day was fine and the river had dropped, so spent it on the Whanahuia bushline as scheduled, and on the last day came out on the next spur upstream - a good route on to Otumore (Lin, Janet and I got boxed down this spur in mist on one famous occasion). Leatherwood was a feature of this trip, but this was intentional, as mountain beech stops about here and we wanted to find out what takes its place. You will have guessed the answer!

Otamateanui

19th - 26th March.

A large bush tributary of the Rangitikei drains east off Patutu and Karikaringa. The trip was to check whether red or silver beech come in there (Ans: No). Access is difficult from sheer distance. Went in off the Desert Road across Moawhango Basin, an enormous hollow of red tussock, drained by fantastic gorges and mainly inhabited by wild horses. Also contains queer fossil beds of a coal seam that burns. The lower Otamateanui is very narrow and 2,000' below the Motumatai Range, though its upper vallies look pretty open. We dropped in near the Makomiko confluence and dropped down to spend our third night a little above the main Rangitikei. Took two full days to come out via Stowman Range and Bare Acre to the Rangitikei Bridge. We sighted no one for 5 days, but the local grapevine followed our course with uncanny accuracy!

N.L. ELDER

NGAURUHOE

23rd - 26th Feb.

Mt. Ngauruhoe, 7750 feet, of recent years has erupted lava and rocks. A new cone has been built up inside the western wall of the 1/4 mile diameter crater, and all former vents covered by a smooth ashy surface. Using the Waiho-honu Hut as a base, I failed on Friday, 23rd Feb. to climb by the sou-west route and returned via the Great Rift to the hut. Visited Ohinepango Spring next day where a full-grown river emerged from the hill. Sunday took the track to Te Heuheu, 9070 feet, the north peak of Ruapehu. Only fragments of snow clung amongst the dry, rocky, steep slopes which repelled me sarcastically.



On Monday westerly clouds tried to envelop Ngauruhoe, but at my advance they retreated. High clouds gave a cool shade as I ascended the south lava flow. This is a fine rock climb, the best on the rock-strewn cone. Two hours from the hut to the base of the cone opposite Tama, 5276', and three hours to the top. The last 500' was loose ash and stones. The north-eastern and south-western walls have crumbled away leaving low crater rims. The low north-western gap where lava overflowed a few years ago still remains with the base of the new active cone alongside. The new crater pouring out steamy fumes I guessed to be fifty yards across, and the sides were bowl-shaped. There was a sound as of rocks crackling in intense heat. On the north-eastern and western outer slopes about 150' down fumes were emerging. The rocks on the outer slopes below the summit rim, in several places showed signs of heat treatment, perhaps from lava in the throat of the mountain. The slabs of plastic lava thrown over the rim are more crumbly - like coke - than former eruptions; perhaps an evidence of hotter and higher welling up of lava.

Time from the Desert Road to the Waihohonu Hut - 1 3/4 hours. Hut in good order and comfortable.

Angus RUSSELL.

-----  
HIKURANGI via RANGI

1st - 3rd Jan.

1st January, a hot day, but got on to the Waipawa Saddle at last. Along Three Johns, 69, Rangi, then via nice shingle into the Rangi Creek - still very hot. Made a comfortable camp at the junction of Rangi Creek and the Kawhatau, and got into the sack pretty early as we had to catch up with some sleep from the previous night. 2nd January just as hot. Moved up the Kawhatau past Waterfall Creek, where we found a fairly good spur leading up to point 5335'. It took us two hours to get up. From that point we had a nice view of Sawtooth and the main range, Taihape and Lake Taupo. Moving north, we struck quite a few big tarns. Iron Peg was almost gone, only a few scattered boards remained. Further north we struck Hikurangi, 5622'. From here we found a spur which brought us down to the river in a few minutes time. Walking up the Kawhatau we passed an abandoned deerstalkers' camp. When we got to our own camp a couple of rabbits were chasing each other.

3rd January: mist, rain and cool temperatures. Up Rangi creek, over Rangi saddle to Waikamaka Hut, where we found tons of food, left by that deerstalker who met with a nasty accident some time back. Over Waipawa saddle, down the Waipawa River, and our "Old Girl" brought us back home again. Sighted eight deer - one on Hikurangi and seven on Rangi saddle.

-----Els and Philip BAYENS

PROPOSED HUT IN MAKAHU SADDLE

For some time the Club has been considering building a Hut in the region of the Makahu Saddle. You can imagine how we sat up and took notice when the following letter from the District Forest Ranger was read out at a meeting:-

"The Forestry Service is considering constructing a permanent all-weather hut in the Makahu Saddle to facilitate Wild Life control in this area and to open up the Northern Kawekas to trampers and deerstalkers. Would your club be interested in examining alternative sites in the Makahu Saddle and

