

MAGIC MOMENTS



WITH THE BISHOPDALE TRAMPERS

1985-2006



Edited by Allan Hunter

Illustrated by John Andreae

The first tramping club formed in the Bishopdale area of Christchurch, NZ, now celebrates its twenty-first birthday.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Front Cover: Descending from Boundary Hill towards Lake Coleridge, 23 February 2005.

INTRODUCTION

When Don Chadderton resigned, he wrote:

"The Bishopdale Tramping Club is a model of what the ideal club should be in that it consists of a wonderful group of people who enjoy a common goal with a fine sense of cooperation and friendship. It has been a privilege to be a member over the past five years and to share some interesting, sometimes challenging, but always satisfying days, exploring Canterbury.

I have enjoyed the positive spirit within the Club and wish every member:

- The joy of many more years of that view from the top after the slog that makes it all worthwhile.
- The delight of that shower or bath at the end of a long day in the rain or the mud.
- The taste of that deserved drink, and a chat round the fire in a country pub on the way home.
- The opportunity of being part of friendly banter in the queue for pies at Hororata.
- A coat that stops water running down the back of the neck.
- The fun of charging down the scree.
- And, most of all, the good company that the Club offers."

This letter serves as a very good beginning to the Club's history. Tramping is a healthy (p.50), non-competitive activity within the scope of most people. There are no winners, just the joy of taking pan. In fact, if any person is in difficulty, everything possible is done to give help so that all reach the finishing point.

I joined in 1988 at an important time when with membership surging, the bus was replacing the car for travelling. This had advantages - we could explore more distant places, no worries driving, the president with the microphone kept us informed and the view of the countryside was superb. I, personally, now leave with many happy memories.

Over twenty-one years, nearly 400 Cantabrians have taken part and are, I am sure, the better for it. To Waimairi District Council and their Bishopdale Community Officer, Julie Battersby, our thanks for their foresight in launching the Club.

Allan Hunter

President's Message

As I prepare for my second term as President I am mindful of the effort put in by previous presidents to ensure the successful continuation of the Club. Things are changing in society today with the result that the Club has had to become more professional in its operations. These changes include relationships with landowners, protection of our members with the Club becoming an Incorporated Society and a greater emphasis on safety.

The Club performs another very important role in society by giving comradeship and support for its members whilst enabling them to maintain a healthy level of fitness. Membership evolves as those older members, finding their tramps beyond them, choose to move over to other groups, but most importantly new members join us. This has ensured the Club's continuation and hopefully will do so in the future.

Edward Clark

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The Team of 1990 at Sumner Beach.

(Names of people in picture on page 57.)

Back row

Bob Debonnaire, Ken Fitchett, Alex Smeaton, John Sutherland, Rita Gunn,
 Allan Hunter, Bill Miller.

Fourth row

Paula Van Kuppevelt, Edna de Joux, Beverley Fergusson, Lenie Gisbertes,
 Tina Goodgame, Betty Flanagan, Bernice Baker, Eileen

Fletcher. Third row

Greta Martin, Gillian Williams, Thelma Durant, Hazel Jannesen, Colleen Holland,
 Josie Snackers, Ethel Hepenstall, Lorraine McLeod, Elsie Erby, Rayne

Hamilton. Second row

Dorrie Gibbins, June Kenworthy, Nettie Bruce, Val Greig, Jeanette Amer,
 Val George, Bernie Dorrance, Dorrie Church, Carol Garland, Daphne Gibson.

Front row

Jim Strangman. Bob Angus, Noel Parker, Ted Walker, Jack Sleeman, John Ince.

Presidents (See page 51.)



Betty Atkins '85-7



Greta Martin '88,9



Jim Millen '90



Herb Smeith '91,2



Noel Parker '93,4



Edith Mitchell '95,6



David Eddy '97



Harold Harris '98,9



Elizabeth Barr '00



Ward Clarke '01



Molly Andreae 2002



Ray Withington 2003



Edward Clark 2004



Neil Barr 2005

Treasurers

Secretaries (and on next page)



Jack Sleeman
1991-1995



Audrey Jackson
1996, 2006



Bill Tonkings
1997 - 2005



Lyn Lapslie
1991 - 1995



Val Greig
1996



Tina Goodgame
1997 - 1998

Secretaries (continued. See page 52.)



John Murdoch 1999 - 2000
Doreen Withington 2001 - 2004
Pauline Whitmore 2005 -

Authors (if not shown above.)



Allan Hunter Editor
John Andreae Illustrator

Authors (continued.)



Harry Franklin Peter McKelvey Garry Jeffery Bert Upjohn Jeanette Hickford Nola Cowie



Thelma Durant Robin & Alan Whittaker Robin Hickford David Holyoake Allan Williams



Rayne Hamilton Bruce Graham Bob Ryburn Colin Knight Ron Smith Jenny Abrahamson



Colleen Holland Margaret Morton Maebry Pink Dawn Meikle Wendy Aldridge Alex Smeaton

BEGINNINGS

1985 -1987

In May 1985 a local newspaper clipping read:

"Take a weekly walk on the bright side with Bishopdale Hikers. These enthusiastic hikers are looking for new members to make up a group to walk the various walkways in and around Christchurch.

The group will meet at the Bishopdale Community Centre 1.30 pm Monday, 30 May to discuss future hikes, days and times. Although initially the group will hike midweek a weekend group may develop.

If interested in either group please attend the meeting. For more information ring Julie Battersby, Bishopdale Community Centre, Tel 598 310 .»

Here, then, is how it all started. The fourteen people who turned up were quite enthusiastic. This came at a time when some of the gloss attached to jogging was waning. Arthur Lydiard had begun that fashion in the 1960's as a way of training our top distance athletes. It gathered momentum from the successes of men like Halberg, Snell, Bailey, Quax, Dixon and Walker. Many of the public took up jogging as a health exercise and it was a common sight to see runners of all ages making their way round our streets. At a training centre opposite Carlton Mill Road the manager used to warn visitors "At midday, if going out on the street, watch out for the thundering herd!" referring to the many Christchurch business workers who spent half their lunch hour outside. However, for some, particularly the elderly, this was a strain on knees and hips and at least one jogger was advised by his doctor to switch to walking or tramping.

The First Two Years (May 1985 - July 1987)

Betty Atkins was at this first meeting and, as a result, was so keen that she went to the then Lands and Survey Department for pamphlets on walking tracks. Then she made a list of suitable ones, and organised times and a car pool. People just turned up and it was then decided who went in which cars, what the charges would be on that day and who were to be leaders and tailenders. Betty and Donna McFadden organised the diary, photos and the ringing of radio station 3ZB to cancel. Julie went on the first three walks to give support and to check on safety requirements. The new Club continued on this pattern until 12 July 1987. On 6 December 2003 Betty was interviewed about the early tramping days. She explained that having been widowed since 1972 and recently retired from part-time work, she had been thinking about a fresh activity when the advertisement in the local newspaper attracted her attention.

Edith Mitchell, who is still a member in 2006, was at that meeting in the Community Centre. She remembers that the staffing time was 9 am and, as some members had children at school, they had to arrive back as near to 3 O'clock as possible.

The First Recorded Walk Took Place on 26 June 1985

Clear advice was given on necessary equipment:

- Strong walking shoes or boots.
- Woollen socks and jumpers.
- Parka — water and wind proof.
- Woollen hat and mittens.
- A packed lunch.
- A drink — hot or cold.
- Put all gear into a comfortable backpack.

Cancellations from 3ZB at 7.30 am

1985 Programme

There are no diary descriptions of these outings. The first one was from Pines Beach to Woodend with the car pool cost of \$3. Others in the year were:

- Bottle Lake Forest.
- Estuary walk to South Brighton.
- Rakaia Gorge was cancelled so they went instead to The Groynes.
- Ryde Falls, Oxford.
- Sign of the Takahe to Coronation Hill.
- Barnett Park.
- Orton Bradley Park to Charteris Bay.
- Rapaki to Witch Hill.
- Quail Island (using the ferry).
- Hanmer Springs.
- Bridle Path.
- Burwood Plantation.
- Rapaki Track (repeated).
- Worsley Track.
- Ashley Gorge.
- Kennedy's Bush. Diamond Harbour (first recorded distance of 12.5 km). Ilam Homestead.
- Orton Bradley.
- Kaituna Valley.

For this varied programme the average distance appears to be about 10 km, an impressive start for a club in its first year.

The final event for 1985 was lunch at the Russley Hotel where all present were dressed up in their "best" and all were unrecognisable from the Wednesday trampers. From the list at the foundation meeting it can be seen that most members were women. The photo on page 7 of the group at the Russley shows that Harry Franklin and Herb Smeith were the only men present. The situation was similar in the Kaiapoi Walk and Ryde Falls photos. The imbalance was to be gradually corrected over the years with more men retiring from work and joining. In 2006 the numbers are even.

Having set the Club up on sound lines, Betty resigned on 12 July 1987. It had been a busy two years with membership in mid-1986 rising to 70 on the list and the highest attendance being 34. Special trips had taken the keen ones to Peel Forest on a Sunday and Totaranui (Tasman) for an

overnight stay. In the first month after starting they had sat down at lunchtime and decided where to go the following week but within a short time, handwritten copies of longer programmes were made out. Edith Mitchell remembers these arose from the early lunch hour discussions to which everyone contributed. The same happened when the list of appropriate clothing and gear was decided. "When we saw a need we filled it suitably. Everything was free and easy with no rules or constitutions. That is what everyone liked about the Club in those days and moreover they said so". Edith Mitchell's statement was emphasised in 1988 when the Editor of The Papanui Herald published an article calling for new tramping members. Presumably this had come as a request from a Club member but as can be seen, Harry's reply was rather terse.

5 July 1988

Sir,

The Herald report about the Bishopdale Wanderers was of interest to me. I had never heard of them before. But for three years I have enjoyed walks with, and the fellowship of, the Bishopdale Trampers (not Midweek Wanderers as reported) and our number should be not 50, but probably in excess of 70. That number never appears at our 9 O'clock rendezvous on Wednesdays but we generally muster between 30 and 40. There are tramping clubs that have rules and are thriving, but the Bishopdale Trampers have enjoyed a long and happy association without any restrictive rules, one simply arrives ready for a walk and automatically becomes a welcome member. We have a wealth of talented "officers" never elected but we could contrive an election if that became necessary.

I hope the "Bishopdale Wanderers" become as successful because they could provide for people not free to join us on Wednesdays.

Harry Franklin

(The Editor apologised for his error with the title of the Club.)

As the founding convenor, Betty had clearly done an excellent job.

Edith Mitchell

Already mentioned in the article about the forming of the Club, Edith is the only person who attended the opening meeting and is still an active Club member. Born and brought up in Tasmania where she became a member of the Hobart Walking Club, she came to New Zealand on a working holiday.

Edith met her future husband, Neville Mitchell, at a Craigieburn skiing week. They were married in 1958 and had four children. For a period, Neville was stationed in Wellington, and while they were there, they joined the Tararua Tramping Club.

Later, he was transferred to Christchurch so that when the Bishopdale meeting was advertised, Edith was immediately interested. She walked for the first five years with Betty Atkins and Greta Martin, and after the 1990 meeting became acting-secretary in that first year. She not only took the minutes, but filled the gaps dealing with cancellations and bus bookings until the following year when Lyn Lapslie became the elected secretary.

During 1996-7 Edith was the first woman president, facing the challenge of expanding membership. Each president has had issues to resolve and hers would be typical. In that period a cellphone was bought and this proved excellent in emergencies. Annual tree-planting mornings were begun and efforts were made to provide keen trampers with extension trips.

Neville did not join until 1987 when he retired from work, and he walked regularly until his premature death in 1990. He took an interest in new members and encouraged some to accompany him on longer trips such as the St James Walkway. In March 1990 they went on the Greenstone-Routeburn tramp followed by the Harper Pass trip in April. Sadly he died three weeks later.

As evidence of her strength and determination Edith has overcome three walker's setbacks: a broken leg while tramping, and successful hip operations in 2003 and 2005. We hope this cheerful person will be with us for some time yet!

Allan Hunter

Names of People in Some Pictures.

Kaiapoi Walk, 27 November 1985 (page 7.)

Back row: Donna McFadden, ?, Rita Gunn, Ethel Hepenstall, Jean Smeith, Frances Summerfield,

Frances Courtney, Greta Martin, ?, Gwen Saunders, Val Taylor, Norma Searle.

Front row: Herb Smeith, Eileen McSaveney, Betty Atkins, Betty Nankivell, Esme Tregonning,
Gillian Williams, Chris Evans.

Lunch at the Russley, 4 December 1985 (page 7.)

Back row: Norma Searle, Marion Stewart, Elaine O'Connor, Frances Courtney,

Trixie Smith
Third row: Ruth Veale, Rita Gunn, Edna de Joux, Val Jones, Ethel Hepenstall, Herb Smeith

Next row: Betty Nankivell, Josie Snackers, Gillian Williams, Vivienne Blaikie, Greta Martin

Front row: Harry Franklin, ?, Betty Atkins, Jean Smeith, Denise Duckworth, Esme Tregonning,
Donna McFadden

Mid-Winter Dinner at the Autolodge, July 1986 (page 7.)

Stairs: Sue Fuller, Lew McFadden, John Sutherland, Kathleen Sutherland, ?,
Dorothy Dew, ?,

Ethel Hepenstall, Rita Gunn, Donna McFadden.

Third row: ?, Greta Martin, Margaret Sanders, ?, Colleen Holland, Val Jones,
Elaine O'Connor, Godfrey Jameson, Beverley Fergusson, Jean Smeith,
Frances Courtney, Harry Franklin, Patricia Coates, Les Little, Vivienne
Blaikie, Dorothy Dew, Val Taylor, Rema McLean.

Second row: Patricia Klinkum, Gillian Williams, Betty Atkins, Edith Mitchell, Vi Campbell.

First row: June Fulton, Jeanette Amer, Bernie Dorrance, Betty Nankivell.

Mid-Winter Party at the McFaddens (page 8.)

From the left: Rita Gunn, Patricia Klinkum, Dorrie Gibbins, Harry Franklin,
Frances Courtney,

Maureen Kearns, Esme Tregonning, Norma Searle, Donna McFadden, ?, Jean Smeith,
Herb Smeith, Betty Atkins, Val Taylor, Val Jones.

CONTINUED GROWTH

1987 - 1990

By popular choice Greta Martin was the organiser for the next three years. A bus instead of cars was used to travel to a launching spot for special walks. By 1990 it was a bus every week. She thought this was a very economical way to travel. Gore Bay was always a favourite: the first time, they had to walk back to their cars and it was a very long day but later, with the bus, it was quite different. Another early trip was to Coal Point, Mt Somers. Someone disturbed a wasp nest which resulted in several being badly stung but all recovered quickly. Other walks were to Teviotdale, from the Monument to Mt Herbert, and to Little Port Cooper. The last was where Harry Franklin worked. He had been a Chief Yeoman of Signals in the Royal Navy, emigrating after the war. Harry lived at Little Port Cooper and walked up to the signal box every day until the new signal station was built at Lyttelton. One mid-winter dinner was at the Star and Garter, Waikari, and the walk to it was from Frog Rock along the railway lines in the snow.

Greta was a tireless, charismatic leader who listened to members' wishes and made sound decisions. Her announcements were clear yet always given with a happy smile. However, as it had been from the beginning, the leader was under considerable strain, with no other officers to help, and consensus was becoming more difficult to gain at informal meetings. So in June 1990 Greta resigned and asked Allan Hunter to chair a meeting for members to discuss the Club's future.

The Meeting and its Results (26 June 1990)

Some 60 members turned up at the Community Centre. The chairman explained the purpose of the meeting and called for discussion on filling Greta's role as leader. The first five years had been so successful that fresh problems had arisen. Membership had increased dramatically. Using the bus each week meant that the range of available walks was greater, bringing with it the need for more planning. Previously, passengers paid the car driver but bus fares amounted to a considerable sum in the Club's name. All this pointed to the need for some type of committee.

The response was muted so the chairman introduced a copy of a simple constitution as used by Probus clubs. Discussion then became animated as some saw the need for change and others, particularly foundation members, dreaded the thought of facing "restrictive rules". The situation was relieved by Herb Smeith saying that at the very least, with so much money being received, there was need for the offices of a treasurer and an auditor. The meeting ended with agreement to hold an annual meeting to elect a president, a secretary, a treasurer, an auditor and a committee of at least seven members. At this meeting an audited statement of accounts was to be presented. A special meeting could be called if 20% of members asked for it. The policy of having no subscription was to be continued. New members were to be able to join as in the past.

A record of that meeting is in the minutes book. The committee was left to elect a president. Elections took place and the officers and committee were duly appointed. The president was Jim Millen, secretary Edith Mitchell, and treasurer Ned Hitchcock, with committee members Sandra Hurrell, Bernie Dorrance, Dorothy Dew and Gillian Williams. (They had power to co-opt others.) Approval of the constitution was not discussed. Although members departed with some feeling of apprehension it was, indeed, a watershed in the Club's history. Duties were now to be shared rather than loaded on one convenor. However, at least three members resigned.

The first committee met the challenge bravely but did not find it easy. The following year's committee, building on the founders' experience, was more successful and consisted of Herb

Smeith (President), Jack Sleeman (Treasurer), Ken Fitchett, Edith Mitchell, Thelma Durant (Social) and others. A pattern evolved which was followed over the next seven years.

Approval of a Constitution

Harold Harris who was President in 1998-9 reviewed the position on taking office. The Club was organised by a committee elected at an annual meeting. The President's main role was to chair committee meetings, to be the front person in the bus, to give notices, to thank that day's leaders and to decide whether to have a refreshment stop on the way home. The Secretary kept the minutes and handled correspondence. The Treasurer collected bus fares, paid the bus company and other accounts. An Auditor checked the accounts each year. No subscription was needed as bus fares usually provided a surplus, which met other expenditure. The committee met several times a year, the main item on the agenda being the designing of the programme. Factors such as snow, lambing, location, starting time and cost all had to be considered. Membership of the Club was open to anyone who came as a result of word-of-mouth contact and if they liked it, they stayed.

A subcommittee of Elizabeth Barr and Harold was appointed to look at Club governance. Several factors were considered. The first was finance, as by April 1996 the bus fares for the year had totalled \$14, 194. The second was safety and the third was membership. After the enquiry the subcommittee recommended that there was need for a constitution, which would give authority on these three factors, and a model one was presented to the committee. It was duly discussed, amended and approved. At the annual meeting it was passed with one amendment that the minimum number of tramps each year for members be ten. For those unable to complete that number, Associate Membership was offered in a later amendment. (This constitution is being amended in 2006 as the Club becomes an incorporated society.)

The Club today operates within this framework, a credit to Harold and Elizabeth. It is rarely invoked and emphasises the commitment of the Club to its members and the latter's responsibility to the Club.

Communication is helped by each tramper having a name badge pinned on the backpack. There are a number of cellphones held by members as well as a Personal Locator Beacon carried by the leader. The First Aid gear has been overhauled to meet today's demands.

Members names are recorded on computer and most photos from diaries have been named. After each trip the diary record is a typed account of the journey, including advice for a repeat trip, and may include a map and photos of the area. In the first five years the names of diarists are not given, apart from Harry Franklin. From 1990 amongst those writing were Noel Parker, John Ince, Peter McKelvey, Bill Dudding, Ron Roy, Alex Smeaton, John Andreae and, currently, Jenny Abrahamson. Little did these people realise that some of their notes would appear in this book!

New members are welcome but they do have three "guest" trips to test their fitness.

A sister club, the Ramblers, was formed in 1995 to cater for those wanting longer breaks from tramping. Some of our members have found it 'invaluable when recovering from operations, injuries or just suffering from the ageing process.

23 March 1988



Kaiapoi Walk, 27 Nov 1985



Lunch at Russley
4 Dec 1985



Ryde Falls - 19 Feb 1986



Mid-Winter Dinner at
Autolodge, July 1986





First Walk



Diamond Harbour - 23 Oct 1985



Gore Bay 15 March 1989



Castle Hill Rocks
9 May 1990



Christmas 1992



Waikuku, 20 July 1988



Gillian Williams



Mid-Winter Party at the McFaddens



Mt Lyndon, 8 Feb 1995



Boat Race, 1997

TRAMPING OVER THE YEARS 1985 - 2004

A Selection

First Year Anniversary

25 June 1986

Some of the group spent the morning visiting Donna McFadden at her home. The decision to make a scrap book was decided after Betty Atkins suggested it.

Major Hornbrook - Estuary

9 September 1987

Eight members set off for this walk and eight went to the Estuary but the weather had other ideas as it turned out. It was very wet. The Estuary walkers went home about midday. The other walkers went to Scarborough, covering the Flower and Scarborough Tracks. They were home just after midday. Sue was a treat to see, carrying her umbrella.

Captain Thomas Walkway

18 November 1987

This was a new walk Donna and Lew McFadden had found on a Sunday ramble. It was a good one with 15 trampers doing 14.2 km. We had lunch at Jollies Bush. The walkers had a minute's silence at 10.30 am for Trixie Smith.

Burwood Plantation

29 June 1988

(30 persons, car pool \$3.50)

Hitherto, this had not been a popular walk - in fact it had become a bit of a joke, not to be undertaken except as a last resort. But today's walk was so pleasant many declared we should revise our opinion. The walk through the trees was enjoyable with the pine needles making a comfortable carpet underfoot and on the return journey sunshine enhanced the enchantment of the forest with golden shafts of light making sharp contrast with the woodland gloom. As we came out into a sunlit clearing we loved the vivid colours of the willows and silver birches.

The beach walk, as good as we had ever had, gave us such a nostalgic view of the Port Hills and Banks Peninsula that it was easy to identify many of our previous walks. So far from the weather being the cold sou'wester as forecast, we enjoyed a blue sky flecked by cin•us clouds and sunshine warm enough to produce a slight tan, as some declared. The 3 O'clock temperature was 16 degrees.

Pines Beach - Woodend - Waikuku

20 July 1988

(This covered the same area as the first trip by the club on 26 June 1985. 16 trampers went 16 km, car pool \$3.)

Overcast and a cold sou'wester at the start but the sky cleared and gladdened the hearts of all. The tide was in, so what beach was available was not the best for walking on, too soft, making progress

laborious. So the track north through the scrub and trees was followed, giving shelter from the wind and the pleasure of dappled shade and sunshine.

For the walk south there was enough firm sand exposed by the retreating tide to make for pleasant walking. The view of the Port Hills gave the ever-present feeling that we knew the joy of tramping in "them thar hills". The foam and froth brought in by the waters suggested that old Father Neptune had been doing his washing.

As always, a walk along the seashore was balm to the spirit.

Luncheon at the Town Hall

24 November 1988

Fifty-six trampers gathered at the Town Hall for the winter dinner, and some were friends who had not been walking with us for a while so we had some happy reunions. This suggests we should keep a record of those who can no longer walk with us, so all can be invited.

As usual it was a delight to see the ladies looking so beautiful. The first meeting together in the bar before moving to the tables is always a heart-warming affair as we, not without some difficulty, look around and recognise our familiar friends in unfamiliar attire.

We had settled down and were enjoying lunch when Harry called for attention and explained that here was a token of love from us all in appreciation of the untiring work which Greta (our leader) had done to make our group such a happy band of people. It was revealed that Ellen had taken up a collection and Gillian had put together a basket of goodies. All shared the moment when Greta, taken by surprise, embraced the happy bearer. And so I think, in recollection, the food was good and the fellowship superlative.

In glorious sunshine and in splendid disorder we gathered by the fountain for photographs and later moved to the floral clock for more of the same. May these photos long give pleasure in remembrance of a happy occasion.

(The three items above were written by our ex-Royal Navy member, Harry Franklin)

Mt Grey

2 May 1990

(49 people, bus \$7.50, route Amberley - Ashley State Forest)

An ideal day for tramping — fine with little wind and a clear atmosphere. After a short diversion to look at Lake Janet we had a steady and pleasant climb to the summit. The breath-taking view made the energy spent well worth the effort and made us feel that our country is indeed a place of beauty. As we had made good time up the mountain it was a little early for lunch so a large group wandered down the other side first.

For the descent we broke into two groups. The larger group did the loop track to the Mt Grey picnic area while the smaller one returned by the way they had come. The loop track was an easy descent through the beech forests which were inhabited by the all-too-familiar wasp. The bus met the larger group at the picnic area where we found that Lou and Donna McFadden and John Sutherland were retracing their steps in search of Lou's pedometer which he had lost on the way down. Thanks to Donna's sharp eye it was found resting in the grass by the side of the track.

A very welcome stop was taken at Amberley which enabled us to replenish, in one way and another, the liquid lost on the tramp.

The Three Deans

1 March 1995

(50 people, distance 17 km.)

We left in bright sunshine turning left at Amberley, over the railway line, past the school and going along Rampaddock Road to Waipara Gorge. Passing the farmhouse the group crossed the bridge over the Waipara River and began the climb. Morning tea was held at 10.30 am overlooking the valley. After climbing two of the three promontories, half the group chose to go down to the valley floor while the remainder went on to the trig at the top of the third.

There are some spectacular views of the limestone bluffs on the left of the valley and, to the right, of the Waipara River. We had a short but welcome stop at Amberley for refreshments, arriving home at 4.30 pm.

Mt Vulcan

20 June 2001

(52 people, \$10 bus, 14 km)

We turned off the northern motorway at Reeces Rd (Omihiri School) and began the walk from the farm woolshed. There is a direct route for slower walkers (10 km) but the main party turned off to the coast and stopped at Mt Vulcan where some took time to climb to the top. While eating lunch, perspiring trampers relaxed and enjoyed the quite magnificent view of Pegasus Bay and the Kaikoura Mountains. The bus was waiting for us at the road overlooking Motunau.

Mt Alexander

16 October 2002

(53 people, \$12 bus fare)

We left Bishopdale at 8.30 am and travelled to Waikari where we turned at the first road on the right past the pub. This took us 5 km along the Waikari Valley Road until we took the third on the left down Foxdown Road, arriving at 10 am.

Immediately past the sheds we turned to the right past a prominent sign deterring the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society and the Department of Conservation. After following up a well-graded farm road with scattered widely-spaced trees we took a left hand turn and came to a gem of a place for morning tea — old yards with a shelterbelt of protective trees and some stone walls.

Past the trees we took a lower farm track and followed it up until we reached a pylon and on further to near the trig and communications building which can be reached from the south by leaving the track and climbing up a short slope and through a fence. This is an excellent place for lunch as it affords magnificent views: the Hurunui Basin to the north and Pegasus Bay and Banks Peninsula to the south.

After lunch we dropped south to the farm track by which we had reached the trig and turned right along it. This descends fairly quickly, affirming that the tramp is best made by the route we took rather than the reverse. We ended by taking the true right bank of a large valley. Then the track

dropped down and left to a stream, which we crossed and climbed steeply up the other side, arriving back at the bus at 3 pm.

The surface geology is a mosaic of limestone and greywacke. There are plenty of good, wellgraded farm tracks.

Peter McKelvey

(The leader commented that it is essential we leave all farm gates as we found them. Special care was taken on this. A 2005 tramp left Bishopdale in fine weather and was confronted at Mt Alexander with driving rain. After a tour of the excellent museum the trampers returned home by midday).

Mt Lyndon: A Tale of Two Tramps.

On 25 February 1995, my 64th birthday as it happened, I was taken on my introductory tramp with the Bishopdale Tramping Club. It was up Mt Lyndon, which would be just about the barest and most exposed of all our tramps. Up past the University lodge, heading south, then northwest and straight up into the sun. And on this February day there was indeed sun. At the start, in the middle, right to the end — relentless, beating sun. The leaders ground onwards and upwards, relentless, beating leaders. Great sights of course, when we were eventually allowed to pause and eat our sandwiches and gulp our coffee, before the dreaded "two minutes" call sent my new-found companions leaping to their feet, throwing on packs, eager to continue this masochistic madness. Fortunately the unwritten Club rule of "no climbing after lunch" applied and it was just a matter of leaning into the nor'wester across the crest, and then everything was downhill, plungingly downhill. Not the gut-wrenching slog of the morning, but a downward dance, which ultimately began to hint at latent muscular mischief ahead — as it turned out, crippling muscular mischief, in the back of the legs, over the next two days and more. Baptism by sweat, breathless panting, exhaustion and muscle stiffness. And we return for more and yet more, week by week.

Forward three and two thirds years to 21 October 1998 and the club is again set to traverse Mt Lyndon, this time with me as leader! Some have greatness thrust upon them. At least it will be at my pace, and I will be able to curb the enthusiasm of the gun trampers. You can name them but in those 'good old days' the rule that no one got in front of the leader was honoured, not breached. What is more it will be spring and not high summer, and indeed there are the left-overs from a late snowfall liberally spread along the tops. A beautifully clear sky and a sunny day but a coolish wind, so it won't be quite so sweaty this time. Yet the vertical challenge of not just one foot after another, but one foot higher than the other, remains.

We get the upward grunt and grind mostly over, and there is the looming decision, as that wind is increasing by the moment, of where we should lunch among tussocks which have quite liberal amounts of snow clutched in their arms and lodged in between them. Leadership decisions in the Bishopdale Tramping Club are of course made by consensus and consultation, and after mature consideration. But on this day the wind is suddenly, in an instant, banshee howling, and whipping off the ground, stinging, blinding, blizzarding snow clouds. Backs turned, hoods up, glances exchanged. Gritty, nuggety, not-giving-up-tramping does not need to extend to dying. Everyone for her/himself. The only decision for the leader to make is to endorse the great good sense of all the rest of the party by following them. "Get out of here!" is the instantaneous collective assessment, downhill, rapidly tussock-hopping to the shelter of the morning tea spot, and lunch. Then an orderly retreat to the bus at the drop-off point.

I haven't climbed Mt Lyndon since. Garry Jeffery

Port Robinson Walkway

For many years, Port Robinson Walkway has been a popular annual tramp on our calendar. In very recent years, restricted entry over the small area of private farmland at the Hurunui River mouth has denied public use of the full walkway. DOC's literature describes this walkway as one of Canterbury's most attractive and interesting, so it is inconceivable that the public will permanently lose access to this track.

From the south end at the Hurunui mouth to Manuka Bay and then on to Gore Bay is a distance of 7 km, which many people walk in 3 - 4 hours. After a short climb over open coastal pasture land, the track winds into gullies among remnants of coastal bush. Eroded "badlands" from earlier times add interest. Unexpected windows through bush and scrubland frame delightful cameos of the North Canterbury coastline as far as Banks Peninsula. At Manuka Bay a public toilet is located in the grassy picnic reserve.

Rounding the northern headland approaching Port Robinson, the stunning view of Gore Bay merits a brief stop to admire. Of Port Robinson itself, little remains after decades of eroding storms. This was once the busy lifeline between Robinson's Cheviot Hills Estate and the outside world. The last kilometre to Gore Bay beach is a boulder-hopper's delight; others prefer to exit this area by an uphill track.

Almost always, our tramp has arrived at the Gore Bay recreation ground for a barbecue lunch where the hardiest of our trampers have proven themselves with a pre-lunch swim from the sandy beach. Afternoon teas have been enjoyed at the holiday home of a member but, first, available options have been explored for further short walks: uphill to the Cathedrals, up Tweedie's Gully to the Lookout, and along the beach above Buxton Lagoon to the original cemetery.

Gore Bay has a distinctive history which is compact and observable. A casual stroll reveals the name "Cheviot Hills", the leasehold run which was first established and named by Caverhill. When William Robinson arrived from Australia with sufficient "ready money" to buy Cheviot Hills from the Government, Caverhill had to forfeit his lease of all that land. Along Cathedral Road, Mrs Robinson's original dormer-windowed holiday home is a Heritage building. On the downhill corner of Farmer Street, near the tennis courts, still stands the little cottage built by Robinson for his kitchen gardener, with its manuka pole rafters in the roof and evidence that its English builder (a Robinson employee) had not adjusted to New Zealand's northerly aspect being the warmer one. Remains of Robinson's benched road around the cliffs to the Port are still visible. Above the site of his boatshed, the slipway shows where lighters were slid down into the sea with momentum carrying them out to service coastal vessels.

The return bus trip from Gore Bay to Christchurch takes rather more than 90 minutes. Bert Upjohn

Rakaia Gorge Walkway

I joined the Bishopdale Tramping Club in 2001 after retiring from teaching and this was the first time I had been on the full walkway. Robin and I had returned about a week earlier from an extensive three month trip overseas and I was looking forward to getting out with the Club again.

It was an absolutely gorgeous day with clear blue skies, not a typical Canterbury July day! We set out on the track near the gorge bridge with the turquoise-blue sparkling waters of the Rakaia below. From memory, Ray Withington was the leader of our group. The track followed through lovely

bush beside the river with few 'ups and downs' at first but later climbed through a more 'gorsey area' and along grassy river-carved terraces. When we reached the lookout point I gasped at the beauty before me. Mt Hutt was completely covered in snow, with blue skies above and the river snaking below through the shingle banks. I commented "I have been all over the world and seen wonderful sights but this has just taken my breath away. I shall never forget this moment." And I haven't.

We continued on along the rim of the gorge and then started to descend. The track at that time (unlike later years) was in pretty good condition though we still had to scramble through some muddy parts and over fallen branches at times. It passes through native forest and shrubs. I did not know that there were old disused coal mines there so the Snowdon mine shafts and rusty equipment were a revelation to me. We had our lunch at the stream at the bottom of the gully and it was so sheltered there we had to strip some layers off! After lunch we went down the side track to the river's edge. Then a scramble over the rocks and shingle, before rejoining the track and climbing up and thence back to the bridge. What a superb day! Since then I have been back with the Club several times but it has never been quite the same as that day in July 2001. In fact, the tracks at one stage were poorly maintained and parts were impossible to use. I believe they are now much better again. I look forward to returning there again in the future. It's a great tramp! Jeanette Hickford

Bob's Knob (from North Branch of Kowai)

29 January 2003

The bus drop-off was at the big pine tree at the bottom of Porter's Pass. The extension party of 7, led by Bob Ryburn, left the main group of 41 after morning tea and followed the usual track up the river as far as the hut. From there we zig-zagged up the steep grassy slope on the right side of the valley. Veering left slightly and scrambling up the very steep patch of mixed scree and vegetation, we used tussock, hebes and dracophyllum as handholds but avoided the matagouri. When we finally reached the saddle, the views were well worth the effort. We could look straight across at the "gap" in the Torlesse Range, or right to the headwaters of the Kowai River or down to the foothills of "Brooksdale" station. Stopping for lunch along the ridge, we sat amongst a variety of alpine plants: celmisias, hebes, olearia, dracophyllum and a flock of "vegetable sheep".

After lunch we continued along the undulating ridge with a steeper rise at the end to gain the top of Bob's Knob. The cars, buses and trucks on Porter's Pass looked like children's toys. Much discussion took place to choose a route down; every way was steep and we had to avoid the rocky bluffs. As on the way up, we used vegetation as handholds and to arrest a few "controlled" slides. At the bottom we had to negotiate a bit of swamp before reaching the river terrace. A tramp isn't a tramp without a bit of mud and blood. Expecting to see the main party across the river, we were surprised to see only 3 men. They shouted "emergency" above the sound of the river and rushed off.

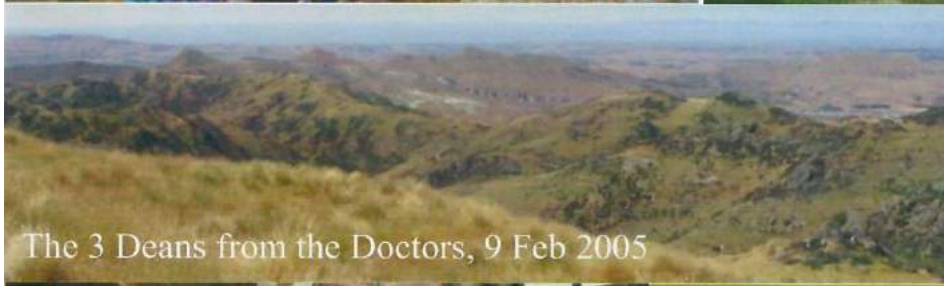
Bob's Knob is a very satisfactory tramp with such dramatic scenery from the tops, but, back at the big pine tree, we joined in the dramatic events taking place down in the valley. Alison Hutton had slipped and broken her ankle. Edward Clark, acting as president, decided that a helicopter was needed. Being out of cellphone range, Allan Williams and Bill Dudding accompanied the bus to Benmore Station to make a Ill call. The bus returned to pick up 44 trampers for the trip home. In the meanwhile, Noel Parker, David Holyoake and Don Chadderton carried the grateful Alison to an open place and stayed with her until the helicopter arrived. It whisked her to Christchurch Hospital before the trampers were back in Bishopdale. Alison Lynch returned later in her car to pick up the three men. Drama indeed !
Mary Claridge



Mt Grey, 22 Sept 1999



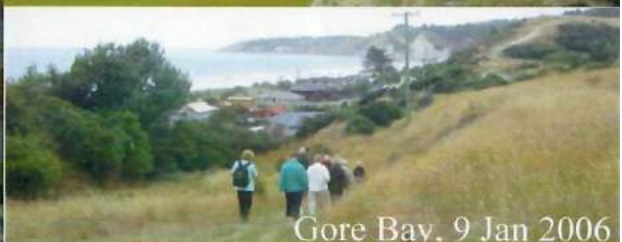
Mt Vulcan, 27 July 2005



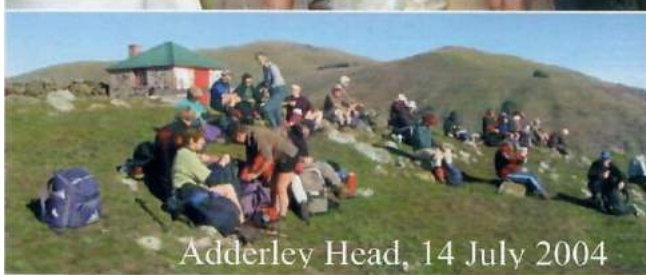
The 3 Deans from the Doctors, 9 Feb 2005



Mt Alexander ->
<- 22 Oct 2003



Gore Bay, 9 Jan 2006



Adderley Head, 14 July 2004



Rakaia Gorge, 16 Nov 2005

Elsie Erby

Bernie Dorrance

June Kenworthy

Pat Hudson





Crater Rim Walkway, 1 May 2005



Lyttelton Harbour, 6 April 2005



Toni Thompson, Hazel Jannesen



Kowai R., 26 Jan 2005



Ashley Gorge, 9 Feb 2000

