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of

**A. U. C. TRAMPING CLUB**

Volume 5 | 4

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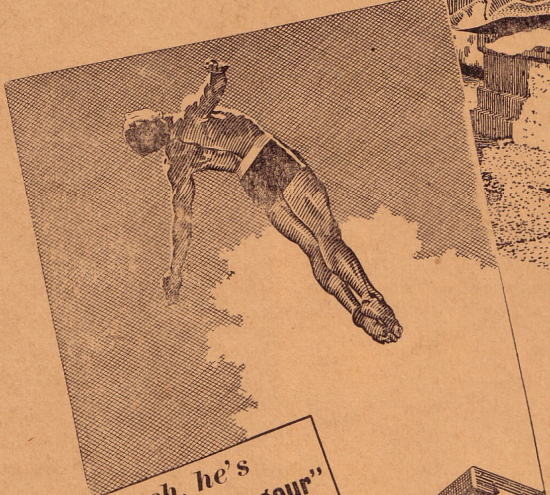
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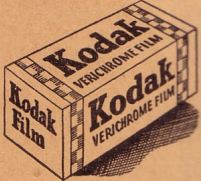
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This summer Tramping Club has a more ambitious programme than ever. Great Barrier, Nelson and South Otago. But although we are going further afield the membership of the club has dropped.

We have a summer programme which provides a number of trips and working parties in the Waitakeres and the Hunuas. These organized trips are particularly important as it is through club trips that most younger people start tramping. Therefore it is to be hoped that they will be supported by present members and their friends.

Unfortunately we are not using Ongarunuku enough and it is being run at a financial loss. Perhaps we have lost a little of that old enthusiasm, but next year let us hear again, "are you going up to the hut this weekend" in the good old "Puttuh Cowley" style. Hutch and Sweet may be growing old and staid but there are still plenty of young members in T.C.

In this issue we are lucky to have 2 accounts of trips in foreign parts, written by past A.U.C.T.C. members.

First, Rod Draffin writes from Scotland, about the adventures of Dave Spence, Mike Hay and himself.

#### A HIGHLAND FLING

After telling of some successful hitch-hiking and encountering a so called "Scotch Mist" which would have gone under the title of a cloud-burst elsewhere Rod goes on to say:-

The following day we secured a long hitch along the Bonnie Banks of Loch Lomond, over the Rannock moor and down the Pass to Glencoe.

The mist remained heavy all next day but we succeeded in climbing Bidean, a fine peak, and were lucky in seeing the top twice and the valley once through the cloud.

The day we arrived at the Ben Nevis Hostel was fair and 11 a.m. found us on our way up Ben Nevis. This is the highest Mountain in Great Britain and is a long dreary slog up scree slopes for the whole 4,200 feet. The view from the top was - mist, but enroute we got some good views over the West Highlands.

We were on the move again next day to Skye. If the ferry did not line up to certain "Bird on the Wing" traditions, at least we made Almadale in good time.

On arriving at Glenbrittle Hostel, we met some old friends namely Bob Foster and 2 girls from the A.S.C. doing a similar trip to ours.

Out of our four days stay at Glenbrittle two were hopeless, one was doubtful, and the fourth was fair. On this day we had a successful climb and secured some glorious views over Skye.

From Glenbrittle Dave and I continued north of the Pass of Killi - kranski, whilst Mike went south.

Our tramping finished at Lorig Ghru which is one of the best known Cairngorm Passes. **We then returned quietly to Glasgow.**

Most of the country covered was rather more open than in New Zealand Skye has very few trees at all, but everything is covered in heather. Most of the lower ground is a peat bog and very wet, while the higher hills are rock and scree.

Everywhere we went we were marvellously received and met a great variety of people ranging from a Cockney who had never been in such a





(4)

Next come the cliffs, first there is Wigmore Bay, easy entrance is found in the South corner but in the north the cliffs are sheer for 600 feet. Up along the cliffs there are some wonderful views. From the top of Gentle Annie the cliff line runs round Octopus Bay and out towards Cannibal Flat; the cliffs are pretty sheer and standing out from a rock ledge are two rather fragile aiguilles. When I grow old I am going to buy a helicopter and build a cottage on Cannibal Flat. There are two points running out, one to the north and another to the south. I will leave it to you to decide which offers the best view.

Cannibal Bay itself is very bleak. A long climb brings you out on a flat from which a point runs out and then stops, only 500 feet and you would land in the sea. From Arawhata Beach the best route is round the coast at low tide. Key Hole rocks look wild and there may still be some terns nesting there. On round Boulder Bay - one of the boys from the farm was walking round there one day, he tripped over a rock and there lay a corpse. I hope you won't do that. Eventually you will come to the Fisherman, the gut between you and the mainland is an eerie place, an old Maori used to live in the cave.

South you come to Te Waha - private property so don't light fires. Te Ahu Point above Piha gives you a bird's eye view of the whole coast. Mercer's Bay, Kari Kari, Whatipu and at last D. G. - they are all worth looking at.

S. A. R.

#### A SNOW CAVE ON RUAPEHU.

Living in a snow cave or igloo is a monopoly of Eskimos and civilised people regard it as a very primitive form of existence. Caves are also associated with savage and barbarian peoples of olden times who looked on robbery and murder as a natural part of their daily life. And so the following is written with a certain amount of diffidence.

The use of snow caves instead of tents in mountain country is yet in its infancy in New Zealand, and a few people have tried out the idea with most encouraging results. It was an article in this year's Alpine Journal which very much impressed Alan Goodyear, Bernie Bowden and me with its potentialities, and persuaded us to try it out on Ruapehu in August.

The cave was dug on a slope in the Waterfall valley about 400 yards from G.H. After finding a place with sufficient depth of snow - 12 feet - on a rather gentle slope (the steeper the better) Bernie and I began to dig. We excavated first a kind of working shelf and then began to tunnel an entrance shaft. After carrying it in about 2 feet we widened it out and cut out the interior of the cave. This was eventually about nine feet long, 7 feet wide and  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet high and took  $3\frac{1}{2}$  hours to make. We used shovels and found the easiest way was to cut the snow out in blocks and manhandle them to the surface.

Following its construction we spent 4 nights in the cave, and were perfectly warm and comfortable. This is probably due to the fact that the white walls reflect back most of the heat. No condensation occurred. The problem of insulation when lying on snow was solved by using strips of cheap felt (S.B.C. felt, then S.B.) which kept us quite warm as long as they were dry.

The whole experiment proved for us intensely interesting, and we shall certainly be doing it again. It seems very likely that soon the use of snow caves will become common practice, for in a cave one is perfectly warm, comfortable and secure against any blizzard the weather gods can send. On Ruapehu the idea is capable of much further development, and whether a cave can be built further up the mountain or even on the plateau itself seems to be the next question. In any case the use of this technique, as yet in its pioneer stages, will be a very exhilarating experience for anyone who likes to try it.

John Leonard.

#### AFTER-DEGREE TRAMP

After-degree tramp is over, and twenty-seven raw-nosed 'Varsity students will be telling their friends all there is to know about that interesting, little known, fourth island of New Zealand -- Great Barrier. Space permits us to tell only a little about it here, but if you refer to John Busing's map in our last issue we can explain briefly where we went and what things looked like. Mt Hobson is the high point of a ridge that looks like the Devil's dentures. It runs roughly North-South. Well-bushed valleys with plenty of second-growth kauri run down to beautiful inlets on the western side. Logging and burning-off has bared long ridges, especially up towards Fitzroy. The extreme North of the island is rugged and trackless. We avoided it, though we visited the Maori settlement at Motairehe and Maby's farm at the north of Whangapoua. The eastern coast is more open and there are more farms. The long white ocean beaches would be famous if they were more accessible. Behind them are large flats inclined to be swampy. The south is hilly and bushed.

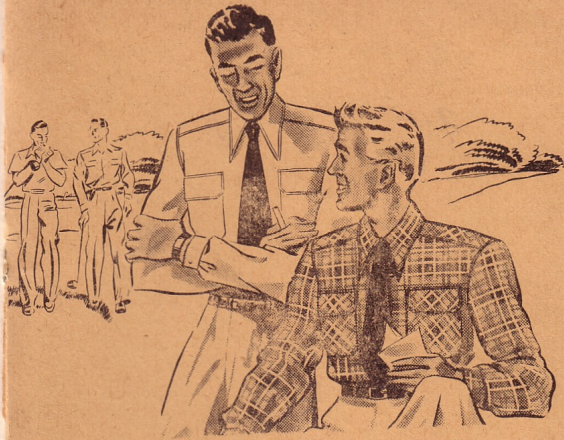
Of our trip down on the "Kapiti", the least said the better; sufficient that we arrived safe and more-or-less sound at secluded Whangapoua inlet and there set up our base camp. The next day four parties started off on a six-day trip circling the middle portion of the island, Frank Hayman and Dave Grace leading their parties up the west coast and Brian Hayman and Harry Locker leading theirs around to the East. The chief diversion for the foolish on the west coast is following hauler tracks, which are like this V only wuss! From this side all parties ascended a river valley to Mt Hobson, and although only four reached the summit - the rest of us being deterred by an unexpected downpour and heavy bush-cum-cutty-grass - we had magnificent views and saw two massive timber dams, bearing marks made by After-degree trappers in 1946. From Fitzroy round to Kaitoki Beach, travelling is mainly on the island's roads --- clay with built-in hob removers. Any discomfort they caused was more than made up for by the presence of milk-dispensing farms and the aforementioned magnificent beaches. Tramping is fine when one is flat on the back on a pine-shaded sand-dune gurgling calf-tucker! Lastly we must mention the Hot Springs, a good mile from the Whangapoua road and very welcome indeed, not to mention cleansing. So it wasn't all suntan!

After a day's rest the parties were reformed for a two-day trip to Tryphena and back. We travelled along high ridges, found Tryphena a beautiful place and the Peart brothers bountiful fishermen (thanks a lot!). Next day we returned via Kaitoki. On the last day gear was packed over the hill to Okupu where we spent the night before the arrival of the "Kapiti" on Friday morning. The boat's supply of fresh bread and cheese was in great demand, particularly as the trip home was smooth all the way.

There are many anecdotes that could be told about the camp - how Les Dudding played the barber, how Gordon Nicholls unaccountably threw himself into the river, and so on, but space does not permit us to revel in them here. The weather was kind to us; the island folk were even kinder. We are particularly indebted to Paddy McGeedy, who helped us in many ways, and to his wife, who twice baked scones for twenty-eight (bless her.) And lastly to Bruce Morton, who ran the trip and to those who, though they could not come, were by their organising largely responsible for the undoubted success of the camp.



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