

ADVENTURE IN FALLS CREEK OTMC Bulletin, April 1987, (Page 12)

13th - 15th March 1987

By the Famous Four, formerly The Gang of Five.

Friday night is a scratch time to start, rush and rumble, gruntle grumble ... to the bus in time. Phew! all in and off we go. Down Taieri, water to left and right, below and raining down ... we've forgotten our snorkles. A notable OTMC leader was overheard to say, during our stop-over in Gore, "Gaw! if I had a car, I'd go home right now". There were automobiles parked everywhere. Bushcraft must be light on conversion.

Darkness lengthened towards midnight and after three broken-down buses, all looking remarkably alike, we arrive at the shelter.

Resident wekas and bush-rats, till then lodged without complaint, heard us coming and went to ground. Such a concrete marvel beats a waterbed anyday, at least for Frankenstein ... but be truthful, agony racked till frosty dawn when some beggar in red shorts perked up and crowed, "Don't ask for whom the bell-bird calls, it tolls for thee...".

Breakfast to the hiss of little stoves busy boiling and the babble of the Hollyford River ... then up the road towards Homer as the sun thawed our spirits, and at the foot of the track, a bridge with fine stonework, and cascades and rockpools where taniwha lurk. Onwards and upwards, reddening faces sweated and wheezed by. Across the gorge we spied huge boulders, one white and rectangular like some discarded washing-machine in a giant's tip. Through groves of bitten makomako, native orchards, and fernlands, upland peat and mossy carpets, we came in time to a chosen site amid tussock and hebe. Like old tent-dwellers, we anchor our fly, yellow rather than black. And how good is a fly, we discover.

Sun and sky, buff-headed robins and a solitary morepork, variegated flax and sphagnum, daisies and edelweiss ... and, would you believe, somewhere not far off, a Billy bleated among the boulders.

The shadows crept across the valley as we climbed the primeval glacier. Then it was good to settle into camp, light a fire with the incense of dead herbs and enjoy hours of food and fellowship ... and a visitor who teased us with trifles.

Our hosts for the time, and perhaps highlight of the week-end, were Koa and Ka Kea and cousins - Kaha, Koha & Kehua ... may their iwi <tribe> increase. They chatted with us in the moonlight and again at daybreak and spoke to us of heights and peak experiences, and nests in crags. "Kia kaha", they chorused. "Kia manawa nui", we enjoined. "Haere ra a tatau". "E noho ra, e noa".

Next morning we sauntered down in easy style, bathed in sunlight and feeling at peace with each other. The waterfall thundered in majesty, blue and misty and garlanded in rainbow. We returned to the shelter in good time and large in spirit, a most enjoyed experience. I think I 11 be a kea. Our thanks to Wayne for his friendship, obliging leadership and the easy way he stayed with us. Thanks to Shirley who prepared the weekend's eating impossible to please everyone, yet she did!

Shirley & Peter Callacher, Ruth Brown & Wayne Hodgy.