



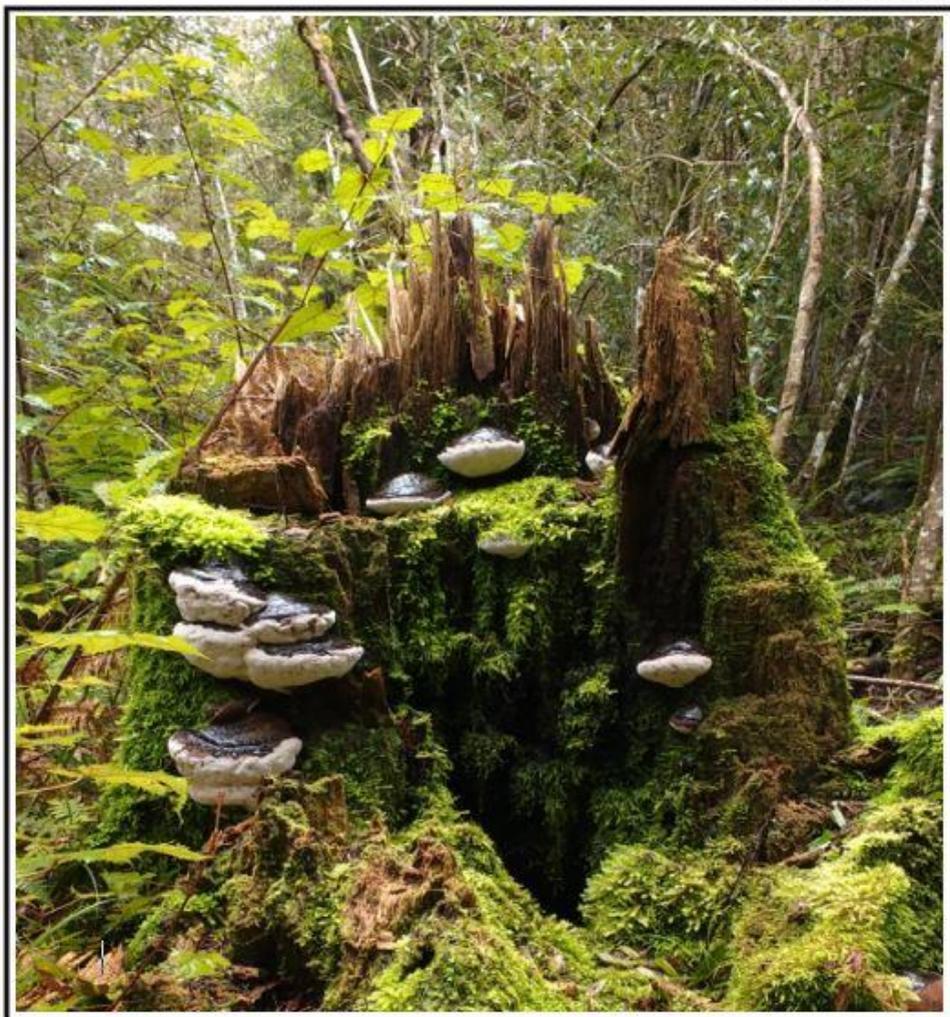
THE WAIKATO TRAMPER

Official Bulletin of

WAIKATO TRAMPING CLUB (INC)

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September 2018



Pureora Stump Photo by Amanda Collins

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BULLETIN No 797

September 2018

Trip reports

Trip 2773

Snowcraft 1

30 Jun/1 Jul

Snowcraft 1 for 2018 began at the same place and same time as all the many other Snowcrafts that had come before it, at the assembly point in an office carpark in London Street at 5.30pm one cold Friday.

I signed up for the course with friend Rachael. We were nervous about what the weekend held for us. We wanted to ensure that we were properly prepared so we arrived early for the departure. We spent our waiting time alternating between making nervous conversation with other equally nervous early arrivals and making visits to the rather grotty toilets on the corner of the street.

Soon the wait was over as the main party arrived. The trip leaders were keen to get away quickly so we placed our packs in the trailer, placed ourselves in the van and waited for our driver to take us southward to the mountains, arriving at the top of the Bruce Road under an amazing full moon. After we had settled ourselves into our accommodation in the hut we were summonsed for a briefing session with the trip leaders. It was explained to us that we were high up on a mountain..... but, as we were with the trip leaders and had been slowly driving uphill for the final 20 minutes of the trip, we had already figured this out for ourselves. Further to this we were told that we needed to keep ourselves safe and be aware of the dangers inherent with alpine trekking.

This is when we were introduced to Allan Wickens, a God-like figure in the local tramping scene who had strode like a colossus over trails both in NZ and abroad. He talked of alpine hiking from personal experience and warned of the potential for snow blindness, avalanche, oxygen deprivation, yeti bites, hypothermia and white-out....after which he bid us goodnight and wished us a refreshing night's sleep.Yeah right.

Eight hours later it was time to greet the new day, but I was still wide awake from the night before. Rachael popped her head into my bed space to get me up. She helped to uncurl my fingers away from the cowl of my sleeping bag and then enticed me upstairs for breakfast.

We tucked into a hearty breakfast. Hopefully this wasn't to be my last, while the trip leaders explained the format of the weekend.

Allan explained that Saturday's weather would be fine, enabling us to practice snow hiking, up and down, while those with previous experience could hike to the crater. The poorer weather expected for Sunday would give us experience of hiking in white-out conditions.

Breakfast was over. We togged up in hats and helmets and crampons and met with the snow.

It was stunning outside....like stepping through the wardrobe. I'd never been in snow before and very quickly my nervousness was replaced with a sense of exhilaration. It was so much fun. We frolicked in the snow like young children....actually some of the party were young children, so we all had a good time together.

We walked up the snow, climbed up the snow and clumsily clambered up the snow. We also fell down the snow, sometimes deliberately and other times not, and threw snowballs at each other. It was a great day. And suddenly it was over, we were back at the hut and I was exhausted. I had a quick dinner, chatted with the equally excited crater hikers, and then went straight to bed.

Day 2 dawned and it was just as Allan had promised. Very misty.

We togged up again, went outside, and soon discovered how very easy it was to misjudge the contours of the snow. We stumbled our way to the upper reaches of the mountain, relying on ice axes for physical support and our leaders for emotional support. We climbed for an hour or 2 but the weather continued to deteriorate so we stopped for a chat and then turned around and worked our way back down to the club hut. There it decided that we should pack up and return home.....leaving just enough time for a quick detour through the Silica Rapids on the lower slope of the mountain. A walk that was stunning in the winter snow and yet would be equally breath-taking under the summer sun.

Participants: Allan W & John W & Stephen P & Doug P (instructors), Ron D (driver), Jacqui D (cook), Tanya & Tanya da C, Callum McD, Peter & Lily & Jade L, Wayne G, Rizal R, Hamish R, Kevin L, Julie O, Corina L, Rachel R, Anna W, Bruce L, Jacob H, Graham C (scribe), Rachael S, Amanda C, Daiki N.

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## **Trip 2778**

## **Snowcraft II**

**4/5 Aug**

I was in hospital recovering from the worst of the yeti bites when friend Rachael came to visit. She informed me that she had signed us up for Snowcraft 2. This time not only were we hiking up the mountain, we were to camp up there for the night.

So once again we spent a nervous Friday evening in a carpark at the carpark in London Street. Saturday morning arrived too quickly and we once again found ourselves eating breakfast and deciding who to sacrifice should the worst happen. Allan Wickens assured us that while the weather on Saturday would be fine it would deteriorate through the night and continue to worsen on Sunday.

So once again we donned our gear and hiked our way up the mountain to find a suitable slot to camp for the night.

The visibility was poor on the ascent so our leader stopped briefly to remind us of the dangers associated with walking in white out conditions. Once he had imparted the importance of the message he turned around and promptly stepped down a snow bank. Fortunately for him the balaclavas we wore muffled the sounds of our laughter.

The rest of the hike proceeded without incident and we soon arrived at a suitable spot to set up camp. The tenters began to set up tents while the snow cavers began to dig snow caves. It was after our accommodation was established that things went slightly awry.....I was part way building a snow wall around my tent when I noticed a green tent flying through the air. At first I thought I was hallucinating from the effects of oxygen deprivation, but then I noticed two of my colleagues chasing it down the slopes. Luckily Mike from Bivouac had set up a pop-up shop close by and was able to sell our friends some tents pegs. It was a busy day at the shop as moments later he got a visit from another companion, a man who had discovered that crampons and air mattresses do not make for good bed fellows.

As predicted by Allan the weather began to cut up rough during the night so the next morning we decamped early and made our way back down. "We should get to the hut about 20 minutes before the really bad weather arrives" Allan said. Around 90 minutes later we arrived at the hut and, as we were getting out of our wet clothes, a storm swept over the hut. Allan is amazing, he reads weather patterns with the same degree of diligence as my wife looks at my eftpos statements.

We packed up our gear, cleaned the hut, and made our way back to the van, only to find that someone had parked in front of the club trailer. While we stood around trying to find a way of getting to the trailer Allan stripped to his underpants, lifted up the trailer, leapt over the errant car, and gently placed it on the end of the club van. This man can do anything. We were so amazed by this stunning feat that we made the drive home in total silence.

Participants were Allan W (leader), Graham C (scribe), John W, John D, John McA, David T, Daiki N, Rachael S, Bruce L, Ashley H, Max G, Peter L, Mike P, and Gert M.

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## **Trip 2779**

## **Henderson loop track**

**12 Aug**

I turned up at 8.00am on a bright & clear blue day but cold morning at 8.00am to surprisingly find 2 vans & a McCaw Lewis carpark full & 20 keen trampers. We made our way to the Old Kaimai Road after picking up a passenger in Cambridge and arrived at a good time of 9.15am. Another group joined us in the car park & once we rattled off all our names (28 of them!) we headed off with a quick welcome to our first stream crossing. We made our way

through good bush & attempted to take a short side track which led to a waterfall and swimming hole. But unfortunately the bush was quite thick so we backtracked & continued to join up with the western branch of the Henderson tramline. The track was at times very muddy & we had to be very careful trying to negotiate wet clay with numerous people slipping & sliding. Then we headed on the North South Track from the summit until reaching the northern branch of the Henderson Tramline. It was a stunning day in the bush although there was still mist coming out of people's mouths when talking (also we had 3 very young trampers making lots of noise & having fun). We stopped for lunch at a lovely grass area & some of us had to be careful not to sit on bush lawyer! The tramline east track was exceptionally wet & muddy with no one's boots keeping dry. We came out by the edge of cleared land beside a fence where we had to cross two large streams before reaching Old Kaimai Road. Next we proceeded to walk a further 20 mins on the road back to the vans. We headed back to the Tron arriving around 5.30pm. Thanks to Trip Leaders Jacqui (also a huge thank you for the tasty banana cake & ginger crunch) and Ron Dick, much appreciated for leading this very popular tramp.

Other participants were: Matilda B, Rizal R, Jo & Aidan McL, Amanda C, Kathy T, Nette L (scribe), Pamela & Alan H, Cameron H, Margaret C, Isla T, Peter N, Jocelyn W, Jacob H, Fiona and Cara G, Peter & Lily & Jade L, Laurette & Amelia S, Annette F, Marianne L, Dale H.



## Trip 2781

## Duder Regional Park

26 Aug

A very small group of 4 left at 8.00am & we headed north to Duder Regional Park which is on the Whakakiwhara Peninsula near Clevedon. After a leisurely & chatty drive we arrived at the carpark at 10.00am where, at this stage, only 4 cars were parked. There was a big station to brush & clean your boots for Kauri dieback disease & once through we made our way on a nice gravel track. We didn't walk far before we came across a huge NZ wood pigeon sitting in a kowhai tree enjoying the seeds. The bird did not mind us in spite of the fact we were very close to it. We stood watching it for quite a while. We then took a detour route to Duck Bay, finding the track in parts quite muddy & luckily the tide was out (good timing Doug !!) so we walked on the beach for quite a while spotting more bird life kingfishers, shags, paradise ducks. We hiked up a grassy verge to the tip of the peninsula Whakakaiwhara Point Pa & decided to have lunch here, sitting right on the tip of the point overlooking stunning views of the gulf and Waiheke Island with no one else about. We were also on the flight path for Auckland Airport with numerous big planes flying right above us. A Tiger moth was being flown from Ardmore Airport too. We made our way through farm land (with Cathy loving all the baby lambs) where we passed lots more people walking the tracks. We made a detour through nice bush up to the Trig which had stunning views, noting many birds such as fantails, swallows, grey warblers, pukeko's, and kakariki all over the peninsula while making our way back to the car park which was now completely full. We stopped at Clevedon for a milkshake/ice cream & made our way back to Hamilton. This walk surprised us 4 trampers - especially the bird life and views, and we all thoroughly enjoyed ourselves for the day. Thanks to Doug Pagel for suggesting this walk & for driving, there may not have been lots of bush but it was great to do something different & we all enjoyed this Park which was gifted by the Duder Family in 1994. Scribe: Nette, Leader Doug, along with Cathy and Nida.



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**Next Month:** Email your contributions to the editor by **Friday, 5<sup>th</sup> October**





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