

Mid King & Mitre

Tararua Forest Park

17-19 January 2019

The Waingawa road end ('The Pines') has the Tararuas' newest hut, built by Chris Tait and Hans Kolinko.







Materials for Powell Hut IV
travel in from Chris Tait's farm.



Tomorrow's destinations: Girdlestone,
Brockett & Mitre



The Forest Park
is broken!

I relieve the tedium of the walk to Mitre Flats by collecting a pebble from each flowing stream. After recent rain, streams are plentiful.





At last, a view up South Mitre Stream to the lumpy ridge leading to North King.



South Mitre Stream joins the Waingawa River.
At right, the same scene in January 2017.





My pebble collection, minus one that's still in my pocket.

These boys left the road end an hour before me. They've already been up Mitre and are now on their way out. Sigh ...

Leonie, on the right, lives in Greytown and is heading out down the river.





I cross South Mitre Stream and follow terraces on the true right.



Baldy Creek is a magic spot for a brew and a sandwich. Why don't I come here more often? Oh yes, the Barra Track - that's why!





The climb begins.





At last, the bush edge



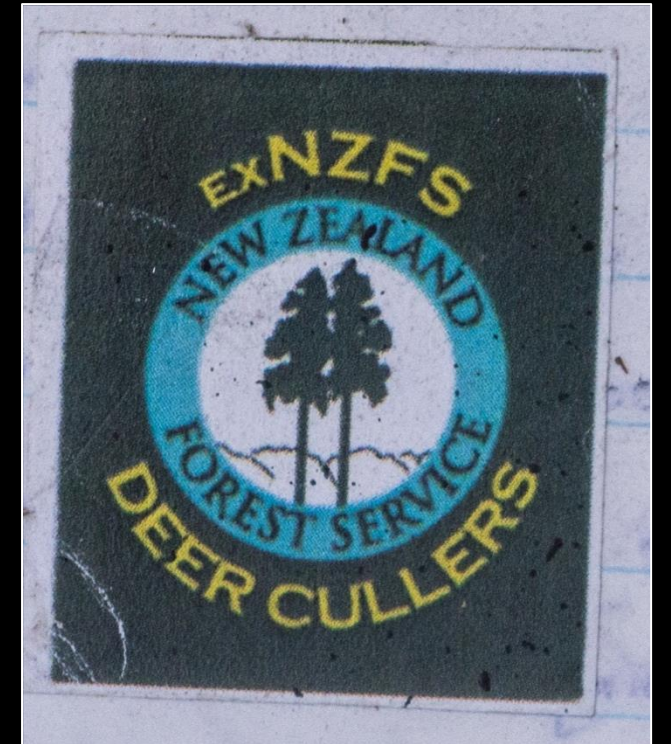
Mid King Biv. is well defended so it pays to stay on the track.







This hut is one of several lovingly maintained by the ExNZFS deer cullers.





Soon it's my home.

Many tramping and deer culling
luminaries have been here.

Anita Radcliffe

Bryan + Anne Dudley

Harry Smith

Joe Nawalaniec

Derrick Field

Paul Gush



The water supply is a nearby tributary of Baldy Creek.



Morning, and the ascent
to Mid King continues.



Chionochloa flavescens is in full flower, covering my shorts in pollen.



Euphrasia flowers are
everywhere too.



These *Celmisia* inflorescences are a metaphor for the trampers at the hut yesterday. I identify with one of them!



The leatherwood is having a good flowering season. Above the leatherwood zone, I'm nearly on Mid King





... and ready for morning smoko. I've camped beside that tarn two or three times.



That's nearby North King on the left, then distant Mitre.



Coprosma perpusilla is a woody shrub only a centimetre or two high.



Ranunculus verticillatus adds a dash of colour to North King.



Aciphylla means 'spiky leaf'. The flower clusters are spiky too, so it could just as well be called *Aciflora*.





Adkin lies ahead, then Girdlestone.
Both men contributed much to our
knowledge of the Tararuas.



Continuing towards Adkin, I score a photo that I've wanted for years. This obliging *Sigaus piliferus* sat still while I rattle off 13 exposures. The 13th one is in focus.



Looking back to the
Broken Axe Pinnacles,
with cloud forming on
the windward side of
the ridge.



I'm nearly at Adkin Saddle, which ...

... has a pair of tarns in the mist.

In 1955 this nearly became the site of a hut. The Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) had two deer cullers' huts pre-cut and ready to air-drop. An interdepartmental party picked a site for one of them in the basin below Mt Bannister.

Agreement for the second hut, to go near Girdlestone, was harder to reach. Senior DIA men chose an exposed, waterless site on Dorset Ridge which they said was suitable for dropping. Forest Service men and Internal Affairs cullers wanted it in this sheltered Adkin saddle with handy water and firewood. The Adkin advocates camped here refusing to move, but the Internal Affairs bosses prevailed.



More pinnacles lie on
Tarn Ridge, but
they're not on
today's agenda
Don Stevens fell
there in April 2016
and had a dramatic
helicopter rescue.





A last view of Mitre (right)
before cloud envelopes it



Celmisia hieracifolia on the climb
to Girdlestone, the last big uphill
for the day





Dorset Creek and Dorset Ridge are named after Ted Dorset, who in about 1870 made an epic crossing of the Tararuas with Bennington and Donald. They took a week

and a half to cross and another week and a half to walk back to Masterton via the Manawatu Gorge.

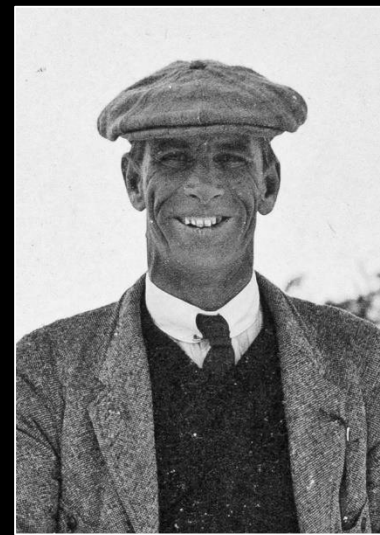


The head of South Mitre Stream is one of many glacial relics in the Tararuas. Even more interesting is the thought of a brew on Girdlestone.





I first photographed this rock on the side of Brockett in July 1993.



Fred Brockett was a leading Masterton tramer of the 1920s.

Mitre was the first peak in the Tararuas to be trigged, by Tom Drummond in 1869. Morgan Carkeek later built a wooden beacon over Drummond's survey point. In my time, Mitre has never had a beacon. When I first came here in 1963, these rocks were arranged to form a wind shelter for trampers.





Brachyglottis bidwillii and *Astelia nervosa* create foliage patterns on Mitre. Botanist John Bidwill visited New Zealand in 1839, 1840 and 1848. He was the first European and probably the first person to climb Mt Ngauruhoe, but never came to the Tararuas.



Late afternoon brings
a moody appearance
to the southern
slopes of Mitre.





The bush entrance, and
some forest inhabitants



Mitre Flats again, at the end of a satisfying day.