

AHURIRI OTMC Bulletin, March 1987, (Page 11)

The trip to the Ahuriri Valley was uninteresting and we encountered no trouble at Birchwood Station. The view from the tent on Saturday morning didn't seem too promising. Breakfast finished and with light drizzle moving up the valley we left the vicinity of the Ahuriri Base hut, a NZ Forest Service 6 bunk, for the ridge above. We walked on up through the open floor beech forest until we reached the open tussock and the ridge. A bonus not counted on were the ripe white-coloured snow-berries - delicious. Our objective was somewhere below us and through the mist and light snow the bush was visible in the Dingleburn Valley. However, it was sometime before we actually found the wide flattish face to walk down to the hut. The Top Dingleburn hut was another NZ Forest Service 6 bunk model, situated on the edge of the wind thrown bush but was actually further south than located on the map. As the snow & rain still persisted we relaxed for the rest of the day, not venturing further than the wood heap and spent the time sharing experiences. Sunday, a completely different view with the clear tops and to the south peaks draped in fresh snow. The objective for the day - a climb to the pass into the Hunter River, flowing into Lake Hawea. Our direction of travel was the true left of a tributary of the Dingleburn but the going was slow in the wind-damaged forest especially about the valley floor. Above the bush, it was spectacular and scary to observe the freeze and thaw action eroding rock precipices. No wonder scree develops as they do. Unfortunately, upon arrival at the pass we barely caught a view before the mist rolled back down to eat lunch in the sun below.

On the return to the Ahuriri Valley we were blessed with a wonderful view of Mt Barth, to the north, Ken's destination on a few occasions but still beckoning him. An old bulldozer track slightly down valley from where we reached the ridge the previous day allowed for an easy trip to the car beside the Ahuriri Base hut.

Doug Pagel on behalf of Ken Mason, Mike Farrell & Philip Jenkins.