



# Canterbury Masters

## Figure Skating Club Inc.

Affiliated to the NZISA

**Newsletter - Special Social Issue  
December 2005**

### ***The Skaters Went Tramping***

The next scheduled newsletter would be a long time to wait for stories about the skaters' tramp, so a special edition seemed in order.

After a last desperate coffee at Springfield the tramping team was finally underway, with Kim

explaining enthusiastically the difference between gaiters and puttees to anyone who would listen or who couldn't get away quickly enough.

Clearly her ancient borrowed puttees had seen better days but they did lend her an air of

experience and authority. This was soon undermined when she failed to negotiate the first obstacle of the day with as much finesse as the puttees might have led us to expect. It seemed that grace on the ice would be no guarantee of grace on the trail.





Against all odds the sun was shining and the wind a mere zephyr as we made our way up (and up and up!) through beech and exotic forest to the tussock tops. Gail, spurning the usual vertical position of one's pack, carried hers at a jaunty angle that gave her a slightly tipsy look. Veteran trumper June put this down to a lack of stabilizing straps at the shoulders but the others insisted it was Gail's imaginative and individual spirit.



We were loathe to pass up any opportunity to sharpen our skating skills so kick lines were randomly formed and any stray rock was commandeered for some outside edge practice.

Zita sank into the tussock and a deep sleep at every stop, sometimes disappearing completely from sight. While we searched for her, Kim had time to tend to her record-breaking blister – formed in the first hour of the tramp. Equipped with a state of the art blister repair kit, hardened trumper Debbie came to the rescue. In fact, Debbie's gadgets and toys were a godsend. It was a stroke of luck that she had packed her GPS and was able to tell us when we had arrived at the large tarn on Lagoon Saddle. This idyllic spot was where we were camping for the night.



*The GPS says we're there! Yeah, thanks, Deb. Really useful.*

Kim had a tense moment or two as June looked doubtfully towards the forest where she had cached a tent for her the week before. All those trees suddenly looked the same. If it couldn't be found, Kim would be sleeping under the stars. But it was soon carried out triumphantly and after a frenzied half hour of tent pitching the camp looked superb. Camp mother Stacey arranged elegant blue windbreaks and got the kettle on. What a luxury to be offered actual milk by Gail who added "That's not from a cow – that's bought milk". We felt a bit nervous. Gail's a dairy farmer – does she know something the unsuspecting public doesn't?

Dusk was approaching – just time for a walk to inspect the two diminutive huts nearby but that entailed crossing a section of very boggy ground. The bogs could be avoided by venturing into deep tussock but which was worse?



*Kim finds out which was worse*

After that things became a bit of a blur. Gail dug out a large quantity of port, said she didn't have a hope of drinking it and steadily worked her way

through the lot. Kim's tippie was vodka and she seemed to have filled that little pack with an entire crate of mixes like coke and V. We all got very funny and the more we drank the funnier we thought we were. Stace and June were sipping discreetly from a hip flask the effects of which weren't fully discovered until June staggered to her feet and exclaimed "Zita, you're so pure. You haven't dropped a touch!" Poor Zita would have preferred a drink after her meal but by that time there was none left. Dinner appeared miraculously – for some, fillet of salmon in lemon sauce on a bed of fluffy rice with tender asparagus spears. Readers with an interest in tramping cuisine should check out Kim's photos which have a marked culinary flavour.

As it grew dark and the temperature plummeted to below zero we lit what we hoped would be a small environmentally friendly fire but hadn't reckoned on pyromaniac Gail's obsessive stoking. Trying to rein her in as the conflagration reached bonfire proportions (it wasn't as if we had Graham with us to expertly extinguish it), we heard Gail weakly protest "I thought it was going out".



*Nobody told Kim that trampers don't wear pyjamas*

And so to bed. Debbie opted to try out her new bivy bag and calmly inserted herself into this shroud like apparatus. Pyjama clad Kim toddled off to her tent clutching a hottie – a most unlikely looking trumper.

For those up early enough the next day there were some good views of the frost-laden tussock and stunning reflections in the tarns. Stace was excited to find that gadget girl Deb had packed a kite which quickly became 'the best thing about the tramp'.

The innocuously named Mid Hill is a 1680 metre peak lying directly behind our campsite. If Gail had known that Deb, Zita and June were aiming for the top she may have declined their invitation to go for a stroll. But Gail soon got into the spirit of things



*Deb's kite kept the troops amused for hours*

and no one could dissuade her from tackling the final precipitous rock scramble to the top, where Zita was already attempting to fly the kite on a razorback ridge. June's frantic cries - "Come down! Jeanne'll kill me if I bring you back dead" - went unheard as Gail, gripped by summit fever, forged ahead over the steep crumbling rock.

Back at the campsite Stace and Kim had been putting in a few solid hours sunbathing. Once the climbers returned there was nothing for it but to eat two meals in quick succession to give us the strength for the big tussock climb that preceded the long descent to the car park.



*Gail placates the mud gods with a quick prayer*

By now the tramping group was a finely tuned machine and, except for the occasional skirmish with mud, fairly flew over the terrain. Clearly skaters make great trampers - their balance is good, they're used to the cold and falling on soft ground holds no horror for them. But with perfect weather and no bugs, did we have it too easy? It did all seem just a bit too gorgeous to be true! It's a hard act to follow but we'll definitely have another tramp next year.



*Look out Airborne Hunnies, here come the Lagoon Bound Bunnies*

## ***Other Social News***

### ***Orienteering***

On Feb 19<sup>th</sup> 2006 there is a Council sponsored fun orienteering day at Bottle Lake. It's aimed mainly at beginners, with lots of Orienteering Club people on hand to answer questions ... and its FREE. People can do the courses on their own or in groups, running or walking - emphasis is on having a go and having fun. This could be a good social event for CMFSC. It only takes an hour or two and we could follow up with a BBQ. If you are interested let official club orienteer, Debbie Gill-Fox, [debbiegillfox@paradise.net.nz](mailto:debbiegillfox@paradise.net.nz) or a committee member know.

### ***Christmas Break Up***

Don't forget the Break Up on December 19<sup>th</sup> – ice time is booked from 5.30 – 7.00. It's just free skating for the first half hour to allow people time to arrive after work. Bring a plate please. Now, just one more tramping shot ...



*Lagoon Saddle*

### ***Goodbye to Zita***

Zita Lin will be returning to Taiwan in a few weeks because job opportunities in her field in NZ are limited to technical rather than the people based kind of job she would like. We are very sorry to see her go.

Zita has made tremendous progress in her skating since she joined the club earlier this year and at the Masters Games won a gold medal for her solo dance and bronze in her stroking event. We look forward to seeing her when she returns to NZ, confident that she will have continued her figure skating (and rather worried that she'll have left some of us way behind!!) Good luck for the future Zita.