

TRIP TO THE SOUTHERN PEAK OF RUAPEHU (THE LITTLE MATTERHORN) AND CRATER LAKE, FROM THE ROUND BUSH.

The Round Bush, situated about seven miles to the north of the Karioi Railway-station, forms a splendid base to ascend Ruapehu from the southern side. This bush is a circular patch separated from the main body about 10 chains, and can be seen from the railway-line almost anywhere between Karioi and Waiouru.

To reach this camping-spot excursionists taking horses should cross the stream running immediately to the east of the Karioi Railway-station by a small bridge just above the railway-bridge, and then make straight for Ruapehu till the foot of the low hills to the north is reached, so as to avoid several little swampy gullies. A well-worn track starts along the foot, heading off these bad places, and joins the old Native track from Karioi to Tokaanu just under the Tanatehapua Trig. Station and continues almost to the Round Bush, which can be seen standing out very prominently ahead. The route is almost level the whole way, and is easily walked in two and a half hours.

A leading spur runs right from the Round Bush to the southern rocky peak known to many as the "Little Matterhorn," owing to its resemblance to the famous peak of that name. The first mile and a half across the tussock plains, almost level walking, and then an easy rocky spur is met, which rises steadily until within a few hundred feet of the summit, where it rises somewhat abruptly, though not in any way precipitous. A good trip is to climb the south peak, and then cross over round the south side to the highest peak, descend to the lake, and return the north side to the leading spur again. An easy route to the summit of the rocky peak is up a steep rocky ridge immediately to the south of it. To reach the highest point, Ruapehu Peak, 9,175 ft., from here, it is necessary to descend the spur again some distance, and then skirt around the head of the Mangaehuehu Glacier, through a saddle, and up the ridge ahead. In March this glacier presents a magnificent spectacle, being cracked from top to bottom with large crevasses, and about half-way down there is a remarkable icefall which presents a series of tremendous crevasses, ice cliffs, razor-backed ice pinnacles and dark caverns, the greenish tint of the ice giving the place a beautiful effect. The view of the lake and surroundings from Ruapehu Peak is a marvellous sight. On a clear day the ocean can be seen on several sides, together with Mount Egmont standing out away to the west. The trip to the top from the Round Bush takes about six hours. The lake is easily reached by descending to the snowfields below, though late in the summer large crevasses appear near the edge, where the ice cliffs are falling into the lake, which might cause deviations to be made. From the lake the best route is round underneath the north side of the rocky peak, across the Wahianoa Glacier, to a saddle in the spur running down to the Round Bush. Early in the summer this glacier, as well as the Mangaehuehu Glacier and several small ice-filled gullies, is covered with soft snow, which forms splendid foothold, and it is possible to travel almost anywhere without much trouble; but late in the summer, about March, all the soft snow has disappeared, and only the hard ice remains, and it is then that the ice-axe is indispensable, and care has to be taken not to slip.

The journey down can be accomplished easily in a little over two hours from the lake. This route is a very popular one with people resident in the district, as it occupies little time, and forms an ideal excursion for riding-parties.

TRIP TO RUAPEHU PEAK VIA THE MANGAEHUEHU STREAM FROM RANGATAUA.

This route is a direct one from the Main Trunk Railway line, but will not be very popular until a pack-track is formed and a hut erected somewhere near the edge of the bush. The bush and river scenery throughout is magnificent. A good walking-track has been cut up the eastern side of the river from Rangataua to the open country at the foot of the mountain. Horses can be taken about three miles and a half in through a large clearing, and from there the rest of the journey has to be undertaken on foot. It takes about three hours and a half to go from Rangataua Station to a good camping-spot within a mile of the open country round the mountain, and from there five hours will see one to the summit of the highest peak.

From Rangataua to the camping-spot it is a fairly even grade, and from the camp a good leading spur gives easy climbing until within about 500 ft. of the top, where it steepens a good bit though not at all formidably. The route keeps to the east of the Mangaehuehu River until the foot of the glacier is reached, and there it crosses over to the spur to the left of the glacier, giving a splendid view of the terminal face, about 50 ft. of solid greenish ice, with the river rushing away from it in a foaming torrent. The spur to the west of the glacier leads directly to Ruapehu Peak. A party climbed by this route on the 17th March, 1909, just after the Ngauruhoe eruption, and they found the ice and upper parts of the mountain covered with a grey mud, the effects of the recent rain on the ash.

The advantage of this route is that it is very direct from the railway to the main peak. A pack-track could very easily be cut out, and if this were done, and a hut erected within half a mile from the open country, the route would become very popular.

TRIP TO PARETETAITONGA PEAK FROM WAIMARINO SIDE.

On the west of Mount Ruapehu, immediately above the Erua Railway-station, is situated the hill known as Hauhangatahi, its forest-clad slopes, facing the railway-line, presenting a charming spectacle. From the summit a magnificent view can be obtained of Ruapehu. A good track has been cut by the Public Works Department up a leading spur situated about a quarter of a mile south of the Erua Railway-station.