



PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217
PALMERSTON NORTH
NEWSLETTER

September 1991 Edition

Gear Custodian
Newsletter Editor and
Newsletter Distribution

President	: Tony Gates	357-0990
Membership Enquiries	: Tony Gates	357-0990
	: or Tricia Eder	357-0122
	: Daryl Rowan	356-4655
	The DRI Gang	w 350-4808
	: Peter Wiles	358-6894

ENQUIRES CONCERNING OVERDUE TRIPS

Brad Owen	: Ph. 358-3467
Daryl & Linda Rowan	: Ph. 356-4655
Sue & Lawson Pither	: Ph. 357-3033

ALL TRIPS LEAVE FROM THE FOODTOWN CAR PARK IN FERGUSON STREET.
IF YOU WANT TO GO ON A TRIP, PLEASE ADVISE THE LEADER AT LEAST THREE DAYS IN
ADVANCE. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN AN ALTERNATIVE DAY OR WEEKEND TRIP, CONTACT
THE LEADER OF THE SCHEDULED TRIP.

Members are reminded that a charge for transport will be collected on the day of the trip, the amount depending on the distance traveled and vehicles used. Leaders should be able to give an estimate in advance.

THURSDAY EVENING PROGRAMME

Please sign your name in the visitors book. There is a door fee of 30c which includes supper.

The PNTMC committee meets on the first Thursday of each month, at 436 College Street. Meetings are held for all Club (and intending) members on the last Thursday of each month and the Thursday two weeks prior to that evening. The venue is the Society of Friends Hall, 227 College Street, Palmerston North, at 7:45 pm.

THURSDAY EVENING PROGRAMME

SEPTEMBER 17 Hugh Van Norden, on his expedition last year to Mt Everest. Hugh reached within 100 metres of the summit before retreating. A very moving talk and professionally delivered will be presented at the M.T.S.C. rooms, The Pavilion (The Square), at 8.00pm.

SEPTEMBER 26 Debate at Society of Friends for the renowned boot trophy with the topic -"THAT TRAMPERS SHOULD STICK TO THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW".

OCTOBER 17

OCTOBER 31 Map & Compass instruction

TRIP LIST

SEPTEMBER

- SEPTEMBER 21/22** MAHOENUI Nth. TARANAKI CAVING (M&T) Leader: Steve Glasgow Ph 0650-68838
- SEPTEMBER 21/22** IRON GATES RUAHINES (E) Leader: Chris Saunders Ph 358-4899
- SEPTEMBER 26** Club Evening MUAC Annual Debate
- SEPTEMBER 28/29** SNOWCRAFT III RUAPEHU SNOWCAVING. (F&T,) Leader: Peter Wiles Ph 358-6894
- SEPTEMBER 29** KUMETI (E/M) Leader: Tricia Eder Ph 357-0122

OCTOBER

- OCTOBER 5/6** CATTLE RIDGE TARARUAS (M) Leader: Tricia Eder Ph 357-0122
- OCTOBER 6** HEREPAI (E) Leader: Alison McColl Ph 358-9326
- OCTOBER 10** Club Evening
- OCTOBER 13** NGAMOKO RANGE RUAHINES (M) Leader: Mick Leader Ph 358-3183
(Note change from weekend trip as per card.)
- OCTOBER 13** RANGI (E) Leader: Margaret Riordon Ph 356-7460
- OCTOBER 19/20** MAROPEA FORKS RUAHINES (F) Leader: Perry Hicks Ph 355-1393
- OCTOBER 20** NORTH RANGE RD CYCLE TRIP Leader: Stuart Boyd Ph 356-6235
- OCTOBER 26-28** MT HIKURANGI EAST CAPE (M) Leader: Peter Wiles Ph 358-6894
- OCTOBER 26** CYCLING Leader: Sally Hewson Ph 357-0990
- OCTOBER 26** A week or so SKI MOUNTAINEERING SOUTHERN ALPS
Leader: Tony Gates Ph 357-0990
- OCTOBER 31** Club Evening Map and Compass Skills

EDITORIAL

Since the last newsletter, there have been two Club evenings and several trips. Peter Wiles presented an inspiring slide show about snowcraft and mountaineering in New Zealand, then a whole lot of us tried the real thing at Mt Taranaki. See the trip report below. Colin Sharp spoke of caving (they call it pot-holing) in Europe. There were several shots of a very "Derek-ish" looking person looking down deep holes. They even winch tourists down.

The DOC "Draft Ruahine Forest Park Management Plan" is out now, and PNTMC is deliberating over a submission. Points that most concern us are public access to the Park and DOC work on huts, tracks and bridges. If you have any concerns, then please convey them to a committee member. Submissions have to be in by the end of October.

A booklet arrived in the PO Box the other day. It was entitled "For Those Who Understand", it is poetry about fishing, hunting and just living in the Ruahines and Kawekas. Copies are available at Club discount of \$13.00, or probably in the bookshelf of a little hut on the farmland near Rangi car park (ask Marcel). Mike McGee, the author, may be able to spin a few yarns at a tramping club evening some day. As for other publications, the brilliant 1992 alpine calendars are now out, so contact Tony for your copy.

Just a brief note to remind all you authors to write up your last trip, or an article, for this newsletter (please) Even if it was a grovelling trip into snow covered leatherwood!

NOTICES

New Members:

The Club would like to welcome and introduce three new members to the fold:

Sue Bramley
2c Droylsden Place
Palmerston North
Ph 358-6290

Pauline Coy
7 Just Place
Palmerston North
Ph 356-8782

Chris Kelly
273 Broadway Avenue
Palmerston North
Ph 355-4980

Corrections

Correction to Simon Allan's phone number. I believe it should be 355-2665.

Snowcraft

Snowcraft III will be at Ruapehu, and will probably involve snowcaving or camping out. We will go into more detail with belay methods and anchors, front pointing and abseiling. Participants will require the above gear and a hard hat would be in their interests.

I am not sure whether a general climbing weekend is on the schedule for later in the season, but this probably can be arranged if there is the interest. - (editor)

SAREX 91

We have been asked to submit our intentions to field at least one team for this year's event for the weekend of October 25th. Could we manage two teams this year? Register your interest with Tricia.

More on the subject of Giardia

I notice that most if not all the huts in Tongariro National Park have notices in them stating "GIARDIA MAY BE PRESENT IN THIS AREA". This vague statement is of some concern. What does it actually mean? Are they trying to say that the natural ground waters in the area are probably unsafe? Are they saying that the hut water tank is suspect? At Rangipo, the only potable water supply for some distance is the tank supply which presumably is unlikely to be contaminated. At Oturere, I was happy to make the same assumption, until I heard the possums on the hut roof. Then I began to wonder, what is the risk - would the stream be a lower risk in this case? What level of contamination constitutes a threat?

DOC's advice to "boil all water" seems to present us with a problem. On a major trip and apart from the time wasted, the quantity of fuel that would need to be carried could nearly double. Alternatively investment in filters of unknown efficacy would be required. In either case it's all more load to be carried.

I noted recently in the newspaper, that DOC had carried out a local survey of both natural waters and some hut supplies. We need these results. But this in itself is not enough. We need some idea of what levels of intake are likely to be pathogenic. Can intakes at low levels invoke a degree of tolerance or immunity? Does anyone have any information to shed more light on this subject - send us a line. Has anyone been diagnosed with the organism, or know of someone? What were the circumstances?

TRIP REPORTS

RANGI AND BEYOND, AUG 11

It snowed. The Renfrew Road (Rangi) car park had a light dusting, and we could see heaps more snow in the bush. Despite grotty weather, we were optimistic.

The Whanahua Range, beyond Rangī Hut, has some great skiing. It is close to Palmy, in fact the hut (on the bushline) is only about two hours from town. There has been heaps of snow this winter there, and just so much good skiing, that we had to get out and enjoy it. We were "TEAM TELEMAR", otherwise known as Mike Hewett, Tony Gates, and others.

Rangī Hut was warm, and crowded with the usual masses of day trippers. Powdery snow about the hut, with the promise of much more beyond. Well dressed up, we tramped into the murk debating about how far we should go in poor conditions, and our chances of the weather clearing. One has to be optimistic.

The crowds dwindled when they realised knee deep snow wasn't easy to "plough" through. Skis make it easy aye Tony. Blue sky appeared intermittently when we reached Mangahua (1583 m), the views were amazing, and there was heeaaps of snow. Two happy skiers then could enjoy several exhilarating runs (and a few good prangs) into the basin to the north. The snow was excellent, very forgiving, and good for beginners. The return to Rangī Hut was not particularly good skiing, however, as the snow was a bit thin, and skiing on tussock tends to slow you down! Mike nearly reached the hut on skis.

The track lived up to it's reputation as a quagmire of mud, made worse than usual by the melting snow.

Members of this team?

SNOWCRAFT TWO. . . . JUDGEMENT DAY

Every good movie has a sequel. So to does every good trip, so apologies are owed to Schwarzenegger for the subtitle. Some must have thought that rather apt though, as we struggled up to Kapuni Lodge Taranaki late Friday evening. Howling wind and rain (sounds familiar?). The lodge with its pot belly stove fired up and roaring like a welding torch, was a very welcome sight.

Saturday was grotty. We firstly fitted harnesses and sorted out a few knots in the shelter of the lodge, then braved the conditions outside for some instruction on the uses of the rope. A small gully just down the track was reasonably sheltered, and held plenty of soft snow for our purposes. Fairly steep too, so ropes could be seen to be useful when crossing such gullies. Everyone had a go at belaying and being tied to the rope. Thoughts of the toasty warm lodge and our lunch lured us back after an hour or so of useful instruction. Lots of locals in residence. The afternoon was spent studying some snowcraft, organising a rather large dinner, and for some, sleeping.

COMMENTS
Typical downpour
raining like hell
complicated knots!
huge bowl of popcorn for lunch
boy that stove is hot
difficult crossword!

Sunday was grotty too. We did however persevere, and get some more practice with rope work and belays. We found a steeper, larger gully to the south, with a decent overhang for some shelter. The team was keen, but unfortunately some got rather cold standing around belaying or waiting for a free rope. Bit of a problem that, keeping warm whilst doing a sedentary job and waiting for your partner to climb (and untangle the rope!) Some were keen to expand their experience on the mountain, but most of us just wanted to get back to the hut. Pot belly stoves were seldom more appreciated.

There was heaps of snow in the bush, about the car park, and even some at the National Park boundary. The mountain was enshrouded in black cloud as we departed. Next time the weather will be fine!

Members: Tony Gates, Trevor Meyle, Mick Leyland, Jane Davies , Bruce van Brant, Paulene Coy, Chris Saunders, Brad Owen, Roderick Saunders.

Five Out Of Five At Tongariro National Park - Peter Wiles

While I had planned to go to the South Island in August, a last minute reduction in numbers, geometrically increased the cost of this possibility. Instead John and I went to Tongariro National Park for 5 days. Neither of us ski, so what to do there for 5 five days in winter? I discovered John was generally unfamiliar with sizeable chunks of the Park, so there were heaps of options. If the weather outlook was poor we thought we might do the around Ruapehu track, however, in the event the weather prognosis was fine so that option remains for another occasion.

We, initially, headed into Rangipo Hut, after a lapse of about 2 or 3 weeks. This time we had no problems on the road or track finding. There was no one at the hut and no entries since our last visit - although it was obvious that it had been inhabited since our last visit - because if anything it was tidier than when we left it. It was also warmer than the previous visit - the temperature was on the comfortable side of freezing. There was a fading south-easterly breeze and only rather patchy snow around the hut.

Next morning we left shortly after 6.30 am to have another attempt at the east ridge of Mitre. This time the weather was ideal - little or no wind, no surface powder snow until very high up and a good freeze. The east ridge involves about 500 m of easy climbing up a series of steps on the peak. Depending on conditions, a belay might be desired in one or two spots. We reached Mitre about 11 am, and then continued the plod along to Tahurangi, which we reached at 12 noon. There was no one around apart from a car park full of skiers at Turoa and some people near Dome. After a quick lunch, we decided we would head over to Girdlestone. Although our route was not as direct as it might have been, it did not take very long to reach the summit. The final Girdlestone ridge was covered with massive horizontal blocks of sastrugi. On our return, we had to decide our route back to the hut. We decided not to descend the Mitre ridge, but instead we decided to explore the Waihianoa. We did a sidle across the eastern slopes of Mitre at about 2100 m to see if we could get a route back onto the Rangipo - Mitre ridge but found that there was a massive ravine cutting us off. We continued down the Waihianoa / glacier / snowslopes making sure we weren't going to get bluffed. At the bottom we had a decision to make. It was getting late in the afternoon by this time. Should we continue down the valley until we picked up the round the mountain track at the bottom or should we take the direct route by climbing out of the gorge? We decided on the latter which probably proved to be the better choice although we somewhat underestimated the size of the climb up the side of the valley - 350 m rather than my initial estimate of not more than 200 m.

Next morning (Wednesday) we were not in too much of a hurry to do anything. We decided to leave Rangipo; reorganize our gear at the car and drive round to the Waihothonu road end. In fine but overcast conditions we trudged over to Oturere Hut. Like the others, it too was empty. The snow level seemed to be lower over in this area than back at Rangipo (patches down in the bush).

In the evening we made the mistake of putting an instant pudding out on the hut veranda to hasten setting. A few minutes later I went out to grab the burner and found a possum a few feet away from the bowl and on closer inspection - yes there was the characteristic imprint of its face in the pudding. That and its mate were very lucky that day - they got the lot and we started again. Later on in the night I heard one of the creatures on the roof. (This raises the issue of Giardia which will be addressed as a separate subject.) (If you have ever had difficulty making a less than perfect instant pud without a beater, John and I might have come up with a way round the problem - it was nothing to do with possums but the innovation arose by virtue of the second attempt. More experimental verification is required - so watch these columns for more information.)

Next morning we were blanketed in cloud, but it soon started to break up as the weather forecast (back at the car) had predicted. Ngauruhoe was clear so our main plan was put into action. We headed across country on one of the main ridges south of the Oturere lava area towards Ngauruhoe. (A route in retrospect might have been improved in one or two places.) As we approached the slopes a layer of cloud began to gather at the 2100 m level. Would it get worse? John and I ploughed on. We eventually reached the col between Ngauruhoe and the Tongariro complex. We pressed on - excellent snow - and in what seemed a short time we were on the crater rim. We waded through a white out to reach the summit near the southeast extremity of the crater. Then we began to get breaks in the cloud to reveal Ruapehu standing proud of the cloud and also down onto Tama Lakes. There was no hurry, so we wandered around admiring the ice formations and generally waiting for a clear view. Visibility progressively improved. Then we inspected the main vent. After more photos and a brief conversation with 2 Aucklanders we headed down to some warmer territory.

After lunch overlooking South Crater, we decided to complete the double by heading up Tongariro. The prospects for a view from its summit appeared to be slim - but what the heck. Once we got onto the south ridge, we found that a herd of elephants had stamped / cramponed a track along it. Before long we entered a dense whiteout which prevailed until we eventually reached Red Crater. Red Crater is always fascinating. Perhaps more so in winter when the rock walls are plastered with ice and yet there are streams of steam issuing from fissures amongst the cracks. We also inspected the geothermal area immediately to the north of the crater. Then having dropped below the cloud layer we headed down the Oturere lava field. This was the most tedious part of the day - plodding along the soft snow also as far as the hut.

The evening looked like rain. In the morning the hut was engulfed in cloud. We decided there was little point with further "exploration" of the Tongariro area so we headed back to Waihothonu with the option of heading across country again to Tama Lakes. By the time we reached the edge of the Waihothonu Valley, it seemed that we were going into progressively clearer weather, so plan B went into action.

The walk up the valley to the "saddle" between Tame and Ngauruhoe was rather tedious (and made more so by a somewhat inappropriate sidle along the northern side of the Waihothonu Valley - which at the start, I thought was a good idea but moraine is moraine whether it is in the South Island or the North - new or old).

After having a good look at both lakes, we had lunch and then started the trek back to the Desert Road. The upper area of the Whakapapa Valley looks from above to be mostly flat and covered with tussock. I had encountered the realities of travelling across country in this area some time ago with Trevor. With better weather, this time I was determined that we would make a better go of it. In spite of noble intentions, the reality is a considerable number of small narrow gullies separated by low fern / grass / moss / swamp which seems endless. However, just when we were wondering about the wisdom of this we viewed the track. Then we were cooking on gas. We reached the car in good time and before the rain set in.

Purity Hut - Sunday 1st September

Ours was the sole vehicle in the car park. Had the ominous forecast kept trampers at home in bed? Unperturbed, we sallied forth into the hills. A poled route led us through stockyards, across farmland and a stream, to the bottom of a steep hill. The track follows a fence line up the ridge for about an hour. From time to time, the slippery nature of the track saw the fence being deployed as a ladder. About half way up the slope, an electric fence joined in the ascent. Make no mistake about it, the current is ON. After a shot of electro-convulsive therapy, farm and fence were behind us, and it was only another hour to Purity Hut. Along the way little red berries of a ground creeper, *pratia*, greeted our downcast eyes. After a rest at Purity Hut, three of us decided to head towards Wooden Peg for a look see. Above the hut, we encountered plenty of snow - quite deep in places. The crust on the snow occasionally gave way, swallowing its victim's entire leg. We extracted ourselves, repeatedly, from the snow's icy jaws and, despite an affront from a vicious wind, made it to Wooden Peg. Good views were had of Iron Peg and Mangaweka Peak. After admiring a beautiful cornice of snow, we headed for calmer conditions back down at the hut. After a second lunch we continued soon arriving back at the car park - and we were still dry!

The party: Pauline Coy, Monica Cantwell, Tricia Eder and Doug Strachan.

Have you been in any tiger country lately?

A quote from the Tararua Annual of 1989 sets the scene ..." for five unforgettable hours (we) crawled, crashed and wallowed through the worst patch of swamp and jungle it has ever been my misfortune to meet either in New Zealand or West Africa ... flax swamps in which a man might disappear for ever ... in this abomination one lunge - I cannot call it a step - would often occupy five minutes .. after which one would fall exhausted to the ground, to lie there entangled in (supplejack) vines and thigh deep ooze ..." Anon. (Thank goodness and amen- ed.)

And on a more (slightly) positive note:

My boots are wet
My shorts are split
I wonder why I agreed to this
My knees are sore
My ankles sprained
But please, please invite me again.

Anon.