



PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217
PALMERSTON NORTH
NEWSLETTER

December 1992 Edition

Gear Custodian

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TRIPS OFTEN LEAVE FROM THE FOODTOWN CAR PARK IN FERGUSON STREET UNLESS THE LEADER ARRANGES OTHERWISE.

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.

TRIP LIST

DECEMBER

CHRISTMAS TRIPS (dates to be confirmed)

DECEMBER 20-30 MT COOK N.P. Climbing Trevor Meyle 356-8782

DECEMBER 26-JAN 1 (approx dates) KAIMANAWA-KAWEKA crossing medium Tony Gates 357-0990

THURSDAY EVENING PROGRAMME

There will be many more interesting Thursday evenings put on by PNTMC and friends. We hope to arrange another talk by DOC for early next year, on the "Conservation Management Strategy". They want to keep us (the users) informed, and they want feedback on how they perform. Stay tuned.

EVENTS PROGRAMMED FOR 1993

1. BBQ venue??

2. Pauline is planning to block book MTS's hut at Whakapapa for sometime late January or perhaps February. A good weekend for a general wander about the mountain.
3. Greg Preston Climbing in Greenland
4. Clive Jones Climbing in Argentina
5. DOC "Conservation Management Strategy" by Andrew Spence, of the Wanganui Office. An audio visual presentation looking at management of the Conservation Estate.
6. PNTMC activities featuring Christmas in the Kaimanawas and Kawekas etc. Bring along your slides.
7. AGM - End of March

EDITORIAL

Summer is here at last. Or is it? Haven't seen much sunny weather recently, and I still see a heap of snow on Mt Ruapehu. We have still managed a few of the usual style of trips recently despite the weather and the usual excuses heard to avoid tramping near Christmas time. I hope you keep up the tramping, and enjoy reading about the past tramps here.

Linda Rowan spoke at a Club evening last month on some map and compass matters. We hope to have a follow up practical evening early next year. Then there was, for the party goers amongst us, the annual Christmas dinner. Good food, good drink, (what was that you had Sally?), and good company. However do we get away from these "big eating" occasions? Try tramping (but to be honest, that doesn't always work).

Every now and then I day dream about people and places in the hills. Sometimes it is like a memory, usually of good times, that can strike anytime. Photos and maps also remind me about past trips, so that leads to continual scheming for future trips. There is just so much to do. Get into it, but don't forget to consider the weather and terrain when you go to the hills. And do not neglect writing for the Editor (Please!).

Merry Christmas.

NOTICES

CHRISTMAS TRIP KAIMANAWA - KAWEKA CROSSING

Well, here it is, your big opportunity, your big tramp, you too can cross the Kaimanawa and Kaweka Ranges with us.

The central North Island plateau is a vast area of wilderness. There is tussock, beech forest, big rivers, a few tracks and the odd hut. The three principle ranges, the Kaimanawas, Kawekas and the Ahimanawas are administered by DOC but there are also substantial areas of private land.

We hope to tramp (sweat?) over the Umukarikari Range to the headwaters of the Rangitiki River. There should be really pleasant spots to camp, wide open spaces and good handy beech forest. We would bypass Boyd Lodge, then tramp up onto the tops of the Kaweka Range. There are several nice huts there, and hopefully good views of the Mohaka and Ngaruroro valleys. Our destination is the hot pools of the Te Puia Lodge area and the mighty Mohaka River.

Contact Tony ASP if interested.

TRIP CARD

With a bit of luck we should have a trip card prepared for the December newsletter.

ANNUAL HUT PASSES

Contact Tony for passes, details etc.

NEW GEAR

We have purchased half a dozen carabiners and 3 descenders (figure of eights). If you think you might need such items don't hesitate to give Mick a ring.

FIRST AID

Someone has suggested that it would be a good idea to check out suitable first aid courses next year. If you are interested, relay your interest to the committee.

BOOK REVIEW by Tony Gates

This may well prove to be a classic book. It is an informative handy sized field guide to several adventure sports and many places all over New Zealand. The authors have tackled a fairly small local market that is already saturated by bits and pieces about outdoor adventures and places in New Zealand. But they also aimed at the overseas tourist market, so should sell a few more books than just to people like us. I enjoyed it, and am honoured to have known some of the authors.

The book briefly discusses general information, equipment and skills, types of adventures (land and water), wilderness nightmares, further reading, Clubs and Contacts, grading systems, and glossaries of terms. Good summaries: in fact the entire book is a good summary of what the authors want to say. There are roughly equal chapters on each of ten geographical areas, each with 10 or so different "classic" adventures, with emphases on mountain biking (Jonathan Kennett 1991 co-authored "Classic N. Z. Mountain Bike Rides" - do you have that one Mick?). Each chapter has sub-chapters of 2- 3 pages each on; snorkelling, diving, sea kayaking/ canoeing, rafting, horse trekking, tramping, climbing, back country skiing, mountain biking, and combinations. Other places to do these, and other activities such as; rock climbing, ice skating, caving, paragliding, bungee jumping, and somewhat light hearted lunatic activities are briefly discussed at the end of each chapter. One gem describes "The worlds worst tramp", a trench filled with mud and submerged logs, as having no highlights, no views, and no rewards (sound familiar Derek?).

This book is directed as much towards experts of those activities as for beginners. The authors do, however, state the dangers involved, and stress that professional guides are often available. I certainly hope readers, especially those from overseas, do not underestimate the dangers that are mentioned.

Where are the Ruahines? Hardly a mention in this book I'm sorry to say, have to wait for volume two? Yeomans Track (Whakarara) is briefly mentioned as a mountain bike ride. The closest adventures to P.N. the book mentions are to be found on the waters of the Rangitiki, Otaki, Waiohine, and Whanganui Rivers. The closest tramps mentioned are the legendary Southern and Northern Crossings of the Tararuas. There are climbs of several of our major peaks discussed, and some other popular tramps, rides, and rivers.

The cover photo shows white water rafting on the Otaki (with a mountain bike strapped on!), and the back cover shows a determined looking mountain biker riding through ankle deep powder snow. There are plenty of good black and white and colour photos, and regional maps for each chapter showing main roads and access points. Darling wee detailed "hobbit" style maps are presented of some areas. The authors make frequent mention of DOSLI maps being essential for the relevant activities, and the ones required for each particular adventure. Appendices give advice for further reading and clubs and contacts, and Mountain Radio Service details are also valuable as references. The book is up to date with detail of phone numbers, prices, services, etc. At a little under \$25.00, it will be valuable as a guide book as well as for reference and the coffee table.

TRIP REPORTS

RANGI - Saturday November 14

A rare fine morning - clear with no wind - saw seven of us set off for Rangiwhahia. Such a change to have a fine morning. We hoped it would last.

After a pleasant drive, we noticed that there was still snow on the tops of the ranges and the countryside was fresh and green apart from the many slips scarring the hillsides; the results of very wet weather.

We were impressed by the access to the car park. It was much improved on the last time. Surprisingly there was only one other vehicle there.

After a quick change into boots etc. we were off up the track with Sue Pither leading the way. We had a few stops on the way to admire Ruapehu on the horizon, but even so we made good time to the hut. On our arrival we noted several changes - especially the new gas fire and cooking rings. Lawson decided to try the gas and organised the billy for morning tea.

After a leisurely morning tea - enjoying the sun and peace and quiet, we decided to continue up to Mangahua. (It was only 11 am and the day was too good to waste.) Malana, Tricia's niece, had some doubts about this, but after emptying her pack and lots of encouragement she continued. Just before the top we met two guys and their dogs, who assured us the view was great.

We reached the top at 1 pm, Heather, Sue and Malana decided that was enough but the other four went on further to investigate the snow and photograph the view. Surprisingly, there were still large patches of deep snow around but the track was clear.

Dark clouds started rolling in while we were eating lunch but had almost dispersed again before we set off back to the hut. We arrived at the hut at about 3 pm, in time to boil another billy and attend to a blistered toe before

heading off down to the car park. We had thought about a visit to Cross Hills to see the rhododendrons, but we were too late for that and also the asparagus which Lawson had spotted at a roadside stall on the way up took priority.

We all had an excellent day - enjoyed by Sue, Lawson, Malana, Jenny, Heather and Sue B.

TREKKING IN THE ANNAPURNA RANGE (NEPAL) October 92 by Monica Cantwell

I had intended joining the Manawatu Tramping Club to go into Nepal, but the length of time they were to be away was a little too long for me. I decided to go early in October. I joined a British group having 13 in the party of varying ages for the 2 week trek. All were extremely fit and had done a lot of preparation for the trek.

October was only supposed to have 4 wet days, of which we experienced all 4 at the beginning of the trip. It was not easy climbing, in muggy and very warm conditions on the lower part. On 3 occasions we climbed for 3 hours up huge stone steps. Some of our days were long, trekking for 6 - 9 hours. The local people are gentle, quietly spoken and very poor. The children, all along the way, like to take your hand and talk a lot, asking for school pens (some are sold), T-shirts and anything else you have got. Lots wanted medicines and ointments (several with sores etc.). The authorities are trying to discourage begging, but I would have liked to have taken a bag of old clothes over with me. Some of the party discarded their surplus clothes as they went along (making things lighter). We all noticed the thin air as we climbed higher over 3,500 m. Also we were very fortunate to see all 15 peaks in the Annapurna Range at different times. They are very huge and breath taking (over 8000 m). People coming down had not seen any views due to the 4 wet days. We stayed mainly in tea houses or local inns and this was excellent for meeting the local people. We had 8 porters and 1 English speaking sirdar, or guide. All carried incredible loads and walked only on jandals. They were all wonderful and helpful, but all paid very little.

On leaving, the Government will only give or exchange 18% of the currency you want i.e. US\$, so it is essential to work out ones needs whilst there. The higher up we went the more bottled water and soft drinks cost. They were very plentiful all along the way. The most refreshing was milk tea, which always came with what seemed like 2-3 heaped sugars. All the party without exception were affected with coughs, colds and sore throats when reaching the high altitude and on our last 3 days, people came down with the other 2 bugs. I only got a slight cold.

We were very careful with our food and drink, but could see why, small children washing our dishes out of a hose in the mud with chickens on the plates and dogs also having a lick.

We met several mule trains, some with 30 in a team, heavily loaded and could hear their bells ringing a long way off. I flew for 1 hour over the Himalayas seeing all except the tip of Everest. It did not stand out in any way as bigger than the rest. The vastness and the heights were amazing.

I then spent 5 days in Bangkok (crazy traffic) the air was blue both in Bangkok and in Kathmandu with smoke. All old cars in the latter and rubbish piled up in the streets every few yards. All in all, it was the ultimate for any tramper.

Some of the facts:

96% of Nepal's energy comes from the forests. Current figures show that these forests are disappearing at the rate of 3% per year. 1 ha of cleared forest loses 30-75 tonnes of soil annually. Approximately 400,000 ha are cleared each year, resulting in devastating landslides and floods. The only thing they seem to have is an abundance of water. The lodges in one small village along the major Annapurna trekking route consume 1 ha of virgin rhododendron forest per year to service the needs of trekkers. Only 20c out of US\$3 spent by the average trekker per day contributes to the local village economy. The rest is spent on imported goods and services. While tourism is Nepal's leading source of foreign exchange, it has produced negative effects on the natural environment. The increase in trekking has led to the clearing of vast tracts of forested land to meet the cooking, heating and lodging needs of visitors. Litter and sanitation problems have also reached alarming levels. Trekkers bring many non-biodegradable items with them that end up in scattered piles on the outskirts of villages or strewn along the banks of rivers. Toilet facilities, if they exist at all, are often found dangerously close to water sources. The threat to humans and wildlife is great, not to mention the gross unsightliness of it all. However there is a new approach, "The Annapurna Conservation Area Project". This is a new concept in protected areas management. They will concentrate on forest conservation, alternative energy sources, conservation education, tourist awareness programmes, community development, community health, community management and research and training.

Really good buys were silver items (mostly coming down from the Tibetan border). Also nice thick jerseys made of Tibetan sheep's wool (cost NZ\$25).

I have been asked several times where to next and I have said the Andes. (Thanks Monica, we await your next report.)

Monica Cantwell

PINUS CONTORTA - 21-22 November by Perry Hicks

What happened to all those members who said that they were willing to go on a Pinus Contorta weekend if we arranged one? I to recall at least 10 hands went up at the time.

Three members of PNTMC travelled to the gates of the Kariori Forest where we were met by 10 people from the Rangitiki Club and 40 from the Wanganui TC. The team of 2 from DOC then arrived and led us on quite a long, drive through the pine forest to a car park only 20 minutes walk from our camping area at Coopers Ohu. (A camp named after one of the original Forest Service staff who starting trying to beat the Contorta problem.) Once at the camp, we were given time to set up our tents before we had a briefing on the Contorta eradication strategy and the day's instructions.

Ours was the first weekend of the 92/93 season, so we worked almost from the camp upwards and across towards the round-the-mountain track towards Mangaehuehu Hut. The infestation in this area was starting again as it had not been touched for 3 years. The idea is to work in a long line with about 10 m between you and the adjacent person. We worked our way up towards an area of beech near the snowline where we stopped for lunch.

The afternoon consisted of a sweep back towards camp on a slightly higher area to the north and here the trees were more numerous and bigger. The loppers came in handy at times on this section. One of the great things on Contorta trips is the views from high up areas that you wouldn't normally get to. We could see all the way out across the Kariori Forest to Waiouru and beyond towards Taihape.

Unfortunately the weather in the afternoon deteriorated and a cold soaking thunder storm swept through the area at about 2.30 pm which forced us back to camp earlier than expected. After changing, various fires were got going with the assistance of some diesel supplied by DOC for the purpose. That was followed by numerous cups of tea. The weather improved which enabled a rather enjoyable time to be spent around the fire having a few drinks. Another shower of light rain at about 8 pm forced some into their tents.

We had to leave first thing next morning as I had to work at 12 noon but I have promised we will return in February - hopefully with greater numbers?

We were Jackie Pilet, Perry Hicks and Peter Wiles.

DECEMBER TRAMP IN THE POHANGINA

The weather had been grotty for two weeks, and the forecast was for rain and southerlies continuing. So it was to be a "safe" tramp to parts of the Pohangina Valley where river crossing would not be too much of a problem. Our destination was Mid Pohangina Hut, reached by half of the team from the west, and half from the East.

I wandered in via Stanfields (luxury) hut, then Cattle Creek. The warmth and shelter of the huts was welcome. Saw some Blue Ducks, but not much else. Paul followed "the track we love to hate", the infamous sidle track, which is probably a bit quicker. It was muddy and cold, the river was up, so we sat in the hut in front of a good fire dreaming of sunshine. No such luck old buddy, the rain eased only to a drizzle. Patience was wearing a bit thin on the way out as the wind and drizzle continued. No chance even of a brief clearance at the car park. Home real early.

P.S. Monday and Tuesday following were brilliantly fine.

TARANAKI ACTIVITIES

Reliable reports to hand inform me that Bruce van Brunt did yet another ascent to the summit - his 4th for the year is it? This time I understand it was from the Kapuni Lodge side in company with Chris Saunders. Keep up the good work - guys.

MORE OVERHEATING ON THAT MOUNTAIN - by Peter Wiles

We decided to go to Whangaehu Hut. It was raining most of the way from Taihape to Waiouru so the prognosis as we reached the Desert Road did not look good. Surprisingly, Lance had resisted the suggestion of leaving at 6 am but had requested 7 am instead.

As we approached the Tukino turnoff we had got the rain behind us and were approaching clear sky. I stopped at the round-the-mountain track car park as I was not sure whether the gate was unlocked. We walked up the road in some lingering mist. The gate was open after all.

We reached the first patch of snow just beyond the road end past the DOC Depot. We figured the snow would be fairly soft by this stage, so we elected to stay as far as possible on the rocks. We were in blazing sun by this time and as our temperature rose our rate of progress correspondingly declined. Nevertheless, we reached the hut at midday. (I had been to this hut once before - probably 10 ten years ago in winter with Trevor and others. We had walked in on a Friday night. I seemed to recall the hut as dark and a bit of a mess. A blizzard came in shortly after

we arrived so we walked out first thing the next morning.) Anyway this time the hut was nothing like my recollection. It was immaculate, light and bone dry.

After lunch and a rest we elected to plod up Pyramid. This was the first time either of us had looked at the crater lake from this vantage point. To get there, however, required a great deal of sweaty effort while we sank up to 30 cm into the snow and the 600 m climb took us 2 full hours. It probably was worth it though. We sat and watched half an army around Dome and a couple of other groups of two and that was the extent of human activity on the plateau that afternoon.

Back at the hut, next to no time later, was time for intensive rehydration therapy. By nightfall all the cloud had melted away, but we did notice a slight westerly drift to the breeze. During the night the wind gradually increased to the point where the hut was rattling and creaking quite noisily. We ignored the alarm at 4.30 am, and got up with the intention of walking out instead of tackling the face on Te Heu Heu.

As we left the hut the wind seemed to have died again and in spite of the wind there had been a good freeze, so we began to wonder whether we had made the right decision. At the Tukino Huts it was very calm but on the road down to the car the wind, this time, seemed to rise quickly from the north. Masses of high cloud were moving in from the north-west. We figured that our decision was probably correct after all. We will try again when the weather forecast, one hopes, is more reliable.

Peter Wiles and Lance Broad

LIFE IN THE FAST LANE by Brian Lawrence

Two Club members, Brian, (faster than a speeding bullet) Lawrence and Sally (tractor tyres) Hewson took part in the Great Lake Cycle Challenge on November 28th. This annual event is a complete 100 mile circuit of Lake Taupo, and this year attracted over 2000 entrants. All kinds of bikes were there – from the expensive racers and mountain bikes to tandems and the rusty (trusty?) Healings - and there was just as much variation in the physiques of their owners. The weather was favourable with only the lightest wind. Brian, who was not seen for dust steamed home in 4 hours ? minutes while Sally took longer at 7 hours 40 minutes.

Well done team!

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