



PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217
PALMERSTON NORTH
NEWSLETTER

September 1994 Edition

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ENQUIRES CONCERNING OVERDUE TRIPS

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

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN GOING 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.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN A DAY TRIP MID-WEEK SEE DETAILS BELOW, OR RING Lawson and Sue Pither (357-3033), or Monica (354-3834), Nancy (358-8241), John (358-3513).

Trip Grades

Grade of trips can depend on many factors, most especially the weather and state of the track. As a guide, a reasonably proficient trumper would be expected to cover the graded trips in about the following times: Easy (E) 3 – 4 hours, Medium (M) 5 – 6 hrs, Fit (F) about 8 hrs, Fitness Essential (FE) >8 hrs. (Tech) refers to trips graded technical requiring either special skills and / or gear.

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.

Club 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 unless otherwise notified in the newsletter.

The PNTMC committee meets on the first Thursday of each month.

SCHEDULED EVENT LIST

SEPTEMBER

Committee meeting: 1st. Club Nights: 15th and 29th.

SEPTEMBER 15 Cho Oyo climbing expedition (8,153 m [26 750 ft]), to the world's 8th highest peak (depends a bit on which book you consult) in the Himalayas presented by Clive Jones.

SEPTEMBER 29 Geomorphology in Tramping. Mike Sheppard will be introducing us to this aspect of tramping with reference to the Andes, New Guinea and New Zealand.

Date	Trip	Grade	Leader	Phone
SEPTEMBER 10-11	Snowcraft 3 Whagngaehu	FIT	Peter Wiles	358-6894

Depart 6 pm Friday evening. You will need ice axe and hammer, crampons and bash hat and a harness. If weather is reasonable on Friday evening, we will climb up to Whangaehu Hut (at 2,050 m), otherwise we will head to Rangipo Hut and climb up the Whangaehu Gorge on Saturday morning, or perhaps check out the Mitre Ridge route option. (Whangaehu Hut belongs to NZAC and costs \$11 per night.)

SEPTEMBER 11	Canine Capers Hound Hike	E/M	Monica Cantwell	354-3334
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DEPT 9 am from MILSON LINE SHOPPING CENTRE CAR PARK. An easy trip for all trampers, as well as those 4-footed friends. we will travel to Tangimoana Beach, tramp along the beach towards Himitungi and on the return follow the river into a forested area to complete a round trip of 3-4 hours duration.

SEPTEMBER 17	Rangi Hut snow play	E	Tony Gates	357-7439
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Depart after breakfast and back late-ish. Indulge yourself a little. Play in the snow. Bring your skies, toboggans, plastic sheets etc. Bring tea, coffee, cake etc.

SEPTEMBER 17-18	Cattle Creek	E	Tui Craven	355-4179
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DEPT 8 am: Another cruisey easy trip. Tui is going to go up the bulldozer track on the way into Stanfield Hut. Above Stanfield, the group will go down Cattle Creek, to Cattle Creek Hut, where we will enjoy a good nosh-up meal in a welcoming and comfortable hut. On Sunday we will follow the track to the ridge, above the hut, go along it before dropping down to Stanfield Hut and complete the round trip by going back out the wet route to the road end.

SEPTEMBER 24	Herepai	E	Sue&Lawson Pither	357-3033
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This tramp travels along a well-marked riverside track, through wonderful bush with large ferns and big trees. After the swing bridge there is a steady climb for a short while before reaching the T-junction. Signpost, (a well-worn scroggin stop), to Roaring Stag and Herepai. From here to Herepai Hut the track, in short sections, be rather wet/muddy, but with care, you can negotiate the puddles. Once at the hut, the keener people can carry on up to the tops for views of the eastern side.

SEPTEMBER 24-25	Top Gorge	M	Llew Prichard	358-2217
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DEPT 7 am. This trip begins at the head of the Pohangina River near to Longview Hut. It follows an interesting route, has great scenery and can be a little sporty in a couple of places. Also you may get to see the Blue Ducks that swim in the river above and below the hut. The hut is sighted above the river, and a large signposted cairn, built by Marcel and friends, will alert you to the hut's location. First class accommodation and a loo with a view.

SEPTEMBER 24-25	Neil Winchomb Ridge	FE	Dave Hodges	358-5981
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DEPT either Friday night and go into Cone Hut, or early Saturday morning from Walls Whare over Neil Winchomb Ridge, Mt Hector, round the Dress Circle to Alpha Hut and out via Cone Hut. There is the possibility of camping out on Saturday night.'

OCTOBER

Committee meeting: 6th. Club Nights: 13th and 27th.

OCTOBER 13 Guest speaker this evening is club member Arthur Todd. While Lis attended a conference, Arthur had time to explore Hong Kong by foot. This evening's presentation is entitled "A Trampers Guide to Hong Kong".

Date	Trip	Grade	Leader	Phone
OCTOBER 1-2	Rangipo	M/T	Trevor Meyle	354-9126

DEPT Friday night. Trevor is leading this trip, giving club members yet another opportunity to gain more mountaineering experience and to use the skills acquired over the winter. On Saturday morning, the group will leave from Rangipo Hut and head up Mitre Ridge. From here, activities will depend on the weather and snow conditions and the group's makeup.

OCTOBER 2	Tamaki-A-Frame Hut	E	Liz Morrison	357-6532
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DEPT 8 am. Another suitable tramp for those who are getting into the outdoors and want to challenge themselves just that little bit more. Also a favourite for those who want to get out for the day and it's not too far a field. From the Tamaki road end, Liz will be leading the group up to the A-Frame and then wander along Takapari Road for a look-see. 4 footed companions welcome.

OCTOBER 8-9	Dorset Ridge	F	Dave Hodges	358-5981
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DEPT 5 am. Saturday. Dave plans to go in from Holdsworth, to Atiwhakatu, up Barton track to Baldy, west to Broken Axe Pinnacles over The Kings up to Girdlestone and along to Dorset Ridge Hut. On Sunday, Dave is heading back to Girdlestone via Brockett to Mitre Flats, over to Atiwhakatu and out to the road end.

OCTOBER 9 Maharahara E/M Judy Stockdale 355-5277
DEPT 8 am. from the POLICE STATION, Church Street. A combined club trip with the Manawatu Tramping & Ski Club. Cars will be left at the Kumeti and Opawe road ends. The eastern approach is more graded, while the western approach is steeper. There is attractive bush on both sides and we will lunch at the top.

OCTOBER 15-16 Leon Kinvig M/F Andrew Carvell 359-0935
DEPT 7 am. Andrew will be going in on the eastern side of the Ruahines and along the Apiti Track, staying at Leon Kinvig on Saturday night. On the Sunday there will be the choice of either completing the round trip or returning the same way.

OCTOBER 16 Kaiparoro Clearing E Brenton Sheppard 06-376-8474
DEPT 7:30 am from P.Nth. This is a trip for all those people who would like to locate a lost aircraft. This time it will be third time lucky! The first time we were rained out, the second time we went up the wrong ridge, but this time we'll get to the lost aircraft because Gerald has marked the route -- I hope!

OCTOBER 22-23-24 Day trips All Tricia Eder 357-0122
If you would like to lead day trips on any of these days please contact Tricia 357-0122 with your suggestions. Thanks.

OCTOBER 22-24 Tararuas FE Tony Gates 357-7439

OCTOBER 22-24 Wakelings view 56m falls E/M Mick Leyland 358-3183

OCTOBER 29-30 Mangahao-Avalanche Flats M Richard Lockett 323-6489

OCTOBER 30 Waipawa River E/M Arthur&Lis Todd 323-6246

EDITORIAL

After a series of weekends of dismal weather during June, July and the first half of August, two consecutive weekends of perfect weather, in time for the holidays, heralds the arrival of spring. The days are already substantially longer and it is time to start thinking about trips over the next few months - especially over summer. The only dark cloud on the horizon, is that some of us have exams starting next month. It is time to consider booking the car on the ferries, if you are planning to head south during the period Christmas through to the end of January. With the ferry employment contracts now bedded down and 24 hour sailings scheduled, there may be less pressure now for vehicle space on the boats. Also there is talk of these high speed ferries - perhaps believe it when I see it.

For those that did not make it to club nights last month, Dave Barker and his trip companions gave a stimulating presentation of their climbing in January in the Tasman Saddle area of Mount Cook National Park – thanks guys and perhaps we can book you in for next year. More recently, Doug Strachen continued his European exploits of Denmark and Germany – working for a few months, touring, sightseeing and socializing - a great mixture to entertain the audience. Doug says that he has Thailand still to go! We look forward to them too. Thanks Doug.

Membership continues to grow at a steady rate and is currently already about 10% ahead of last year's final tally.

NOTICES

NEW MEMBERS

Please welcome a new member to the club:

Nigel Scott,
146 Salisbury Street
Ashhurst.
Phone 326-8161.

THURSDAY TRAMPING GROUP

Actual location of the trips will depend on factors closer to the date, but the following list of events are scheduled, so contact the leaders.

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

If you are unable to make it or expect to be late, please ensure that our apology is forwarded to the secretary in advance. Next meeting at Tricia's place 57 Fiars Road.

Hut passes continue to be available \$40 each. I think there is one Antarctic calendar no spoken for so if anyone would like it - \$13.00.

THAT 1080 AGAIN

DOC are getting concerned with peoples' casual attitude going into areas where 1080 has been recently laid. Especially at risk are children and dogs!

POLITICS ETC.

Visit by FMC President

Hugh Barr (President FMC) and Murry Preston will be coming up to address the club on November 10th. His address will concern "Access, pastoral leases and Waitangi Treaty claims". They will be interested in discussing any local concerns/issues. We expect that space in the hall will be of a premium for this evening and there will be \$1 a head cover charge to defray expenses.

Hasst to Hollyford Road

It is understood that this perennial issue is starting to bubble to the surface again. Keep your ears tuned.

Access Fees

Access fees are emerging as a significant issue - DOC desperately needs the funds on the one hand, while on the other, usage pressure is starting to overwhelm some of the most popular tracks. Question for each member to ponder and find an answer to: what means should be used to match demands on an area with the areas ability to withstand the usage pressure? The Minister has stated in the last few days that he does not favour entry fees - in part because there is no way (in most cases) to ensure collection. Amen to that.

MOANS

If you have hired gear from the club, can you return it promptly please. Recently there have been too many cases of members sitting on gear. Mick has had to turn people away recently because of a shortage of gear. The club reserves the right to charge sitting fees.

TRIP REPORTS

Don't forget (leaders) please get your trip reports in or use your short lived powers to delegate to an unsuspecting team member. How about a letter to the editor, perhaps, or some good gossip, or a poem or what ever.

A TRAMPERS' "GUIDE" TO THE OTAKI CATCHMENT by Tony Gates

(Part one) **SOUTH OF THE FORKS.** (excluding the Southern Crossing Route)

The Otaki river drains a vast catchment in the western side of the Tararua. Three main tributaries meet at Otaki Forks to flow down the popular lower Otaki Gorge. The Waiotauru River drains the entire area bounded by Mt Rapakapanui and Mt Hector, the Waitatapaia, a sizeable chunk of "wilderness" to the north of the Forks, and the Otaki River proper, drains the largest single catchment in the Tararua. It starts on the slopes of Pukematawai, is bounded on its east by the main range, a continual up / down ridge, right down to Rime Basin, and its west, a seldom visited, heavily bushed Waitewaewae (YTTY). The Otaki is a wonderful place to tramp. I recall a friend once saying that if there was a perfect tramping spot, it would be somewhere in the Otaki Catchment.

Mt Rapakapanui, at 1102 m, is just in the tussock, so commands a fine view of much of the southern Tararua. It dominates the Waiotauru catchment. Rapakapanui trig makes a pleasant two hour day tramp from the Akatarawa Road, but you cannot drive far from Akatarawa Saddle, so need to tramp for another hour along the old logging road.

The old road continues down to and beyond the rather dilapidated Waiotauru Hut, near some grassy river flats. Amazingly, street cars could once reach that hut! The road ends above Waiotauru Forks, and feels like what it is, the end of the road. However, a track follows the river downstream for about an hour to the farmland, then half an hour further to the picnic area at Otaki Forks. A good mountain bike ride. There are numerous old logging trails in the Waiotauru, clogged with pampas grass, and rapidly reverting. Logging during the 1960's seems like ancient history when you see how much regeneration has occurred. The southern edge of the Waiotauru catchment is tracked, and the large Renata Hut is only 10 minutes from the road, opposite Rapakapanui track. Renata and Elder peaks are just in the open tops, as the ridge winds its way past Elder Biv (several confusing "dog legs" here) and along to Aston, on the legendary Southern Crossing. Some easy off-track travel here, notably in some side creeks, and some typically difficult as well. The Waiotauru catchment is the domain of the competent bushman. Road to Aston - allow three to four hours.

The legendary and ever popular Southern Crossing of the Tararua Range, more passionately known to generations simply as "The Southern" follows the tops on the steep eastern boundary of the Waiotauru Catchment until the end of the Renata Ridge at Aston. Then it wanders down to Alpha, overlooking the Hutt and Tauherenikau Catchments. Time to complete, approximately 16 hours (all time record a little over five hours!). But "The Southern" is a long story, deserved of its own chapter in the next newsletter.

Away from the rough pasture at the bottom of Judd Ridge, the Penn Creek track starts. It leads to a good circuit up onto the tops, not so much for the scenery, but for the proximity to Otaki Forks, and the ease with which you can get there.

The gorge sidle track to Penn Creek Hut takes about three hours to tramp. It dives off from the Southern crossing track on the first large grassy terrace above Otaki Forks, then splits once again, from the YTYT track, just before the short descent to the footbridge. Stick to the track and enjoy views of the mighty Otaki Gorge, far below. It is a bit of a goat track in places, muddy too, so definitely not for those in fancy white Roeboks. The sidle track overlooks some large grassy slips over the river, as it winds frustratingly high, then drops down again. There are three side creeks to cross, so water is never far away. The track climbs high to the prominent ridge before Penn Creek, then way down to a terrace close to pleasant river flats on Penn Creek. There is a good side trip off the track and down to pleasant campsites at Penn Creek and the Otaki River for a swim. In suitable conditions, travel up river is easy for about an hour, crossing it several times, till Plateau Stream. Back on the track to Penn Creek Hut, the track climbs high above a mini gorge in Penn Creek, then drops down through Mahoe forests to Penn Creek. There is a sign a couple of minutes downstream from the hut warning the unwary of falling rocks from a slip above. Then a few small grassy flats, and the hut, a standard ex NZFS six bunker maintained by VUWTC. Wet feet from here for those who continue the circuit. The tracks to complete the Penn Creek circuit are overgrown, muddy affairs, but important routes through the leatherwood nevertheless. Follow the bed of Penn Creek itself up from behind the hut for ten minutes to the major fork, then there is a rather overgrown track through the leatherwood up onto the tussock of Vosseler Peak and the main divide. Two hours from the hut. Alternatively, there is a reasonable track from Penn Creek hut up onto Table Top following the flat behind the hut for five minutes or so, then crossing a small side creek just past the main creek junction and up a steep spur to the tops. Two hours. Muddy.

DOC plan to place a new hut on the main range/ Pakihore Ridge/ Yeates area for safety purposes (Tararua Peaks can be dangerous), then make tracks forming much better loop trips for trampers in this area. They also are considering a new "Mansion" for Table Top, forming more good tramping circuits.

The Southern Main Range track/ route, from Bridge Peak, north to Maungahuka (peak and hut) alternates between tussock and leatherwood, crossing numerous contour lines, kinks in the ridge, and brushing past more than a few leatherwood bushes. Perusal of the map may not mean much to the uninitiated, but all those names of peaks assume momentous importance when on them. Tramping in the Tararua Ranges is renown for the continual ups and downs, and the Southern Main Range is no exception.

There is a long descent north-east from Bridge Peak, then Boyd Wilson Knob, which is fairly small as knobs come. Vosseler, a bit bigger, a leatherwood saddle over to Yeates, then several other unnamed "sub knobs" before McIntosh. Bridge Peak to McIntosh four hours, one hour further to Maungahuka. The ridge is fairly close to the headwaters of the Hector River for a while near Boyd Wilson, and the river flats look extremely pleasant. However, the southern slopes further along, down from Vosseler and Yeates, are a different story, with imposing leatherwood choked bluffs and waterfalls. Do not get off the main ridge. The track is, in a word muddy in places. Just past McIntosh, is the top of Pakihore Ridge, then a small tarn, which may be valuable to know about, it can get pretty dry up there. Then Tuiti and Tunui, otherwise known as The Tararua Peaks rear their wonderfully rugged heads above, past a couple of little knobs that will get you in the mood. This is it, true rugged Tararua tops, real mountain goat country. The Tararua Peaks are renown for their wire ladder, bolted to the rock, which provides access to an otherwise nearly inaccessible spot. You wonder where the track goes, as the ridge suddenly narrows, climbs, drops down to a true knife edge saddle, overhanging on the Hector River side, then bang, it disappears into thin air. That is where the ladder comes in handy, descending the first peak. Then, the track follows a slippery, wire assisted sidle under the second peak to a prominent knob (on the ridge mentioned below) overlooking Whatiuru Creek. A friend once took his wire haired Fox Terrier up the ladder inside his pack, head poking out!. A friend once told me of a feasible route through the leatherwood and bluffs down into the Whatiuru Creek from the tops near the Tararua Peaks. Immediately east of Tinui, take the leading spur down to the north, and stick to it. Whatiuru Creek affords good travel for most of its length. Pakihore ridge is however not difficult as untracked ridges go, so can easily be gained from either McIntosh, Whatiuru Creek or Penn Creek.

Back on the main ridge, there is a small grind uphill onto Maungahuka (but you should be used to the uphill by then!), then the shelter of Maungahuka Hut. It is another standard NZFS six bunker, cosy and sheltered, and from nearby, tremendous views of the central Otaki and Waiohine catchments. Great for sunsets. It's all downhill north of there, down easy, broad tussock covered steps and to the leatherwood around Simpson. Then comes Wright, with some overgrown bits on the track, and back into the ups and downs again. Climbing the brooding bulk of Aokaparangi drags you well above the leatherwood, and offers more fine views of the surrounding catchments. The main route bypasses Equip Biv. For thirsty trampers there is a kitchen pot sitting beside the track, hopefully full of water. There is a well marked track east from Equip descending to the swing bridge and Mid Waiohine Hut. Maungahuka to Equip - allow three hours. A long saddle in and out of the leatherwood, then Kahiwi-roa, and its delightful "park like" side ridge descending west into the Otaki. The track may be overgrown and difficult to find at the northern bush edge of Kahiwi-roa, but it is of course well worth the effort, as a short jaunt in open ridge beech forest brings you to Anderson Memorial Hut, approximately three hours from Equip. The wilderness of the Southern Main Range is somewhat diminished from there, but it is within reasonable striking distance from YTYT Hut, and the tracks are better, hence more people. To complete this section of the eastern half of the Otaki catchment, it is an exposed one hours tramp through the tussock and scree up onto the flat topped Junction Knob, and the turn off to Mt Crawford.

Just as an aside to this route guide, these days there are certainly more hunters flying into huts such as Anderson and Maungahuka, especially during "the roar". I know our time up there is precious, especially in good weather, but it seems to me that the area could easily become "overused" by helicopter clients.

Off track travel in this area is, to put it simply, extremely variable. Some of the forest is simply superb, with open river flats in places. Other parts are definitely not worth mentioning, let alone visiting. Steep leatherwood gullies and waterfalls are best observed from a distance. One exception though, and I talk from a rather bias viewpoint, is the Otaki Gorge. This is definitely the domain of the dedicated trumper, the thrill seeker, and the well prepared. Do not attempt Tararua gorges such as this one without suitable tubes, helmet, and wet suit. The upper Otaki Gorge is a true Tararua Classic. Most "gorgers" tramp through to Arapito Creek (just before YTTY Hut, inflate tubes, then set off down the gorge. Easy at first, then beyond Kahiwiroa stream, about an hour down river, the gorge assumes its characteristic look - bottomless pools, "suicidal" rapids, daunting cliffs, then the legendary five metre waterfall. Wilderness in its truest sense for the Tararuas. There are some open patches and river flats, and a grotty DOC bivvy just before Whatiuru Stream, so tramping gets easier. More gorge till Plateau Stream, then a series of extremely pleasant river flats takes you to the Penn Creek confluence. A bigger river by then, so better tubing. Not far to the swing bridge, the farmland, and the car. The complete round trip makes for a good day, maybe twelve hours long.

It can be of utmost importance to know these off track routes if firstly you plan to go there, and wish to avoid the leatherwood, waterfalls, and bluffs, and secondly in the event that you are forced off the tops by foul weather.

TRIP REPORTS

ATIWHAKATU JUMBO July 231 24 1994

Rain lashed down, as we drove south through Eketahuna, destination Holdsworth Lodge. Things looked a bit more optimistic in Masterton, and by the time we got to the Lodge, we could even see some snow covered tops. Views did not improve much though, so we were stuck mostly with overcast conditions. Lucky I suppose, it didn't rain.

There is a new day shelter at the road end, providing dry changing room and toilets. And there is are a lot of public facilities around Holdsworth Lodge. Good tracks, not far to the huts, all side creeks bridged, and no shortage of the ubiquitous trumper. A popular spot.

Being early, Jenny, Steve, and Cathy wandered into Atiwhakatu Hut, then on up to the chosen destination of Jumbo Hut. Plenty of snow there. The other three took their time, arriving at Atiwhakatu Hut for a brew after a pleasant two hour walk. The track was metalled for most of the way. The hill up to Jumbo looked somewhat daunting from below, and with only two hours of daylight left and a black looking sky, the attraction of an open fire and a hut to ourselves was too much. So Atiwhakatu Hut it was to be for the night. Tony sprinted up to Jumbo Hut to inform the others of the change of plan. There is a good ridge track up Rain Gauge Spur that takes less then two hours to tramp. Jumbo Hut, with on tap gas, arid a hut warden, was a welcome sight under heavy snow. Then the weather tried to clear, nothing came of it, as we were to see on Sunday morning. More snow up top and drizzle down in the valley. Back at Atiwhakatu Hut, a warm fire and a good feed.

It drizzled on Sunday. A late start, and then th folks from Jumbo Hut arrived for a brew. On the track by 11.00, back at the car by 1.00. Home early! Yes, Holdsworth is a good, lazy place to tramp when the weather is crook and the days are short.

Trampers were; Steve Glasgow, Jenny McArthy, Cathy McArthy, Yvonne van der Does, Sallie Hewson, and Tony Gates.

THIRD TIME LUCKY. WINTER TRAMPING ON THE RUAHINE TOPS

With Tony Gates, Nigel Barrett, and Andrew Carvell, August 6/7 1994.

We had traversed Sawtooth Ridge the past two winters in somewhat less than satisfactory conditions (i.e. no views, thigh deep snow, and generally miserable weather). Both times, Howletts Hut provided us with luxury accommodation, and lured us back for more, and also that elusive "perfect day on the tops".

Mick, Llew & Co, had tales of flooded rivers and delayed tramps a couple of weeks ago, and there was some concern about the Tukituki River. So, Saturday morning saw us splashing up to Daphne Hut with a few doubts about our proposed Ruahine alpine trip, with weather still less than satisfactory. Derek had kindly dropped us off, and was to pick us up at Rangī Sunday PM. We three moved rapidly to everyone's favourite Hut, Daphne, for a brew, then sweated up to Howletts. Nigel's watch-altimeter proved fairly accurate. Misty in the leatherwood, a little snow about, and warm drizzle. Howletts Hut was therefore as welcome as it ever was. A choice hut in a superb location. And plenty of firewood about if you walk maybe five minutes from the hut. Dead leatherwood is excellent, and despite a rather decrepid firebox, we got a good blaze going. Depressing looking at the weather and thinking of the possibility of having to descend the way we had come, and go home on the eastern side of the range, when we had plans of crossing all the way to Rangī.

Saturday night passed in a warm, drizzly blur, but standing at the hut door in the middle of the night (6.00 AM actually) I could not help but notice a starry sky, and ghostly valley mist far below. We were up soon thereafter, brewing up and jamming stuff into our "nano-packs". We were ready to depart before it was light enough for a photo of the hut!

How's that for a speed getaway? Dry plastic climbing boots, ooh la la. It's just so nice to have dry pairs of boots on a tramp.

The route up to Tiraha from Howletts Hut follows some beech forest, which shaded the snow lying on the track, and gave us exhausting snow plugging. Then, out in the open, in the most delightful morning sun, the track was over bare scree and tussock, permitting rapid travel. A few snap-shots, and we were soon toiling, up the slopes of Tiraha. A prominent ridge point about half way up afforded us with magnificent views of a rather jagged piece of snow and ice covered dirt immediately to the north, Sawtooth Ridge. Tears of memory for us all. We put our crampons on there, and immediately felt secure crunching up the icy south faces. More photos, more sweat, and steamed up sunglasses, then the top of Tiraha on a fine winter's day. Yep, it was our lucky day. The views were awesome. Rotating 360 degrees we could see the Tukituki Catchment, Howletts, Otumore and Longview Hut region far below, the headwaters of the Oroua, the legendary Te Hekenga, icy peaks of the Whanahuia and Hikurangi Ranges Ruapehu, a mist filled Pourangaki Valley, bits of Hawkes Bay Ridge, Ohuinga, then a semi-misty Sawtooth Ridge. No time to consider Sawtooth Ridge, for we were heading for Rangi Hut, and had a long way to go. Brilliant conditions for cramponing too, across sheet ice and frozen tussocks. No route finding problems, so rapid tramping along the flat-ish ridge, past Taumataomekura, towards the rather intimidating Te Hekenga peak. I say intimidating, because the ridge appears to tower above you as you approach, and the so named "Cheval Pitch" usually requires one to straddle it like a horse to get across! The rotten gravel ridge is about 100 mm wide for a couple of metres, with fearsome drops on either side, but on this day, it was twice as wide with ice, and delightful safe cramponing. With sharp points sticking out from beneath your boots, you can stick to mother earth with impunity.

Then we were there, on the top of Te Hekenga, at the highest point of the Manawatu. Super duper views, hot sunshine in the shelter, and chilly in the shade. Andrew took off his feet to thaw them out. A group photo, a squizz with the binoculars at the distant Tararuas and parts of the Ruahines that were visible, and food. Cloud level approximately 1500 m. Departure was then into the mist, but it looked like it wouldn't stay. Losing altitude along the ridge, we took off our crampons in the scrub.

Once at a lower altitude, and in the scrub, the snow was noticeably softer, causing some step plugging problems. There was always a way around though, and good ice on the south side. The last uphill bit to Maungamahue seemed to take us ages. Those steps are very deceptive in the mist, though made considerably easier by good cramponing ice. Mist promised to clear when we were on top, so with plenty of time, we sat down for a brew and a feed. That felt good, but unfortunately the clear spells did not arrive. The almost pure white sweeping slopes south of Maungamahue gave us easy travel on the descent. Soon we were on territory familiar to many, bypassing the poled track to Triangle Hut, then staggering up the final hill before the descent to Rangi Hut. Misty. Nigel mumbled something about a sore toe.

Rangi Hut has gas on tap, so another brew was called for! That is getting to be quite a habit for some of us, always stopping for a brew. And Mick, it was delicious herbal tea, not black coffee! On the track, the mud, oh the mud. We met Derek near the road end, he had calculated out time of completion to within 15 minutes! Howletts to Rangi had taken us eight wonderful hours. Thus ended the tramp.

NGAURUHOE Day Trip - August 20th. by Peter Wiles

The car, filled with a compliment of four, left P.N. at 5 am on Saturday morning for the Mangatepopo Valley. The intention was to wander around the summit area of Tongariro. It was fine but cloudy until we reached Waiouru. Then we entered clear sky and it was evident that the snow level on Ruapehu was quite low. As we headed past National Park, the peak of Ngauruhoe stood out clearly in the frosty morning light. We reached the car park at about 7.45 am and were on the track by about 8 am.

It was nearly 10 years since I had visited this road end - and there had been a few changes. We reached the first snow as the track starts to climb up through the first of the initial lava flows that fill the valley floor - about half an hour up the track. The snow was frozen hard and some footprints from an earlier party made useful steps.

As we approached the sharp climb of about 200 m that takes one into South Crater, quite a lot of daytime cloud seemed to gather around Tongariro. Ngauruhoe seemed to remain clear. After a brief stop for some chocolate and a discussion, we decided to switch our objective to Ngauruhoe. (This proved to be the correct decision.) However, because we had not brought crampons with us, it was uncertain how we would cope with the conditions on the peak.

Once we were on the slope of Ngauruhoe proper, it soon became evident that it would be touch and go, whether we would be able to reach the summit. The slope was composed of a hard sub-surface with a few centimetres of fresh snow on top. As we got higher, the soft upper layer tended to be replaced with increasingly hard sastrugi ice. Conditions tended to improve by sidling eastwards. With these conditions being relatively new for one of the members of the party, different people tackled things at different rates. At about 100-200 m below the crater, the sastrugi became too icy to walk on and I began cutting steps. I became increasingly unsure that we could make it. This job was going to take all day and more. Conditions improved after about 50 m and we finally reached the lip of the inner crater for lunch.

The cloud layer stopped about 200-300 m below, so to the west we looked out over an endless expanse of cloud. (Meanwhile the Saunders team were groping about in the cloud on Fanthams Peak, coping with very hard ice

conditions.) To the east, conditions were clear. Sitting out of the chilly westerly breeze we could have dozed off for the afternoon in the glorious sunshine.

After lunch, we inspected the crater. (Activity has definitely declined over the last 10 years or so, and now there is virtually nothing in the way of steam emerging from the bottom of it.) We sidled to the southern rim to look at the Tama Lakes (neither were frozen), before starting the descent. Initially, this looked rather intimidating and for some it was. The heat of the sun had done a little (but not nearly enough) to soften up the snow. More step cutting was required. I snapped the shaft of my old wooden shafted ice axe, barely 100 m down. However, at this stage, I began to realise that even if one did fall, one was not going to slide very far - a couple of metres at most. Be that as it may, I could no longer cut any more steps. The others continued to pick their way carefully, cutting steps, more often than not. Once clear of the worst of the sastrugi, they elected the bum-slide option to overcome the conditions.

We regrouped again at South Crater, before walking down into the mist. Lower down the valley, the cloud looked like it was beginning to break up for the evening. We were off down the road by about 5 pm after an energetic but rewarding day. Thirsts matched the effort put in.

Team: Lance and Vera Broad, Pat Janssen and Peter Wiles.

GEAR HIRE

Yes! PNTMC has gear for hire. ...

13	Ice Axes	8	Snow stakes
7 pairs	Rawlings crampons	4 pairs	Salewa crampons
	Tent Flys	5	Ropes
1	Abseiling Rope	1	Climbing Rope 11 mm x 50m
4	Fuel Bottles	5	Primus
1	Tool Kit		
	Assorted Climbing Gear - Karabiners etc.		
1	Pressure cooker	5	Billies
1	Bivy Bag	8	Tent flys
1	Tent	2	First Aid Kits

Reasonable prices.

Contact Kick Leyland Ph 358-3183 and he can advise as to your requirements.

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From Hillary and Russell at Mountain Equipment

Hello! Spring is just around the corner – the leaf buds on the trees are nearly open, the days are getting longer and it is getting warmer.

Spring skiing, tramping and climbing - here we come! This is a great time of the year to get into the outdoors, but check over your gear first.

Walking Poles

Whether you're recovering from an injury, not so good on the downhill (the old rubber knee syndrome) or just want to make life easier, a walking pole is a great idea. Two of them are even better.

"Leki" poles have several advantages over the good old skiing regulars:

- they are lighter and stronger,
- they have a basket to prevent them from going too deeply into mud/sand, and best of all they're "telescopic"

i.e. they fold up into 3 sections to make them easier to carry on your pack when they're not in use.

WHICH MODEL TO CHOOSE?

There are several types - differentiated mainly by the handle -whether you prefer a knob, a handle or a ski-pole type grip. Some also come with a built in spring to help absorb shock if you miss a step. The latest example can be used as an avalanche probe and the ski-pole handles can be reversed and a "self-arrest" grip attached.

Some models available are:

Super Makalu Antishock	(ski pole grip + spring)	\$185/pair
Makalu Trail	(ski pole grip + no spring)	\$159/pair
Light Walk	(knob grip + no spring)	\$98 each
Wanderfreund Antishock	(handle + spring)	\$98 each
Wanderfreund	(handle + no spring)	\$75 each
NEW Extreme-Lawisand	(ski pole grip & no spring)	
- 2 section, self arrest handle can be attached		\$169/pair
Self Arrest Grip		\$50/pair

These enable you to go heaps faster in soft snow!

Less 10% for tramping club members.



GEAR FOR SALE

Fairydown "Stratus" Jacket Navy, medium/large, had little use	\$30
Wilderness "Mtn. Jacket" Purple/Navy, large, never used (\$460 new)	\$350
Macpac "Cocoon" Bivy Bag Blue, 100% reflex, used twice (\$325)	\$190
Asolo "AFS-101" Climbing Boots 4yrs old, 9½ or 10	\$140
Dynafit "Tourlite" Ski-Touring Boots 3 yrs old, 10' s, Gortex inners, Vibram soles	\$180
Salewa Stitch Plate with spring	\$15
DMM "Beta Brake" Stitch plate	\$15
DMM Screw gate, pear shaped karabiner, never used	\$15
"Dynamic" 185 cm ex-rental skis - free to good home	
"Scott" Ski Goggles, had little use (\$80 new)	\$30

This gear belongs to various burnt out trampers ...
Contact Tony Gates if interested in anything.