

PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217, PALMERSTON NORTH

Newsletter - July 2001

THIS ISSUE: NEWS

Coming up- the Interclub Quizz

Photograph competition results- and a selection of the winning work.

QUITE A FEW TRIP REPORTS:

**A Taranaki birthday bash
Powell- Jumbo Hut, and Hemi Matenga
The Travers Valley
Purity Hut, and Sunrise Hut
SAREX at Levin
Outdoor First aid
Mid Winter celebrations at Rangataua.**

CLUB NIGHTS

JULY 26	Olivine Range, Mt Aspiring N P	Barry Scott
AUGUST 2	COMMITTEE MEETING, at Stephen Liddall's place, 24 Nottingham Ave.	
AUGUST 9	VIDEO	Warren Wheeler

Club nights are held for all club members and visitors on the second and last Thursday of each month at the **Society of Friends Hall, 227 College Street, Palmerston North**. All club nights commence at 7:45 pm **sharp**, winter or summer. The PNTMC Committee meets on the first Thursday of each month.

At the club night: Please sign your name in the visitors book. A 50c door fee includes supper.

UP AND COMING TRIPS & EVENTS

21-22 July Hikurangi Range M/F
Dave Henwood

Mangaweka trig, at 1733 metres, is the highest point of the Ruahine Ranges. This peak will be accesable on the trip. Be prepared for snow/ ice.

22 July Longview Hut M
Stephen Liddall 357-6978

A nice day tramp to one of those traditional haunts in the southern Ruahines. This hut is set in a commanding location. Depart P. N. 8.00 AM.

26 July Applications close for Snowcraft 2001 (refer notices)

26 July Thursday trampers
Liz Flint 356-7654

26 July 7.45 PM Club Night. Olivine Ice Plateau. Barry Scott.

Last summer, a few club members, and friends, visited the alpine wilderness of the Olivine Range, in Mt Aspiring National Park, and did some good climbs. Here is their story.



The Olivine Ice Plateau, from a map, by NZAC 1964. NB The plateau is about 1 km wide. Also note that all of these glaciers have shrunk considerably recently.

28-29 July Ruahine Classic F
Tony Gates 357 7439

This classic alpine tramp will take you through the high central Ruahines to the cosy Howletts Hut, then along the legendary Sawtooth Ridge. Good equipment and skills essential.

29 July Coppermine Creek Family
Richard Lockett 323 0948

A good local tramp to the southern Ruahines, in from Woodville. Follow Coppermine Creek, then climb over to Billygoat Creek. Depart 8.30 AM.

31 July (Tues evg) Snowcraft intro lecture T
(refer notices)

2 August Thursday Trampers
Rosemary, Ken Hall 356 8538

2 Aug Committee Meeting at Stephen Liddall's house, 24 Notingham Ave.

4-5 Aug Snowcraft 1 T
Terry Crippen 356 3588

(refer notices)

5 Aug Burn Hut E
Dave Grant 357 8269

A wander from the dams, down the Mangahao river valley, then up onto the open tops of the Northern Tararuas behind Shannon.

9 Aug Thursday trampers
Bev Akers 325 8879

9 Aug Club Night "Not the Vertical Limit" mountaineering videos Warren Wheeler

11- 12 Aug Ruahine Corner M/F
Derek Sharp 326 8178

A three day tramp, from the Makarora Valley (Hawkes Bay), over the tops, and so to this delightful DOC hut. Return via a different way.

12 Aug Tunupo M
Peter Darragh 358 8744

Just up from Apiti, Tunupo is one of the closest alpine crags to Palmerston North. A well graded track leads up the side of the Oroua Valley to the tussock tops of Tunopo peak, 1568 metres. Great

views if fine. There could well be snow and ice about, so come prepared.

Terry Crippen 356 3588
Bruce Van Brunt 328 4761

(refer notices)

15 Aug (wed) Snowcraft 2, for participants
(refer notices)

16 Aug Thursday Trampers
Donna Hayes 328 2878

16 Aug. **Etrex GPS familiarisation, by Dave Adamson.** A two hour lecture/ discussion on these amazing tools of navigation, with refreshments, starting at 7.00 PM. The venue is yet to be advised, possibly Central Police HQ.

TRIP GRADES can depend on many factors, especially the weather. As a guide, a reasonably proficient trumper can be expected to cover the graded trips in the following times:

Easy (E): 3-4 hrs

Medium (M): 5-6 hrs

Fit (F): about 8 hrs

Fitness Essential (FE): >8 hrs

T refers to technical trips requiring special skills.

18/ 19 Aug Snowcraft 2 (Prereq SC 1) M/F, I

Trip participants:

If you are interested in going on a trip, please contact the leader at least three days in advance. Trips usually leave from the Foodtown carpark in Fergusson Street with transport provided by car-pooling. A charge for transport will be collected on the day of the trip, the amount depending on the distance travelled and vehicles used. Leaders should be able to give an estimate in advance. For general information or any suggestions for future tramps please contact one of the trip co-ordinators Terry Crippen (356-3588), Janet Wilson (329-4722) or Stephen Liddall (357-6978).

Trip leaders: Please discuss with the trip co-ordinators, as soon as possible, if there is any doubt that you will be unable to run your trip as scheduled. This is so that alternatives can be arranged, put in the newsletter, or passed on at club night.

***** OVERDUE TRIPS *****

Enquiries to: Mick Leyland (358-3183), Terry Crippen (356-3588), or Janet Wilson (329-4722)

NOTICES

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES can be Emailed to tony.gates@horizons.govt.nz, or stuff can be delivered to him at home or work.

c/- horizons.mw

11-15 Victoria Ave, PN

If you're e-mailing, we'd prefer you to include your article as an attachment (please use Microsoft Word Version 7.0 or Rich Text Format), unless it is quite a small article, which can be typed directly into the e-mail.

Note that e-mails with scanned photos will be filtered by a "quarantine" system. you will get an e-mail reply from the horizons 'postmaster', confirming this. Don't worry about this, all material gets through to us once it is checked for viruses etc. by horizons' staff.

The deadline for anything for the Newsletter is the **FIRST THURSDAY** of the month.

GOODBYE

Farewell, and good luck to Frances Woodhead, who is leaving Palmerston North. Frances will be working for DOC at Nelson, with Conservation Board support, public awareness, and community relations work. She will be working out of their Bridge Street Nelson office, so can be contacted there. I'm sure that Frances will enjoy as much as possible of the beautiful South Island.

NEW MEMBER.

Welcome to Yoko Shimada,
6 Keiller Place, Palmerston North,
ph 06 355 1510

ADDRESS CHANGE

Gina Fermor
20 Gloucester St Palmerston North,
354 2499

LOST – one ice axe.

On Friday 6 July the PNTMC hired a brand new ice axe to a non-member with extensive climbing experience overseas, but none in the North Island. On Saturday 7 July, while attempting his first ascent of Mt Egmont with a friend, he slid 1000m down the icy north face and was killed. His body was recovered and returned to family. The ice axe has not been found.

We have lost an ice axe. Paul Cook lost his life. That he lost it while climbing, which he no doubt loved, is small consolation to friends and family and all those kindred souls who accept the challenge of the mountains. May his spirit live strong in the hearts of all those who feel his loss.

Warren Wheeler

QUIZZ

PNTMC is organising this year's interclub quizz, for the Trevor Bissell Memorial trophy (refer photo page 14), which usually resides at Mountain Equipment. It is between MUAC, MTSC, PNTMC, and Mountain Equipment, and is to be held at our own club rooms, on Thursday 13 September.

The quizz is a lot of fun, and provides both participants and audience with plenty of laughs. If you are interested in assisting your club, and reaping some of the honour involved with *winning* the trophy, then please notify one of our committee members. Stay tuned.

SNOWCRAFT INSTRUCTION 2001

This traditional and very worthwhile programme is designed to equip club members and other trampers with basic and intermediate skills so they can safely get out and about in snow on winter trips, and alpine trips down south over summer. The course involves straight forward walking on snow, to simple snow climbing and aspects of technical mountaineering. A progressive approach is used: Snowcraft (SC1) assumes nil or only minor previous snow



experience, Snowcraft 2 and 3 (SC2, SC3) build on the previous levels. Some people may enter at SC2 level. Some people just do SC1 and SC2. Numbers are limited, so be in early.

The programme consists of three weekends away (departure Friday nights), two at Mt Ruapehu and one at Mt Egmont; and three week night evenings. A comprehensive programme is presented

The programme dates and fees are:

Thurs 26 July applications (on registration form, with fee) close for ALL three levels.

SC1 **\$120** (\$125*)
evening TUES 31 July, weekend 4-5 August

SC2 **\$125** (\$130*)
evening WED 15 August, weekend 18-19 August

SC3 **\$115** (\$120*)
evening WED 29 August, Weekend 1-2 Sept

One-off discounted payment of \$345 (\$360*)
(*non PNTMC member rate.)

For details and registration form contact Terry Crippen 356-3588, Bruce van Brunt 328-4761, Warren Wheeler 356-1998

THE SPORTS FUND 2001 of THE HILLARY COMMISSION has recently given to PNTMC the sum of \$888.00, to be used to subsidise us in the purchase of mountaineering safety equipment. As with previous similar donations, this will be wisely spent, and the equipment will be available for club use pretty soon.

A very big thank you to Bruce Van Brunt, who organised this, and to the kind donors.

PHOTO COMPETITION RESULTS

Murray Woodcock, from Bells Photography and "Extra eye" gave the competitors and audience for this years photo competition a fine and enthusiastic commentary. There were numerous snippets of useful information on technical details of camera and slide care, photo composition, depth of field, and the like.

We firstly showed all the slides section by section, (about ten entrees per section), and Murray diligently took notes and listened to audience comments (there were a few ooh's and ahhh's). He short listed the best, we saw them again, then he took a show of hands as a vote for the winner. Some sections had clear winners, some stiff

competition. Alpine NZ, Natural History NZ, and Overseas people in particular had very close votes. And the overseas scenic/ alpine, although counting a clear winner, had stiff competition for the other place getters. And Murray reckoned that one non winner would have easily won- *if the other's hadn't been entered!* I think that the one slide that scored the most votes, (and the most laughs- sorry Terry), was Pete's lovely study of a well kitted out Mr Crippen eating lunch on Mt Ruapehu.



"Tongapurutu cliffs" [Harley Betts]

Murray was the sole judge of the prints. Sure, some enlargements looked great, but not all the winners required enlargement. And some of the best photos were mere snap shots, taken with a little "point and shoot" camera.

Congratulations to all who entered, and to all who gained places. Harley Betts in particular deserves congratulations for his fine work, much of which

deserved to do well, albeit with some stiff competition.

Don't forget, MUAC and MTSC have an interclub photo competition coming up on 8 September. We need to clarify their rules and categories, and send a few of our best along.

SLIDES- Scenic NZ

- 1- Tongapurutu cliffs. Harley Betts
- 2- Rockburn river. Terry Crippen
- 3- Lake Tekapo. Harley Betts

Topical NZ

- 1- Terry eating lunch. Pete McGregor
- 2- Climbers on Taranaki. Harley Betts
- 3- Whitcombe thar hunter. Pete McGregor

Alpine NZ

- 1- AP Barker Hut. Harley Betts
- 2- Cramponing on Ruapehu. Tony Gates
- 3- Bettison valley. Terry Crippen

Natural History NZ

- 1- Eglinton Valley forest. Harley Betts
- 2- Kea at Smyth. Pete McGregor
- 3- Tararua Rannunculus. Tony Gates

Overseas People

- 1- Goat herders, Nepal. John Phillips
- 2- Passengers on Shokalskiy. Harley Betts
- 2(equal) Spanish goat herders. Tony Gates

Overseas Scenic/ Alpine

- 1- Ross sea pack ice. Harley Betts
- 2- Tolka Village, Anapurna. John Phillips
- 3- Lake Ohara, Canada. Lew Pritchard
- 3 (equal) Kali Gandaki Gorge. John Phillips
- 3 (equal) Hidden valley, Nepal. John Phillips

PRINTS- Scenic NZ

- 1- Castlepoint storm. Harley Betts
- 2- Milford Sound. Harley Betts
- 3- Rainbow at Rangī. Sarah Todd

Topical NZ

- 1- Trampers defy gravity. Harley Betts
- 2- Ruapehu shark attack. Sarah Todd
- 3- White Horse rapids. Tony Gates

Alpine NZ

- 1- Mangatepopo sunset. Harley Betts
- 2- Sunset, Fanthoms Peak. Harley Betts

- 3- Mangatepopo valley. Pete McGregor.

Natural History NZ

- 1- Fox Glacier. Harley Betts
2- Whio, Lambert River. Pete McGregor
3- Karamea Weka. Harley Betts

Overseas Scenic/ Alpine

- 1- Canoeing in Sweden. Warren Wheeler
2- Padjelanta Trail, Sweden. Warren Wheeler
3- Anapurna Sanctuary, Nepal. John Phillips

Overseas People

- 1- Hello Reindeer. Kristina Mattson.
2- Reading in mossie net. Kristina Mattson



"Hello Reindeer" [Kristina Mattson]

TRIP REPORTS

THE SYME HUT HARLEY-PARTY – 24- 25 March, by Pete McGregor.

Some trips to the mountains are better than others, and of those, some are spoken of among friends in a way that approaches legend. As recollection replaces immediacy, one of those extraordinary trips will be Harley's Birthday Bash at Syme hut on Taranaki. Most of what follows is true.

At the car park, Harley, Brett and Charlotte are offering watermelon in the hope that they won't have to lug it up to Syme hut. But it's a bit the worse for wear – last night they'd bored a hole in it and used it as a candle holder, and now, in a kind of vegetable petulance, it's beginning to fizz and ferment and split. Charlotte produces a Swiss army knife and begins to endanger Harley's anatomy as she attempts to segment the melon while he clutches the oozing fruit. Eventually she removes a ragged wedge and offers it triumphantly to Brett. He looks at it, thinks hard, and refuses. She offers it to Harley. He looks at it, thinks hard, then in a typical act of Harley craziness, accepts it. When he's finished spitting it out all over the car park and anyone standing nearby, the melon gets thrown into the rubbish bin and we set off to Syme hut.

Andre, Richard and I led the way, cruising through the low Middle Earth forest, up the long, steady-breathing rhythm of ascent into walls of scrub, climbing the steps whose count's etched into the triviabellum of obsessive trampers; on to the shelter where we stopped and wondered where the remaining six people were. How far ahead were we? Should we wait or keep climbing? Finally, we carried on to Kapuni Lodge, where we debated whether to begin the feasting or politely wait for the others, but the decision was easy when we discovered that they'd bypassed the lodge and were heading directly for Syme. We angled up through the snowgrass above the lodge to meet them in cold, swirling cloud on the scoria track. Voices; muffled echoes; the clatter of loose rock; occasional bad language as someone took one step up and slipped three downwards... weighed down by enormous loads of food and wine, we struggled up Taranaki's downwards escalator. We met several people on their way down, and learned that the water we were carrying up in case the tanks were empty was unnecessary. It's that Murphy again – take water and the tank's full; don't take it and the tank's empty except for an inch or two of slime and midge larvae. The perversities of the universe are indeed infinite.

Syme hut crouched empty in an alien landscape of rock and cloud and wind. I checked the water tank – no drought here. The last stragglers straggled in. The bench and table filled rapidly with cookers, pots, bottles of wine and food to feed the world;

the hut filled with noisy conversation, the roar of the MSR, laughter and the racket of packs being unpacked. Warm sunlight streamed through the sand-scratched hut windows as the cloud began to break, and I perched where the sun could warm my back; enjoying the feeling of deep warmth soaking in; listening to the cacophony of voices and occasionally adding my own. Hannah produced a bottle of bubbly and we toasted Harley's birthday. JK opened the first of the three bottles he'd carried up, and even more bottles appeared from other packs – of the nine of us, eight were wine drinkers and we had 10 bottles, predominantly red. I have no idea how our heads survived so well (Harley excepted, but then it was his birthday, and Harley's Harley). Or perhaps it was that our bodies were in overdrive after the slog up the unrelenting slope, and the alcohol was metabolised before it had a chance to wreak havoc... We took several mattresses outside and placed them carefully where we could loll around in the evening light, looking North and West, enjoying the wine, deliberately misconstruing anything anyone said and laughing at almost anything (particularly each other, and any mention of sheep). Watching the sun relax into hazy cloud over a metallic ocean... evening mist coloured with indigo; the long shadow of the mountain stretching forever over and beyond the ring plain, across the King Country, onto Ruapehu, into legend... we were all slightly drunk, not so much on wine as on the laughter and madness of crazy great friends... The word "eeexcellent!" increased in frequency, perhaps because by then it seemed appropriate for every aspect of the situation, or perhaps simply because that's what excellent company and excellent wine do to your formerly excellent vocablur... vocabur... words. Soon after arriving, I'd begun cooking my contribution to the evening dinner (a kind of lamb stew affectionately labelled "Pete's biodegradable sheep thing"), and at 5:30 I stumbled inside, made some final adjustments to the sheep and started cooking a billy of basmati rice. Frances prepared her couscous delight - an annoyingly excellent dish for such rapid preparation - and soon after, Brett appeared and began heating his "eeexcellent!" chickpea curry. Surprisingly, we still had a little wine left by the time we settled down in the remains of the evening to stuff ourselves nearly senseless.

As dusk drew in, we saw four faint figures scurrying down from the summit towards the hut. We'd noticed them just at the point when we'd decided we'd have the hut to ourselves. "Damn," we thought, hoping that perhaps they'd carry on down to the car park.. We wondered how to gently discourage them from staying at the hut, and tried bouts of raucous, partying laughter, but that seemed to encourage them to speed up towards the hut. "Like minds," we thought, so we gave up and quietened down. The four figures drew closer. Then someone (not me) suddenly exclaimed, "HARR HARR! – FRESH ARRRSE!" When we'd finished rolling around and wiping the tears from our eyes, we welcomed the four young guys and offered them the remains of the feast. I don't think they could believe their luck – they'd intended to make up a couple of those horrible dehy meals that resemble cat chuck complete with noodles that look like... well, never mind... They stayed the night with slightly bemused expressions, unsure, I think, of what to make of this mad bunch of joyful lunatics.

We rounded off the evening with yet more wonderful food. Hannah prepared a chocolate fondue with marshmallows; we devoured the "self-baked" apple cake that Andre (the "self") had baked and guarded so diligently from his hostel mates; and Charlotte, in lieu of a birthday cake and in honour of one of Harley's innumerable outrageous statements, produced a foot-wide afghan, decorated with a giant "H" in walnuts. Eventually, exhausted and approaching Mr Creosote status, we crawled off to sleep, and no one snored. It's true, I swear – 13 people crammed into Syme hut, and no one snored... Harley, being Harley, slept outside, claiming the night was too warm, but we believe he actually wanted to enjoy the gentle motion of the frost-heave beneath his sleeping bag. That, or else he just wanted to fart without guilt.

The next day, Harley, Brett, Charlotte, Andre and I climbed to the summit. More of that awful, tiring treadmill of scoria; a relentless slog until we reached the broken, slabby rock near the lip of the crater. I stepped onto solid rock, relishing the feel of firm footing, of not slipping backwards with each step. The five of us gathered at the lip and picked our way down into the crater. At the bottom, Harley gleefully stamped and shuffled through a field of ash-like dust in a successful

attempt to cover Charlotte with huge clouds of the grey-brown stuff. As war broke out I headed directly for the summit, looking for an opportunity for a spot of easy bouldering. Straight up a ridge of rough rock, enjoying the balance, the sense of seeking holds and positions – I realised how long it had been since I'd last climbed outdoors. But some of the rock was loose, and I was acutely aware that the others by now were following roughly the same route. I paid extra attention to moving carefully, and we had no incidents.

A short distance from the highest point, I stood and looked about. The summit's a dusty, flattish area jumbled with broken rock, massive boulders and the signs of innumerable visitors. At my feet, the dull glint of old, broken glass; nearby, the remains of a rusty tin can. The wire tie from a bottle of sparkling wine twitched in the wind in a patch of dust. As I waited for the others to come into view, I caught a glimpse of a faded red object. I looked across. It was a pair of weathered underpants.

One day Taranaki will say enough.

"We should do some yoga," Charlotte said, caught up in the contemplative mood of the summit plateau, high in the vast air, surrounded by the far-below sea, by cloud, forest, rivers like silver thread... She leaned forward, flowing into the sort of position that leaves you incapacitated for several weeks afterwards. Inspired by her mastery of the asana, I cautiously attempted it myself and was surprised and mildly satisfied to find myself balancing on one leg, the other outstretched behind me as I bent towards the ground with my arms spread wide. Charlotte, as usual, looked elegant and graceful; I looked like a snapshot of someone puking violently. Meanwhile, Brett and Harley, caught up in an entirely different mood, were doing unspeakable things to Harley's rubber chicken...

We ran down in great joyful leaps and reckless bounds, packing our boots with scoria, our nostrils with dust, and our shorts with... well, let's say dust also. Back at the hut the sensible malingerers had prepared a magnificent lunch. We ate, watched the cloud thicken and swirl around the summit and remarked how lucky we were to have timed the climb so perfectly. But perhaps it

wasn't entirely luck. Perhaps Taranaki had sensed the special nature of our party; appreciated the small gesture of staying just below the very summit. Perhaps Taranaki, forever alone, offered us the chance to enjoy being together; perhaps Taranaki, steeped in Legend, recognised another small legend in the act of creation.

On the way home we buy takeaways at Waverley and attempt unsuccessfully (and therefore probably fortuitously) to eat them at Ototoka beach. After burying our dinners in the sand we swim (some of us), manage to weasel out of being tossed into the sea clothes and all (me), and then walk miles along the shining beach into the dusk. The sky's luminous with cloud; night creeps out from the sand cliffs. The air's full of the sound of endless surf. I drift away and see my friends silhouetted against gleaming sand, striding out, gesturing in conversation, occasionally larking about like kids, splashing along the edge of the sea. The moment goes on forever.

Happy birthday, Harley.

We were: Harley Betts, Hannah Brackley, John Kay, Richard Lovell, Andre Niederheide, Brett Robinson, Frances Woodhead, Charlotte Sunde and Pete McGregor.

POWELL HUT- HOLDSWORTH- JUMBO HUT, 7- 9 April, by Liz Morrison.

At the AGM, Ashuini asked for a "shadow" for their Duke of Edinburgh Silver Expedition. We decided on the first weekend of the holidays, and had a pre trip meeting to discuss food and gear. The girls were well organised, and knew what was needed for a comfortable, safe expedition.

We set off from the Holdsworth road end, and, being "the shadow", I didn't feel obliged to keep up with "youth and enthusiasm". I ambled up the track at my own speed (slow). Every so often, I'd come across the girls resting on the track and chatting. This method of progress worked very well for the three days. Above Mountain House, we needed mitts and jackets, as it had cooled down considerably. We reached Powell more or less together. The new hut is quite splendid, though lacking some of the character of the older versions. But we thoroughly enjoyed the view, warmth, space, and a social evening with several families, as well as Gerald (the hut warden).

Powell was in thick, cold cloud next morning, but by the time we had reached the top of Holdsworth, it had blown away. We were left with a brilliant view over the Tararuas. We took our time, investigated the tarn, and rested in the sheltered spots. At the last stop, with the sign post in sight, it was the usual “how much further?”, “half an hour- what are we waiting for?”- and they were off! By the time I’d trundled down the ridge to Jumbo Hut, the billy was boiled for a late lunch. We then spent a lazy afternoon eating our way through some of the weight in Sophie’s pack. I’ve never been on a tramp where we had so much food, in spite of “loosing” half the sausages at Powell to a young lad. Gerald and Jack arrived from Powell later in the afternoon to unlock the coalshed, which was just as well- it was cold.

An incredible full moon rose from a bank of cloud just on dusk. The sunrise was just as spectacular.

Heading down rain gauge spur was the only time we all went at the same pace. In spite of a sore shoulder, I’m reasonably nifty downhill. Ashuini had a sore foot, and Sophie a damage achilles tendon. In fact, we decided that none of us should have been there at all, what with our previous injuries- but you cant sit at home when the hills call. A hot cuppa at Atiwakatu hut, then the girls galloped off along the flat. Basking in the sun at the road end, we decided we’d all done very well and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves.

We were; Ashuini Kahawatta, Sophie Egden, and Liz Morrison (Shadow).

HEMI MATENGA, 27 April, by Liz Morrison.

What a week! Torrential rain, an earthquake, thunder and lightening, with a southerly forecast. However, when five of us set off from the car park at the back of Waikanae, it was fine.

The first hour of the Hemi Matenga track is up a wide benched track through Nikau and Kohekohe, changing to Rimu, Miro, Kamaki and Tawa. As Bonnie is ageing, she stayed on her lead to prevent exhaustion, though Warren reckoned it was to pull me up the hill- could be. Janet and Fiona still had enough breath left to chat, and I led “from the rear”. We met up at the first lookout, a grassy clearing with a view of Kapiti and the

South Island. The track then heads around the back of the ridge (with a view of Kapakapanui), up a fence line, then dives into the bush, undulating to a second lookout. We had lunch there, and watched the front approaching from the Tararuas. Duncan set off downhill like a mountain goat, and we followed. The last part of the walkway, across a paddock, has been vastly improved, with dog friendly styles. Then the keen southerly caught up with us as we retreated to Waikanae Beach for a cuppa and chat.

We were; Warren Wheeler, Duncan Hedderly, Janet Parsons, Fiona Donald, Liz Morrison, and Bonnie

TRAVERS VALLEY, QUEENS BIRTHDAY, 2-7 June, Terry Crippen.

Since the cows had dried off and the Queen has had a hard time over the last few years, we decided we needed more than a day off for her birthday here in NZ, so a six day winter Travers-Sabine circuit, with a day for a climb, was in order. This meant that apart from the first day, no crowds of trampers, and no wasps. But plenty of winter snow and a full moon thrown in for good measure. And five perfect days of clear skies and no wind (the 6th day necessitated parkas due to a front coming in).

Overnighting at Nigel Scott’s Dad’s place in Blenheim we got the water taxi up Rotoiti - with some TTC peoples - and started the long slog up to Upper Travers Hut. Lots of other trampers were heading to John Tait and Cupola Huts for the standard 3 day QBWE. The snow was to below the bush line and in shady places there was heavy hoar frost. Just missing the sun at John Tait (it had gone behind the ridge about 10 minutes before we arrived) meant we had a very cool lunch stop, but the increase in gradient on the section to Upper Travers soon warmed us up. The upper valley basin was completely covered in snow. We noticed that the south side of Mt Travers was looking very cold and dark in the mid-winter afternoon, but the north facing slope of Kehu Pk basked in the sun till sunset. So this decided what we would attempt the following day - the warm snow-free rock of Kehu.

Settling into the hut, we soon had the fire going and marvelled at the brightness of the evening with the near full moon beaming down on the

snow. This was to be a nightly activity each successive night.

An early start on the second day saw us heading up into the snowy north facing basin below Kehu and onto the leading ridge. Out with the rope, and after an initial grovel of mixed snow and rock, we were soon on the warm rock face, and across to the summit which is hidden from immediate view, but overlooks the Rainbow and Begley Valleys. Snow covered peaks in all directions. There was no need to rush the descent as we had maximum advantage of the sun.

The next day was to be a standard crossing of Travers Saddle to West Sabine Hut. The snow was a bit crusty, but we made the saddle by mid-morning. We had plenty of time to head over to the tarn under Rainbow Saddle and chop through about 20 cm of ice to replenish our water containers. We then headed down to the bushline on the Sabine side where we stopped for lunch. Then what? Bugger! We discovered that we had left one of the snowshovels back at Upper Travers Hut! We discussed various options, concluding that we had better retrieve it. So a grunt back up to the saddle -with our packs in case we ran out of day light and a bivvy on the saddle was necessary. Nigel headed off down to the hut while I started to build an igloo and visit the tarn again for water. Nigel made short work of the descent and re-ascend (and partaking in a brew from some Massey types at the hut, who had made good use of the shovel making a snowman), but it was still just on dusk when he returned. We decided instead of bivvying out (that would have made the next day extra long) to have another brew and then descend the 1000m to the West Sabine by moonlight. It turned out an highly enjoyable night tramp, getting to the hut about 10pm.

The long day (16 hours) and late dinner that night meant we opted for a very late start the following morning - 11am - for the down valley stretch to Sabine Hut on the edge of Lake Rotoroa. Here we shared the hut with three hunters who had just arrived by boat with lots of goodies. We welcomed their offers of warming liquid refreshments and swapped tales of the hills.

A headlamp departure the next morning saw us heading up the steep track onto Mt Cedric, reaching the bushline just after dawn. The snow

was a bit crusty especially on the tussock areas, but higher up it was excellent cramponing. Mt Owen, and The Needle and Haystack could be seen snow covered in the distance. The route to Angelus Hut would be interesting in a whiteout since the ridge and traverses have plenty of direction changes. We arrived at the hut in time for a lazy lunch. Lake Angulus and its smaller fellow tarn were of course frozen over and the scenery was, as for the last 4 days, A+++ . There were plenty of cramponing trails and the odd ski trail about the basin so there had been quite a lot of people there over the long weekend. But again we had the hut to ourselves. In the afternoon Nigel headed off for Mt Angelus, as it was his first time here while I chopped a line of steps to the bog, checked out the route across to Robert Ridge, had a sweep (of the hut) or two, and got the fire going to produce some drinkable water. It was the full full moon that night - an amazing sight, the bright moon light reflecting off the lake's ice and the snowy slopes. A wee bit of cloud started to ooze over the ridge from the west indicating the minor front that had been forecast.

The sixth and last day was a bit windy with the front coming in, as we headed out early onto Robert Ridge, although it only necessitated us donning parkers to stop the wind. Robert Ridge could be a bit exposed at times in poor weather - some sections are quite narrow and even the easy slopes can be underestimated since it is easy access from the skifield car park. It was the scene of a major (successful) rescue of a group of people who had got caught out in poor weather and snow conditions the week before. The decent down the Pinchgut track was a bit painful so once on the road we dumped our packs to walk light the last 5 km to St Arnaud and the car. Once we had returned for our packs it was off to Blenheim for the night, with the rain behind us, to a good meal, snooker competition and more of the Scott's hospitality. An excellent trip was had by Nigel Scott and myself.

WAIPAWA, 3 June, by Warren Wheeler.

This was an unprogrammed trip until Thursday club night before Queens Birthday Weekend. It was just what we needed – not too strenuous, just right. We parked at the Swamp Walk Carpark near the river to save the walk back along the farm track, and enjoyed the longer walk through the nice big swamp forest with tall kahikatea, miro in

berry, rimu and beech. The track was not swampy at all. There was snow on the track at about 1000m but the snow wasn't deep enough to cover the tussock, resulting in an amazing icescape. Although it was calm for us and the several other groups enjoying the day. Cloud obscured our views somewhat, but the surroundings were magic anyway. The tarn at Sunrise Hut had 30mm of ice, and the one at Armstrong Saddle was thick enough to walk across. The route was a bit icy just past the Top Maropea Turnoff, but was not a worry even in my rubber gummies, without ice axes although we later looked back and saw a less experienced couple having second thoughts. The fun run down the scree into the north branch of the Waipawa has been cut almost in half by a huge slip in the lower section to the right. This has left behind impressive jagged outcrops and gullies, but the run into the head of the stream is still quite straight-forward. The slip has had quite an impact on the stream – it looks like a debris avalanche about 3m deep travelled down to the main branch of the Waipawa. Travel downstream is still quite easy with only occasional small drops. The lower Waipawa has changed remarkably with the huge volumes of material deposited in the valley floor – certainly keeps the budlia at bay and makes for easy travel. We were back at the car by 4.00pm with the sun still shining after a thoroughly enjoyable 6 hour trip.

We were Barry Scott, Warren Wheeler, and a keen Japanese chap (name mis-placed, sorry).

SAREX, 9- 10 June, by Warren Wheeler.

This year the Levin Police hosted the annual Search and Rescue Exercise. The focus this time was on Track and Clue Awareness, with each team given a person(s) to track and find. Our two people were lost in the foothills of the Tararua Ranges, in an area outside the Park which had been logged in the past and was criss-crossed by tracks cut and marked by local tramping clubs – a really interesting area to explore, with some big rimu trees still standing. We found the obvious clues like a boot print in a cow-pat (!) and spotted the “camp-site” which the lost party had carefully composed including ashes that had obviously been brought from home for the “camp-fire”...a nice touch – good to see the other players getting into the spirit of things. The tracking wasn't so easy after that as we followed them up a stream but we still found the fern arrow they had left

where they branched off onto the ridge. We lost them here – and blundered around in the kiekie until almost dark hoping to pick up the trail on the ridge. We set up camp under three separate flies and were just finishing our dinners when we heard a kiwi calling three times. It even returned our whistle until we realised (doh!) that it was a whistle too – we had found our lost party....or they had found us! Just goes to show one should never give up, and at night take advantage of the drop in wind to try the whistle – but if we had been much more than the 200m away we would not have heard them – amazing how the sound was dissipated by the bush and by the little gully and spur between them and us. We dealt to his injury – a broken leg – and went back to our own camp for the night although for the sake of the exercise we “virtually” spent the night with them !). In the morning we made up a pack stretcher and carried him about 50m to a suitable open patch in time for the “virtual helicopter” to arrive – hard work but a very effective short-carry method. We walked out in less than 1 hour along a ridge track and the rain started just after our van arrived at 1100 hours to take us back for the debrief. While waiting for other teams to make their way back we wandered into the Command Centre at the Police Station to see how the exercise was being run. It was quite an eye-opener – it is amazing how difficult it is to get good reception and hear clearly over the radio, and how well the operators do to unravel the messages. Comms are often a problem during a Search and this SAREX was no different to normal. We missed a couple of Schedules because of poor reception at times with the hip-slung VHF radio, and problems with the yellow Condor were eventually tracked down to a broken aerial wire at the terminal. All in all a really worth-while exercise – we look forward to the one next year.

Our team was Janet Wilson (chief tracker), Graham Peters, Mick Leyland and Warren Wheeler.

PURITY HUT, 10 June, By Fiona Donald.

A select group of four set off at 6.40am from Palmerston North. It was well worth the early start in order to avoid the worst of the afternoon's drenching rain.

The first test was climbing over the steep hill country farm, and gosh, it was very steep! Extra

challenges included contending with lots of slippery sticky mud and zappy electric fences! At the top we were rewarded with a brief superb view of the farmland below us before the rain clouds closed in. Next, we tramped through the magnificent bush in the Ruahine Ranges and, at times, paused to watch clumps of mist drifting down through the trees; both eerily reminiscent of Craig Potton's photographs. We had an early lunch at Purity Hut. Unfortunately there was no snow and none of us were inclined to traverse further beyond the hut. We made our way down in record time and were treated to some more amazing views.

Etsuo summarised the tramp well and he said "mud, water, I'm whacked!" while my highlight was "going downhill, it was pure heaven." Laurence was pleased that "we didn't get lost" and Duncan had "nothing more to add". The tramp went well and is strongly recommended as a great way to spend a Sunday on an easy tramp to Purity Hut.

We were: Laurence Gatehouse (leader), Fiona Donald (writer), Duncan Hedderley and Etsuo Yamamoto.

MID WINTER CELEBRATIONS, 23- 24 June, by Warren Wheeler.

Friday night was clear and starry as 8 of us settled in to our beds and campstretchers at the Club Patron's lodge in Rangataua, the sleepy suburb of Ohakune. Two carloads of us headed off after breakfast on Saturday and checked out the snow conditions at Turoa – rock garden; ski-lifts closed; only the Learner Area open for skiing: snow-boarders only need apply. So with the murky cloud hanging onto the left hand side of the slopes we decided to head out into the sunshine to the east, with an easy trip to visit Blyth Hut. There has been a lot of work done to upgrade the track recently, although the track standard seems a bit posh. A footbridge has a sign warning maximum of 5 people and it looks like it could take a Mack truck. Once past the waterfall the track deteriorates again and takes some care to follow where it crosses a couple of streams. Blyth Hut was very tidy but unoccupied when we arrived for an early lunch break. We decided to have a wander up the track behind the hut and do a loop around and back out. It was a bit breezy with drizzle flurries (quite windy actually – Marion and

Jennie turned back from the lunacy) so again we swung right, into the Mangaehuehu gully by a 25m waterfall. We followed this little stream down for a couple of hours, with interest maintained by the impressive lava cliffs and a slip sidle around another big waterfall and deer tracks, and rejoined the round-the-mountain track. This would also make a nice easy day trip in summer, with the option of a rock hop all the way back to Rangataua for a fit trip, including the Sigley Falls. We met a few other parties heading into Blyth for "Mid-winter", and day-trippers on the track despite the weather. It was worth it because the rain stayed put in the north-west. Back at the Lodge we found that we had been joined by Dennis and Glenda Moore who had spent half the day trying to find the A-frame lodge hiding behind the hole in the lawsonniana hedge. The party split up with three of us opting to take a Mid-winter Dip in the hot pool at the Powderkeg – a popular spot, but not overcrowded – rejoining the party in time for pre-dinner drinks after the traditional blowing up your own balloon to remind us that the breath of life is a Beautiful Thing (whatever...). Then Dinner Commenced. And a merry night of Excess it was too. Thankfully a halt was called before dessert – time for the sing-along. Sue had copied pages from old Tramping Song Books which had us all joining in "just like in the olde days". Fortunately the tunes are not particularly taxing and recognisable even if the tramping lyrics are new – "no more double bunking, double bunking, double bunking" was a particular favourite. After yummy dessert we opened our wee Samx presents (for being good during the year.) to cries of delight, and sighs of astonishment. As the tall tales ebbed with the Ginger Wine most of us ventured outdoors into the cool night air to circuit around Rangataua under the stars wheeling overhead. Mick and Lou remained on duty at the lodge and proclaimed that no GPS was required to tell where we were – we could be heard a mile off they reckoned.

After a night free of eruptions and lahars the morning broke uneventfully. Porridge again – no way! Chocolate fondue and fruit, for me, for you, me hearties..Arrrrr Happy Mid-winter m'dears.

After breakfast, in one shape or another, was consumed the lodge was swept clear of our Occupation and we made our farewells. Half the party headed off home directly while the other

half took the long way. After so much Indoor Revelry we were feeling in need of another walk despite the overcast sky – so we ventured around the loopie track opposite the Ranger Station on the Mountain Road. We marvelled at the huge trees left standing in this reserve, and the life that the forest leads...if we don't cut it all down first.....and the tears rolled from the Sky as we hustled into our cars and headed off Home...happy to have been here, sad for what has past, in more ways than one.....may we have more to Celebrate next year.

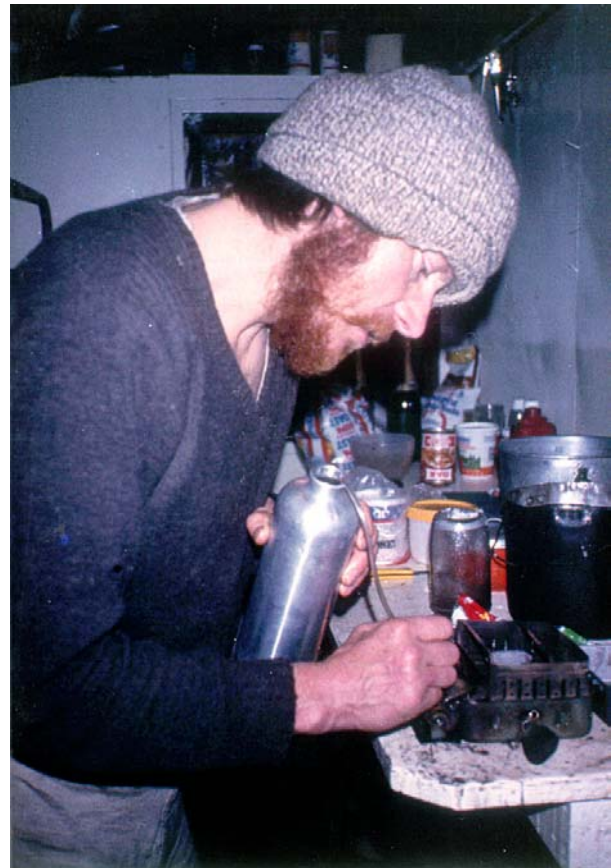
We were Mick and Marion Leyland, Llew and Jenny Pritchard, Dennis and Glenda Moore, Heather Bewick, Warren Wheeler (scribe), Sue and Lawson Pither.

OUTDOOR FIRST AID, 30 June- 1 July, by Warren Wheeler.

This Course was an excellent mix of theory and practice with the outdoor scenarios being really instructive and fun – we all had turns at this with the lucky ones getting dressed up with gashes and broken bones. I drew the short straw and only had to be the unconscious patient, lying out in the cold night air, with cold hands “ascertaining injuries”. A really important point that arose concerned pre-trip planning and group management in an emergency. We need to be diligent in ensuring as trip leaders that we know beforehand whether anyone has a medical condition (asthma is a common one) that they have their medication, and you know where it is if you need to get it for them. It is a good idea to identify roles for people before leaving the carpark – the leader, the first aider, the assistant first aider, the scribe, the communications person (cell phone? Mountain radio?), the go-fer(s) -lets have fun in the outdoors but also be safe, and ready to help others in trouble. One of the key messages for me from the course is that First Aid builds largely on

common sense – but when an emergency arises some training really helps us do our best. Thanks to SAR Levin for organising the course and to the Mountain Safety Council volunteer instructors. I would encourage everyone in the PNTMC to further their First Aid training by attending an Outdoor First Aid Course.

There were 14 participants including Warren Wheeler, Graham Peters and Janet Wilson.



Ex club member and fantastic bloke, the late Trevor Bissell (1945- 1989) He is fondly remembered by those who knew him. He is also remembered with “The Trevor Bissell Memorial Billy, which is fought over at the annual interclub Quizz. [Photo: Sallie Hewson]

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