



# PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217  
PALMERSTON NORTH  
NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 1995 Edition

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## ENQUIRES CONCERNING OVERDUE TRIPS

Mick Leyland : Ph. 358-3183  
Daryl & Linda Rowan : Ph. 356-4655  
Sue & Lawson Pither : Ph. 357-3033

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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 (326-9691), 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.

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### **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 members and visitors on the second and last Thursday of each month. 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 AUGUST

**AUGUST 10**

Thursday day trippers

Judy Stockdale

355-5277

**AUGUST 10** Club night Rob Suisted, from DOC (Wellington) will be presenting a talk and slide show on his recent trip to the Auckland and Enderby Islands. He spent three months there, working with flora, fauna and other interesting things. An excellent speaker, not to be missed.

**AUGUST 12-13** Howletts-Longview M/F Phillip Brown 355-1389  
Depart 7 am. Into Howletts, a cosy and well situated hut via Daphne Spur. Good views of the high tops of the Ruahines and the lights of Hastings at night below. Sunday will be south towards Longview and back via Moorcock's Base.

**AUGUST 13** Maharahara Crossing E Warren Wheeler 356-1998  
Depart 8 am. This is pleasant crossing of the southern Ruahines, giving great views to the north and south, east and west. Depending on the numbers, we will start from both ends and exchange car keys enroute.

**AUGUST 17** Thursday day trippers Judy Callesen 357-0192

**AUGUST 19-20** Snow craft 3. Whangaehu p: SC2 Peter Wiles 358-6894  
Closing date for application: Friday 11 August. Weekend: 18/19-20 August. Content: Further crampon techniques including the use of 12(front)-point crampons, more belay methods and backing up belays, some activity on ice, planning and practising pitches.

We will depart 6pm Friday night heading up the Tukino Mountain Road, Ruapehu, and tramping into the huts. Due to numbers both Whangaehu (NZAC), and Rangipo (DOC) huts will be used. Instruction will be centred on the upper eastern slopes of Ruapehu. You will need: ice axe, crampons, harness/improvised harness, screwgate karabiner(s), plus what you can get of; helmet, some snaplink karabiners slings, snowstake, hammer (or a second ice axe). Costs: Hut fees \$24 or DOC hut pass/ticket (depending on which hut you will be at), and approx \$25 transport.

**AUGUST 20** Kiriwhakapapa E Jenny McCathy 06-376-8838  
Depart (PN.) at 8:15 am (meeting Jenny at Eketahuna). This is a pleasant walk, starting up through magnificent redwoods, then into native forest to sunny lunch spots on the eastern side of the Tararua Ranges.

**AUGUST 24** Thursday day trippers Tony Cameron 356-545

**AUGUST 26-28** Waterfall Hut F Derek Sharp 326-8178  
Depart: Friday afternoon. Either Howletts or Sunrise, in the Eastern Ruahine Range, for Friday night. On Saturday along and over the tops to Waterfall Hut. Sunday out via Purity or Kelly Knights. This was the trip that was down for July 28-29, it will not be further postponed, so be in. (The trip originally down for 26-28 August, South Mitre-Tarn Ridge, has postponed till February).

**AUGUST 27** Sunrise Hut E Warren Wheeler 356-1998  
Depart 8 am A steady climb through some of the finest forest on the Eastern Ruahine Ranges to snowy scenery and great views. Return via the Waipawa River.

**AUGUST 31** Thursday day trippers Russ Johnson 358-7777

**AUGUST 31** Club night NZ Mountain Safety Council  
Most members will be familiar with some of the work of the NZMSC through its various publications, including the Bushcraft and Mountaintcraft manuals. But the NZMSC has a much wider role to play. Noel Bigwood or Jo Green will present an overview of the Mountain Safety Council, both locally and nationally and its future directions.

## SEPTEMBER

**SEPTEMBER 1-3** Ice Climbing M/F/T Derek Sharp 326-8178  
Depart early Friday morning. Based at Whangaehu NZAC Hut on the eastern side of Ruapehu. We will climb in pair's (2 per rope), so anything goes - you can sunbath at the hut, tackle vertical ice, or hunt for ice hammers! If you are keen find a partner, scavenge some gear and give Derek a call.

**SEPTEMBER 2-3** Te Puia Springs, Mohaka E Tui Craven 355-4179  
Depart 8 am This is trip for those who enjoy a leisurely stroll and a hot soak. There are hot springs at the road end and about 3 hours in (about an hour beyond the hut) adjacent to the Mohaka River (at the northern end of the Kaweka Ranges).

**SEPTEMBER 3** Rangī Hut snow trip E Tony Gates 357-7439  
Depart 7 am This is your big chance to learn to ski. Tony Gates, master of cross country and telemark skiing, will be showing you what it is all about. Rangī Hut is a couple of hours easy walk and has gas on tap. Wide open tussock tops (under the snow) await those who join Tony up at Rangī. Please phone.

<b>SEPTEMBER 7</b>	Thursday day trippers		Bud & Nan Cade	358-8241
<b>SEPTEMBER 9</b>	Rangitikei River rafting	M	Derek Sharp	326-817&
Saturday 9 <sup>th</sup> , medium fitness, no experience needed, 13 years plus. Keen to raft the; Rangitikei with the Rangitikei Whitewater Guides? Go on the North Island's premier full, one day rafting trip. A white water challenge of grade 5, (grade 1, placid; grade 6, unrealistic). This trip combines rugged beauty with some of the country's toughest and most exciting rapids to negotiate. A must for all those who love a challenge. The cost is eighty nine dollars which includes morning tea, lunch and refreshments, and of course an experienced guide. Wet suits, lifejackets, helmets, raft and paddles provided. We need a minimum of twelve enthusiasts. Must book before August 17 <sup>th</sup> with twenty dollars deposit. (If the trip is cancelled due to lack of numbers the deposit will be refunded.) I'm expecting a deluge of phone calls!				
<b>SEPTEMBER 10</b>	Smiths Stream	E/M	Liz & Arthur Todd	323-6246
Depart 7 am Smiths Stream is a tributary of the Waipawa River in the Eastern Ruahines. While not often visited, it is a great place to visit and investigate. Over some farmland, into good forest and then to the river and hut. Give Liz and Arthur a call.				
<b>SEPTEMBER 14</b>	Thursday day trippers		Pam Wilson	357-\$247
<b>SEPTEMBER 14</b>	Club night Inter-club Quiz			
This annual event is between us (PNTMC) MTSC, MUAC, and Mountain Equipment and is always an interesting and enjoyable evening. Questions and activities for the competing teams on topics ranging from general knowledge, geography of your favourite tramping places, tramping and climbing (NZ and Overseas) and ????. Although it is being held at the standard PNTMC club night time and venue, this year the organisation is in the hands of Hillary and Russell of Mountain Equipment. So there could be the odd (or even) question on gear. Make sure there is lots of us to support our team. Speaking of OUR TEAM we want four able mind and bodied people for it. Let a committee member know so the team can be organised and some swotting done.				
<b>SEPTEMBER 16-17</b>	Tunipo - Iron Gates	M	Terry Crippen	356-3588
Depart 7 am An excellent winter/spring trip in the Western Ruahine Ranges. The snowy tops of Tunupo and then north along the Ngamoko Range for the Saturday, dropping down to Iron Gates Hut for the night. Sunday a stroll through good bush along the Oroua River.				
<b>SEPTEMBER 17</b>	Mitre Flats	E/M	Liz Flint	356-7654
Depart 7:30 am On the Eastern side of the Tararua Ranges this is a nice tramp, initially over farmland, then along the track through bush adjacent to the Waingawa River. Three hours takes us to the grassy flats or the (new) hut for lunch. Returning the same way.				
<b>SEPTEMBER 21</b>	Thursday day trippers		Neil Gutry	354-0284
<b>SEPTEMBER 23</b>	Southern Ruahine	M	Nigel Barrett	326-8847
<b>SEPTEMBER 23-24</b>	Stanfield/Cattle Creek	E	Richard Lockett	323-0948
<b>SEPTEMBER 28</b>	Thursday day trippers		Liz Flint	356-7654
<b>SEPTEMBER 28</b>	Club Night			
Pete Barnes unable to do this one. His talk on climbing in Peru to be held some other time, maybe November 9 <sup>th</sup> . I have his commitment.				
<b>SEPTEMBER 30-1</b>	Climbing. Whakapapa	M/F/T	Terry Crippen	356-3588
<b>SEPTEMBER 1<sup>st</sup> Oct</b>	Diggers Hut	E/M	Mick Leyland	358-3183
<b>SEPTEMBER 30-1</b>	Ideas contact		Derek Sharp	326-8178

### EDITORIAL

I looked out of the upstairs office window this morning to the wonderful sight of the snow and ice covered Ruahine and Tararua Ranges. And I only recently found out that Dundas Ridge is known to some locals as "The Seven Sisters" (seven peaks), and that ridge is a remarkably dominant piece of our southern horizon on a clear day, especially when plastered with snow. With winter, snow, short days, and the cold, we must travel in the mountains prepared. Sun glasses, sun screen, warm clothes, water bottle (on the tops, most H<sub>2</sub>O is in one of its frozen forms), ice axe and crampons are all essential on excursions above the bushline. Another essential is snowcraft knowledge, which can be gained from our Snowcraft courses (written about later). And if you are so inclined, a pair of skis can be well worth while. With skis come poles, and these too are excellent when walking in snow, even without skis. Ski

poles are light, strong, inexpensive, comfortable, and supportive. The great Reinhold Messener advertises "Leki" walking sticks (an advanced form of ski pole), and these are becoming much more popular these days, even trendy (no, you don't have to be old to use a walking stick!).

During the July committee meeting, your committee paid the annual Federated Mountain Clubs affiliation fee of 8 dollars per member. Have you ever thought where this fairly large section (about one third) of your membership fee goes to? We as tramping and climbing enthusiasts have some representation from FMC in matters political, with FMC lobbying for us when and where necessary to organisations such as DOC. Our FMC affiliation gives us a 30% discount on DOC annual hut passes, sorry, I mean hut passes. Our FMC affiliation is good value for money.

Past club evenings at the Society of Friends rooms have been extremely well patronised. The photograph competition evening held on June 29, was a classic. Terry's Snowcraft lecture presented a brief overview of what to expect on the Snowcraft course (which is pretty popular this year). Terry then spoke of Western Australia, and a somewhat different style of tramping. Then we held a club evening at the rock wall at Massey University, and had a lot of fun, and more than a few thrills and spills. A good crowd there. This club evening definitely to be repeated. At the club evenings, tea/coffee and bikkies are served. To help pay for these, and the hall hire, we request the small fee of 30 cents please be paid at the door. And while you are at it, you can sign the visitors' book. Potential members can leave their address, and receive three free newsletters, which, if you are lucky, are as good as this edition.

Now, this is not an advertisement, but I was in at Mountain Equipment the other day, and took time to peruse some fancy new stuff. New geothermal clothing was most interesting (and fashionable!), so I bought some knickers, and a polypro sleeping bag liner, which Derek thoroughly recommends. But what really caught my eye were waterproof sox. Waterproof sox! Yes, it's true, they have a sort of Goretex layer sandwiched between two comfy but strong layers. They sounded excellent for tramping as long as the water level didn't reach up to the top of them, and flood your feet.

### **Snowcraft Activities update**

Snowcraft 1 and (by the time you get this newsletter) Snowcraft 2 will have been successfully completed. They have been very popular this year with great numbers on each. Read about them in the relevant trip reports, this and the next newsletter. Snowcraft 3 is coming up, but I suspect places are all full. Check with Peter Wiles. Anyhow the details are:

### **After Snowcraft 3, then what?**

While you may have now prepared yourself for winter and snow tramping, there is still much practice and further skills that can be learnt. So get onto as many winter trips as possible that are above the bushline.

If you want to get into alpine climbing rather than tramping get up to Ruapehu and Egmont/Taranaki as often as possible. (As well as the South Island mountains of course.) Also go on the various follow-ups to the snowcraft course. These include up to the end of this year: Ice climbing (early September, see this Newsletter's Scheduled Event List), Climbing at Whakapapa (late September), Snow Caving (October), Snowcraft Extension (November), Climbing at Whangaehu (December). While these are informal weekends compared with the structured Snowcraft weekends they all require the level of skill that you have reached with the Snowcraft Course.

## **NOTICES**

### **NEW MEMBERS**

Please welcome three new members to the club:

Vicki Trotter	Bridget Douglas	Ronald Derosé
23 Cargill Grove	26 Thomson Street	6 Waterloo Crescent
Palmerston North	Palmerston North	Palmerston North
Ph 353-0178	354-9485	356-7412

### **THURSDAY TRIP SCHEDULE**

AUGUST 10	Judy Stockdale	355-5277
AUGUST 17	Judy Calleson	357-0192
AUGUST 24	Tony Cameron	356-5461
AUGUST 31	Russell Johnson	358-7777
SEPTEMBER 7	Bud & Nan Cade	358-8241
SEPTEMBER 14	Pam Wilson	357-6247

Overdue contacts: Sue and Lawson Pither (357-3033) and Trish Eder (357-0122).

## **MORE POSSUM POISONING OPERATIONS**

This spring, DOC advises us, they will be carrying 1080 bait drops in the upper Waiohine, Hector and upper Tauherenikau rivers. Please take care with children and dogs.

## **NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING** September

If you are unable to make it or expect to be late, please ensure that your apology is forwarded to the secretary in advance. Next meeting at ? Street, PN. All members welcome.

## **MAPS**

If you have ordered any maps -good news; they have arrived and are available from Nigel.

## **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. Electronic copy is the most convenient. This newsletter is prepared using Wordperfect. So I can retrieve any material in Wordperfect format (version 5, 5.1, 5.2 or 6, in either DOS or Windows). If you use Microsoft Word or a MAC, then I need an ASCII (or DOS text file) version. with a MAC, you will need a DOS formatted disc. I can only handle 3½ inch discs.

If you have DOS or Windows, and are not sure that you have saved it in ASCII format, then retrieve it into Notepad (Windows) or Edit (DOS) to check the copy. If it's OK, it's OK, if it's not, it's not!

## **TRIP DECISIONS?**

If you decide you want to go on a trip, please ensure that you have contacted the leader by the Wednesday before, so that logistical decisions can be made. Recently, there have been some instances of people expressing an interest in a trip on the evening before - the leaders in some cases, having made other plans at that late stage.

## **BOOK REVIEW** by Tony Gates

"Land Aspiring, The story of Mount Aspiring National Park" By Neville Peat (1994), published by Craig Potton and DOC.

This is a bright, breezy, and inspirational medium sized book about its namesake. It's not really the book to toss into your pack and take with you into the hills, you would more likely utilise this as a brief, though interesting reference text on New Zealand mountains. Many familiar photographs (from the ground and the air) by Craig Potton, Lloyd Homer, Geoff Spearpoint, and Colin Monteith clearly state what this book is about. It is about a fantastically scenic piece of New Zealand. All the attributes of an alpine paradise are featured, many of which are familiar to club members. Of course the photographs are superb, and there are plenty of them. Most are colour, and there are a few black and whites of such characters as Charlie Douglas, Arawata Bill, and A.P. Harper. Also, there are reprints of drawings (excellent), and a couple of maps (terrible).

"Land Aspiring" provides 11 general interest chapters on such subjects as; geology, weather, glaciers, and mountaineering. The "Matterhorn" look alike spire of Mt Aspiring is of course featured. There are other emphases on history and current usage, especially the wilderness aspects. The book is easy to read, and not distracted by the numerous scientific references (there is an extensive bibliography, and appendices). The author has explored both the area and its literature in great depth, and presented a fine book suitable for everyone. It would be an eminently suitable book for a local and a foreigner.

## **BOOK REVIEW 2** by Tony Gates

"Tongariro, a sacred gift" (a centennial celebration of Tongariro National Park), written and photographed by Craig Potton (1987), Lansdowne/Craig Potton.

Craig Potton and his photographs have certainly left their mark on New Zealand. This is one of his photographic essays from the mid 1980s from one of our favourite National Parks. It is a coffee table book of photographs, poetry, and essays on major facets of the park.

The poetic forward is by Sir Hepi Te Heu Heu (a great grandson of Chief Te Heu Heu Tukino, who donated "the sacred gift" of the mountains as the first National Park in New Zealand in 1887). And the introduction is by the late Bruce Jefferies, sets the tone for a special book about a special place. There are then chapters on; Fire, Erosion, Life, People, and Sacredness and Protection. Each with informative essays, poems, and quotes. As we who tramp and climb there know, the volcanoes evoke great feeling and passion. There is much written of Maori mythology and history, European settlement and change, and then some philosophy on National Parks and wilderness values.

Craig Potton's camera has an eye for the unusual, yet stimulating and artistic view. Not all photographs are of fine weather, rather of wind and rain, of snow and cloud, and of some of those little things like rocks, blades of grass, insects, and watercourses that we so often take for granted. There are many stunning shots of Botany,

Zoology, Geology, weather. And there are a few famous Craig Pot ton shots that you should recognise. One shot is printed upside down!

Letter to the editor

Dear readers,

It does appear that your recent correspondent, A Bill, might have a valid point -the club in recent years has gone soft. A search through the record reveals: that in the early days, the club was into real ice-breaking stuff. Members were advjsed on 21-22 June 1969 that their participation was invited for the following event:

**RANGIWAHIA SWIMMING CLUB:**

An invitation is extended to members to meet at the tarns on the Rangiwahia Ridge on 22nd June. Any of those present will be very welcome to join in the breaking of the ice and the competitions that follow. Festivities begin on the ridge at mid-day and the following competitions have been suggested:

Endurance - competitors must be able to leave the pool under their own power at the conclusion of their effort.

There is some doubt as to the availability of volunteers to drag out casualties.

Races of various kinds.

Any members who would like to go to the hut on Saturday...

New Grading – IMPOSSIBLE Leader: Tony...ph. 73.805

Draw your own conclusions.

Yours etc.

B Bill

**REVISITING HISTORY (Ed)**

I recently read an account of the 1921 Everest reconnaissance expedition by the British. This expedition into Tibet discovered the Rongbuk Glacier route, which is now the dominant Tibetan route to Everest. They were the first (Western) party to reach the peak and find a feasible route, climbing to the North Col at 23,000 ft.

George Mallory was one of the prominent members of this expedition (who of course became famous for disappearing along with his partner (Irvine) at about 8,500 m on the subsequent 1924 expedition.

The party also explored a valley to the east of the Rongbuk valley, the Kama ( also spelt Khama & Karma) Valle'y. Mallory describes his impressions:

As I recall now our first impression of the amazing scenery around us, I seem chiefly to remember the fresh surprise and vivid delight which, for all we had seen before, seemed a new sensation. Even the map of the Kama .valley, now that we had it, may stir the imagination. Besides Everest itself the crest of the South Peak, 28,000 feet high, and its prodigious south-east shoulder overlook the Western end; Makalau, 12 miles from Everest, thrusts out Northwards a great arm and another peak to choke the exit; so that whereas the frontier ridge from Everest to Makalau goes in a South-easterly direction, the Kangshurig Glacier in the main valley runs nearly due East. In this spacious manner three of the five highest summits in the world overlook the Kama Valley. (Everest [1], Lhotse [4] & Mdkalau [5] Ed.)

And we now saw a scene of magnificence and splendour even more remarkable than the facts suggest. Among all the mountains I have seen, and, if we may judge by photographs, all that ever have been seen, Makalau is incomparable for its splendour and rugged grandeur. It was significant to us that the astonishing precipices rising above us on the far side of the glacier as we looked across from our camp, a terrific awe-inspiring sweep of snow-bound rocks, were the sides not so much of an individual mountain, but rather of a gigantic bastion or outwork defending Makalau. At the broad head of the Kama valley the two summits of Everest are enclosed between the North-east arete and the South-east arete bending round from the south peak; below them is a basin of tumbled ice well marked by a number of moraines and receiving a series of tributaries pouring down between buttresses which support the mountain faces in this immense cirque. perhaps the astonishing charm and beauty here lie in the complications half hidden behind a mask of apparent simplicity, so that one's eye never tires of following up the lines of the great aretes, of following down the arms pushed out from their shoulders, and covering the upper half of this Eastern face of Everest so as to determine at one point after another its relation with the buttresses below and with their abutments against the rocks which it covers. But for me the most magnificent and sublime mountain scenery can be made lovelier by some more tender touch; and that, too, is added here. When all is said about Chomolungma (Everest), the Goddess Mother of the world and about Chomo Uri, the Goddess of the Turquoise Mountain, I come back to the valley, the valley bed itself, the broad pastures, where our tents lay, where cattle grazed and where our butter was made, the little stream we followed up to the valley head, wandering along its well-turfed banks under the high moraine, the few rare plants, saxifrages, gentians and primulas, so well watered there, and a soft, familiar blueness in the air which even here may charm us.

(Makes one want to book a trip tomorrow, doesn't it?)

And a few pages later in an entirely different vein, Mallory describes, with more wonderful imagery, coping with snow-shoes (skis being a later innovation for tackling this type of terrain), together with the effects of altitude.

No one without experience of the problem could guess how difficult it may be to sit down on a perfectly flat place with snow-shoes strapped to the feet. To squat is clearly; impossible; and if the feet are pushed out in front the projection behind the heel tends to tilt the body backwards so that the back is strained in the mere effort to sit without falling. The remedy of course: is to take off the snow-shoes; but the human mountaineer after exhausting efforts is too lazy for that at an elevation of 21,000 feet. He prefers not to sit; he chooses to lie - in the one convenient posture under the circumstances - flat upon his back and with his toes and snow-shoes turned vertically upwards. On this occasion the majority of the party without more ado turned up their toes.

## TRIP REPORTS

### **ADVENTURES ON MT. ASPIRING** by Bruce Van Brunt

(This is the first truncated instalment - Road end to French Ridge Hut. Ed.)

Our plans involved the use of Colin Todd hut on the northwest ridge of Mt. Aspiring. The common routes to this hut from the Matukituki valley invariably require the crossing of a large glacier, the Bonar. There are -two "standard" routes: the 'French ridge' route, which entails a steep ascent to the French ridge hut followed by a slightly less steep approach along a small glacier which eventually provides access to the Bonar at about 2000m+ in elevation (the last bit of this is fairly steep); and the 'Bevan Col' route, which is more exposed but offers access to the Bonar at some 2300m. Now Colin Todd hut is around 1800m in elevation and the former route entailed crossing the, 'length of the Bonar; whereas, the latter required a considerably shorter transverse crossing. A central concern in April is that the Bonar and nearby glaciers would be highly crevassed: the Bevan Col route appeared much more attractive because it required less climbing and the glacier crossing was shorter. What is more, using the Bevan Col route the crossing of the Bonar would be parallel to the crevasses as opposed to the transverse crossings required by the other route. None of us had ever been to this region but prima facie it seemed that the Bevan Col route was a clear first option. By late March our plans had crystallized: we would attack Mt. Aspiring just before ANZAC day using the Bevan Col approach to Colin Todd hut followed by an ascent via the northwest ridge along the 'Ramp' to the summit. We allotted no more than a week for the adventure fully expecting poor weather for at least half the trip but hoping that there would be one good day for climbing.

We arrived at the car park around 9 :00pm whereupon Richard exclaimed that he had forgotten his bowl, fork, knife, spoon, and cup in Christchurch. After a moment of reflection, I realized that I must have also left my bowl behind (it was with Richard's). Clive fortunately came to the rescue with his copious cooking equipment. Richard still did not have any utensils, but we all had bowls and cups. Having surmounted that obstacle, it transpired that the extra bottle of white spirits was also left behind. Clearly this proved the presence of a tramping gear black hole somewhere near Christchurch. We had enough fuel for a week without the extra bottle, but we could not be lavish with our cooking. As if all of this was not enough of a deterrent, there was the 'torch crisis'. It began with Clive noticing that his torch had turned on in the pack and run down the batteries (he did not have his spare set with him - the Christchurch black hole). At least we still had two torches for the moment. But then my torch decided that it was time to burn out a light bulb and we were thus down to one torch. A bit of fumbling and I managed to find much to my surprise a spare bulb. We were back in business, but my batteries were so low that I was obliged almost immediately to use my spare set. We had really not left the car yet. So far, this trip did not have many good omens.

When we started, the weather was clear with virtually no wind. There was little moon, but we could see the silhouette of the mountains bordering the Matukituki valley and speculated that they must be magnificent. We also noticed that clouds were coming down the valley - we would be wet within an hour or two. The trek up the valley was uneventful (most of it followed an old road). Part of the trail had been washed away by a small stream and it disoriented us in the dark for a few moments, but otherwise everything was straightforward. (The two trampers we met must have crossed the Matukituki river at a footbridge and followed the Rob Roy track.) The rain began in earnest as we approached Cascade Hut, and this and the late hour persuaded us to stay at this hut.

Cascade Hut provides fairly modest accommodation in comparison with Mt. Aspiring Hut. The hut consists of two sections: one section is for the use of the local station and is kept locked; the other section has four bunks, a fireplace, and a food locker. It is not an uncomfortable hut and is located within twenty minutes walk from Mt. Aspiring Hut. Cascade Hut has one decisive advantage: it is much cheaper than Mt. Aspiring Hut (in season). The latter hut is \$12-00/ night and hut passes are not accepted; the former has no ticket box and I understand that at most it is \$4-00/ night or 'free' with a hut pass.

At daybreak we left Cascade Hut. It was pouring buckets of rain down upon us as we grudgingly left: our nice dry hut. We were soon completely saturated and it was in this state that we made our debut in Mt. Aspiring Hut. This hut is perhaps the nicest DOC hut I have encountered. It is an impressive older hut built of stone situated in a river flat overlooking the Matukituki River.

There were but two people in the hut aside from the warden. It was early in the morning and we evidently woke them. They were real "guns" one of them had solo climbed the southwest ridge of Mt. Aspiring on a lark along with a northwest ridge ascent of the peak the day before that.

Conditions on the mountain were changing quickly and the weather had closed in on them, but they described favourable snow conditions. They told us they had come down from Bevan Col and had considerable trouble. The upper part of the route is quite exposed and can prove rather slippery in a storm (as we were later to find out). The pair had had some difficulties with the upper part of the route but it was the crossing of the Matukituki River that was the real problem: the river was very high. The discussion of the Bevan Col track ended with one of them saying something like "whatever you do, don't take Bevan Col; not in this weather and with the river this high." In contrast with our previous warning we knew that if they had encountered difficulties we surely would as well. We resolved at once to abandon our Bevan Col route plans and, instead try our luck with the French Ridge route. The climbers had used this route a week or so before and it at that time it was still passable. They also told us that the Bonar Glacier was still pretty "tight" and could be easily crossed without too many crevasse problems.

By the time we left Aspiring Hut it was past eight in the morning. Although we had lost time it was certainly a worthwhile stop. The rain had not decreased in intensity and all the tributaries to the Matukituki had swollen making small lakes in the river flats. The track from Aspiring Hut to the beginning of French Ridge is nearly level and mostly open. There are bridges at all the major stream crossings as well as a bridge across the Matukituki so that even in this horrid weather we were able to easily get to French Ridge in about two hours.

Once we entered the bushline at French Ridge we escaped the heavy rains and began climbing. The track to the hut is steep involving a 1000 metre climb. We were heavily laden with gear and progress was slow. In strategic places some lengths of tape/rope had been tied to trees to assist in the ascent/descent. Eventually, we left the bush and entered into the tussock. It was still raining heavily and the wind had come up. Sometime around 3:00 pm we staggered into French Ridge Hut wet and exhausted. We had wanted to get higher that day, perhaps even to the Bonar Glacier, but the weather was appalling and it was with little persuasion that we voted unanimously to stay the night in the hut. There were two other climbers there. They were also planning an ascent of Mt. Aspiring and were waiting for the weather. In fact, they had been at the hut for some four days waiting for tolerable weather.

French Ridge Hut is of modest size in comparison with Aspiring Hut; it can accommodate 10+ trampers comfortably. There are no frills in this hut (save perhaps for a barometer mounted on the wall) but there is a wireless and, though we could not appreciate the view owing to the weather, the nearby vistas are spectacular. The hut fees (in season) are \$10-00/ night and hut passes are not valid.

Next instalment - French Ridge to Colin Todd Hut'- Bivying out, lost amongst the crevasses on the Bonar!

## **THE HARD OUT ADVENTURES OF NIGEL AND DEREK IN THE KAIKOURAS JUNE 30TH TO JULY 6TH.**

After three days of waiting patiently for appropriate flying conditions, it was quickly decided that we would expend ourselves in the local ranges...

Day One. Plonkers,. when we had wished for bad conditions we hadn't anticipated snow plodding. By Mangahua our legs (and Nigel's back) were really noticing our 25-26 kilo packs. After passing the saddle, where our igloo was constructed a few winters back, the weather really started to kick in. It's amazing 'how cruel and' deceptive the snow can be. By Maungamahue map and compass became our bible and iceaxes our crutch. The weather was a repeat of Dave Hodges' hypothermic trip, although, even colder - whistling winds, slashing snow and taxing temperatures. On the slog up 1614 two rime covered trampers were scratching ice off their goggles. By the time we had gained the Pourangaki signpost the cold had beaten us; our parched mouths were cheated by frozen water bottles – man we were thirsty! Artificial light illuminated the way down to Pourangaki Hut, giving us an arrival time of 'an hour after dark'. Dinner consisted of quenching thirst and eating chocolate, afterwards, turgid bellied and tired legs were rested.

Day Two. Four inches of powder at the hut greeted us that morning. Nigel's hut day of snow bathing around the hut turned into Derek's hut day of hiking to the tops. The plan; levitate to the tops adjacent to Waterfall Hut, turn south-east to grid reference NZMS 260 U22 760455, qlissade down the slip and crash down the stream to the footbridge. The outcome: we tramped softly through snow-laden bush, passing plenty of deer sign (Tony). At the tops we were greeted with panoramic views of the snow covered Ruahines and, after photos and waving across to Llew's party we retraced our steps due to time constraints. It is not often you get to flick around dry powder in the Ruahines. Back at the hut we relaxed and roasted in front of a red hot Corker Cocker on our ergonomically designed four mattress sofa.

Day Three. Due to yesterday's aborted plan we decided to explore the side stream. Nice, light packs were shouldered late in the morning and off we set. The Pourangaki River was a chiller, but no bother, as we were soon happily rock hopping the side stream. Thank goodness we didn't carry out yesterdays plans; fifty minutes later after becoming rock buffs we encountered one of the largest, most totally impassable waterfalls that we have seen in our

short Ruahine experience. An impressive volume of water thundered over the fifteen metre waterfall into an equally impressive cavern. (Can you locate this waterfall on your map?). After shouting ourselves hoarse trying to arrange props for photos we departed. Back at the hut we reminisced, relaxed and read, over coffee and cream with after dinner mints. Dinner was a protracted event, with, 'more coal on the fire'. If you want a hot cosy hut, Pourangaki's the place. During the night the rain became steady.

Day Four. Today we decided to vacate the hut and leave for Kelly Knight via the river. After packing up and cleaning the hut we trudged off joking that we'd have to return due to high river levels - but no worries, a while later, frozen from the waist down, with discoloured legs we'd made it. Yep, we were back. It's odd how you fill in time in the hills! No matter, what fool would leave a dry hut, hot fire, comfy sofa and a good book for an icy cold bath - not us! The afternoon was real relaxation in true Pourangaki weather, by now the rain had become incessant and the river was now under the hut. Later that evening...Nigel's comment after successfully pouring the second, nightly, slippery nipple, 'I must say Derek, I TRULY am good!!' (Referring to his perfected bartending abilities) - Boy, it's a hard life tramping with Nigel and Derek!

Day Five. Today dawned clear and fine, and now we would have to leave for Triangle. A good pace was set and by the time we reached the snowline/bushline we had a clear view of the Pourangaki cirque - very picturesque. By 16:14 crampons were a must, the Whanahua Range (and the others) were PLASTERED in snow, very little, if any tussock was seen above this altitude - and this became Nigel's 'benchmark' day. By Maungamahue clear views of Ruapehu and Egmont were had and also of the snow clad Tararuas - or was it the Kaikouras? After an easy stroll, lunch and photos, we descended to Triangle. Triangle was non eventful except for the whios heard during the night and a couple of rats, also, can anyone tell us if Triangle is a category 3 or category 4 hut?

Day Six. Cold. Ice cold. We were in agreement with what the blue ducks screamed at us last night; as we criss-crossed the Oroua river, "PHEE-OAAR- my feet are cold ". Two more blue ducks were spotted on our last crossing which culminated in Derek's dunking - pack, camera, film and all. At Iron Gates we left abuse in the log book targeted at the last teenage party - remember, pack in pack out. Contrary to comments in the log book the fire was lit with ease - and we roasted.

Day Seven. Bloody wind. Bloody leatherwood. Sorry Joanna (our ride home). As everyone knows it's a dawdle from Iron Gates out, so we thought we would make the most of the last day and go out via Tunupo. A quick climb up ensued with only one pause had at the tussock line to adorn ourselves with the appropriate regalia to rebuff the elements. Stiff wind, snow plod. Lunch was had at the ironmongery that marks the Ngamoko Range. We then turned south. Stronger wind. Trudging up to the trig as 1505 proved challenging to say the least. Nigel being the weightier of both of us was making some headway, but for Derek, headway in the wrong direction was becoming more easy without choice. After a quick pow-wow behind a terrace it was concluded that the only feasible idea to get out on time, was, to just drop over the side into Tunupo Creek. The winds must have been in easy excess of 70 knots. Nigel lead, like the blind leading the blind and succeeded in bluffing us in the leatherwood, @\$#%&@! It took us about 90 minutes to reclaim that 60 meters back up hill, giving us a better understanding of the word pooped. But hey, some of the more enjoyable points about leatherwood massage; the black and blue shins, scratched thighs, the totally strained upper body muscles, especially arms, and the joy of carrying around that huge anchor/hook on your back. Derek was quick to spot a 'one way trip only' alternative route. Through the leatherwood - one way due to the impossibility of reascending 60 metres up a 60 degree slope in leatherwood! Once we reached the stream it was a careful scramble down to the main creek. On obtaining the super highway dark had fallen. After fulfilling Nigel's dream of moonlight tramping for one and a half hours, the carpark was reached, culminating in a 10 hour day. We bivvied under the pines, toasting in our new poly pro liners (well recommended). The next morning we left in thick falling snow to phone home - Thanks Mr Wilson for the hospitality and for the access to the park.

In Conclusion -Derek's now wondering about taking pjs more often and a pillowslip!! - and a waterproof camera. Nigel's still concerned about his big toe since freezing it on day one, and, he might also be conned into taking pjs too - or at least a comb! Well, seven days later, a beard later, a bottle of Sambuca later and a sack of coal later too fitter and wiser trampers left the hills - to get an ear-bashing from home about cellphones or radios!!!

Nigel Barrett, Derek Sharp.

**ICE CLIMBING, RUAPEHU.** 11<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> July.

Authentive snoring shatters the silence of the night like an open throttled semi-trailer. It crashes through the hearer's central nervous system like a chainsaw wasting a forest. It appears in the paranoia of early morning darkness, as an aggressive act: "The king sleeps! All you lesser mortals, stay awake!" Reader's Digest, Feb 1977, pg 29. It was good to reminisce and relax at one of the best huts on Ruapehu - out of the horizontal snow and ice.

The climb up had followed a crude pattern of guessing the approximate direction based on past experience, isolating a rock that wasn't enveloped in white and getting there. Half way up crampons were put in place, where at, Alistair entertained/perplexed me by sprinting off in a sudden burst of energy into the mist/blizzard - to return later with

absconded mittens. He wasn't so successful with his hard hat forty minutes later! By then we (and our goggles) were both amply coated in rime, and I was proudly sporting a rather large ice goatee of frozen breath on my balaclava. We eventually had to discard our goggles, which quickly gave way to extremely painful faces due to the intense cold and bird-shot like snow. It was the coldest I've known. Thankfully we weren't too far away from the hut.

Five and a half hours later from the road end the hut was under siege, and attacked with greater fury than the weather - we quickly smashed away a month's ice from bolt and door with our adzes and raced onwards, for hot drinks and our pits. Dinner was luxury, stir fried vegetables and mashed potatoes (with milk and butter) followed by deliciously fried up-market steak, and of course, all downed with plenty of coffee and cream. Later that evening, I must confess, as Alistair put it, I was "guilty of mountaineering treason" as I relaxed to my solar powered radio. I wouldn't recommend taking one, all they do is depress you with dismal weather reports!

Alistair's promised 'tomorrow's fine weather' never came; only more of yesterdays. Pit warming was compulsory. But later that day...the necessary evil had to be done...after successfully negotiating the cliff top one way, chipping the toilet door free with the shovel and then freezing on the inside, it was time to return. I was keen to get back. I was keen to get back, in fact, I was in a rush to get back. I was painfully cold and slightly giddy - possibly due to the sudden exercise with the shovel after lying down in my pit all day - and then calamity struck...after extracting my foot from some deep snow on the return I instantly realised my inner was no longer on my foot. S---t. In the instant I realised and started to take remedial action, it was too late. All I saw of it was a fleeting glimpse, as it mercilessly flew over the cliff top to be never seen again - like my dinners! Now What? After an equally fleeting moment of depression I realized I would dream up something! Alistair's helpful suggestion, or should I say, only worry was; "What happens if the Desert Road is closed?!!"

As it eventuated: After placing on four layers of socks, a plastic bag, my pj bottoms and another plastic bag and all the appropriate, already frozen, storm gear, we set off. Navigation was the most challenging I've done. After working out a series of semaphore moves Alistair set off. I'd shout. He'd look. I'd frantically point. He'd move. I'd shout. He'd stop. I'd catch up. etc. etc.

For most of first half, all we could see, other than white, was each other and the compass needle. With no navigational hiccup we were soon walking under the ski tow and out along the road. After a rather challenging and extending experience and we were both extremely happy to see our ride waiting. An enjoyable day.

Later that night on the phone...

"Ah, Derek. Do you have Peter Wiles' hammer?"

"Dunno, I'll just check"...

"Mmm, Alistair,. Do you have Peter Darragh's hammer?"

Oh s--t.

That weekend... Four of us headed off towards Ruapehu with an obvious intention! Unfortunately we only got as far as Peter D.s' place in Fielding. The Desert Road was closed.

Unquotable quote! from the back of a Beehive match box at Whangaehu Hut.  
Alistair Millward, Derek Sharp.

#### **A HOUND'S EYE VIEW** Sunday 25 June by ??????

One Sunday morning we went to collect my friend Amy who was waiting with her lead and a "Tux" lunch. At Foodtown I leapt out of the car to greet my very best friend Rosemary who was a quiet calm Labrador, also P.C. a friendly extrovert Brittany spaniel, inclined to be noisy while travelling. Horrors! Who is this? A huge black Shepherd called Sharka. I think we'll put our tails down and show deference...just in case.

Our people parked in the shelter of the pine trees on the edge of Santoft Forest ... Let me out ... Let me out ... Oh the beautiful smells! A short way up the road was the beach. What a glorious day, invigorating wind, rolling waves. Why does it look like water and taste so foul? Try it every time but it's always the same! I like Amy but she's inclined to be bossy when there's only the two of us - you know how it is, some people always have to be in front. However, with so much space we all had a fantastic time running backwards and forwards for two hours. Lovely dead fish to roll in - got yelled at for that - they just don't understand.

We turned inland over a sand bank to find a road back through the forest. Lunch time! Amy and I can't understand why people want to eat their food, and not give it to us, especially when we can on that starving eyes, ears forward, head on one side look. Eventually had to settle mostly for Tux, but P.C. shared his water bowl. Can you believe my companion expected me to drink from those muddy water holes in the forest? A dog could fall in there and I hate swimming. P.C. is the opposite. He paddles up and down doing lengths.

Back at the cars, while they had cups of tea, we shared some biscuits and water - we'd all got along really well. Rosemary joined Amy and I in my car for the ride home so we could sleep, leaving the guys to romp around the ute. Hey - Nicky, Tammy and Oscar - where were you? Come next time: we had a great day.

Paved by Bonnie, Amy, P.C., Rosemary and Sharka, two-footed by Liz, Pauline, Monica, Malcolm, Candy, Jody, Ken and Rosemary.

### **OPEN WEEKEND AT RANGATAUA by Ron DeRose 8-9 July**

With really bad weather forecasted for the weekend Terry and I set off along the wind swept main highway towards Mt Ruapehu. After a brief stop at Taihape for fish and chips, and some fresh air, it was time to hit the road again. Snow flurries soon dominated our view of the road ahead. Cars in a hurry sped by. They spewed great torrents of slushy snow onto our windscreen and completely obliterated our view. Thankfully we remained on the road, to pass through Waiouru, and finally make it to Sue and Lawson's warm and hospitable house at Rangataua. After a cupper and chat with Sue, Lawson, Chris, Alastair, and Dianne it was time to hit the sack in anticipation of the day ahead. Next day, despite bad weather, we all set off on the Ohakune Mountain Road. The road was closed at the 9 km barrier, so it was out with ice axes and on with the wet weather gear. Then followed a brisk walk uphill to the Blythe hut track. After a short distance along this track we turned off left along the spur before Waitonga falls, and followed a disused track to the old Blythe hut site. The track was easy to follow at first, passing through patches of snow covered tussock and stands of mountain beech. At times we had to push our way through thickets of regenerating bush which followed the track, and which I am sure were much denser than the surrounding forest. In places small streams had cut down the track to create small ravines, and although easy to follow, we often had to negotiate deep muddy holes, which are always potentially dangerous, as Dianne was to find on her way back. Finally we reached the old Blythe hut site. Terry took great pains to point out, that indeed this was the site of the old Blythe hut, and not in fact where the Wanganui High School hut currently stands. Little remains of the old hut now, except for an old Forest Service sign and the concrete front doorstep. It was lunchtime, and a well deserved break. After finding some shelter from the cold south-east wind, Sue got out her trusty primus, and soon some mountain water was on the boil for a hot drink to warm our souls. Most of the party returned back the way we had come, but Terry and I braved the weather and continued to follow the spur line heading up the mountain. In an almost full on blizzard, we negotiated our way around to the MUAC hut which was completely empty and then walked back down to the cars. Back at Sue and Lawson's place, Pauline and Trevor had arrived, along with Monica and Rosemarie, for the evening's much welcomed and plentiful meal. The next day was much the same. The weather improved slightly, although the thawing snow made for colder walking. Terry had a mind to visit the old Mangaiti hut which supposedly stood in a clearing off to the west of the Mountain Road. So off we set, took a bearing, and began to bush bash. Moments later, after climbing down a cliff, we came across the track, which looked too well used, suggesting that the hut may still exist. After about 1 km passing through forest, and negotiating two small streams, we came to a clearing where the hut still stood nestled among scrub. The two storied hut was locked, but still looks to be used regularly, and was even adorned with a solar panel. A sign informed us that the hut is run by the Tongariro Tramping Club. After lunch we retraced our footsteps back to the track entrance, only to discover that it entered the bush just opposite the entrance to the Blythe track, and only metres above where we began bush bashing. Feeling a little cold we decided to leave. Back at Rangataua the sun began to shine as we said good by to Sue and Lawson and departed for home. So ended an eventful weekend, braving inclement conditions, and visiting historic sites of days gone by.

### **MANGAHUIA (WHANAHUIA RIDGE) VIA RANGIWAHIA HUT by John Phillips**

The walk originally planned for this day was Branch Track and Beehive Creek in the Pohangina Valley. Having just moved to NZ under 3 months ago, it sounded like a nice gentle resumption of my tramping career after 8 years' forced abstinence in the hot desolation of Western Australia's northern wheat-belt country. I got more than I bargained for (much to my delight) when Warren, the walk leader, presented a more exciting choice, having heard of good snowfalls on the North Island ranges within the last couple of days: a tramp up to Rangi Hut on the Whanahua Range, if the weather looked good enough on the day.

Of course, like most (West) Aussies, having never seen fresh snow before in my life, I couldn't deny such an opportunity, despite my unconfirmed state of fitness. I was assured that this was a relatively easy access route if I wanted to experience the high country under snow. So, freshly kitted out with polyprops and gumboot hikers, I set off in a group of four (Warren, Laura, Cath and myself) with anticipation on a fine day, albeit with some high cloud cover.

My first encounter with snow was quite a striking visual one as we drove up towards the set-off point of our walk. No doubt the other three watched in bemusement at my child-like reactions to this new phenomenon. The "WOW" at seeing the first small patches of snow by the roadside rapidly built up to a "WOW!" as we rounded a corner to reveal a paddock completely smothered in the stuff, some of it tossed in the air by the hooves of fleeting lambs as they scurried away from our approaching vehicle.

This pristine rural winter scene was only small comparison to what was to come. At road's end we set off walking 11 am, proceeding on a reasonably gentle climb up through the forest. The most enigmatic Christmas-like scenes confronted us at every bend, with snow-dusted berry bushes and NZ cedars. The silence was only broken by the crunch of snow underfoot and the occasional rustle as yet another lump of the stuff slid off overhanging branches,

calling on some quick manoeuvring to avoid it. Ground snow thickened as we progressed upwards and the forest thinned out to leatherwood and the occasional flax-like plant, all equally photogenic under their cold white blanket. As the scene changed to snow grass, the track levelled out and we arrived at Rangi Hut one and a half hours from the carpark. The Hut is a superb site, with uninterrupted views northwest across to Ruapehu.

After lunch, and the obligatory inaugural snowball fights (courtesy of certain other Club members who happened to be waiting at the Hut at the time), we decided to go for the main ridgeline of the Whanahua Range, about 3 hours return from the hut. This section was a real alpine delight, with broad views as we proceeded up the spur ridge to the main Whanahua ridge; the reward was breathtaking views of the main Ruahine Range to the east, blanketed in fresh snow. A quick scroggin re-fuel was had on the Mangahua summit.

We had been mindful of the weather closing in from the northwest; Ruapehu had disappeared from view and the wind was building up, so we did not hang around. My battery-operated camera was even groaning about the cold, refusing to wind on to the next frame. It was a rapid and exhilarating descent to the Hut! then a gentler pace back down through the forest, arriving at the carpark 4-30pm. Driving back out, the snow-dusted paddocks didn't seem quite as exciting as on the way in for this newcomer..."bit patchy, ay?"

The Rangi walk was an inspiring introduction for myself to winter tramping in NZ. I was at first a little bemused that people tramped up in the mountains during winter here, but now I can see why. It's fantastic that the Club provides the opportunity for newcomers like myself to discover it in the company of people who already know about local conditions.

## FOR SALE

MACPAC Cascade pack (large size), used once. Offers to Sue Pither ph. 357-3033