



PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217
PALMERSTON NORTH
NEWSLETTER
MAY 1996 Edition

Club Patron	:	Lawson Pither	357-3033
President	:	Terry Crippen	356-3588
Vice President	:	Tony Gates	357-7439
Secretary	:	Warren Wheeler	
Treasurer	:	Peter Wiles	358-6894
Membership Enquiries	:	Liz Flint	356-7654 and Warren Wheeler 356-1998
Gear Custodian	:	Mick Leyland	358-3183
Newsletter Editor	:	John Phillips	358-1874

ENQUIRES CONCERNING OVERDUE TRIPS

Mick Leyland	:	Ph. 358-3183
Terry Crippen	:	Ph. 356-3588
Sue & Lawson Pither	:	Ph. 357-3033

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 (Wednesday or Thursday) SEE DETAILS BELOW, OR RING Liz Flint (356-7654), or Lawson and Sue Pither (357-3033), or Monica (326-9691).

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. Beginners should start with Easy graded tramps.

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

THURSDAY EVENING PROGRAMME

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

Club meetings are held for all club 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 7:30 pm during winter and 7:45 pm during summer unless otherwise notified in the newsletter. The PNTMC committee meets on the first Thursday of each month.

Deadline for notices and trip reports for inclusion in newsletter: LAST THURSDAY of each month.

SCHEDULED EVENT LIST

NOTE TO TRIP LEADERS: PLEASE DISCUSS WITH THE TRIPS CONVENOR (TERRY 356-3588), 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.

MAY 11 Island Ridge (Northern Tararuas) M Derek Sharp 326-8179
Depart 7:30 am. An introductory day trip to map and compass by our navigational expert in the Mangahao valley area. We will either encircle Island Ridge or take an odd route over it. Should be back by early evening.

MAY 11-12 Graeme's Special M Graeme Roberts 357-8567
Somewhere new, somewhere different, somewhere Graeme hasn't been to yet? Contact Graeme for destination details, or just contact him for trip requirements and don't let him tell you the destination till you leave the carpark at the start of the tramp! Have a go, you may be pleasantly surprised.

MAY 16 Midweek tramping Judy Stockdale 355-5277
Depart 7:30 am. Kapakapanui Loop (Southern Tararuas). This loop lies inland from Waikanae. A pleasant medium tramp into the Kapakapanui Hut and the adjacent tops for some spectacular views of the southern Tararuas.

MAY 18-19 Triangle Hut M/F Phillip Brown 355-1389
Depart 7:00 am Saturday. This tidy DOC hut is found in the Oroua Valley, Ruahines, and can be reached from either Rangi Hut (via the tops), or from lower down the valley. Phillip hopes to go to Triangle Hut via Rangi Hut and the tussock tops on Saturday to utilise the wonderful views up there, and then exit the same way on Sunday, or down valley if transport can be arranged. A classic Ruahine tramp.

MAY 19 Roaring Stag M Malcolm Parker 357-5203
Depart 7 am. Day trip to the Ruamahanga Valley, north eastern Tararuas, in from Eketahuna. A pleasant bush walk over the hill and down to the river for lunch. Hopefully, the second DOC swing bridge will be repaired, (but you may still get wet feet).

MAY 23 Midweek tramping Phil Pearce 354-6687

MAY 25-26 Coppermine-Kumeti M A volunteer to lead?
Anyone interested in leading this one? Terry has suggested this trip which involves an overnight stay at Kiritaki Hut, possibly meeting up with Llew's group on the Sunday. Kiritaki is a "cracker" hut, with lots of firewood, good views, etc. Any offers to lead, contact Terry Crippen on 356-3588.

MAY 26 Kumeti Hut E Llew Prichard 358-2217
Depart 7:30 am. This is one of the closest huts in the Ruahines to the road end. It's a short stroll up the wide gravel river bed to the hut, a bit of an old NZFS donga really, but could form a base for an interesting walk up the valley or the end of the Maharahara track.

MAY 30 Midweek tramping Rose & Ken Hall 356-8538
(Swapped from May 9)

MAY 30 Club Night "What's Special in the Ruahines" Rose Bishop
From earthworms to bats to snails.....Palmerston North DOC Conservation Officer Rosie will be talking about the many very interesting duties she has been involved with.

QUEENS BIRTHDAY WEEKEND

JUNE 1-3 Three Peaks TNP F Terry Crippen 356-3588
Leaving 6 am Saturday. Planning to visit the peaks of Tongariro, Ngauruhoe and Te Heu Heu (the northern most Ruapehu peak) in a clockwise direction, starting from Mangatepopo. Involves camping out. We will try and find a couple of very old & now disused tracks – one of these tracks was the original route to climb Ruapehu from Waihohonu Hut. So a mixture of tramping, climbing and history, all in the company of our illustrious bearded President, makes for an interesting trip! Also a good opportunity for another look at some areas familiar to last year's Snowcraft patrons.

JUNE 1-3 Tongariro NP E/M Mick Leyland 358-3183

To be planned closer to the date. Mick is planning an easier alternative to Terry's Three Peaks trip described above, and possibly link up with Terry's party in the Waihothonu area. Bring warm clothes.

JUNE 2 Manawatu Gorge Walkway E Margaret Riordan 356-7460
Nice easy day trip, close to Palmerston North. Really good track now – excellent for an introduction to tramping in the area.

JUNE 6 Midweek tramping Russell Johnson 358-7777

JUNE 6 Committee Meeting Peter Wiles' place, 12 Jensen Street. Any non-committee members also welcome.

JUNE 8-9 Cattle Ridge M Patrick Janssen 356-3116
Postponed to 6-7 July. Details in next newsletter.

JUNE 9 Athene Walkway M Judy Callesen 357-0192
Depart 7:30 am. Near the lower Whanganui River, this is a circular route through some lovely native forest. An undulating walk along bushy ridges, with some views and, according to the Whanganui Park map, some interesting old riverbed landforms in the area.

JUNE 13 Midweek tramping Vina Cottam 354-5045

JUNE 13 Club Night "History of Women Climbers in NZ" Graham Langton. Graham is from the History Dept, Massey university. This is a slide show and talk about women climbers from 1881-1935 in what was then a very male dominated past-time. Graham will show how much contribution women made, and talk about some of the heroines of the day, such as Freda Du Faur (the first woman to climb Mt Cook) and Betsy Blunden (the first woman guide, who is still alive today).

JUNE 15-16 MacIntosh Hut E+M Tui Craven 356-4179
A range of route possibilities of different grades to this hut in the central Kawekas. Probably approaching from Lakes Road, across the MacIntosh plateau for an overnight stay in the hut. May leave PN Friday night – depending on preferences of the group.

JUNE 16 Maharahara Crossing M Warren Wheeler 356-1998
Come on the new, you-beaut, revised "Medium-rated" crossing of the southern Ruahines via Maharahara summit, with our expert guide Warren. This one has been upgraded from "Easy", having been the subject of last season's now infamous club award for "Most Persistent Trampler". Some impressive leatherwood country on the tops. Great views – if you're lucky. (Sorry, couldn't resist that one JP, Ed.)

JUNE 16 Hound hike Family Liz Morrison 357-6532
Liz has an easy walk in mind....Somewhere local, but yet to be decided.

JUNE 20 Midweek tramping Caroline Brodie 358-3588

JUNE 22-23 MID WINTER CELEBRATION Terry Crippen 356-3588
This will be held at the DOC base at Kawhatau. You can drive there, so bring plenty of luxuries. Lots of good walks in the area. Terry will be coordinating transport, and food and goodies to bring. You can arrive at Kawhatau Base anytime Saturday morning on, go for a day-tramp with Mick (see below), or just relax. There is a stove and cooking facilities, but we need gas or Tilly lamps (NOT candles). Lots of nice food wanted for the Saturday night meal. More details next newsletter, or contact Terry for info. There will be a charge for base hire.

JUNE 22 Kawhatau E/M Mick Leyland 358-3183
A tramp in conjunction with the above. We got a little lost last year, but this time PROMISE to be home before dark! (Oh, yeah yeah...it's all a dastardly trick if you ask me – JP, Ed.) ... and for those of you who missed out, there's always the planned version:

JUNE 23 MIDWINTER DIP - on the Sunday to freshen up as part of the Kawhatau midwinter celebration! Keep the tradition up – 6 of us had one last year.

JUNE 27 Midweek tramping Monica Cantwell 326-9691

JUNE 27 Club Night PHOTO COMPETITION –Refer article in Notices below.

JUNE 29-30 Rangataua open w/end All Sue & Lawson Pither 357-3033
This is always a popular trip, staying at Sue & Lawson's holiday house, and tramping around the Ohakune area. Many activities available.

If there was a perfect hut in the Ruahines, then Daphne would be it. To tramp there, we will drive over to southern Hawkes Bay, and wander across farmland to the bush, and hence the Tukituki River. It takes about 3 hours to reach the hut.

EDITORIAL

by John Phillips

Well, it's just over a year that I've been living in NZ, and hardly a year since I first ventured out tramping into the wonderful wilds this country has to offer. That first tramp was only a short day tramp up to Rangi Hut and beyond to the broad Whanahuia tops. But what made that first taste of tramping so memorable, I think, was that feeling of tramping above the snowline.

And so that time of year is beckoning again....the short days, the nippy nights, the autumn leaves in the city, the brooding heavy clouds over the ranges...

It *has* been a great summer of tramping for many in the club, whether south Island or local tramps: for me, several great tramps in the Tararuas, and a taste of Fiordland (tramping and sea kayaking – I hope to have a report next issue). But thinking back over the past year, there is something particularly unique, I have realised, about tramping in the NZ winter...to see a landscape totally transformed, blanketed in white – and oh, to avoid the mud! Then there's the 10-minute descents of mountains like Ngauruhoe...

These are the lasting impressions I have of my first winter tramping. The other impressions was just how vulnerable you can be in that environment at that time of year; whether it's being completely dis-orientated in a whiteout on the spur leading up to Kapuni Lodge... or feeling as though you are on top of the world on a magnificent day on Fanthams one minute, only to be totally clouded in in the next... and then when the chill winds blow...

This tramping club has provided the opportunity for me to discover the beauty of the NZ high country in winter but, equally importantly, the club has given the opportunity to learn how to do it in safety. The Snowcraft courses, in particular, I can *strongly* recommend to any new members who have joined the club since last winter, or to those who just didn't get around to going on previous courses. This club shares a wealth of experience about mountaineering skills in its ranks, and these skills can be learnt and used whether you are keen on mountaineering or, like myself, just want to add extra dimension to tramping, by learning a few skills to make tramping above the snowline a safe and enjoyable possibility. So come along and give Snowcraft a go!

The courses were very popular last year, so you should make an early booking if you are keen on developing the skills and experience this winter. To all of you, happy Snowcrafting! And may *the* mountain refrain from erupting this year, at least until the snow has melted. (Oh well, it was very photogenic, wasn't it?)

NOTICES

EDITORIAL NOTE

by John Phillips

Hello! from your new editor. Firstly, a correction from last month... we DO prefer articles on disc, especially if they are fairly large, or ... even better, if you have the facilities at home or at work why not "e-mail" it to me at my work address which is PHILLIPS@MWRC.GOV.T.NZ. I am editing on "Microsoft Works" software, which can convert Microsoft Word as well. If you use any other software, give me a ring on 358-1874 and I may be able to indicate whether it is compatible or not.

Please note the deadline for each month's issue on the front page of this newsletter.

LOST YOUR JERSEY??

A jersey was left at the Society of Friends Hall after Ted Smith's presentation on Thursday evening. Contact Terry (356-3588).

ROCKCLIMBING

Tuesday nights at the Massey Climbing Wall. Casual arrangements – usually from about 6.30 pm onwards. You will need a wall pass (\$30/year) or a casual night pass (\$2). Ring Andy Backhouse on 353-0774 for more info.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Time to get out those cheque books! You can retain membership with PNTMC for the princely sum of \$10.00 for students, \$30.00 (standard), and \$35.00 for a family. GREAT value for the tramping opportunities, the newsletter, cheap gear hire for tramping above the snowline, etc etc... (You can tell if you probably have not paid by looking at the year code on the bottom of the address sticker on the newsletter.)

JULY-DECEMBER 1996 TRIP CARD DETAILS

Planning for the next six months of club events (trips and club evenings) is well underway, with the yellow 6-monthly Events Card now in draft form. Terry has been trying to contact all the potential leaders for future trips. If he hasn't reached you yet, don't despair! If you are keen to commit yourself to take a Club trip to that favourite spot in the bush or mountains, be it for a day or a weekend, give him a call (356-3588) and he will gladly accept your offer(s). The Events Card, together with a copy of the club's "Guide for Trip Leaders" (especially useful if you haven't led a club trip before) will be out with the June Newsletter.

DOC 24-HOUR FREEPHONE FOR REPORTING HAZARDS

The Department of Conservation have established a 24-hour-a-day 7-day-a-week "Safety Watch" freephone. This is to encourage users to report, at no cost, actual and potential hazards they might see during their visits to National Parks, Forest Parks and all other DOC-administered conservation lands. It can be used to report problems with huts, tracks, bridges, actual or potential avalanche damage, etc.

The system is staffed by a professional answering service, and DOC staff will then follow up on any report. The freephone number is **0800 999 005** so write it down on the inside of your boot NOW.

SNOWCRAFT

Once again there will be three weekend courses this year. We have booked the MUAC hut at Turoa for July 19-21st for Snowcraft 1, Kapuni Lodge on August 3-4th for Snowcraft 2, and MTSC hut at Whakapapa on August 16-18th for Snowcraft 3. Numbers will be limited, so firm bookings will be needed soon. An excellent opportunity for new people to learn skills, whether for mountaineering or just safe tramping above the snowline, as well as an opportunity for previous snowcraft participants to brush up on your technique. Contact Andy Backhouse or Bruce van Brunt for more details.

HUT PASSES, MAPS AND BOOK ORDERS

PNTMC continually orders these for club members, as bulk buying is convenient. At \$40, a hut pass is good value, and you know that the money is going back into the huts, tracks and bridges in the Ruahines. Our order will be completed early next month, so contact Alistair or Tony if you want to order one.

A map order will be put together as and when required. A good chance for a 30% discount (from FMC).

The new Bushcraft manual by the MSC (Mountain Safety Council) is now available for \$12. Orders to Terry on 356-3588.

TRANSPORT FOR ONE-WAY TRAMPS

Kevin Pemberthy and Derek Sharp have offered to be drivers for any tramps across the ranges. You can provide your own vehicle, or use Sharps' van as a pick-up.

PHOTOS FOR CLUB ALBUM

Tony is in the process of rejuvenating this, and will be busy with requests, demands, orders and grovels for photos (NB a different sort of grovelling to Nigel's efforts in the leatherwood). Please contact Tony on 357-7439. You will be suitably proud of your efforts.

SURFING THE NET

The New Zealand Alpine Club has a world wide web site for details on New Zealand mountaineering. You can find it at; <http://www.wcc.govt.nz/dir/csd/nzac/>

Also, Don French, who recently spoke to PNTMC, has his own site for route guide information at; <http://www.wcc.govt.nz/dir/csd/nzac/alpine/htm>

PHOTO COMPETITION

The Club's annual photo competition will be held on Thursday, June 27 and judged once again by John Cleland, our guest photographic expert. The rules for the competition will be as follows.

- Slides must not have been entered previously.
- All entries must be related to tramping, skiing or climbing.
- All slides must have a cross on the bottom left-hand corner of the mount for normal viewing (ie. top right-hand when loaded into the carousel).
- Limit of 3 slides per person per category, but no limit on prints.

Categories

1. Alpine (NZ) Predominately alpine scenery in NZ i.e. above bushline.
2. Scenic (NZ) Scenes of natural pictorial interest in NZ hills, coasts, etc. i.e. predominately below the snowline.
3. Natural History (NZ) NZ flora or fauna.
4. Topical (NZ) People in tramping, climbing, or skiing-related activities in NZ.

5. Overseas Alpine of Scenic Related to tramping etc. overseas.
6. Overseas People Climbers or people met while tramping, climbing overseas.

TRIP REPORTS

TITAHI BAY 11 February

After some last minute "pull-outs" five would be, to be, has been, could be rockclimbers descended on the "bay". After some inspection of wrecked cars on the shore we limbered up for our climbs on the crags around the "slab" area. We all learnt some new techniques before lunch, whereupon we were visited by Kevin P. paddling his sea kayak. We were most impressed by the manoeuvrability of said craft.

Lunch over, we set up more "top ropes" and more climbs were achieved. We rounded off the day with one person prussiking in a cave, whilst two others went for a swim and another went exploring rock pools for crabs.

Those participating were, Ron, Warren, Dale, Peter D. and Joseph.

HEREPAI AND ROARING STAG

The grand total of 17 mid week trampers recently visited the Mangatainoka area. It was a fairly medium sort of trip, on a glorious autumn day. Half of the mob splashed up to Herepai Hut and beyond to enjoy the views, while the other half visited Roaring Stag hut. Both groups met in the "witches forest" at the track junction within five minutes of each other! A memorable day trip.

GRUNTING AND LAZING IN THE TARARUAS 5-7 April, by Peter Burgess

It was with a certain amount of trepidation that we drove south through the northern Wairarapa with the wind whipping the car around on the road. If it was like this down here what was it going to be like up on the tops? After a brief stop in Pahiatua for Derek to buy some sticky buns and another in Masterton for Nigel to buy some Coke (he had forgotten to bring a water bottle), we reached the end of Upper Waingawa Road at around 9:30 am. We had noticed that the Waingawa was up and as we struggled into a strong head-wind right from the outset; none of the planned routes looked very good. The original plan had been to follow the South Mitre Stream up to Girdlestone, with other alternatives including Baldy and Mitre. The idea was to reach Dorset Ridge Hut or to bivvy/camp somewhere on the ridge and then spend the next two days exploring the Park and Waingawa rivers. Heavy rain had raised the river levels so much however, that this plan seemed doomed. On the way to Mitre Flats, we met an elderly member of the Komatua Tramping Club who informed us that we'd be lucky to get very far on the tops with the wind. We lunched at Mitre Flats Hut and, after one look at the raging South Mitre Stream, decided to go over Mitre and make for Tarn Ridge Hut. I didn't relish the prospect as I had done it a month earlier with a lighter pack (I was carrying my tent this time) and no wind and found it hard work. Just before we set off another group arrived who apparently also intended to go up Mitre and make for Tarn Ridge Hut.

I felt better than last time climbing Mitre, at least as far as the point above the bush-line where the ridge turns to the north. Derek, however, began suffering cramps before we were half way to the bush-line. He gave various excuses for this failing including not having done any exercise over the last three months, having too many late nights and (most absurd) having run up and down the stairs the previous day, high stepping, "because I was bored". A few hundred metres beyond the 1330 m bump on the ridge we looked back and saw someone who we assumed must be a member of the other party. He seemed to be considerably ahead of the rest however. Just after this we were exposed to the full force of the wind and could only concentrate on keeping our footing and struggling to make headway. Finally making it to the top of Mitre we were pretty buggered. Turning back and bivvying below the bush-line was an option. However, we decided that returning along the ridge would be as hard as continuing to Arete, so we chose that option. As each peak was reached, Brockett, Girdlestone, several unnamed bumps, I kept thinking "How am I going to do another one after this?" The wind was joined by hail like shot-gun pellets. I had put my over-trousers on by this stage, but it seemed to go straight through them. The others had to just sit down with their backs to the wind. At one stage when I caught up Nigel asked me if I was alright after my little fall. I replied "fine" and wondered 'which one?'; I had been blown over every few steps it seemed.

We finally reached Tarn Ridge Hut (which is thankfully closer to Girdlestone than it is marked on the map) between the 1435 m top and the memorial cross. It was after 6 pm and getting quite dark. We had been going for about 8½ hours. The other group never arrived. Once inside we got the fire going and stoked it up with coal until the chimney glowed red hot. I was pretty cold and had to get into my sleeping bag. The wind dropped by about 1 am.

Next morning, needless to say we slept in. Few were game for a hard-out day even though conditions were much improved. We decided to head for Arete Biv, which we reached at around 1 pm after a leisurely 3 hour stroll/scramble along Tarn Ridge and over the Waiohine Pinnacles. On the way I saw why Derek and Nigel were keen to explore the Park and Waiohine Rivers. The parts of them which can be seen from the ridge are very picturesque. As conditions seemed to be turning bad again we spent the rest of the day lazing in the hut in our sleeping bags, playing Yatzee and cards on an improvised couch and using Nigel's Thermorest as a table.

We then cooked a huge dinner which Derek refused to eat as it was too spicy. Sometime between 5 and 6 pm it started to rain.

Next morning the foul weather had returned. Our plan was to traverse Bannister and Waingawa and then cross Cow Saddle to climb Te Mara. From there we intended to try to follow the (untracked) main ridge of the Blue Range back to the road end. Fortunately the wind was not so strong and did not hinder us greatly as we reached Waingawa in good time.

Unfortunately we all managed to get thoroughly soaked. We were at Cow Saddle by 1 pm but decided to push on up rather than stop for lunch. The climb up to the junction with the track between Cow Creek and Kiriwhakapapa seemed to take forever and while we ate a quick lunch, we became cold very quickly (especially me). At this point we discussed the sensibleness of our proposed plan given the weather conditions, our state, the time, and the fact that we did not know what the going would be like. We decided that it would be wisest to either head down to Blue Range Hut and then possibly continue the ridge the following day or to the Kiriwhakapapa Road end from which we should be able to get hold of my sister (who lives in Masterton) to give us a lift. We initially decided on the Hut, but by the time we got to the turn-off a certain amount of desire to get out of the bush seemed to have crept in and so we carried on. We finally reached the road end a little after 5 pm, having walked for about 9 hours.

While resting and contemplating the walk of an hour or so to reach the nearest farm to use the phone, we were lucky to be rescued from this fate by some good Samaritans in a camper-van who had a cell-phone. They also gave us hot tea and coffee, toasted sandwiches and let us wait in the comfort of the warm van while we waited for our ride! During this wait an elderly couple arrived who had made the mistake of thinking that the track from Mikimiki was a loop and needed to get back to the other end, so we all piled into my sister's ageing Triumph (the boot tied down with string and the couple sharing the front passenger seat). The couple were so grateful they offered to take us out to our car at the Waingawa Road end.

Finally we headed back to my sister's place for tea with the car heater on full-bore. We ended up watching a video and staying the night before driving back to Palmerston North next morning.

The team were: Derek Sharp and Nigel Barrett (Chiefs), Peter Burgess (Indian).

EASTER EGGMONT

"Easter Sunday: cloud about and south of the mountain....." sounds reasonable, let's go...foolish little bunnies we turned out to be...The cloud turned out to be full of snow flakes and the going was decidedly unfriendly with fresh snow down to the Policeman on East Ridge...not only did this make for treacherous footing at times but it was obvious that further progress upwards was only for the die-hard summit psychopaths.

Since none of us was keen to admit to being so inclined we decided to pull the plug at about 2000 m – only the sacrificial Egg putting up any real resistance to this decision. The traditional ceremony of snowballing the overly optimistic leader was carried out spontaneously as we turned our chocolate lined teeth downhill.

After a brief and slippery scramble we reached the lightly snow-covered scree and leapt blindly into the void, reaching the top of the ski tow and safety fence only slightly off piste...beware of veering off to the right where there are cliffs to trip you up.

Back at the shelter for lunch, just as the place was being emptied by another party who informed us that yesterday they had gone to the top before it clagged in. "No problems, without crampons, even though it was a bit icy".... Sigh....so much for mountain weather forecasts.

Still at least we were now below the cloud, it wasn't raining, and on the way back to the Plateau Carpark could again marvel at the height that the rockfall/avalanche debris reaches as it blasts down the gully...the gully we crossed suitably briskly and with wary sideways glances uphill...and which, once clear of, we paused to ponder the longevity of the rock strewn snow remnants which lay huddled against the north side of the gully bed., resisting despite the odds...come to think of it, a bit like our trip: resisting the temptation to climb to the top...hmmm, well, maybe not...OK so, hey guys, how about Ruapehu tomorrow? Yes? No? Let's go.

The Easter snow bunnies were Peter Darragh, Ron and Garry De Rose, Markus Loelscher, Nigel Scott, and me, Warren Wheeler.

EASTER MONDAY DAY TRIP TO RUAPEHU

"Cloud lifting in the morning....." as we rounded the bend Ruapehu looked magnificent with not a cloud in the sky and fresh snow down to about 1700 m. Far out to the south-west the picture postcard cone of Eggmont taunted us after yesterday's aborted trip. By the time we had changed into tramping clothes and rubbed on sunscreen the sun was being rapidly crowded out by cloud which had materialised over the summit, spreading out in all directions. Great! No sunburn problems...(!)

We took the gently graded bulldozed track off to the left just behind the buildings at the Turoa carpark (thanks for the tip Bruce) and reached the snowline just above the Movenpick Café. We followed up the foot track to the right of the chair lift towers to the Giant Café where we stopped to put on gloves etcetera, while doing our best to avoid being scored by falling ice out of the roof-space.

Dead ahead the route to the summit was clear up the Snow Tongue onto the saddle just below the summit Tahurangi. The route up the Summit Ridge looked a bit patchy so we opted for the easy snow route. Well it was easy for me anyway...I just plodded away up the steady grade thanks to the 300 mm deep footsteps that Markus had plugged into the fresh snow, leaving ruined steps for novice Blair to cope with...sorry about that Blair.

At the saddle we regrouped in the sun to enjoy our triumph over lunch, despite a fresh chilly breeze. The scene before us was huge: a sheer drop off our perch on the crater ridge; a crevassed snow field directly below stretching out to the left: a small avalanche slid off the steep ridge slopes as I watched; straight ahead the new steep sided crater hissed steam which swirled up and around in the eddies, lightly obscuring the view – from this angle we couldn't quite see into the bottom of the crater where an island is forming; beyond the dark crater cliffs the slope rose smooth and white to Dome shelter to the left, the Cathedral Rocks to the right, and in the middle distance the central plateau with Te Heu Heu and the rest of the old crater rim on the far side of the picture. About thirty tiny figures could be seen in the vicinity of dome Shelter and the edge of the crater – from our position as distant and secret observers it looked like some occult pilgrimage to an all-powerful Fire God.

As the cold began to bite we decided to head off back down. Markus scampered over to find a way up on to the summit, which he managed without difficulty after donning crampons and wielding ice axe. Blair decided he was stuffed after “the hardest thing he has ever done...” so I headed off down with him to practise self-arrests. Unfortunately the fresh snow was too soft and we could barely bum-slide, even in the steepest spots.

We both traversed across to have a look at the summit ridge and check out the crevasses on the glacier (yup, they're looking huge Bruce – have fun next weekend). We traversed back to meet up with Markus on the Snow Tongue where Blair did a half-Derek by dropping his glove. It slid down the gully without it disappearing from sight and was easily retrieved. Contrast this with a full-Derek (q.v.).

Despite the hordes of people walking up from the Whakapapa side we had the whole south side of the mountain to ourselves. Big-Footing it down the slopes was enjoyable fun but we were somewhat mindful of the awful breaking screaming sounds that tend to follow when one's leg is caught pivoting knee-deep in snow behind hidden rocks.

We followed the other steeper track back to the car which was just below cloud base level – heavy patches of cloud stretching all around – Eggmont clagged in again. OK, so I didn't summit Tuapehu but I was close enough, we snow bunnies were more than satisfied.

We were Markus Loelscher, Blair Peterson and me, Warren wheeler.

P.S. A good way to spoil a good ice-cream is to wander around licking it while inspecting the weigh-in at the Annual Big Hunt at Ohakune....

LONGVIEW HUT April 25

Peter Carvers' group of six midweek trampers went up the Daphne track, along the tops to a lovely lunch at Longview. The weather was great and the trip was enjoyed by all.

NO BURNING ATA BURN HUT day trip, April 26

This is the story of a medium-ish day trip to Burn Hut, in the Mangahao Valley, Tararua. Seven of us followed the somewhat windy road to the middle dam, then set off under leaden skies, destination Burn Hut. Initially, the river provided rapid and easy travel, but the Mangahao gorge soon loomed ahead, forcing us into the bush, onto an obstacle course that some would call a track. It was pretty steep in places too. Presently, we made it to the leatherwood belt, and our promised views of the surrounding countryside vanished into the wet mist. We persevered over to Burn Hut, arriving at approximately lunch time for a well deserved brew. A sore knee was also attended to. During the return, the weather took a turn for the worse, trying hard to drench us under our Goretex and PVC shells. We probably got wetter, though, from splashes underfoot. Down at the river, one flooded side creek gave us the chance for a few fun and games, as the wire crossing was a tangled mess. Back into the river bed, rain chased over slippery boulders up to the cars.

Day Trippers were; Heather, Lawrence, David, Cathy, Vinny, Tony, & Al

27-28 April OTURERE-KETETAHI CUM TONGARIRO SUMMIT LOOP

After two postponements this trip finally got away, but with bad weather forecast for Sunday we wimped out at the Mangatepopo carpark, and repacked into light-weight mode for a day trip onto Tongariro via the saddle

ridge. This ridge offers a fun variation to the summit with plenty of opportunity to practise rock-climbing skills or not, depending on route.

We emerged through the cloud blanket just below the summit and soaked up the over the top views – Egmont, Ruapehu and Ngauruhoe all poking up nicely – thank you Fuji film. After lunch overlooking Central Crater and the Blue Lake we dropped down and up across to the rim of North crater, drooped off into the crater plateau and over to the crater depression itself. I dropped in to try out the echo-rama and reckon campfire operetti under a clear full moon would be absolutely magic – Next Time...

The cloud obscured the view off the edge to Ketetahi Hot Springs but we were in a patch of clear sky as we headed east across the plateau to drop down to the Ketetahi saddle and the main track. Cutting straight across Markus and I dropped up and over to the western shoreline of the Blue Lake while Blair headed for the Red Crater direct.

It was amazingly eerie skirting around the Lake where the lapping waves and fog banks rolling over a grey blue sea gave the sense that we could have been anywhere but on the top of a sleeping volcano.

Cloud also filled Central Crater, in spectacular fashion and we sidled around Red Crater on the poled (singular) route to avoid the scree and met up with Blair in swirling cloud-realm of the Gods or what.

The drizzle patches stayed away on the track back and after stopping off at the Hut to check the Forecast we decided we would head on home, holding on to the images of what we had: 8 hours of excellent alternative reality in the unique world that is Tongariro.

We were Blair Peterson, Markus Loelscher, and me, Warren Wheeler.

HAPPY DAYS IN THE HILLS

PNTMC GUIDE FOR TRIP LEADERS

(All club Members should keep this for use/reference.)

AS LEADER OF A PNTMC TRIP, YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SAFETY AND WELL BEING OF ALL THE PARTY MEMBERS. YOUR BUSHCRAFT / NAVIGATION / LEADERSHIP SKILLS MUST BE SUFFICIENT FOR THE TRIP YOU ARE LEADING.

BEFORE THE TRIP

- 1: If you cannot lead the trip, try to arrange a substitute leader and/or contact one of the Trip Convenors as soon as possible.
- 2: Collect trip sheet at club night, and contact prospective members.
- 3: Make yourself familiar with the area to be visited; ask if in doubt. Obtain permission to cross private land. Got the latest relevant map and information on tracks/routes? Party First Aid Kit?
- 4: Make sure trip members are aware of the type of trip it is, its grading, level of fitness and experienced required. Any special medical requirements? If in doubt about any prospective members ability for the trip, quiz them and/or discuss with Trip Convenor. You can decline prospective trip members if you do not think their fitness / experience is sufficient.
- 5: Inform trip members when and where the trip starts. (Usually outside Foodtown in Ferguson St).
- 6: Discuss with trip members communal and personal food and equipment required, hut passes/tickets, estimate of transport costs. Be in early to hire gear from Gear Custodian.
- 7: Ensure trip members have informed their parents/partners/flatmate to phone trip leaders home and/or the Overdue Trip Contacts if they do not return after a reasonable time. The Overdue Trip Contacts will know if there is any need for concern at this stage.
- 8: Leave written information for SEARCH & RESCUE purposes either at your home with a reliable contact (i.e.: partner/parent), or one of the Overdue Trip Contacts (Mick Leyland, 358-3183, Linda Rowan 356-4655, Sue & Lawson Pither 357-3033), or at the Palmerston North Police Station. Include: PNTMC name; Overdue Trip Contacts names/ phone No's; date and duration, grading, destination and planned route of trip; description/registration of cars, what road end parked at; list of all party members names/phone numbers; and a generous due out time/date.
- 9: On returning to Palmerston North inform whoever has the list. When using the Police Station, uplift the information sheet in person (otherwise you may get a 2 am phone call!)

ON THE TRIP

- 1: The party always travels together which means it travels at the pace of the slowest person.
- 2: Communicate clearly your objectives to all trip members.
- 3: Be aware of where each member is, and how they are going, during the trip.
- 4: Collect all hired party gear at end of trip.
- 5: Make sure all members leave the road end at the completion of the trip.
- 6: Collect and sort out transport and other moneys.

AFTER THE TRIP

- 1: Check any hired party gear and return it promptly to the Gear Custodian.
- 2: Write a trip report (delegate?) and give it to the Newsletter Editor.

Any queries about the above contact a Trips' Convenor (Terry 356-3588 or Derek 326-8178).