

PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217
PALMERSTON NORTH

NEWSLETTER

August 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 Enquires	: Liz Flint 356-7654 and Warren Wheeler 356-1998	
Trips co-ordinators	: Terry Crippen (356-3588) and Liz Flint (356-7654)	
Gear Custodian	: Mick Leyland	358-3183
Newsletter Editor	: John Philips	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.

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

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.

AUGUST 15 Midweek tramping Jill Spencer 329-8738

AUGUST 17-18 Snowcraft 3, Whakapapa I Andy Backhouse 353-0774
Bruce Van Brunt 328-4761

Prerequisite SC 2. Refer other information about the Snowcraft course in Notices below.

AUGUST 18 Chris's Special M Chris Saunders 358-4899

Details to be discussed in the next newsletter. Stay tuned.

AUGUST 20 (Tues) Interclub Quiz evening at the Pavilion, on the Square.
Organised by MTSC this time. Every year, MTSC, PNTMC, MUAC, Mountain Equipment, and Highlife get together for the interclub quizz, a fun evening for all to enjoy. Questions will be presented for the competitors to answer, and some tasks, such as pitching a tent in a certain time span. Some "volunteers" will be required for our team. Its about time that PNTMC won!

AUGUST 22 Midweek tramping Doug Wakeling 323-4127

AUGUST 24-25 Ruahine Winter Classic F/T Derek Sharp 328-8178
Derek's winter classic in the Ruahines is a tradition stretching back many years. He hopes to visit the high central tops, so crampons and ice axe are essential, as well as some Snowcraft experience, warm clothes and a fair bit of fitness and determination. Route to be decided close to the date of departure, but will probably include Rangioteatua and Teatuoparapara. A classic for the more experienced club members.

AUGUST 25 Purity Hut E/M Judy Callesen 357-0192

A wonderful winter spot, as you will probably see, touch, and smell snow up at Purity. Perched high on the slopes of the Hikurangi Range, Purity hut is reached in a few hours from the car. A steep climb in places, rewarded with great views. Muddy. These day trippers may meet up with Derek's fit trip (above).

AUGUST 29 Midweek tramping Merv Matthews 357-2858

AUGUST 29 Club night: BYO slides, videos, prints and yarns.
This is a chance to share your exploits with friends. There may be a few snapshots of Snowcraft, the Ruahines and Tararuas, and maybe even the mountains of the South Island.

AUGUST 31-SEPT 1 Kime Hut M Peter Darragh 323-4498

From Otaki Forks, the graded track climbs up Judd Ridge to Field Hut (2 hours), then onto the tussock tops, and then Kime Basin and Hut (a further 2 or 3 hours). A very popular area of the Tararuas, providing possibly the easiest access onto the tussock tops. Here is your chance to climb Mt Hector in the snow. Bring your ice axe, and if you are that way inclined, your skis!

AUGUST 31-SEPT 1 Southern Crossing FE, T Leader required

The moon will still be pretty full now, and there will probably be plenty of snow and ice about, so you might get a true classic Tararua trip- a moonlit tramp on the tops. Tracks are well marked (and worn) low down, and huts are well used. The newly renovated Alpha Hut will be nice to see. Great views of Wellington and environs, and the southern Tararuas.

SEPT 1 Field Hut E/M Dave Larsen 329-8054

This is a day trip to meet up with the Kime Hut trip as they descend. Good tracks, but old huts; in fact Field hut was made in 1920 by totara logs possibly 1000 years old cut out of the forest- it is an historic place. Springtime, well nearly.

SEPT 5 Midweek tramping David Warnock 357-4140

SEPT 5 Committee Meeting

Please dont forget, all you dedicated committee members. Apologies accepted if necessary though.

SEPT 7-8 Pouaki, Egmont M Malcolm Parker 357-5203

Located on the northern slopes of Taranaki, the Pouakai Range provides an interesting place to tramp, with magnificent views of the big mountain. Pleasant tramping on tracks, and a chance of climbing up to the snow if conditions permit. Departure time to be advised.

SEPT 8 Tunipo, Ngamoko Range M Dale Lockart 359-2922

Longer days now, but softer snow on trips like this could make for hard work. It's a pleasant local tramp onto the tops, and, with good spring weather, good views are promised. Be prepared for snow travel. Departure time to be advised.

SEPT 12 Midweek tramping Cath Lyttle 329-8608

SEPT 12 Club Night: SAR and First Aid by Travers Moffitt.

Travers is a local paramedic, and with his interest in the hills, he has been involved with numerous Search and Rescue operations. Essential listening.

SEPT 14-15 Whangaehu, climbing F, T Nigel Barrett 326-8847

Whangaehu Hut is located overlooking the Desert Road, and provides good accomodation for those wanting to experience Ruapehu at its best. September can be a great time to look for some steep ice to climb, plod up some snow slopes, and further your snowcraft experiences. Beware of exploding volcanoes! The leader here is quite a character, who promises to provide an interesting cuisine, and may entertain the troops with his (attempts at) poetry. Depart Sat AM, early. Ask Nigel.

SEPT 15 Rangi snowplay E+M Tony Gates 357-7439

Rangi Hut is located on the tussock tops of the western Ruahines. It is a popular day trip just to see the countryside and relax in the hut, but with Tony, you will get a chance to go for a cross country ski. Crampons and ice axe may be required. [...and ski poles, unless supplied! - Ed.] Depart Sat. 8.00 AM.

SEPT 19 Thursday day trippers John Rockell 358-3513

SEPT 21-22 Gold Creek E/M Graeme Roberts 357-8567

Located in the north eastern Ruahines in from Ongaonga, Gold Creek and Hut are easily reached in 5 hours. Great beech forest. Depart Sat AM

SEPT 22 Sunrise-Waipawa loop M Warren Wheeler 356-1998
Sunrise Hut is a popular spot, and provides easy access to the tops of the north Eastern Ruahines. And the top of TeAtuoparapara, at 1687 metres is a great spot for views of much of the Ruahines. A fairly strenuous climb to the top, then descent south to Waipawa Saddle, and down the wide open Waipawa River. Come prepared for snow and ice. Depart early Saturday.

SEPT 26 Thursday day trippers Phil Pearce 354-6687

SEPT 26 Club night: Climbing in Bolivia Andy Backhouse
The club's very own resident mountaineer, Andy Backhouse, will be talking tonight on his travels into the Andean mountains in Bolivia.

EDITORIAL

Well I can't believe its August already - those who savour the joys of tramping in winter should be well into it by now. Having looked forward to winter with anticipation, I've realised it is suddenly getting away from me. Apart from a cracker of a trip into Waikamaka Hut under full snow on the Queen's Birthday weekend, I just haven't managed to get back into the hills with one thing and another. If you're in a similar situation you may, like me, be getting somewhat restless, finding it difficult to settle down to getting on with everyday things in life. It seems to me that these outdoor experiences are necessary to retain one's sanity in life, to raise the mind above the humdrum. Rolling into work on a Monday morning has a vastly different feel to it after an exhilarating weekend out in the snow.

Actually I have had some worthwhile reasons to be 'deprived' of late, one of them being a recent weekend outdoor first-aid course run by the Manawatu branch of the Mountain Safety Council. I see that another course could eventuate later this year (see notice in this issue). I would highly recommend this course to anyone, especially if you're just not confident or aware of what to do in a medical emergency, as I had always been before doing the course. In particular I enjoyed the 'scenarios', where we were sent out into the bush (including after dark) to discover faking 'victims' in various states of ill-health! I found this very effective for focusing one's observation and decision-making skills, where the first-aid theory from the lectures was put into action.

There was one particularly funny scenario during the course that had some of us really fooled. A 'victim' was found lying down on a stream bank, gasping for breath and in a well simulated state of pain. He spluttered that he had been trying to cross the stream. As we immediately commenced our diagnosis/prognosis, he then started to rave on about his 'mate' (who had supposedly been crossing with him) was missing, probably swept downstream. Now, we knew damn well that this guy had been 'planted' on his own for this scenario, so we politely ignored his mutterings for fear of questioning his sanity. I was almost driven to tell him to 'shut-up' until, after copious prompting from our course instructor, two of us walked a few yards downstream where we were amazed to find a second 'victim' jammed under a branch in the creek - the 'victim' was a plastic dummy of the kind used for CPR instruction. A dastardly trick indeed! Of course, after being unsuccessful at resuscitating this second victim, we then had to go back and inform the first victim of his mate's death, which wrought further simulations of distress. Black humour aside though, it was a useful reminder not to take anything for granted in emergency situations!

Anyway, back with the winter tramping . . . I see a window of opportunity coming this weekend to finally head up into the snow again. Happy snow-tramping all, and fingers crossed for the weather!

NOTICES

TRIP REPORTS AND OTHER NEWSLETTER ARTICLES!

To all of you who would like to contribute articles to this newsletter, small articles are okay hand-written (deliver to John Phillips, 87 Victoria Avenue), but it makes the editor's job a bit easier if larger articles are on disc. Even better, if you have the facilities at home or at work, why not "e-mail" it to me at my work e-mail address which is PHILLIPS@MWRC.GOVN.Z. 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 357-9009(work) or 358-1874(home) 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 the newsletter.
[P.S. Has anyone considered writing a 'guest' editorial? Anyone is welcome to.]

GEAR AMNESTY PARTIALLY SUCCESSFUL

Some items have been successfully returned under the recent gear amnesty, but there still remain a number of missing items. Among other things, a number of the club's karabiners are conspicuously absent. Can those who have hired/borrowed any club gear over the past year please check your sheds/closets/dusty corners in case you have forgotten to return anything. This matter is particularly important for the club, because we are currently going through a process of re-stocking club supplies with new purchases. This is proving to be a big drain on club funds, so the amount of gear we can buy is limited, so some items may have to be foregone. Please don't make us spend valuable money on items which the club may already have - even one bit of gear returned from the odd member may add up to significant savings for the club, which we can then put into more important new acquisitions.

NEW CLUB GEAR

The club has just purchased some more equipment, with the help of a 1:1 subsidy from the Hillary Commission for Sport Fitness and Leisure. The gear is: two climbing ropes and two alpine hammers. The replacement cost of these items is quite significant, and use of the ropes need to be controlled for safety reasons. For these reasons, and for the maximum benefit of the club, these ropes and hammers are (for the first year or so) only for use on scheduled club instruction courses. Also a log book will be kept to record each rope's use.

GEAR AUCTION: ADVANCE NOTICE

The club night of 14th November (down as TBA on the events card) will be a gear auction. How about dragging all those items of tramping and climbing gear out that you don't need now? (A small percentage of the auction price will go to the club to purchase more gear). Also do you know a professional auctioneer to run the auction to make it an exciting evening? If so let Mick or Terry know.

NEW MEMBERS

A big welcome to two new club members:

Anne Cantrick
c/o 859 Main St, P.N.
Phone 357-9663

Kristin Stokes
39 Manuka St, P.N.
Phone 355-3251

WELLINGTON DOC PLAN

DOC Conservation Management Strategy for the Wellington Conservancy is out now, and a complimentary copy has been forwarded to the club for our information. These extensive documents dictate DOC future policy. It makes for interesting reading, and will prove to be a valuable reference document. If you wish to view them, contact Terry or a Committee member.

CLUB PHOTOGRAPH ALBUM

The Club Committee is progressing well with the club Photo Album, but still requires club member input. All Photos considered. Contact a committee member. Donations gratefully received.

CALENDARS

The club's annual order of Alpine and Antarctic Calendars should be ready by the time you are reading this. It is expected that they will be of the usual high standard. Price to be advised. Contact Tony or a Committee member if you have ordered one, or require one.

POISON IN THE HILLS

DOC and the Regional Councils are once again baiting possums in the Tararuas. All points of public access are well signposted, but everyone tramping in the area needs to be aware of the little green 1080 pellets.

FOR SALE

Adventure "Shadow 2000" 2-person tent, suitable for backpackers or cyclists. Double aluminium-hoop-style double-skin tent. Lightweight (2.6kg), with storage front & rear. Brand new (unwanted gift). Normal retail \$360, will accept \$250. Phone 354-2341

FIRST AID COURSE

Following the highly successful course attended by 6 club members last month, a similar course may be organised, probably Nov 2-3 or 16-17, to follow up on Travers Moffitt's First aid and SAR talk at the September 12 club night. The course will need sufficient numbers to eventuate. Interested people can contact NZMSC instructor Cheryl Wright (phone 358-3300 or 025 416-585) to give an idea of numbers interested. Cost \$75 probably.

A NOTE OF THANKS from the President

Due to family commitments, Linda Rowan has stepped down from her role as one of our three SAR contacts. (As well as attending SAR meetings, these SAR contacts are the people who the police contact when any search is initiated, and who then organize search team(s) of experienced and trained club members. Mick and Warren will continue this role). Thank you Linda for your work. Linda will still contribute to PNTMC's activities at times, eg helping with the navigation training later on in the year.

WEATHER INFORMATION AND FORECASTS

Don't forget: getting the most up to date info on the Wx (weather) is essential for all trips. Start looking at the Wx maps in the paper or on TV a few days in advance to see the changes in the situation. Also make use of the Long Range (5 day) forecast on the National Programme radio: each day about 12:35 just after the news. For those "crack of dawn starters" there is the detailed situation and forecast at 5:30 am. Also there is the National Programme Mountain Wx forecast after the news 1 pm in the afternoon. Phone numbers (24 hour) that are useful are: Mountain Wx forecast 0900 999 66; Ski field area Wx forecast 0900 999 06.

BOOK REVIEWS by Tony Gates

"Arawata Bill" The story of legendary gold prospector William James O'Leary, by Ian Doughty (1996). From the series "New Zealand Lives", Exisle Publishing, Auckland

This is an irresistible little paperback that will be valuable for historical reference as much as tramping and general interest. Trampers and mountaineers like us can but follow in Arawata Bill's footsteps if we go to "his patch" of South Westland- North West Otago (the Hollyford, Cascade, Arawata, Haast, Wanaka, and Dart catchments). He was the grand master of rugged trans-alpine trips (with his horse!) that we could never hope to emulate, even today with our modern equipment. This is the story of a human legend of New Zealand.

Seventeen delightful chapters of his life cover from the late 1870's (when he was in his teens) till the late 1940's (well into his 70's). Titles such as "Passes and Prospecting", "Pigeons and Porridge", "Miners and Mossies", "Gumboots and Glaciers", and "Glenorchy and Gold" lead the reader into the life and times of this character. They are all professionally referenced, and there is an extensive bibliography from official and unofficial records, newspapers and periodicals, books and pamphlets, interviews and correspondence, and audio recordings. Illustrations are as best as possible, with the assistance of the Alexander Turnbull Library, with old black and white photos of the real thing, (note the famous cover photos by Thelma Kent of Arawata Bill with his horse Dolly about 1937, who apparently was of similar character to her rider except in the presence of a stallion). There is also a section of modern day colour photographs, and two brief maps.

Arawata Bill was a gold prospector, ferryman, road worker, cowboy (ie milked the family cow) and, primarily, a bushman. He was never far from the bush, and consequently he was exceptionally adept at living, working, travelling, and surviving in the bush. The author skillfully describes Arawata Bill's renown physical strength and stamina, and his generosity and decency. He would always offer fellow travellers food and a brew, and gathering vegetables and fruit from his garden, even making apple pie. His bush clothes consisted of a three piece suit and thigh gumboots, accomodation was often a cave or a brush mai mai, and food supplies included native birds, and a camp oven full of porridge, cooked in the morning, then nibbled on cold whenever he was hungry during the day. He loved cake and chocolate, and was known to refuse whiskey in preference for the latter. He also enjoyed baby food, probably due to convenience, after his teeth fell out. It is of interest to note that Arawata Bill never met Charlie Douglas, who was exploring the area 20 years earlier. And whilst Douglas kept meticulous diaries and illustrations, and named many places, Arawata Bill never did. Arawata Bill never married, never gambled, swore, drank, or smoked, and was unfailingly honest and courteous. He was well known by his sayings "By Christmas I'm wet", "Oh golly" (accompanied by a hand clap), then later in life, by his white beard and apt name of Father Christmas. But by then, the name "Arawata Bill" had stuck so well that few even knew his real name. His best documented routine was of wintering over at Lake Wakatipu during the 30's, then going back home to the bush from spring to autumn. Late in life, in Queenstown and Dunedin, he was fairly well known. They say he was addicted to walking till death, and pined for the hills till the end. For more than 40 years, Arawata Bill had 'his patch' largely to himself, prospecting for gold, rubies, and shipwrecks, and finding very little. Interest in mountaineering and mining in the late 1930's meant that many people would encounter this old character, and so the legend was born, placing him beyond mere local celebrity. He was never seen as anyone of particular note until Fortune magazine, of London, published a somewhat glamorous account in 1948 of his gold prospecting in the rugged mountains. Then, several years after his death, the well known poet Dennis Glover met John Pascoe (of mountaineering fame) who had just followed some of Arawata Bill's footsteps, and wrote a series of poems about his life. The legend has continued to grow basically on its own strength.

The final words answer the question "why". You can escape the mossies in the mountains, and the discomforts of city life, you may find gold, and relish the healthy existence. Arawata Bill simply loved the bush and mountains.

"The Mountains of New Zealand", by Rodney Hewitt and Mavis Davidson (1954). Reed, Wellington. (NB: Hewitt was one of those lucky people to meet Arawata Bill)

This is a methodical route guide and description of its namesake. It is a coffee table book with good quality black and white photographs, and is a pleasant read. Some descriptions remain applicable today, and this may in fact be the most recent, possibly only literature on some areas. Approximately one third of its 127 pages are devoted to the North Island (including the Auckland Ranges!), then right throughout the Southern Alps.

I once read a book review about similar literature that considered this type of book was published approximately once every ten years. The last one was Hugh Logans' "Great Peaks of New Zealand" (1991), and before that, Peter Radcliffes' "Land of Mountains" (1979).

And now for something completely different...

A MAP(!) REVIEW (once again by yours truly, Mr Tony Gates)

"Fantasy Land" (otherwise known as D 40)

A new 260 series map from DOSLI is out and about now, D 40, or "Milford". It is an absolutely awesome piece of dirt, (well probably more rock), with a bit of ice, and quite a lot of water. Contours are often pressed closely together! Milford Sound is in the middle, The Hollyford Valley, Routeburn, and the mighty Darran Mountains are on the right, and the bottom left descends into the depths of Fiordland. This is fantasy land for any good mountaineer.

Fiordland is an enormous place, and will probably not be completely covered by 260 series maps for several years. It will probably absorb at least 20 maps!

TRIP REPORTS

BLUE RANGE May 26

This was Lesley Findlay's M T & S C trip which she was unable to lead. So yours truly took everyone to Blue Range where the weather had rewarded us with huge dumps of snow. With a lovely blue sky the tramp in the snow was fabulous and enjoyed by all.

We were Liz Flint, Arthur Flint, Richard Flint, Sandra Collins, Lorraine Sutherland, and Sue Tui.

WAIKAMAKA WINTER June 1/2 by John Phillips

This was not a scheduled club trip, but was a long weekend trip I had planned with a club member and a workmate, which only partly eventuated. Sound worthwhile so far?! It was intended to be a Ruahine Range crossing. I'd heard a lot of nice things about Waterfall Hut, so we decided on a Purity/Waterfall/Waipawa-Saddle route. We reversed this after the Friday evening's weather broadcast (which predicted fine weather later, rather than earlier, on the long weekend) because we needed a good day for the Iron Peg leg (whoops) to complete the crossing. So three of us set out from the Sunrise carpark around midday Saturday in the full knowledge that we were sacrificing

the first day or two in murky weather for the sake of a good finish to complete the crossing. This apparent preparedness-for-the-worst was still insufficient to prepare us fully for what lay ahead.

The constant drizzle through the forest to the Waipawa River was no surprise, nor was the rising river at the Forks hut crossing. But as we gained height up the valley, rain turned to sleet, and it wasn't long before it lightened to drifting snowflakes at the last scree slope before climbing towards the Saddle. Buzz and Ramon began muttering things about the temperature and the snow; I was feeling quite chuffed at my over-cautiousness at this stage, having decked out in full polyprops and waterproof gear right from the carpark. To be frank, I was too delighted at what was happening to really notice their comments about the cold. An idyllic winter scene lay around us - snow falling steadily, with hardly a breath of wind at this stage. The leatherwood bushes and mountain flax were soon dusted with an ice-sugary coating, and the bright clothing of my fellow trampers became all the more striking against the surrounding landscape as it was transformed into a white "winter wonderland" within the space of half an hour. I felt ecstatic that I should be in the middle of this on my first winter tramp for the year.

We were only heading for Waikamaka Hut that night, but we felt compelled to keep up the pace as the others were feeling the cold. The full implication of the weather struck us on reaching Waipawa Saddle, where a cutting icy wind was funneling up from the south. Sighting the descent route below, we set off into the driving snow, scrambling down some steep slopes to reach the stream that led on down to Waikamaka Hut. The stream was fairly high for such a small one, and some feet became wet with the inevitable stream criss-crossing. It was a very cold descent to the hut for Buzz and Ramon. (I was still feeling chuffed at this stage because of another piece of newly-acquired clothing in my armoury against the weather - a new pair of calf-length "Sealskin" waterproof socks.)

By 4 pm we arrived at the hut now blanketed in snow, a bench seat outside indicating that about an inch had fallen. Buzz got straight into a sleeping bag and had to stay there for some time; two hours later he still had cold feet. Ramon was admirably persistent at lighting the pot-belly, and we had a good source of warmth within half-an-hour or so. I ventured out to fill a few pots with water. The cold had been uncomfortable rather than hypothermic or anything like that, but it was nevertheless an occasion that remain stamped on your mind afterwards. After a good hot meal we turned in before 8 pm.

Given yesterday's ordeal, and the sub-zero morning temperatures, and the short tramp ahead of us the next day (to Waterfall Hut), we felt as though we deserved an indulgent sleep-in the next morning. We ventured out of sleeping bags at 10.30 am to discover the washwater in the cooking pots completely frozen over. Outside, the bench seat "snow gauge" now had a 6-inch layer of snow. The weather was still murky, and Ramon and Buzz began to wonder whether they were up to handling such conditions for another two days, particularly with more stream-wading likely before and after Waterfall Hut. I was keen to at least try Waterfall Hut, but a group decision was made to go back to the carpark that day. So we ripped frozen packs off the hut floor and massaged solid boots onto our feet for the return journey, setting off before 1 pm.

The walk back up the stream to Waipawa Saddle was more pleasant than the previous afternoon. The flow had dropped enough to keep most feet dryish, and the weather eased a little as we climbed the Saddle. En route we marveled at the many fantastic ice formations created overnight on the rocks, waterfalls and in the stream bed. With feet a little warmer, the pleasant crunch of fresh snow underfoot made for an enjoyable return. We noticed snow even as far down as Waipawa Forks Hut.

I will always remember the following Monday back in Palmerston North as "the day that could have been"! Looking north along the ranges from the hill behind Massey, it was a magnificent day with clear-blue cloudless sky and the Ruahines plastered in fresh snow right down to the farmland. The snow might have been a bit deep, but it could have been a magnificent day to have been up on the tops. Perhaps another time.

THURSDAY TRAMPING June 6

During the month of May the Thursday trampers have been to Mt Thompson, Kapakapanui, Kawhatau, Rimutaka Incline, and an exciting trip to Forks via Te Ekaou. We elected to use Judy Callesen's and Bev Akers' vehicles and went up the farm track. Whilst we were away it rained - mud on a papa base do not make for good vehicle passage for even 4-wheel drives. A lesson was learned here. We will now not take 4-wheel drives any further than we would take a car. After all, we are TRAMPERS and we get from A to B via our feet. But it was a good team building exercise, very social, and all vehicles and persons returned safely. I emphasise SOCIAL because I believe this is the strength of Thursdays tramping. What a lovely bunch of people to tramp with.

ATENE WALKWAY June 9 by Judy Callesen

You don't want to be put off by the weather forecast. We had very pleasant conditions on the Atene Walkway - one by one the longjohns came off as we did the big climb first. By the first trig it was just the summer T-shirt and shorts, no wind, lovely views and easy underfoot conditions. If we hadn't had so many snack stops we may have made the shelter before the sun shower.

We all enjoyed a pleasant five-and-a-half-hour tramp. We were Heather and Laurence Gatehouse, Neil Campbell, Caroline Brodie, Monica Cantwell, Judy and Peter Stockdale, and Judy Callesen.

MIDWEEK OVERNIGHTER AT MITRE FLATS HUT July 3/4 by Judy Callesen

What a noisy lot of trampers chattering half the night, the excitement of large snowflakes falling in the moonlight. Around 2am one after the other a visit to the longdrop and before the sun came up the earlybirds were up making tea and porridge. Not much sleep for the first timers staying in a trampers hut. One had a brand new Warehouse pack especially for this tramp - we had to keep it on his back with a screwdriver. I think he got a refund after the weekend.

Our original intentions were to go to Waitewaewae Hut, but changed to Mitre Flats after hearing the weather forecast the day before. After breakfast on the Thursday most of us wanted more exercise so it was a climb up towards Mitre until the snow got too deep. The others watched the snow falling from inside the warm hut.

A lot of fun was had by all, even in the cold southerly temperatures. We were Judy Stockdale, David Ross, Peter Carver, Caroline Brodie, Neville Gray, Bev Akers, Keith Dommett, Phil Pearce, Neil Gutry, Liz Flint, and Judy Callesen.

FOREST HILL STREAM July 7 by Monica Cantwell

We met at 9:30 am at Dennis' house in Forest Hill Road, and set out tramping quarter of an hour later in misty cold weather. One member was not present with us as Dennis had received a leaflet

on laying 1080 poison in the Region; so Rosemary the "Lab" did not get in her tramping as promised, and was confined to the car.

We took the right arm of a steep car for some half to three quarters of an hour. After passing the lake Dennis decided to take a dip down to the stream. This was a bit tough going so came up again onto the road for 10 minutes or so. We then branched off into the little stream. This was the most amazing trip I had been on for some time. All the years of tramping in this area (since the pines were first planted) I had never imagined this area was ever here; lovely little stream, small waterfalls from the sides, & the most wonderful native bush-clad hills either side, twice opening out into a lovely grassy area (nice place for a camp). This all ended too short in one and a half hours when we came out on the left side of the main track. A nice cup of tea was made for us at Dennis and Glenda's place, where we discovered that Glenda, Sally and Tony's wife Yvonne had come to meet us. Unfortunately they had taken the right track and missed us. A permit must be obtained to visit this area.

We were Tony Gates, Neil Campbell, John McCallum, Monica Cantwell & leader Dennis Moore.

P.S. We certainly will do this again. Can be made longer by 3 hours by going to the top dam on North Range Road, thus doing a round trip.

Thought: When in charge, meditate
 When in doubt, mumble
 When in difficulty, delegate

THE WEATHER FORECAST IS NOT ALWAYS CORRECT AT SUNRISE HUT July 13/
14 by Tony Gates

It was a semi-miserable weather forecast. But we are eternal optimists anyway, so five of us blatted up to Sunrise Hut, hopefully for a weekend in a luxury hut, with a bit of skiing and cramponing for fun. Under the right conditions, it would be a good location for that.

Three vans and six cars at the carpark! The weather was only semi-promising as we left the car, the sort of weather you can never decide if you need to wear the parka or not. However, it was a pleasant stroll up to the hut, and for those who had never been there, interesting to zig zag up through the mountain beech then suddenly pop out at "Buttercup hollow" where the hut is located.

The hut was bustling with Christmas feast activity, being the annual mid winter dinner for the Turitea Rod Rifle and Gun Club. They claimed the bunks, we the floor, luckily there were plenty of mattresses. Their celebrations included gifts from Mother Christmas, Carols (terrible singing), and just heaps of food and wine. But first, some of them went over to Top Maropea, enjoying brilliant weather, and those of us sitting in the hut knew nothing of this, it was thick mist there. Three of us blatted out late in the day to find clear, though overcast weather, and carve rough ski trails in the slush at Armstrong Saddle. Better than nothing I guess. Damned weather forecast.

Our meagre offerings for dinner were quite sufficient for us, only pathetic in comparison to what the others produced. But they had so much that there were plenty of left overs. You should have seen them try to squeeze in the steamed pudding with brandy sauce and cream- there was heaps of it left over for the scavengers (too much even for us).

Rumblings from the bunks began at about 6.30 AM. We five were up shortly thereafter, and tried to shut them up with a few cups of tea- to no avail. Porridge was served with cream- there was only a full litre left, then we got out of their way by departing for the day, destination the tops. It was a beautiful day, and we were in the best place to enjoy it. Peter B wandered up to 1499 for some photos (a good spot). From the turnoff to Top Maropea, we changed plans a wee bit, with Zoe and Peter G wanting a more restful day, so Peter B, Andy, and Tony continued onward and upward (actually, downward at first), to the hulking ice covered giant of TeAtuaoparapara to the south. An impressive piece of the Ruahines, partially covered with tussock, and today partially covered with snow and ice. An overgrown track dwindled into none at all, but it wasn't too bad as we pushed through the short and fairly easy band of leatherwood. Some comments about certain club members who enjoy leatherwood bashing! Shortly, we emerged out onto the steep tussock ridge, and put on crampons as the gradient and patches of ice increased. It seemed a long steep ridge to the top, perhaps because it was! From the first false summit, wide open basins of ice and sustrugi opened out to the west and south, and steep, ice encrusted erosion faces dropped away to the Waipawa River far below. Andy and Tony swapped crampons for skis for the short ridge to the summit, Peter took the much more sensible option of cramponing. The weather had turned to high overcast, but we enjoyed wonderful views of the icy Ruahine hinterland- Rangioteatua, Hikurangi Range, Mokai Patea, Mts Ruapehu (still smoking) and Taranaki, Ruahine Corner, the divide to the north, and the Kawekas way distant. Skiing was of limited quality (ie bloody hopeless), but we felt sure we were the first people ever to ski this lump of ice. Food, drink and photos on the summit, then a scratchy ski (you fall over you gets hurt) down to the false summit. Skis were sensibly swapped for crampons, which made the route down much easier and safer. I'd hate to see a person descend that ridge, or any other on the Ruahine tops in winter, without crampons. It didn't take long though, and we were knee deep in the crusty stuff, then neck deep in the leatherwood stuff. The weather was very slowly packing up, and became quite cold on the exposed ridges, as we skittered back to the main track, and back home. A much quieter hut! Lunch, the track, the car, then it was all over.

Trampers/ climbers/ skiers/ eaters were; Andy Backhouse, Zoe Hart, Tony Gates, Peter Gates, and Peter Burgess.

SHORTS-TOKA LOOP

July 14

by Graham Peters

The advantage of a good clean-living, God-fearing viceless lifestyle is that when you organise a day tramp, no matter how bad the weather has been, how bad the weather forecast says it will be, the day will dawn clear and sunny for you. This is as it was for us on our day tramp to the Ngamoko Range - up Shorts Track, along the top to Toka and return via Knights Track.

The odd view I'd had of the Ruahines during the week prior had disclosed a decent amount of snow so when by Thursday night I'd had no takers for the tramp I wasn't disappointed. When I arrived home Friday night there was a message from T. Crippen with the names of three people keen for this short walk in the Ngamoko Range. Monica rang to say she'd come along for the walk to the bush edge but then return.

It was arranged that the two cars going would meet at the end of Umutoi Nth Rd. When Janet, Monica and myself arrived towards the road end there was some confusion as to where the road was. Logging operations had turned all the roads and tracks into indistinguishable mud tracks. We chose the best one which was someone's drive. The road went on down. The consensus was that, although rather muddy, we would be able to drive back up again. The same opinion held for the grass track through the field towards the carpark but we did chicken out of going the last 100

metres. We'd just stopped and looked around to see the second car following us. When they arrived they expressed a small amount of disquiet about our chances of driving out but we could worry about that at the end of the day. As we shouldered our packs it was calm but the sun was hidden by a high overcast. As we gained altitude we had views across to Mt Ruapehu, with a thin trail of ash drifting south, across to Mt Taranaki, and south to the Tararuas and Kapiti Island. As we cleared the bush it became apparent that there wasn't a great deal of snow around on our route. When we made the tops we were surprised to find it was dead calm. In light of the good conditions Monica decided to carry on with the rest of us. We had a quick snack before wandering on to Toka for lunch. As we walked along we had good views over low cloud covering a lot of Hawkes Bay. At lunch on Toka a bit of a breeze came up and with the air temperature at 4 degrees it was quite chilling but when we started heading down Knights Track we were out of the wind again. As we covered the last few hundred metres to the cars it started raining - fortunately the Jeremiahs amongst the team were proven wrong when we had no problems getting the cars back up to the unmuddy road.

A day trip I thoroughly enjoyed with Monica Cantwell, Janet Wilson, Laurence Gatehouse, Warren Soutle, and Dave Larsen.

SNOWCRAFT I

July 19-21

by Judy Stockdale

After sorting our gear, and organizing cooking groups and instruction groups and generally getting to know each other the Tuesday before, we met on Friday night and drove up to Mt Taranaki and Kanini Hut. We bunked in in comparative luxury, showers and electricity much appreciated.

We were up and at it fairly early with breakfast over and on the trail about 7:30 am. By 9:30 we reached Kapuni Lodge, and settled in, then got ready for our first outdoor session. Snow was still some distance from the hut, so we set off in four groups of 4 or 5, and each group found their gully to practise on. We practised arrests without ice-axe, then with ice-axe in every possible starting position. We cut steps, and practised single traverses, parallel traverses, straight up, straight down. Thoroughly drenched we headed back to the hut about 3:30 p.m.

After tea and nibbles, we sat down to the first of the indoor instruction sessions. Informative talks and bull sessions on gear and equipment, rope knots, risk management occupied us before our evening meal, then weather, first aid, mountain radios after.

During the night, the wind came up and the weather turned nasty, and it was a relief to all that the morning outdoor session was cancelled. Instead we perfected our knots, and our able instructors further increased our knowledge with talks and demonstrations on fitness and body fuels, survival kits and emergency shelters (who will ever forget Terry and his orange two-man body bag puppet show). We learned that one should avoid being geographically embarrassed, and hope that some of the skills and information we picked up will ensure we don't.

True to form, as we were packing up, and departing down the long staircase to the car park, the cloud lifted, and the sun shone briefly to show the mountain in all its splendour. Most of us will return in two weeks to continue with Snowcraft II, and if we get one good day out of two, again we will be thankful, for the mountain always has the last word, and must always be respected.

It was unanimous that we all felt it had been a good weekend. We were well taught by competent instructors and willing teachers, and our days and nights were challenging and busy. Three cheers for the organizing team, Andy and Bruce, and instructors, Andy, Barry, Terry, and Rosie.

We were, Neil, Sarah, Wayne, Dave, Heather, Lawrence, Magda, Kristin, Lynn, Dave, Ramond, and Judy.

MITRE FLATS / MITRE PEAK July 27/28

by Nick Pringle

With a reasonably early start the four of us plus the dog headed towards the Wairarapa where we would stop at Mt Bruce Bird Sanctuary. After spending about an hour there we drove on in light drizzle to 'The Pines' on the Waingawa River, the beginning of our venture up the track to Mitre Flats Hut. Tahley the dog certainly enjoyed the challenge of her new terrain as we each negotiated our way over the endless tree roots on the track. About three hours later we arrived at the roomy hut, and took a well earned rest. After an early tea and a game of cards we called it a day. Two rats kept some of us awake as they gnawed their way into the wall of the hut, neither making any progress. The rain seemed to get a bit heavier.

The next day the sun was out and it was a relatively early start as we ventured up to Mitre Peak. A well formed track makes the route up to the snowline worth the climb, and once at the snow the sun's heat beat down on us. Tahley and Jo make a turn back down to the hut while the rest of us continued on up to the top of Mitre.

The snow was soft and there was also some icy patches, but it was excellent conditions for the climb, with the sun shining and no wind. There was some cloud about, but not enough to stop us from getting a view. We arrived at the top about 11.15 am and then a return trip back down to the hut, and then back out the same way we went in. Thanks to Warren for leading the trip.

The party consisted of Warren Wheeler, Jo Roberts, Patrick Janssen, Nick Pringle, and Tahley the dog.

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