

PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217
PALMERSTON NORTH

NEWSLETTER

December 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 FERGUSON 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>

DECEMBER/JANUARY NEWSLETTER

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.

* Extended summer trips

DEC 27-30 *Matemateaonga Walkway M Malcolm Parker 357-5203
The first of the club's extended trips this summer. If you are interested CONTACT MALCOLM ASAP, as bookings are closing about now!

JAN 2-11 *Kahurangi NP M/F Warren Wheeler 356-1998
The second of the club's extended summer trips. Once again, if you are interested CONTACT WARREN ASAP, as bookings are nearly closed.

JAN 4-5 Tararua N-S traverse FE Derek Sharp 326-8178
Contact Derek *before* Christmas if you are interested in this event. Depart Friday night, EARLY start, Putara to Kaitoke non stop. If the weather is bad, we can postpone the trip to the following weekend. Those interested please come in pairs, and with necessary equipment and experience, as this tramp will NOT have a leader. Recover and return on Sunday. (*I suspect it will take a week, maybe two, to recover - Ed*).

JAN 11-12 Pohangina River M/F Wayne Begg 358-8546
Departs Foodtown carpark Friday evening 6.00 pm. We will try to do the full length of this popular river. Plenty of good swimming holes on the way. Nice huts.

JAN 12 Ruapae Navigation Exercise M,I Terry Crippen 356-3588
Depart 7am. A good chance to learn/practice compass, map and bushcraft skills. This is a repeat, by popular demand, of the one done late last year.

JAN 16 Midweek tramping Judy Calleson 357-0192

JAN 17- FEB 2 *Arthur's Pass F,T Terry Crippen 356-3588
CONTACT TERRY ASAP

Anniversary Weekend

JAN 18-20 Kaweka Range F Mick Leyland 358-3183
Depart 6am. This time Mick will take you to the Otutu Bush hut, west of the Manson probably via Hogget and Mt Meany, returning via Kiwi Saddle. Great country, open tops and Beech forest.

JAN 18-20 Kuripapango family-M Liz & Arthur Todd 323-6246
Departure and arrival times are flexible. Will be staying in the comfortable Robsons lodge at the south end of the Kaweka Range. Plenty of scope for all sorts of walks or tramps or just relaxing. Interesting geology and botany. A combined trip with Forest & Bird.

JAN 23 Midweek tramping

JAN 25-26 Taranaki rockclimbing T Andy Backhouse 353 0774
Dep 6.00 AM Sat. Hut accomodation to be arranged. Andy wants to explore some of the numerous rocky outcrops on this mountain, and wants to check the new guide book.

JAN 26 Diggers Hut M Mick Leyland 358-3183
Dep 8.00 AM. A good bush bashing circuit in a popular spot in the southern Ruahines.

JAN 30 Thursday trampers Pam Wilson 357-6247

JAN 30 Club Night B-B-Q Horseshoe Bend Warren Wheeler 356-1998 or Jenny and Llew Prichard 358-2217 This is the traditional start to the club nights: a good chance to catch up. Bring goodies to eat and share and swimming gear. Turn left at Tokomaru and follow the road to the reserve. From 6:30 pm on.

FEB 1-2 Waitewaewae M Toby Bunn (06) 345-8315
Depart 7 am. A relaxing tramp into the western Tararuas to the hut adjacent to the Otaki River. Good for fishing and swimming. Give Toby (in Wanganui) a call.

FEB 2 Burn Hut M Judy & Peter Stockdale 355-5277
Dep 7 am for this northern Tararua Hut. Some river travel to start with, then a brief climb, and open tops for a bit. Bring your water bottle. Hopefully, you will get some views of the Mangahao catchment.

FEB 5-6 Midweek tramping (Rangitaua) Sue & Lawson Pither 357-3033

Waitangi day

FEB 6 Waipawa Loop M Warren Wheeler 356-1998
Depart 7:30 am. A real favourite with lots of variety - plus the added attraction of alpine flowers still in bloom. This trip, in the NE Ruahines, leads up through magnificent forest to Sunrise Hut, then around the tops with views out to Hawkes Bay and Ruapehu. We then drop down a scree slope into the head of the Waipawa Stream's north branch and follow this downstream to the wide main valley. This is followed by several stream crossings as we proceed downstream through the gorge.

FEB 6 Committee meeting: first of the year

FEB 8-9 Ruahine Corner M/F Mick Leyland 358-3183
Dep 6 am Sat morning for the Mokai base, and tramp around the Ohutu Ridge- Ruahine Corner-Lake Colenso circuit. Fascinating country. Should take three days.

FEB 9 Rangi Hut E Margaret Riorden 356-7460
Depart 8:30 am. A relaxed start and a pleasant walk up to a favourite hut just above the bush edge in the Western Ruahines. Good views.

FEB 13 Midweek tramping Neville Gray 357-2768

FEB 13 Club Night: Nepal and the Himalayas Robin Ross
Robin has spent much of the past 5 years living and working in Manali in the Indian Himalayas, and takes mainly New Zealanders on trekking, mountain biking and 4WD safari adventures to Leh

will have 'weeded out' those whom he/she judges are unable to cope with the challenge of that particular tramp. I go on a tramp therefore knowing I am able to accept the challenges ahead but that the group leader will make decisions which he/she thinks are in the interests and safety of all the group with particular attention to those who may not cope well in some conditions. I have often been in a group who has turned back (particularly with swollen rivers, thick clag or severe wind) knowing that, whilst I may have got across, others in the group would not have been at all comfortable to the extent of being dangerous and foolhardy. I have tramped enough to know that there is always another time and half the fun of tramping is finally getting to a place which may have eluded me a few times before.

Thirdly, I like to enjoy my tramps. Some of my most memorable tramps are those where the weather has been absolutely lousy but great fun.

It is with a lot of concern then that I have noticed recently that many of the Search and Rescue operations have been centred on parties that have split for one reason or another and where few in the party have experienced tramping in a group such as the graded trips a tramping club can offer and ease them into. Keeping a group together is sound risk management; if you don't like it then perhaps group tramping is not for you.

It is for the above reasons, and because Thursday trampers are going further afield and have increased in numbers, that I would like to see all the Thursday trampers belong to one other of our local tramping clubs as it gives the group a feeling of safety and pleasure rather than a group of individuals with different goals on a group outing. At present I feel Thursday trampers are acting as a club without the safeguards of one. In my experience most of the rules developed by tramping clubs, such as keeping the party together, are similar, are important, have relevance and have been developed over the years using a wealth of experience, with opportunities for members of updating techniques and attending relevant courses.

NOTICES

TRIP REPORTS AND OTHER NEWSLETTER ARTICLES A note from the Editor

To all of you who would like to contribute articles to this newsletter, small articles are okay handwritten (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.

EVENTS CARD FOR JANUARY TO JUNE 1997

Its out: the events card for the first half of 1997 and is included with this newsletter. There is a wide range of graded trips being offered from easy to fitness essential, some instructional (risk management and rock), some to familiar areas such as Sunrise and TNP, some to places the club hasn't been to for years such as the Haurangi Forest Park. A good range of club nights is also being offered. Any suggestions (and of course changes - see below) regarding trips contact the Trips Convenor; Terry Crippen (356-3588) or Liz Flint (356-7654). A thank you to the people who have readily offered to lead these trips. (Some people I didn't manage to get back to regarding leading trips, thank you also)

I'm sure all club members will actively support all these trips and club nights. Don't forget to encourage flatmates, partners friends to come along as well.

IMPORTANT NOTE: A couple of dates have changed since the Events Card was printed off; the Risk Management course has swapped dates with the Orongoronga Valley walk. The Risk Management course is now on 3-4 May (contact Terry Crippen 356-3588) and the Orongoronga Valley tramp is now on 5-6 April (contact Tony Gates 357-7439).

TRIP LEADERS & PNTMC GUIDE FOR TRIP LEADERS

Also with this newsletter is a copy of the PNTMC GUIDE FOR TRIP LEADERS, this time on card so as a leader you can either pin it on your wall for planning/organize your trips or fold it and keep it with you on the trips. It lists the Club's procedues which need to be followd. It's good value also for all trip participants. As Liz's editorial mentioned tramping with a tramping club puts a number of responsibilites on the leader, and also the group members.

SPECIAL NOTE TO GROUP LEADERS from the last six months and the next six months (from the trips coordinator Terry). A thank you for leading all those trips since June and keeping me informed of changes etc. Don't forget: let me know as soon as possible if you change a trip in anyway from what it is scheduled as (eg date, place, grading, day to weekend or vice versa, can't lead it, etc). Also if you need any info on the route etc do ask.

LEAVING YOUR INTENTIONS AND THE PINK "HELP" FORM

A pink "Help" form is included with the newsletter, for leaders to use (or as a guide) when leading a trip. More are available from the trips coordinator or at club night.

Regarding leaving full information on your intentions, I had a timely reminder of this last Sunday night! (Fortunately it wasn't a club member or club trip.) Got a phone call from the Police-SAR: A flat mate of a person had phoned up concerned that this person hadn't come back from a tramp. The flatmate only knew the first name of the person (who had just moved in), the only note left was next to useless, just said "gone tramping 42 traverse tawerea house back sixish". Nothing else! Was it on his own, with a club, what part of the World, what car registration etc? We worked out that it was up in the Tongiriro Forest -the mountain bike area in from Tauwera. The police finally tracked down a phone number of a friend of this person up that way and discovered the person had arrived out OK but not bothered to phone Palmerston North.

So always make sure full details are left with a responsible person so that if a club trip is overdue and partners/flatmates/parents contact the Overdue Trips Contacts, full information can soon be obtained. And don't forget to sign off/call in once out.

NEW MEMBERS

Please welcome the following new members:

Wayne Beggs	Cheryl Wright
67 Savage Crescent	PO Box 9036
Palmerston North	Palmerston North
Phone: 358-8546	Phone: 358-3300

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Neil Campbell has changed address to 7 Milverton Ave, Palmerston North. His phone number stays the same.

A FANTASTIC SLIDE SHOW

Anna Cook, of Wanaka, presented an absolutely stunning slide show and talk to an audience recently in PN. She works as a ski and mountain guide, and runs "Hidden Himalaya", a guiding company specialising in its namesake. She began with tales of several ski trips, both private and guided, to the Indian Himalayas, then mountain bike guided tours and camel tours of the desert. It was amazing stuff, with some amazing photos.

FRUSTRATIONS

How large is your pack? Frustrated with it being too small? One club member has found a solution in the latest MACPAC travel bag, the 130 litre "Lugganaught". (A good weekend pack would be about 60 litres). This thing would completely swallow up the largest of fully laden packs, plus a couple of pairs of climbing boots, crampons, helmets and stuff. Built stylishly and to last, "The Lugganaught" will **not** be used for grovelling in the leatherwood.

TRIP REPORTS

DUNDAS RIDGE - PART II

October 26-28

by Alan (Buzz) Bee

Well, here goes - part two of the minor saga of Barry, John and Buzz the not so intrepid explorers of the Tararuas.

Before I ramble I thought I should add that I read once how the Tararuas are a series of really difficult tramping areas that aren't highly recommended. Well, I guess its each to their own. Hills are hills and mountains are mountains, and I reckon the Tararuas are great and they're in our backdoor.

Onwards. The second night was spent at Dundas Hut, a wonderful little isolated hut in the heart of the northern Tararuas - just the three of us - not another soul to be seen. Next morning was much the same as the previous, some high cloud, a bit of sun, and reasonably cool with slightly less wind but not to deny the Tararuas there was still some wind. The climb back onto the ridge from the hut seemed really tough but compared with the day before it was nothing. Nevertheless, that really tough early morning loosener makes the rest of the day ahead seem like a nightmare. Once the days done it all seems like a piece of cake, it's just a bit hard sometimes convincing yourself at 7am that it will be just that - a piece of cake.

Up on the ridge we had a magnificent view of the first half of the days trip. Logan and Mt Dundas were right in front of us, Arete in the distance slightly shrouded in low cloud. Again the day looked like a big one but we felt we had plenty of time and so off we went to tackle each peak as it came. First stop Logan and again what a view. The Mainland was again standing out to the south-west, Taranaki was quite clear with a mistier Ruapehu and Ruahines. We were in the best spot anyone could be that day. Similarly the view from Dundas. I can't say much more, it really was a fantastic scene and boy were we grateful it wasn't a more typical rough day on the Tararua tops.

By the time we got to Arete the weather had closed in and with a little bit of wandering around we found Arete Biv minus the front door. This was lunch and a chance to try out John's new supplementary one-person solid fuel cooker with some alternative fuel - tussock! Yep, it worked but in a two man biv it only takes two handfulls of damp tussock to fill the place with smoke and eight handfulls to boil a billy - lucky the door was off its hinges. Lunch over and off south to Lancaster and the Waiohine Pinnacles. Again a beautiful area, maybe even more so to wander through the jutting knobs and pointed rock spires of the pinnacles with the mist allowing just brief

but wonderful glimpses of the outcrops. Things cleared up for a bit and we took in a breathtaking view of the upper Waiohine which surprisingly is quite a wide almost glacial looking valley especially in comparison to all the other steep gully-like headwater areas.

Tarn Ridge was next and another pit stop near the old Tarn Ridge Hut site before we trudged on with one (supposedly) more climb to go. Seem to remember there was more than one climb and the last one was pretty steep. Near the top was the large wooden cross marking the spot where a Mr Blanchford had died while tramping. I bet there have been many people that have sat or just stopped and stared at the cross and empathised with the poor man and hoped the top wasn't too far off. Blanchford Hut (replacing Tarn Ridge) was just over the crest snuggled in a fold overhanging a steep drop into the Waingawa headwaters.

This was a wonderfully new and extraordinarily large hut and again we were the only overnight residents. Still no other huts had been seen on the trail. Meal by Buzz tonight - a very healthy pasta dish with fresh vege. Nice view out the loo as well in the morning and no it wasn't 'cause of the meal the night before!

What with a great tea the night before and no snorers in the hut it made for a trio of pretty chirpy trampers the next morning, especially since we thought we were doing pretty good with the tramp (no heros here, just typical plodders). And what about the day?!! ...puffy light cloud to the north and beautiful clear skies over Girdlestone, Brockett and Mitre. Still a bit of wind but not enough to be a typical Tararua day, this was going to be a great day.

Straight out of the hut and up the hill (What's new? Perhaps this *was* a typical Tararua day.) First peak Girdlestone, a small snack, drink, a few photos and then on to Brockett and the climb onto Mitre - quite steep in places, hands and feet all in action together. More pictures on the top and then off on the downhill. Now this was somewhat unreal. After almost three days of ups and downs and more of the ups, here was the result - five kms of downhill with about a 1200m fall. All the way down (perhaps not all the way) all I could think of was what a hell of a trip it would be to have to go up the track we were lucky enough to be going down. Down from the tussock, onto the scree, into the bush, through the forest and out into the river - beautiful. What's more the wind was nil on this side of the hills and the sun was shining - coats off, T shirts on - much more comfortable.

Mitre Flats hut for lunch. Toasted buns in the gas grills topped with roast pork - not too bad for a day three lunch. Time to take the boots off and cool them in the Waingawa and generally take a break before the walk out to the Pines. This part of the tramp was really nice and a great easy walk - if you're not in a hurry - for those who love the forest and bush and the beautiful, bubbly little streams, every one of which be photo opportunity. Needless to say I dragged along in the rear taking the odd photo or so getting somewhat frustrated in the thought that the next stream might be better than the one I was currently opening the shutter on. Ended up with a few good ones, maybe not world beaters, but still pretty good (no modesty intended). Finally caught up with John and then Barry at the edge of the bush. As Barry reads this he will wander out to the garage and biff out the boots he swore that he would biff out (several times and not just on this trip). Hope you got some new ones for Christmas, Barry.

A wander along a farm road took us to the end of the public access road and a half hour wait with a couple of thousand sandflies saw transport arrive courtesy of John's partner Heather and her lady friend Pat having done their dash in Martinborough. Icecreams in Pahiatua capped off a terrific trip.

Participants were: John Phillips, Barry Scott and Alan Bee (Buzz).

TAMAKI - POHANGINA RUAHINE CROSSING 1-2 November by David Grant

A bit of organisation with the vehicles makes this crossing of the southern Ruahines a most enjoyable and quite easy two day trip. In fact, at 8-9 hours actual tramping time for this party, it is a quite feasible one longish day trip for the reasonably fit. On this occasion four of us - Peter Stockdale, Wauter van Werner (6 days since leaving the Netherlands!!), David Ross, and myself arranged for a car to be left at the DOC Pohangina base beforehand and then Judy dropped us at the Tamaki road end from where we started at about 3.00 pm on Saturday. The track follows a ridge to the east of the Tamaki river, first up a pasture face and then into scrubby bush, before dropping back into the Tamaki about a kilometre before Stanfield hut. We stopped for a quick break here and then carried on up and over the saddle into the headwaters of the Cattle Creek branch of the Pohangina river. Had a wee discussion on the saddle as to whether we might carry on to Cattle Creek hut via a climb over the top of Takapari (1257 m) to the west but considering the hour decided to proceed down the eastern watershed, reaching Cattle Creek hut about 5.30 pm. This is a very comfortable 8 bunk hut recently renovated (as was Stanfield) set on a large flat above the western bank of the creek. Had a very pleasant "happy" hour (courtesy David Ross) before setting to and hashing up a cordon bleu feed of soup d'jour (savory tomato thickened with potato flakes) followed by boiled rice, Surprise peas and carrots, and fried snarlers. Who's fussy after a few hours on the track? The night was clear and cold, the display of stars was incredible, and by morning there was quite a heavy frost. After a good breakfast of porridge and toast we departed at 7.30 am and followed the creek down-stream, cutting up and over the tail end of the ridge on the north bank of the creek to reach Mid Pohangina hut by about 9.00 am. Peter and Wauter following a few minutes behind (we thought) took a small diversion which delayed them a wee while longer. What a sorry state the bush in this catchment is in. Most of the canopy trees are dead with their standing skeletons a grim reminder of the damage done. We made use of the hot water left in a billy on the fireplace by a pleasant young couple from Palmerston North and had a drink (noted that Tony Gates had passed by the previous afternoon on a hunting trip) before crossing the swing bridge over the Pohangina and heading out along the side track. After an uneventful 2.5 hours during which we attempted to solve a few of the world's problems we reached the bush edge and had a pleasant lunch on the river bank before walking out across the farmland to reach our car parked at the Pohangina DOC centre. A most enjoyable trip in fine cool weather.

SHERIDEN CREEK, OTAKI

November 10

by Neil Campbell

A combined group of trampers and steam enthusiasts spent a very pleasant day in the Otaki Forks area. We left Palmerston North at the civilized time of 9am. After leaving the cars at the start of the Waiotauru track we set off along the track. There was a slight hint of rain however this soon disappeared. To get to Sheriden Creek we had to cross the Waiotauru River. This allowed us to practice the latest river crossing techniques. Sheriden Creek is easy to follow and the surrounding bushland is very attractive. Many of the rails from the old bush tramway are still there. We had lunch at O'Brein's log hauler. This steam engine is covered by a DOC shelter. Following our return to the carpark we took a short side trip to look at a steam engine that had been swept down the river by some monster flood.

Thanks go to Richard Lockett for leading the walk. We were Ivan, Neil, Carolean, Andrea, Cheryl, Bob, Murray, Liz, Chris, Paulette and Richard.

ENDURANCE TRAINING

by Keith Charlton

It was an interesting and arduous weekend.(Warren, Wayne and me)

Getting to Waitewaiwai from Otaki Forks via Kime, Maungahuka, and Andersons is just not possible in one day!! We were tramping by 5.00am Saturday and made it up to the tops quite quickly. It got very windy past Vossler, and those Tararua Peaks seemed endless. We were glad to get to Maungahuka Hut where we decided to stay put for the night. Reading the logbook comments from poor Paul O'Sullivan from Waikanae who was out for 3 nights (lost while hunting) with no food and no sleeping bag was interesting.

We carried on to Aokaparangi where we used a cellphone (Telecom) to phone Wellington to get the time. Unfortunately none of us had brought a watch. We saw a hind in the sheltered western slopes of the hills past there about 40m downhill. This is the first time we had ever seen a wild deer in the bush. She stared at us for 40 seconds and then bounded off down into the valley.

We got to Anderson Memorial hut at about 2.00pm filled up our bottles and kept on going for Junction Knob and Shoulder Knob. I took ages to get down to Waitewaiwai, as my right knee tendon started causing me pain so I had to modify my walking style. We had a late lunch at about 5.00pm at Waitewaiwai and decided against staying the night. It took us ages to get to the forks (with me slowing the pace down with my leg) and we resorted to headlamps. It was 11.00pm when we reached the car.

The cellphone wouldn't work in the valleys, and we finally got a clear signal on the road out. We phoned Wayne's girlfriend who was waiting at my place in Paraparaumu to pick them up and get back to PN. She was a bit concerned and had called the police to let them know we were late, although she wasn't too concerned because she knew we had all the right gear and plenty of extra food. They weren't going to do anything until we were at least 24hrs overdue.

My feet are suffering from rubbing boots, but it was good to finally get that circuit done. It would probably have been better to make it a 3 day tramp.

PS. After going down the wire ladder and following the wire hand rail you get to the top of a small flat ridge with a cairn. We turned left at the cairn, headed along the ridge and down it. It turned very steep until it got ridiculous, so we decided to get back to the cairn. We went right instead which was the correct track. It was quite disorientating as the track direction turned about 270 degrees from the original direction at the top of the ladder.

DAPHNE HUT

Seventeen of us left the Police Station at 7:30am. The hills on the other side of the gorge looked dark and heavy with rain. Tramping in this did not look hugely enjoyable. However, as we progressed toward Moorcock Base the weather cleared and, although overcast, it was quite warm. We were doing a loop so set off up the road and scrambled down to cross the stream and find the track start. After many water stops on the way up, morning tea at the crossroads of Longview/Daphne was a sit down affair. The rain started a little as we set off on the ridge towards the stream and Daphne Hut. The stream was discoloured and flowing quite fast so it was decided to have lunch under the trees in the rain which fortunately was not too heavy. The Hut would wait for some for a second visit.

Soon we were on the loop track heading for home in dry weather. The rain arrived after Dannevirke. DOC has put up a new flash notice board with map at Moorcock Base and I noticed

that our return loop, although in excellent track condition, was listed as being not maintained any longer.

We were: Frank and Robyn Usmar & family (six in all!), Liz, Arthur, Nicola & Jerome Flint, Heather & Lawrence Gatehouse, John Rockell, Rod McKenzie, Carol & John Fitchley, and Mark Street.

IRON GATES HUT 23 November

We couldn't figure out what the weather was going to do as we made our way to Apiti. The forecast wasn't good but the sky looked as if it would improve. Then I jumped out of the car to open the gate at the carpark and I realised how cold it really was. Don't car-heaters deceive fool-hardy trampers into believing it isn't as cold as it really is. We didn't waste time getting our gear on and getting down the hill to seek some protection from the wind. Heritage Lodge was made in pretty quick time. It is a number of years since I had been here and I noticed the marvellous coal range has been removed although the fireplace had been ripped open.

We headed on up the track. Although I thought we would do at least part of the trip in the river considering how the Oroua looked as we passed through Feilding earlier I suspected it would be too high for comfortable travel. A brief stop for a drink and a quick bite to eat just past the fly camp and the Tunipo Stream suddenly appeared in front of us.

An interesting - or should that be challenging - slip about an hour down from the hut had us taking it rather easy as we crossed and tried to convince ourselves that it really was stable and that we couldn't hear loose rocks falling away from our footsteps. Be warned how deep the mud really is in this section as Malcolm found out when he decided not to bother walking around it but just walk straight through the middle - only to fall in immediately up to mid-thigh level!

A pleasant lunch was had at the hut. A couple of days later when I discovered a party of 5 trampers was airlifted the very next day out of the same area just 10 minutes walk upstream from where we had our lunch it got me thinking how blaise' we tend to get on some trips. The possibility of disaster is never far away!

The return trip was quite pleasant now that the wind had dropped considerably. The sun seemed to be shining through the clouds too. At least I think it was the sun - at the time I was rather confused about where Mars and Venus fitted in. Was the dehydration confusing me and muddling my mind? Had not operation Venus concluded at the same time as Mars? What other celestial covert operations existed? We reached the cars after the well known grunt up the hill at the end and we went off on our return to civilisation. An excellent trip and one well worth repeating. We were Richard, Cheryl, Craig, Malcolm and Neil.

RIVER SAFETY AND NAVIGATION Nov30/Dec1 by David Grant

This weekend of instruction on navigation and river skills was organised by Terry Crippen. It provided a "smorgasbord" of activities at a number of sites and I guess Terry may have been a little dissatisfied more club members didn't take advantage of the opportunity but those who attended certainly got their money's worth. Thanks Terry.

10.30am Saturday saw Lawrence, Heather, Warren, Donald, Christine, Richard, Terry, and David, gather at the Ashhurst Domain for revision on navigation skills including how long people's paces were (so we knew how far we had gone), and the basics of using a compass (so we knew where we

were going). Following this introduction the party received their written instructions and members set out on an orienteering exercise around the bush area of the domain. Mostly we followed the tracks but finished up tracking bits of torn up supermarket shopping bag across country. I'm pleased to report that nobody got lost!!

At the end of this exercise Richard left and following a bite of lunch we were joined by Kieran, Phil, Catherine and NZ Mountain Safety Council instructors Noel and Jenny. Noel outlined the latest techniques in river crossing being what I will call the "between your neighbour's back and pack and grasp his waist belt (and the person's next door as well if possible) arm lock", and the "pack float down the river backwards rather than feet first like you used to" method.

Then it was down to the Pohangina river to practice. Several young anglers looked on in amazement as our two groups of five bound together by the above described arm lock and practised crossing the river (and backing out- not so easy). We tried first on a wide reach of slow current with no problems, then on to the real thing, a stretch of river half as wide, twice as deep and twice as swift. A different story here. The power of the river and the slippery stones underfoot really demonstrated the strength and advantages of the above described armlock technique especially when we were wearing packs. Seemed to give the lineup much more stability. When we tried the exercise without our packs on, grasping our neighbour's shorts waistband/shirt instead, both parties experienced much more difficulty. The upstream person also needed to be strong since they broke the full force of the current. When we attempted to cross with a small person on the upstream edge they got their feet swept off the ground. The strongest person should occupy the second position down from the upstream edge and act as the anchorman (politically incorrect!!). Overall, the cardinal rule about crossing is - if in doubt, dont.

Following this exercise we tried packfloating in the prescribed manner (backwards, feet up then swinging the feet downstream and kicking to shore when a suitable landing beach had been sighted). Great fun and the water was surprisingly warm. Believe me!! To finish off we got really adventurous and packfloated a rapid on the mighty Manawatu!!! YAHOOO. In fact it was such a buzz some folks even shot it twice. And one of us who got across on the far side of the current almost ended up in Foxton. A bit of quick sprinting by Noel and wading out on a gravel bank managed to catch the runaway (floataway?) before any harm was done.

Anyway a most instructive day and made even more enjoyable by the fine weather.

Sunday saw the stalwarts (Terry, Donald, Nick, Trisia, Matt, and David) depart from FoodTown carpark at 7.00am for Putara roadend. Apart from a small delay (1 hour) which saw one carload wait in Eketahuna for the other car which they thought was behind but in fact was ahead, the day started without incident. We carried out a small exercise at the roadend, estimating distances and times off the map and then headed up the track towards Herepai, our goal being to visit Ruapae Falls via the "Three Bottle" track. However the second swingbridge was hypothetically blocked when we got there so we had to put into practice our new found navigating skills and work out and follow an alternative route. We worked as two groups and both parties successfully navigated their way to the "grass flats" lunch venue passing through some impressive Rimu forest on the way. Considering the time lost earlier in the day it was decided to forego visiting the falls so we made our way down river, picked up the northern end of the "Three Bottle" track, and climbed up to meet the main Herepai track which we then followed back out to the roadend, reaching this about 3.00pm. Although the weather was overcast and drizzly this didn't detract from another instructive and enjoyable day.

Thanks again Terry.