

PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217
PALMERSTON NORTH

NEWSLETTER

June 1997 Edition

Club Patron	: Lawson Pither	357-3033
President	: Warren Wheeler	356-1998
Vice President	: Terry Crippen	356-3588
Secretary	: Sarah Todd	357-0612
Treasurer	: Peter Wiles	358-6894
Membership Enquires	: Sarah Todd 357-0612 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

The Club runs trips each weekend, either overnight and/or day. See scheduled events list below. There are also mid-week tramps. If you are interested in going on a trip, please advise the leader at least 3 days in advance. Trips usually leave from the Foodtown car park in Fergusson Street. For general information on the scheduled or alternative tramps please contact one of the trip co-ordinators: Terry Crippen (356-3588) and Liz Flint (356-7654).

Grade of trip: This is based on what tramping time a reasonably proficient tramper would be expected to cover in. 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

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. Please sign your name in the visitors book. There is a door fee of 50c which includes supper.

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.**

JULY 10 Midweek tramping Peter Johnstone 358-8596

JULY 10 Club night "Intro to Snowcraft" , now replaced by "Avalanche Awareness"
Note that the Snowcraft talk by Andy Backhouse has been replaced by a joint-club talk by Vern Meyer on "Avalanche Awareness" to be held at *Rangitane Pavilion*. See under "Notices".

JULY 12-13 McKinnon Hut M/F Barry Scott 354-0510
Depart early Saturday morning. Up onto the tops of the Hikurangi Range, the highest part of the Ruahines, to the hut for the night. Great country and views. Last chance to introduce you to the white stuff before snowcraft.

JULY 13 Purity Hut E/M Dave Larsen 329-8054
Depart 7:30 am Into the western Ruahines and a climb up through bush to the hut just below the bushline. If the tops are clear and conditions OK on up to Wooden and/or Iron Peg for even better views, some snow, and a wave to the weekend party.

JULY 15 (Tues) Instructional evening for snowcraft participants only

JULY 17 Midweek tramping David Warnock 357-4140

JULY 19-20 Snowcraft 1 I, M/F Andy Backhouse 353-0774
Bruce Van Brunt 328-4751

This will be held at the Massey University hut below the Turoa skifield on Mt Ruapehu. We will leave on Friday night, as the hut is by the road. This course assumes no previous experience on snow, with lessons on basic snow travel, use of an ice axe, self arresting & an introduction to crampons, with indoor sessions on mountain weather, use of mountain radio, mountain first aid, emergency shelters, etc.

Prior to this trip there will be a Tuesday evening meeting for all participants on 15th July. It will be held at the Central Fire Station (cnr Cook & Church Sts) at 7pm. This meeting is very important as the first instruction will be given, equipment will be sorted and logistics for travel & food will be finalised.

JULY 19-20 MSC Bush 3 I,M Warren Granger 359-2890
This instruction weekend is being run by the local branch of the NZ Mountain Safety Council. Its an advanced course, including off-track navigation, emergency shelters, leadership skills, and it's all practical, ie. out in the bush all weekend in the western Ruahines. For costs, details, and bookings phone Warren Granger on 359-2890 or 025-2421834. Includes the prior Sunday afternoon (13th July) for a pre-trip planning session.

JULY 20 Kumeti E Lis & Arthur Todd 323-6246
Depart 8 am A easy stroll, in the morning sun into a nearby part of the eastern Ruahines; open river flats and a bit of a climb up onto the ridge for views.

JULY 24 Midweek tramping Judy Callesen 357-0192

JULY 26-27 Howletts Hut M Llew Pritchard 358-2217
Depart early Saturday morning A favourite place for PNTMC in the eastern Ruahines. The hut is just on the bushline and offers great views of the bigger snowy peaks nearby. A range of ways in or out depending on conditions.

JULY 27 Ruapehu summit M,T Warren Wheeler 356-1998
Depart 7 am Heading up to the Turoa carpark. A climb up to the crater rim just below the summit, for lunch. An optional, (and depending on conditions), sidle and climb up to the summit. (Some snowcraft skills and equipment required.)

JULY 29 (Tues) Instructional for snowcraft participants only

JULY 31 Midweek tramping Bev Akers 325-8879

JULY 31 Club night Climbing in Peru Dave Henwood

Dave, a recent immigrant from Wellington, was in Peru last year with a NZ Alpine Club team. He will give a slide show on climbs in the Cordillera Blanca, location of some of Peru's highest peaks.

GUEST EDITORIAL by Terry Crippen

I've been on some enjoyable trips and events lately: Pureora Forest Park with its tall totara and rimu forest; the Risk Management Weekend; even a relaxing morning on the Gorge Walkway. And really enjoyed Peter Gates' talk on canoeing down the southern end of Chile. In between those activities, together with Liz and Tony and others, I have been working on the next six monthly events card, for July to December this year and the summer extended trips. So here it is, along with other additions to this mail out: the FMC bulletin, a Pink Help Form, a revamped double sided Guide for Trip leaders, and a Trip Feedback Form. The last two were developed as a result of the Risk Management course 16 of us went on.

This time there are quite a few new leaders and plenty of offers of trips. In fact I had excess offers this time. So support all these trips, there is scope for all. Lets see plenty of PNTMC entries in hut books.

The Guide for Trip Leaders has been re-arranged and also made double sided. The new side is a quick tick box version. So for leaders, feel free to use this side if you want, (referring back to the full side as required) when you are planning and running that trip you are leading. If you are not a leader either side makes useful reading anyhow.

For all trip participants, not just leaders, The Trip Feedback Form is designed to help us improve the standard of our trips. Often I hear through the grapevine about incidents that have occurred on Club trips. Generally not too bad (eg. a cooker failing on a trip), but with different weather, situations, or experience of the party, etc, they could have created major problems or accidents. The forms will hopefully improve the communication on such matters. Also use the forms for those amazing highlights! And any new important route guide info. Ask your trip leader for a form at the end of the trip, or pick them up at club night. (Leaders I hope will routinely use them?!).

The Pink Help Form is to record the details for a trip you are leading, be it a club one or private one, to leave with your trip contact. There are always plenty of these forms (supplied by the NZ Mountain Safety Council) available at club night.

I hope this occasional and small amount of paperwork for trip members, be you a leader, new chum, or frequent tripper, will help us make PNTMC trips even safer and more enjoyable.

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 my 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.GOV.NZ.

PLEASE NOTE that I am now editing exclusively on Microsoft Word, and am no longer using Microsoft Works software. 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. If in doubt, a pretty safe bet is to send any files as an ".RTF" (Rich Text Format) file, which can be easily converted from one software format to another.

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

SNOWCRAFT COURSES 1997

This winter the club will again run courses designed to teach the budding winter tramper or climber some basic techniques that will provide the skills necessary to safely climb the mountains of the North Island in winter conditions & tramp South Island trans-alpine summer routes. Each weekend builds on the previous one & the set are intended to be done as a group. However some people with previous experience may wish to discuss their skills with the organisers. Similarly, some may get the skills they require from just the first one or two weekends. As we did last year, we plan to run some alpine trips during & after the course to encourage the use of newly acquired skills. There will be a glaciercraft weekend in December this year

instead of the usual autumn to allow those visiting Sth Island mountains the chance to work on this important part of climbing. Rockclimbing instruction days/weekends & a snow-caving weekend will also follow on in the spring. See the new trip card for more details. We hope that erupting volcanoes, bad weather & lack of snow do not cause the problems they did last year.

After last years well received courses we plan to follow a similar format. Huts have been selected to afford convenience for evening lectures as well as proximity to the snowline & roadend. The focus during the course will be on teaching rather than reaching a summit.

The courses are open to all, but numbers are limited, & the organisers may have to give priority to members or allocate places by means other than first come, first served, where necessary. For more information regarding this programme contact Andy Backhouse (353-0774) or Bruce van Brunt (328-4761).

STOP PRESS!!! STOP PRESS!!! STOP PRESS!!!

MOUNTAIN SAFETY COUNCIL AVALANCHE AWARENESS LECTURE & FIELD DAY

As the newsletter was going to press we discovered the MSC will be running their annual avalanche course on 10th July at the Rangitane Pavilion at 7.30pm with field days on the weekend following. This clashes with the scheduled Snowcraft club night talk which was to talk about the Snowcraft courses. However our snowcraft course organisers felt that participants on the course (and of course many other club members) would benefit more from attending this lecture. The bad news is this will cost \$5 (we think) to cover the expenses of the speaker, Vern Meyer, a mountain guide, who is traveling a considerable distance to give the talk.

The snowcraft spiel that was to happen on the 10 July club night will now happen briefly prior to the Photo Competition on June 26th, and a written handout may be distributed at Vern's talk on July 10th. In either case it will be short, and snowcraft instructors will be at both evenings to give information on our course. If you wish to know more about the Avalanche Field days contact Mountain Equipment on 359-2162.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

This is a final reminder for paying your subscription - \$30 members, \$35 family. Can't remember if you've paid? A "97" below your address on your newsletter means you are fully paid up! Sorry, but for non-payers, this will be your last newsletter.

THE NEXT SIX MONTHLY EVENTS CARD

The new trip card for July to December 1997 is now being prepared, and comes out with the June Newsletter, so that gives less than a month for all your suggestions as to where you want club trips to go to, and your offers to lead them. Also your suggestions/offers for club night speakers/events. Be in early by contacting the Trips convenor Terry Crippen 356-3588, or Liz Flint 356-7654 and, for the club evenings, the Social convenor Tony Gates 357-7439 before we contact you!

ANNUAL PHOTO COMPETITION

The club's annual photo competition will be held on Thursday, June 26. The rules for the competition are:

- Slides/prints 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 corner when loaded into the carousel)
- All slides and photos must be labelled (on back for photos!) with author's name, and entry category chosen from list below. *NOTE: Slides and prints not marked prior to judging in the manner outlined here WILL BE REJECTED.* This is necessary to facilitate smooth running of the event.
- Limit of 3 slides per person per category, but no limit on prints

Categories:

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------|---|
| 1. | Alpine (NZ) | Predominantly alpine scenery in NZ (ie. above bushline) |
| 2. | Scenic (NZ) | Scenes of natural pictorial interest in NZ hills, coasts, etc. (ie. predominantly below the bushline) |
| 3. | Natural History (NZ) | NZ flora or fauna |
| 4. | Topical (NZ) | People in tramping, climbing, or skiing related activities in NZ |
| 5. | Overseas Alpine
or Scenic | Related to tramping, etc. overseas |

6. Overseas People Climbers or people met while tramping, climbing overseas

Formats: Slides, black-and-white prints, colour prints. Prints do not need to be mounted. Prints may be judged as one group or separated at the judge's discretion, depending on numbers.

NEW MEMBERS

Please welcome four new members to the club:

Marion Carey, 7 Kingston Street, P.N. Ph. 358-2544

Marlene Henderson, 15A Jensen Street, P.N. Ph. 358-5232

Dave Henwood, 333 Albert Street, P.N. Ph. 353-2370

Gina Fermor, 6 Ward Street, P.N. Ph. 354-7675

NEW COMMITTEE MEMBER

A welcome also to Dave Grant as our latest new committee member. Welcome Dave, and thanks for taking up the job of librarian.

CLUB LIBRARY

We are slowly building up a wee library: magazines, some tramping journals, some manuals and books. Dave Grant is the librarian. We have decided that people can only borrow from one club night to the next. This helps regulate the return of borrowed items. Please remember that returning what you borrow is the only way we can have a successful system. We have had some items go missing for months. Please make the system work, by filling in the pink sheet on the table up front at club nights when you borrow.

Dave also looks after the club photo album and scrap books. Please note that these cannot be borrowed, but you are welcome to view them at club nights.

BOOK REVIEWS by Tony Gates

"The Legend of the Kea"

by Philip Temple and Chris Gaskin (1995, Hodder & Stoughton)

An exciting illustrated paperback for kids, I guess aged between five and ten years, maybe a little older. This tells a legend about a forest full of happy birds that slowly overpopulate, and so cause problems to themselves. Their fighting causes much damage to the forest, so the great god of all birds unfolds his wings to obliterate all sunshine, and to punish the birds. Firstly, he gave them all work to do, work like spreading pollen and scatter seeds and eat grubs. Some naughty little birds were banished to peck the forest floor for ever. One well known and particularly quarrelsome chicken like bird had his wings clipped, his nose lengthened, his legs thickened, and he was banished to only come out at night! The thieving seagull was banished to the salty coast and given a black band for easy identification, and the cheeky kea was banished to live forever in far away high altitudes, to a freezing land of glaciers, frosts, and steep mountains. An exciting story, and excellent illustrations!

"Tararua Footprints - A trampers guide to the Tararua Ranges"

by Merv Rogers (1996, Canterbury University Press)

Destined to be a classic, Merv's book should be on every PNTMC members bookshelf, coffee table, and in our packs. This is a no nonsense, catchment by catchment guide to all the "official" tramping tracks, and a few other areas. Apparently, before writing about them, Merv tramped each and every route without fail! Major crossings of the range feature, as do gorge/ river tubing trips, and some escape routes in case of floods and/or storms. Good appendices, but the club contacts miss out PNTMC!

"Beneath the Mountain Mist"

by Max Curtis MBE (1996, Halcyon)

Another of many hunters tales of life in the New Zealand mountains, this time parts of Nelson, then mostly West Coast catchments such as the Karangarua, Paringa, Waitaha, Whataroa, and Wanganui. Fantastic country, and great stories. This is hunting guide Max Curtis's second book, when he relates humorous, interesting, stories in the bush and on the tops from the 50's to the 80's. Change is therefore very interesting in this book, not only from the equipment he used to use, but also the change in animal populations, and changes in government policy. There was a time when there were few, if any deer, thar,

chamois, and possums in the Alps. Then there were population explosions, so government attempts to control the animals included opening up the areas for foot traffic. We, as trampers and mountaineers of the 90's, can then appreciate the huts, tracks, and bridges, built during the 60's and 70's.

I am consistently amazed at the hunting fraternity, and their apparent lack of understanding of equipment required to tramp and hunt in the Alps. I believe that Max never once carried or used an ice axe, crampons, or a helmet. He once mentioned using a 10 metre length of 5 mm nylon cord! Nevertheless, Max saw some of New Zealand's most fantastic country in his travels, and hunted many animals.

TRIP REPORTS

PUREORA FOREST

April 25-27 (ANZAC Weekend) by David Simcock

On ANZAC day Barry Scott, John Phillips, Terry Crippen, Sarah Todd and myself set off for a three day tramp in the Pureora Forest, west of Lake Taupo. We travelled up in convoy with Warren's family/easy group after doing a lap of the Palmerston North cenotaph. We arrived at the drop off point around noon and set off for our first destination, Waihaha Hut, which was three hours down the track.

To begin with, we followed the track alongside the river. The forest in this area was very different from what we are used to. Large outcrops of ignimbrite emerged from the hillsides and were surrounded by tanekaha, very picturesque. Further on we came across huge rimu trees reaching up for miles with massive diameters. Whilst Terry and Barry were explaining the birds, bees, berries and trees (poetry please note), John was recording it all on video. At lunch we were all entertained by Barry's man-eating pack which was attempting to devour its carrier. For about 10 minutes we watched in fascination as legs and torso of Barry struggled to extract head, arms and lunch from the massive packliner.

Terry's plan was to even out the number of hours spent walking each day by camping under a fly for the first night. This was abandoned as a result of the dubious weather forecast and the large plastic bag I was carrying for such an occasion - to stuff Terry in and roll him down the hill if he did not comply to our objections! Reaching the hut around 4 pm we set about preparing dinner with my new super-duper Coleman cooker. Having been assured Coleman's are the best money can buy, it ceased functioning as soon as the first course was over. Terry and Barry stared at the dead piece of metal in horror at the prospect of carrying all that fuel for no reason. Recovering from this slight mishap the fire was cranked up and Barry began the arduous task of teaching 3 beginners to play 500 while Terry hovered around supervising bids.

Due to the short journey of the previous day, day 2 was projected to be some 10 hours long. In readiness for this long day, Taskmaster Terry had us all up at 5 am for a 6.30 am start. Despite a small amount of rain during the night the bad weather had passed us by. We set off with torches leaving the comfort of Waihaha Hut and proceeded to make our way through the forest, much to the disgust of the birds who were still enjoying the luxury of early morning sleep. Some 8 hours of tramping later (19km), we reached Bog Inn which was to be our residence for the second night. The hut lived up to its name - it had a long drop and it was surrounded by a large bog. 2 and a half hours later we had a jelly brew courtesy of Barry after Terry had rectified my feeble effort to make a fire.

The next day Terry let us sleep in until 7am while he clattered and banged to re-establish the fire. The plan for the day was to meet Warren's party on Mt Pureora which was about 3 hours walk from the hut. We arrived at the top in a howling gale seconds before Warren appeared with his lot. Without staying for tea we made our way back down to have lunch in a rimu forest down the road. The next stop was the hot pools where Warren re-visited his childhood playing submarines and making like a basketball, then we headed home after a very enjoyable weekend.

MANAWATU GORGE WALKWAY

Sunday, 11 May

Terry Crippen

Got a panic phone call from Margaret R the night before, that she couldn't lead the trip (thanks for letting me know, Margaret). So Murray Jessen and I were the only two trip starters. Thick fog at the Woodville end was soon left behind as we climbed up through it into a brilliant fine sunny day from the middle of the gorge west. A lazy lunch watching a range of walkers/runners going past before dropping down to the other end. Always a well tracked enjoyable morning walk (3-4 hrs), close to town, in time to mow the lawns in the afternoon.

ROARING STAG (Combined PNTMC + MTSC)

11 May by Liz Flint

Eleven of us left the police station at 8 am on a lovely summer-like morning. We set off from the Putara roadend at about 9-30. The trip in was beautiful. The river sparkled and ferns glowed, even the Easter orchids were still in flower. We had a morning tea/drink stop at the Herepai turnoff before making our way at a leisurely pace to the hut, which was occupied by some young kids and their dogs. I didn't think too much of the way they were chopping down young trees for firewood.

We had lunch beside the river. Warren and 5 others decided to explore along the river a bit and hopefully join up with a small creek and find the track again - it didn't, they didn't, and so, as it turned out, they returned to the lunch spot and came out the same way we had.

Fortunately Monica had presence of mind to check the hut, as the kids had left, only to find a great roaring fire still going and windows wide open. This was soon rectified, fire out and windows closed, and we were on our way. We waited at the Herepai turnoff for Warren and his group but after half an hour plus we were all feeling quite cold so we left them a message to say we were returning to the cars. They arrived back after we had got changed and were having another cup of tea. A lovely trip was had by all on a fabulous day.

We were: John Rochell, Vina Cottam, Robert, Andrew and James Bruce, Monica Cantwell, Warren Wheeler, Marie Limpus, Stuart Hubbard, Peter Stockdale, and Liz Flint.

ANZAC WEEKEND FAMILY TRIP - PUREORA FOREST

by Warren Wheeler

Pureora.... the very name conjures up images of far away places with secrets to discover. Certainly it is an area seldom visited by the Club. We got there in convoy with Terry's group using two cars and a borrowed van. We stopped for breakfast in Waiouru at the Highway Robbery Cafe at the south end town opposite the War Museum - an appropriate spot for Anzac Day. The food was excellent too. After fuelling up at Turangi we headed for the Waihaha Stream bridge about half way along the Western By-pass around Lake Taupo. We all pulled into the Reserve parking area and finalised car transfer and pick-up arrangements for Terry's group on Sunday at Mt Pureora. Our group headed off ahead of the others for a walk up the Waihaha to work the travel stiffness out of our joints and find a nice place for lunch. After about an hour of picturesque secondary growth and ignimbrite outcrops above the stream we turned around, greeting the other sweating party coming up the hill, before heading back past a lookout down to the stream for lunch. Sitting on the hollow sounding sheet of rock in the middle of the stream with neither gravel nor boulder in sight drove home the fact that this was a totally different place - although for the four Thai students with us it was probably not so different from home. Still, its not every day one gets the chance to throw the local rock in the water and watch them float away - weird - OK, kids...time for a pumice race through the rapids! Wandering back to the cars we practised imitating the tui and had a guessing game of how long it would take to get back - we were all pretty close, proving that we all had a pretty good idea of where we were.

A few kilometres north we turned left onto Waihora Road and drove about four kilometres along this access track to the Waihora Lagoon, negotiating past a road-closed sign intended to avoid a pumice wash-out - if not repaired there would be a five or ten minute walk to the lagoon carpark. The short 5-10 minute walk to the lagoon was hardly worth the effort - the lagoon covers about 2 hectare within tall rimu and kahikatea forest but was virtually dry - still, it was a good place to introduce the Thais to the concept that "bush" can mean tall trees and why pepper tree is so named. A bit of light drizzle blew itself out by the time we returned to the cars. We back-tracked to the main road and continued north past the Tihoi store and turned left again onto Kakaho Road - the road turning to gravel shortly before entering the Forest Park and passing the Kakaho Camp Site which looked like quite a nice place to stay.

We however were headed for the western side of the park where there is the DoC Head-quarters and a small visitor centre. The Ngaherenga Camp Site nearby was remarkably uninviting, more so as we discovered Terry's car had a flat tyre from a stone still embedded in the tread - so we decided not to camp and instead took advantage of the chalets next to the HQ. After tracking down the duty ranger in the nearby Pureora Village we unloaded into a seven bed chalet - 6 bunks and a wide single in the kitchen-dining room. This was only \$45 a night and is excellent value - cooking utensils and cutlery were provided so all we really needed to bring was the food and sleeping bags. A communal shower and toilet area provided no shortage of hot water - all the comforts of home, but. Meal-time established the routine of the Thais making their Hot

and Spicy noodle soup first, then Warren doing his one pot vegetable mix, and Heather and Lawrence their fried vegetables concoction - a mouth-watering series of smells.

Next morning we were up at dawn to do the nearby Totara Walk before breakfast - unfortunately no kokako were around, but there were a few bellbirds and tui about - the trees are quite impressive - we seldom see them this high locally in the Ruahine or Taranaki Ranges - mainly because of the altitude, I guess. We checked out the display in the visitor centre which is starting to look a bit tatty but still gets the message across - including the part forestry has played and the role of the protesters in finally stopping it. After breakfast we drove off to explore some of the so-called points of interest. After a very rough metalled track we found the Buried Forest - trees covered by Taupo erupting 2000 years ago - and yes they were buried all right - only a trench in the ground to show where all the excitement had been some 15 years previously - with now-extinct bugs being found.

Similarly the old steam log hauler was hardly a must see - only the winch and rusting boiler remain - at least the site is maintained to keep the bush lawyer from re-claiming the area. We found our way through the maze of tracks back onto Link Road and visited the forest observation platform - a 12m high series of platforms to observe the changing nature of the forest with height - quite well-done, with interpretative panels at each level. From the top in the canopy zone we spotted a kaka some distance away, high in one of the trees.

Finally we made it to the crowded carpark for our tramp up to Titiraupehu - a two hour bush walk, passing a block of concrete which is the centre of the North Island as determined by some local Jaycees using a large sheet of cardboard and a pin. The track is a little overgrown and rugged towards the top but was providing a good challenge for the young families we met - although the group with the four and six year old wisely opted out before then. The final steep scramble included a short pitch with a fixed rope to hoist us each past the steepest part of the rocky outcrop that forms the summit - there were great views towards the Waikato and Taupo, but cloud in the distance obscured the mountains to the south and south-west. It seemed strange that Pureora mountain, just to the south, was so flat - rather like a Chinaman's hat - and all but completely covered in forest - not like our usual mountains at all. This was to be our destination for the next day.

After lunch and photos we headed back the same way without incident and returned to the chalet for a shower and frisbee-session on the lawn until the dew got too cold for bare feet. Dinner included dessert of pikelets and jam - thank you Alison Holst! Next day we packed up straight after breakfast, paid the duty ranger - who was asleep in the back of the station-wagon in front of his house - "too many in the house after the party last night" - and headed off under an overcast and bleak sky to rendezvous with Terry's team on Pureora.

As it turned out we were both half an hour early in heading off and amazingly met at the summit trig in the howling wind and cloud at exactly the same time - truly amazing!!! The track near the top is very prone to erosion and there is a lot of work in progress to build board-walks to extend and replace the present unusual twin-board walks, like railway lines for trampers. A track that was over-enthusiastically bulldozed straight to the top on the west side had threatened to scour away the pumicy mountain-side, so considerable effort has been put into re-instating this by constructing soil-retention works.

It only took us about an hour to get back to the cars and we decided to drive along to the Kakaho Camp Site to find a dry place for lunch. The drizzle was a bit off-putting but we found a nice spot a few minutes along the Rimu Walk beside a platform for the rope-swing into a pool - obviously it would be quite fun for the family here in summer.

On the way home we stopped off at the Tokaanu Hot Pools for a dip and a quick look at the natural hot pools walk - there's more here than meets the eye - next time, with more time to explore.....

All in all an interesting and enjoyable trip to a uniquely impressive area seldom visited by the Club - thanks for the idea Terry. We were: The Thai students (Lyn, Su, Jennii, Kat), Heather and Lawrence Gatehouse, and Warren Wheeler (trip leader and scribe).

RISK MANAGEMENT COURSE
(MTSC Lodge, Ruapehu)

3-4 May

by Heather and Laurence Gatehouse.

Inmates: Warren, Terry, John, Dave L, Kath, Dave G, Peter B, Peter D, Buzz, Sarah, Mick, Llew, Richard, Neil, Laurence and Heather

Instructors: Jim and Jill

The weekend was organised to give a selection of trip leaders and prospective trip leaders a taste of the latest Mountain Safety Council thinking. We, at least, were none too clear what this would entail, but arriving at the MTSC lodge, which is the plushiest place we've ever stayed with my boots, dulled the fears till morning.

Very early on, the phrase "Its basically common sense" came out (and all was OK!). This combined with experience and a systematic approach, which keeps you re-evaluating things and from becoming complacent, is to my mind the basic message. The next day and a half consisted of a combination of talks and practical exercises outside in the unbelievably good weather (we saw Egmont two days running), with regular pauses for huge meals!

The practical outcomings of the weekend will show up soon in a revised trip leader's guide and trip sheet. We were complimented over our present trip leader's guide but decided that it could be arranged and presented more usefully. Also, look out for your leader doing a bit of "lemon spotting" and be prepared for "showing your thumbs".

We were split into four teams, each organising a short practical event for the others, putting into practice what we'd been learning. Afterwards each trip was analysed and suggestions made for how things could be improved (from a risk management point of view) and what had been really good. The trips included a bouldering session, a navigation exercise, a mission (leading several blinded trampers to safety), and a night exercise, namely "Gold for the Hobbit King", but maybe more appropriately termed 'things that go bump (aaargh!) in the night'!?

Overall, the weekend was most enjoyable and was certainly worthwhile. For those of you who didn't make it on the course this time, borrow the book and read up, or better still, do the course (next year?).

POURANGAKI 17-18 May by Patrick Janssen

A party of four set out from the car park at Cornfield Station, and proceeded up the spur to Purity Hut in misty conditions. At the bushline, we broke through the cloud layer and conditions walking along the ridge were superb with not a breath of wind and views of Mt Ruapehu piercing the clouds. We continued along the ridge past Wooden and Iron Pegs before stopping for lunch. For most of the group this was a fairly modest affair, but Tony further enhanced his gourmet reputation by pulling out a rather large and tasty smoked kawhai, and a whole pineapple. It would have been ideal conditions to camp on the tops and some in the party seemed reluctant when the time came to turn down the spur that dropped to the Pourangaki river.

The hut is located at the edge of a small clearing above the river. An attempt was made to light the coal range for dinner, but all the smoke appeared to discharge into the hut. Half an hour was spent cleaning out the flue and stove top of accumulated ash, an achievement for which Tony must surely earn his badge in Corker Cooker maintenance.

The next day was fine, and since the river level was low, we decided to walk down the river bed to Kelly Knight hut. The water temperature was a bit on the cool side but fortunately the sun managed to occasionally find its way down to the river bed. At the hut, we met up with the day trippers for lunch and a brew in the sun. The combined party then followed the track above the river back to station.

The party was Terry Crippen, Peter Darragh, Tony Gates and Patrick Janssen.

KELLY KNIGHT HUT 18 May by Dave Larsen

Five of us headed off to Kelly Knight hut for an easy tramp. A very pleasant track with just enough challenge to make it more than a walk? It was a beautiful clear still day and we met up with the weekend trampers who had gone in through purity and spent the night at Pourangaki Hut. No deer tracks were noticed! On the

way out we realised why our party was sent there this weekend - we had the vehicle to save the weekend trampers the walk out across the farmland.

We were: Monica, Kath, Jenny, Warren, and Dave.

JUMBO-MCGREGOR

24-25 May

by Peter Burgess

This trip was graded "F", though you wouldn't think it from the first day - a mere 4 hour stroll up to Jumbo via the Atiwhakatu. We set off from the car park at 12:25pm and were at the hut not long after 4pm. The prospects for the trip did not look too good with a forecast of rain for the whole weekend. Saturday lived up to this, though we had plenty of time to dry out in the luxurious Jumbo hut with its coal stove, fed well (perhaps too well later on) by the two old gents in residence as hut wardens. The sky cleared during the evening to show a spectacular moonrise, a promising omen perhaps?

Next morning broke bright and fine with most of the cloud down below and scarcely a breath of wind. This was the way it stayed for the whole morning with just the occasional wisp of cloud brushing the tops. We headed off up to Jumbo at 8am and then enjoyed the stroll along a very pleasant bit of ridge over Angle Knob and McGregor (a rather nondescript summit) before traversing the Broken Axe Pinnacles. These are quite exciting but not really difficult except for one steep descent near the northern end. If taken carefully, however, this poses no problems.

Just before the top of South King we left the main ridge and headed down over Baldy from which the whole of our route could be observed. Jumbo hut seemed just a stone's throw away, though it was three hours walk. We replenished our water supplies in some fresh rainwater puddles before dropping down through the bush and into the cloud which started at about 800m and still engulfed us down at the saddle at 670m which we reached just on lunch time.

After lunch our route became more adventurous as we planned to traverse Pinnacle Ridge which has an old track (not marked on current maps). The tricky part would come at the end as although Derek had done this ridge before he came out at The Pines rather than the Holdsworth end. The track to Mitre Flats goes up towards Pinnacle Ridge for a short distance but soon heads down to the left and so at this point we set our compasses, donned our raincoats (the bush was still very wet) and proceeded to bush-bash. Fortunately we soon picked up the old track which although being quite overgrown is very well marked. This was a surprise, as Derek did not remember it being that way and thinks that many of the markers must be new.

We made good steady progress up to the high point on the main ridge (846m) reaching it in 1-1/2 hours. At this point the track goes left and across a saddle before climbing up to Pinnacle itself which has a large open area with just light scrub. Here we rested. We had emerged from the cloud and could catch occasional glimpses of Holdsworth. After leaving Pinnacle we had planned to drop down to a saddle to the south-east which was where we expected the track to take us and then to bush bash down a stream which lead to the camping ground near the car-park. Much to our surprise the marked track actually continued south down a steep spur and eventually (after some confusingly placed markers lead us on some wild goose chases) we found ourselves looking down on Donnelly Flat across the Atiwhakatu. Unfortunately a huge slip directly below us had to be negotiated first. We had some trouble with the dense bush around the top of this slip but eventually dropped into a stream which flows down the middle and into the Atiwhakatu. From there it was just another 20 minutes back to the car. Pinnacle Ridge had taken us 4 hours making 8 « hours for the day.

We were: Peter Burgess, Derek Sharp, Graeme Roberts and Warren Soufflot.

MT HOLDSWORTH

25 May

by Marion Carey

At 7am we met up with our leader, Richard Lockett, and fellow trampers for a trip to Mt Holdsworth. The day dawned warm although a little cloudy, but promised well for a good day's tramping. With fog following us most of the way from the Gorge to Masterton, we wondered what it would be like when we arrived at our starting point.

Fortunately all was well and, with a quick cuppa for some, and our boots donned, we started out on our climb at 9am. The track up to Powell and to the tops of the Tararuas is really good, and the bush holds some really lovely trees and ferns. On the way we stopped at Mountain House for a bit of morning tea (outside - hut definitely not nice), and carried onwards and upwards (quite a challenging climb) arriving at

Powell Hut at 12-30. Out came the billy and a boil up gave us a welcome cup of tea/coffee or soup, and something to eat. A really nice spot to rest for a while.

Some of us decided not to go on further up, as the chance of a view from the top was unlikely. Neil and Warren opted to carry on, and the rest of us started our downward journey, making good time and arriving at the carpark after two and a half hours, tired but happy.

This was a really enjoyable tramp, with excellent company. We were: Richard Lockett (leader), Gina Fermor, Margaret Easton, Monica Cantwell, Marlene Henderson, Warren Wheeler, Neil Campbell, and Marion Carey.