
PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217, PALMERSTON NORTH

Newsletter - October 1997

THIS ISSUE

**NEWS: Summer extended tramps,
...and Alpine Calendars have arrived!**

TRIP REPORTS:

**Taranaki Ascent, Whakapapa climbing, Stanfield, Blue Range,
Sunrise, and the real Sawtooth Ridge (blue sky version)**

CLUB NIGHTS

OCTOBER 9	“Canada”	Liz Flint
OCTOBER 30	“Intro to Summer Trips”	Trip Leaders
NOVEMBER 6	Committee Meeting	
NOVEMBER 13	Local DOC Activities	Focus on the Ruahines - speaker to be advised
NOVEMBER 27	“Southern Alps Valleys”	Rob Suisted

Club nights are held for all club members and visitors on the second and last Thursday of each month at the **Society of Friends Hall, 227 College Street, Palmerston North**. Club nights commence 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.

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

UP AND COMING TRIPS

Trip Grades

Grades of trips can depend on many factors, most especially the weather and state of the track. As a guide, a reasonably proficient trapper would be expected to cover the graded trips in about the following times:

Easy (E): 3-4 hrs

Medium (M): 5-6 hrs

Fit (F): about 8 hrs

Fitness Essential (FE): >8 hrs

(T) refers to technical trips requiring special skills and/or gear.

Beginners should start with Easy Grade trips.

Oct 9 Thursday trappers
Phil Pearce 354-6687

Oct 9 Club night
“Canada vacation” Liz Flint

Club member Liz Flint visited North America during June and July 1997, and did several tramps with friends in the Rocky Mountains of Canada and Montana. She took several colour slides, and will present them to us with tales of her travels.

***Oct 11 (Saturday) Titahi Rock all, I
Zoe Hart 353-0774

Depart 7:30 am. Zoe will be mustering some instructors for this intro to rock climbing. Titahi Bay lends itself to top-roping on easy grades so that everyone is welcome. And remember, for those of you that are budding mountaineers, rock climbing skills are just as important as snowcraft skills.

***NOTE that this was originally planned for October 5 (Sunday) - so, another chance!

Oct 12-13 Oriwa Lake M/F
Tony Gates 357-7439

Depart Friday night. Lake Oriwa, a famous maori historic place is a small shallow lake in the Big Bush Country of the Waitewaewae in the western Tararuas. Come along with Tony for some good navigation to this seldom visited place.

Oct 12 Ohau Shelter E
Margaret Riorden 356-7460

Depart 9:00am for the Ohau river valley behind Levin in the western Tararuas. Take a nice easy walk up the valley through the bush. Have lunch

on the river edge just past the decrepit Ohau shelter then amble back to civilisation. Suitable for the whole family.

Oct 16 Thursday trappers
Neil Gutry 354-0284

Oct 18-19 Mitre Peak M/F
Warren Wheeler 356-1998

Depart 8 am. Into Mitre Flats in the Waingawa Valley, eastern Tararuas, behind Masterton. An easy walk for a relax in and about the hut. Sunday we will head up onto Mitre Peak via track through forest and onto the open tops. Those not keen on the climb can relax at the hut before heading out with the others.

Oct 19 Top Maropea M
Neil Campbell 359-5048

Depart 7:00am for the eastern Ruahines behind Tikokino. After a short stretch of farmland you follow a great track through forest, climbing up to Sunrise hut on the bushline. Time for a break then up and over the Ruahine range via Armstrong Saddle, dropping down to Top Maropea hut in the headwaters of the Maropea catchment. After lunch you will trace your steps back, mostly downhill, to the carpark.

Oct 23 Thursday trappers
Merv Matthews 357-2858

Labour weekend

Oct 25-27 Middle Range, Kaimanawas
M/F Barry Scott 354-0510

Depart 6am from PN on Saturday 25th and travel via the Desert Road to Kaimanawa road end. On Saturday you will climb up Umakarikari (1592m) then follow the ridge NE, dropping down to the Waipakihi hut for the night. Climbing up onto the Middle range on Sunday the route follows SW over Thunderbolt before dropping back into a campsite on the mid Waipakihi. Day three takes you back over the tops to the road end. This tramp should provide an interesting variety of scenery from beech forest at the lower altitudes up to the tussock tops, with the opportunity of spectacular views of the Central Plateau mountains and Lake Taupo.

Oct 25-27 Seaward Kaikouras F/FE
Dave Henwood 06-326-8892

Depart PN Friday 24 at 6:00pm for a 10:30pm ferry crossing Wellington to Picton. Drive south to the Hapuku river just before Kaikoura and camp. This trip involves a big grunt up from sea level to Manakau, the highest peak in the Seaward Kaikouras at 2610m. But think of the views across the Pacific on one hand and inland over the stark Clarence valley to Tapuaenuku and the Inland Kaikouras on the other. Fantastic!!

Contrary to the description in last month's newsletter, Dave has now decided to do the trip in an anti-clockwise direction, breaking up the big climb into two days, reaching Manakau summit Sunday afternoon. Dave will lead you up the Hapuku River on Saturday, camping above the bushline in the headwaters of the south branch. Up onto Uwerau on Sunday & traverse north to Manakau, then down the eastern ridge for Sunday night's camp. South down the Hapuku River & out to the cars Monday.

An ice axe and crampons will be required for the high traverse. Return to Wellington on Monday 27 via the 6:30pm ferry ex Picton. *Places for this trip are limited & filling fast. So be quick if you are interested in this one.*

Labour w/end Day trip?

Place and leader required. Can you help?

Contact Trip co-ordinators; Dave Grant (357-8269) or Liz Flint (356-7654)

Oct 30 Thursday trampers
John Rockell 358-3513

Oct 30 Club night: Intro to club extended summer trips

PNTMC's very own trip leaders get their opportunity to advertise their future trips. This is a good chance to learn about some areas in the Southern Alps. I think that there is a fair chance that Arthurs Pass will feature, maybe also Mount Aspiring area, who knows? Stay tuned.

Nov 1-2 Egmont M/F,T
Warren Wheeler 356-1998

Depart Saturday 6:00 am. Up to Stratford Plateau carpark then walk north around the mountain to Holly Hut. Lots of exploration alternatives to occupy the rest of the day - visit Bell Falls (at 31m the largest on the mountain), travel through the Ahukawakawa swamp into the Pouakai area, or westwards through the lava flows towards the Okahu gorge. On Sunday the alternatives are to

go over the top or back via the bush route. Sounds great, with enough variety to cater for all tastes!

Nov 2 Takapari Bike MTB
Stuart Hubbard 356-8782

Depart Sunday 8:30 am for Takapari road in the Pohangina valley. This 4-wheel-drive track/road takes you up through forest and leatherwood onto the tops of the southern Ruahines with the chance for some great views on a fine day. Have lunch at A-Frame hut then freewheel downhill all the way home.

You need moderate fitness and some mountain bike experience.

Nov 6 Thursday trampers
Russ Johnson 358-7777

Nov 6 Committee meeting

Nov 8-9 Twin Peak, Waiopahu M
Peter Burgess 354-3533

Depart Saturday 7:30am for the western Tararuas behind Levin. Peter will lead you up the Waiopahu track to Waiopahu hut for Saturday night, then over Twin Peaks and down the Gable End ridge back to the Ohau river and home on Sunday. Mostly through bush with alpine scrub in the Twin Peaks area.

Nov 8-9 Whanganui Rock all,T
Andy Backhouse 353-0774

Depart Sat 8am. The finest rock in the North Island set on the shores of Lake Taupo. All grades from beginner to extreme. Camping by the lake. A swim? And perhaps a 50m free hanging abseil for the adventurous.

Nov 13 Thursday trampers
Keith Domett 04 562-7322

Nov 13 Club night DoC activities "Focus on the Ruahines"

Speaker to be advised.

Nov 15-16 Tama + Tongariro M
Sarah Todd 357-0612

Depart Friday night. Two separate day tramps, based at the comfortable Ivan's Cabins adjacent to Tongiriro National Park. One of the days we will tramp up to the Tama Lakes between Ruapehu and Ngauruhoe. The other day we will do the world famous Tongariro Crossing.

Nov 15-16 Ngauruhoe summit M,T
Alan Bee 354-9180

Depart 6:00am Saturday for the Mangetepopo valley and a climb to the top of Ngauruhoe. If the weather is reasonable you will be able to camp on the summit. Think of the sunset and the sunrise. Spectacular!! You will need an ice-axe and crampons and on Sunday there will be a chance to practice your snowcraft skills. With a bit of luck we may even meet up with Sarah and her party.

Nov 20 Thursday trampers
Vina Cottam 354-5045

Nov 22-23 Baldy-Mitre FE
Dave Grant 357-8269

Depart Saturday 6:00am for the eastern Tararuas. Tramp up the Waingawa on the Barra track to Mitre Flats. Head on up the Barton track to the open tops then on via Baldy and the Kings to Mid King biv for Saturday night. On Sunday we will head north to Girdlestone then veer off to Brockett and Mitre, dropping back down to Mitre Flats and the long walk back down the Waingawa to the road end.

Nov 23 Roaring Stag M
Neil Campbell 359-5048

Depart Sunday 8.00 am for Putara road end in the eastern Tararuas. Head across the swing bridges and up the Herepai track before taking a left turn to Roaring Stag hut on the Ruamahanga River.

Have lunch and a look along the river edges before returning home.

Nov 23 River Safety I, All

Noel Bigwood 355-1453 or PN Police stn
Meeting at the park shelter in the Ashhurst Domain 1 pm Sunday. Learn, or brush up on how to identify and recognise river hazards. We all need to know how when and where it is safe to cross a river. Learn the latest binding techniques which allow groups of people to cross rivers in greater safety. This will be a training programme in which you will experience the real thing so wear your proper tramping clothes, bring a loaded pack and be prepared to get wet!! (don't forget the dry clothes to change into afterwards.)

**NOTE: this is in addition to Terry's River Crossing/Navigation weekend listed on the Events Card for next weekend (Nov 29/30)*

Nov 27 Thursday trampers
June Sowerby 355-2690

Nov 27 **Club night**
"Southern Alps Valleys" Rob Suisted

Rob is a well known Wellington photographer with an extensive photo library of trips into the bush and mountains. He has visited many valleys of the Southern Alps as well as the Ruahines, Tararuas, and many other areas, and will present a talk, and some stunning photographs, on some of his favourite places there. Don't miss this talk.

Trip leaders:

Please discuss with the trips convenor (Dave Grant 357-8269, or Liz Flint 356-7654), 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.

Trip participants:

If you are interested in going on a trip, please advise the leader **at least three days** in advance.

Trips often leave from the Foodtown carpark in Fergusson Street unless the leader arranges otherwise.

A charge for transport will be collected on the day of the trip, the amount depending on the distance travelled and vehicles used. Leaders should be able to give an estimate in advance.

For general information on the scheduled or alternative tramps please contact one of the trip co-ordinators Dave Grant (357-8269) or Liz Flint (356-7654).

***** OVERDUE TRIPS *****

Enquiries to: Mick Leyland (358-3183), Liz Flint (356-7654), or Sue & Lawson Pither (357-3033)

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.TZ.

I use Microsoft Word Version 7.0. 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, try sending any files as an ".RTF" (Rich Text Format) file, which can sometimes be easily converted from one software format to another, or the safest bet is to just cut-and-paste your text directly into your e-mail message.

Report writers or other trip participants are welcome to send me photos for inclusion in the newsletter. These add a great deal to the newsletter's interest and appeal.

Please note the deadline for anything to go in each month's issue is the FIRST THURSDAY of the month.

JANUARY-JUNE 1998 EVENTS CARD
Dave G & Liz F

The next events card is well underway. It will come out with the December - January Newsletter. If some of you prospective leaders haven't been contacted yet give Dave Grant (357-8269) or Liz Flint (356-7654) a call before they phone you, for those great trips you want to lead. For suggestions for Thursday night speakers and activities, Laurence Gatehouse 356-5805 is now waiting for your ideas.

EXTENDED TRIPS THIS SUMMER

The club is running two scheduled extended (longer) trips this summer holiday period, along similar lines to the two run last summer:

1. Matemateonga Walkway, Whanganui

National Park

Xmas/New Year

Medium

Leader: Malcolm Parker

The club usually organises a number of trips over the Christmas / new year period to cater for the interests and degrees of fitness of a broad range of participants. If you are looking for a nice, relaxing four day trip, where you don't have to spend 8 hours a day with a pack on your back but would rather spend half that time kicking back and enjoying the bush, staying in comfortable huts

in an area that is not crowded with heaps of other trampers doing the same as you, then think about this trip some more.

This is a holiday trip where the emphasis is on relaxing and enjoying. A similar trip was on the calendar last year and proved to be very popular. This year the trip leader would actually like to complete it !!

The track and the area are steeped in fascinating history. And on the last day we take a jet boat trip up to have a look at the Bridge to Nowhere then follow the River Road down to Wanganui.

If you are interested give Malcolm Parker a call on Ph 357 5203 or M-P.Parker@xtra.co.nz

2. Arthur's Pass

10-24 January, 1998

F, T

Leader: Terry Crippen

This is a two week combination of a 9 day trans-alpine tramping trip, and a shorter spell of some technical climbing. It is based along similar lines as the club trips to Arthur's Pass of the last 3 summers. This trip is graded Fit + Technical, ie: Snowcraft III skills and experience, some rock climbing skills, and the ability to carry a 9 day pack, usually 8 hours a day, but with the odd 13 plus hour day. The 9 day tramp will probably be: Waimakariri Valley, Taipoiti Stm, Harman Pass, Julia Valley, Popes Pass, Wilberforce and Bristed Valleys, Half Moon Saddle, Avoca Valley, Waimak. We will set up camp in a couple of places and attempt some climbs en-route. Back to Arthur's Pass and the comfort of the NZAC hut, for a rest day or two, then some more technical climbing. Maps required are NZMS 260: K33 Otira, K34 Wilberforce (put a map order in now with the club to get the 30% discount). Cost will be approx \$200-\$250 and includes transport down, all party food (breakfasts, dinners and brews), DoC fees, NZAC hut accom and luxuries in Arthurs Pass. We will be travelling down by car, so a least a full car load is necessary. People can make their own way back (suggest the red eye flight!) or head off for further tramping and climbing.

Note: I'm away till mid November but there will be info sheets at the club night about summer trips, at which Barry Scott may present some slides based on previous club trips to the area. Also so planning and transport can be organised, the **closing date** for applications is last club night in **November (27th)**, with deposit of \$150.

ANNUAL CLUB CHRISTMAS BBQ DEC 11
Each year, PNTMC meet for a Christmas Barbeque at Brian Lawrence's delightful Mt Stewart property. This occasion is not to be missed. There will be literally heaps of food, drink, and club awards for various activities.

NEW MEMBER

The club has one new member this month:

Sarah Stratton
44 Linton St, PN
Ph: 353-2922

Welcome to the club Sarah.

ALPINE CALENDARS

Our bulk order has arrived so, if you're one of the lucky ones who ordered, see Laurence Gatehouse at the next club night, or ring him on 356-5805.

MAP ORDERS

The next bulk club order will be sent off soon, so if you need maps for those summer tramps, get your order in to Laurence Gatehouse (356-5805). As club members you get great discounts (30% off shelf prices).

ANNUAL HUT PASSES

Tony Gates is now taking orders for annual hut passes. With the FMC discount you get as a club

member, this costs \$40. And if you buy it through us, we purchase them from the P

SUMMER TIPS

A little reminder on the importance of drinking water, particularly as the weather gets warmer again: Regular stops for a gulp or two of water are increasingly important. Dehydration isn't just feeling thirsty - it drains the energy and can make you feel REALLY ill. Its worth remembering both for yourself and for others around you!

[This means carrying water if you're not certain about supplies along the track. At risk of sounding like a boring Aussie import, this is an issue that I am constantly amazed at with trampers in this country. Coming from Australia, I suppose carrying loads of water has been drummed in as essential for survival. But here I am constantly hearing stories of people running short of water on a hot sunny day on the tops, only half a day after leaving a hut. I mean to say, isn't a reliable source of water (ie. in your pack) worth an extra few kilo's!?! So, if in doubt, for God's sake carry the damn stuff rather than hope for some (possibly festering) tarn along the route! I think trip leaders should also encourage enough stops on such trips to ensure party members get plenty of drink into them, before they get thirsty and dehydration becomes a problem. -Ed.]

TRIP REPORTS

STANFIELD Sunday, August 4
by "Rosemary" Cantwell

My friends Bonnie and Amy called in to take Monica and I to the Tamaki West roadend. Amy led three of our companions up the river for an easy saunter while Bonnie and I together with a new friend called Jake decided to take our companions down the road, over the bridge and up onto Holmes Ridge. But . . . you should have seen what they call a bridge . . . no way could four paws cross that half-demolished dog trap! While two companions clambered over, Malcolm found the rest of us a way over the creek where a hound could cross.

That obstacle safely negotiated, we warmed our paws climbing the farm track to the bush. It was somewhat muddy along the top but we had a good break at the lookout waiting for our "official"

leader to catch up. Liz believes in a slow, steady pace so Bonnie has to rush back and forth to keep contact.

We had a good view of Takapari Road and the snow on Takapari Peak. Bonnie and Jake led off down to the river. Jake had great leadership potential . . . pretty good at finding the track and doesn't rush too far ahead before waiting for the tailenders to re-join the group.

There was only one small problem going up the valley to Stanfield Hut . . . we weren't allowed to sample a delicious deceased beast. Strange how our companions have this aversion to an obviously delectable feast.

While Liz and Malcolm brewed a lunchtime cuppa at the hut, we got tied up! A bit mean eh? We only wanted to see if anyone had brought too

much food and didn't want to carry it home. However, "Tux" are a reasonable compromise.

The wind was a bit cold so we set off back down the valley. Hello! Woof! Another friend. After a late start P.C. had brought Pauline to meet us. We had one rest before the carpark; Bonnie's paws were sore with river shingle and crossings. She's not really a water-loving dog, though better than she used to be and getting more experienced at finding the best place to cross. We re-joined Amy and her companions at the carpark. A good day out and neat to see a new hound and new companions.

We were - the Happy Hounds - Rosemary Cantwell, Bonnie Morrison, Jake Bellaney, Amy Eder, and P.C. Coy. Our companions were Monica, Liz, Grant, Chanlidar, Pauline, Margaret, Caroline, Leal, Malcolm, and Moses.

P.S. Hi Nicky. I hear you've moved to Taranaki. Bonnie has relations over that way. A bit hard they don't let canines into National Parks though you do meet a few up the Mangorei Track to Pouakai.

BLUE RANGE Sunday, August 24

by Liz Flint

We met at the police station at 8:00am and waited a while for John who didn't turn up, then set off for Kiriwhakapapa Rd where we re-assembled. The day looked as if it was going to be quite pleasant, neither hot nor cold. The youngest of the group was 7 years old and was quietly itching to get on the way. Rod led the way with the fitter members of the group while Arthur and I kept an eye on those doing the tramp for the first time. Elizabeth, Richard's sister, found the going a bit tough so we took care of 7 year old Joseph and let him guide us up.

Joseph had never seen snow before and so Bev made him feel quite comfortable with the feel of a snowball. This brought a great grin to his face.

We sat outside the hut to have lunch and only packed up when it started to spit a bit heavily. Joseph led the way back down and we all followed at a very leisurely pace, all arriving back at the same time. Joseph arrived back a tired boy having held onto Warren's hand over the last portion of the track and looking forward to Uncle

Richard's promised ice-cream if he could keep his eyes open long enough. Well done Joseph.

We met Peter Carver at the bottom of the track; he'd detoured up Cow Creek a bit so missing us.

We were: Liz & Arthur Flint, Anna Williamson, Rod McKenzie, Bev Akers, Alan & Jenny Cameron, John Gee Taylor, Richard Lockett, his sister Elizabeth and her son Joseph, Monica Cantwell, Vina Cottam, and Warren Wheeler, with Peter Carver somewhere ahead of us all the way. Thanks everyone for making it such a pleasant day.

TARANAKI ASCENT - PART I September 5-6
by John Phillips

Peter Burgess and I set off from PN before 6pm Friday night for the drive over to Dawson Falls. On arrival (after figuring out in the dark that the track start had changed since my last visit) we set off under head-lamps on a lovely clear night up the track to Kapuni Lodge. The puddles turned crunchy just before Hooker Shelter, and then snow, which was sufficiently firm to require some good step-kicking to get safely across to Kapuni Lodge without crampons.

Graham, Janet and Bruce (who had driven over earlier that afternoon) had the standard roaring Kapuni Lodge coal fire going, but in a far more upmarket stove than my last visit two years ago. In fact the whole hut had undergone quite a substantial renovation, including tiled floor entrance resplendent with a very large Egmont Alpine Club logo!

Saturday dawned with a fair bit of low misty cloud, but this burned off soon after we were underway after 7am. It was a crisp but beautifully sunny morning as we made our way up Fanthams - Jim Hickey got it right this time. On Fanthams summit, checking out Syme Hut was a unique experience - the first time I've had to slide 2 metres downhill to get into a hut, and an ice-axe to haul your way out again!

After a snack break in the dull blue light of the interior, we braved strong biting winds on our emergence as we donned crampons again to venture on across Rangitoto Flat. Once on the main ascent up the south slope, conditions were much better & seemed a bit more sheltered from the winds which had swung to the northeast.

Copious lashings of sunscreen were needed for the sun which, by now, was streaming down magnificently from above the main summit up ahead.

Four hours from Kapuni Lodge we entered the summit crater and settled down for lunch in the sun, amidst the calm shelter of stunning sastrugi ice formations all around us - a magical landscape. We wandered up to the final summit after lunch, only to meet quite a gathering of other climbers from the northern route. Quite an unusual feeling for a major mountain summit - even more so with one person taking photographs of two others cart-wheeling across the summit flat, against the backdrop of a very dark blue Tasman Sea.

Everyone was in quite a jubilant mood about the stunning weather and views (especially across to Ruapehu). Photographic opportunities abounded, with fantastic ice formations and outcrops all around the summit, in particular Shark's Tooth to the east and the Sisters to the west.

Gorged on fine weather summit fever, we gathered packs and set off back down the way we came. Some judicious bum-sliding made for a hasty descent, and we reached Kapuni Lodge by about 3pm, a little over an hour from the main summit. A lazy afternoon cuppa followed, while basking in the sunshine streaming in through the hut window. Another unusual experience for this part of the world!

I was originally planning to return to PN first thing the following morning but, considering the early finish to the day, decided to return that evening, leaving the group to other pursuits the following day. The skies remained clear on the drive back to PN, the mountain a large silhouette cone in the rear view mirror.

This was a superb climb, the sort that makes a whole winter seem worth waiting for. Thanks Graham for leading the trip. We were: Graham Peters, Janet Wilson, Bruce van Brunt, Peter Burgess and John Phillips.

TARANAKI ASCENT - PART II

Sept 5-6 by Peter Burgess

After John left on Saturday afternoon, we lazed in the afternoon sun for a while until it went down very suddenly behind East Ridge and it quickly

began to cool down. After struggling for a while with the stove, we discovered the "secret" lever at the bottom, which unlike the one at the top makes the fire go really well. We were soon quite comfortable.

Next morning dawned fine once again and after a casual start and the consumption of a great deal of fried food by some (later to be regretted), we went out onto the nearest snow slope and proceeded to practise belaying. This was a much more pleasant experience than usual on snowcraft courses I have attended due to both the nice weather and the relaxed style of instruction from Bruce. After belaying our way to the top (of the slope, not the mountain), Bruce showed us how to make a snow bollard for abseiling. We then practised some more belay techniques before escaping from the fierce sun (the lemonade in Graham's pack was almost too hot to drink) back to the hut for lunch.

After a lazy lunch and some contortions involving a broomstick (the less said the better), we loaded up the gear and headed down. In places on the descent the track was still quite icy, thanks to the cold clear weather. As we looked back from the car park the clouds seemed to have closed in on the mountain, however, as we drove away it was clear again behind us. Has there ever been such a fine weekend on Taranaki?

CLIMBING WHAKAPAPA, RUAPEHU

Sept 13-15 by Warren Wheeler

Friday night: Travelled in mighty Renault to Top of the Bruce. In perfect conditions followed the chair-lift up to NZAC hut on Knoll Ridge. Took an hour and fifteen minutes. Glad it wasn't windy as forecast. First ones there. Another party arrived after midnight from Auckland. Wind picked up - near epic.

Saturday: Climbing on the Pinnacles. Hard to pick which peak so went for the middle one - Second Pinnacle, I think. Joined up on summit for late lunch and a brew. A bit hairy sidling up on the north side, with soft thin steep snow - rope re-assuring. Ice chute on south side looked more fun for Nigel and Richard. Cloud coming and going. Fine. Took the loop route home. Descent straight-forward except for an interesting hard ice pitch. Jaws dropped watching ice-climbers beneath the Gorilla.

Hut filled with three other parties - good for a natter. Cheesecake looked good. Beaut sunset has everyone outside - very nice thank you.



Sunday: Up at dawn - too hot, couldn't sleep. Up Easy Ridge in crampons and along rim to Dome Shelter. Fine with the usual breeze down slope. Almost calm on top - views for miles. Hello Coromandel. Terry lets loose a small slab avalanche while ducking out of sight for a **** (call of nature).

Wandered across the plateau to the base of north rim and picked a likely playground. Plugged up and roped up for the upper steep bit - attacked the icy bits for fun. Richard's power belay pulls me over the cornice with the wind blowing spindrift up from under. Great photo opportunity as Nigel belays Terry up their interesting route. Wind tremendous on the lip - shooting geysers of spindrift straight up past another party playing around. Left Nigel to exit direct to the hut and summited Te Heu Heu through a swirling eddy of spindrift forming a tunnel or tube (surfer jargon there, sorry). Big-footed down Pinnacle Ridge to inspect the TTC snow-caves in the sunny lee slopes. Lunch.

Peter Gates came over to say gudday before heading off home - unrecognisable in full balaclava sun block. Bumslide in black "nappy bag" - surface a bit too chunky for comfort. Dodged skiers back to hut. Packed up. Ta ta to Terry at about 3 o'clock. Ice cream and ginger beer break in Ohakune. Home for tea. Too late for chapstick, but.

Nice one Terry.

Richard Lovell, Nigel Green, Terry Crippen (overstayer and leader) and Warren Wheeler (reporting).

SUNRISE HUT September 28

by Trishan Singh

My first view of the southern Ruahines, as we arrived in a convoy of cars, was dampened by a fine drizzle of rain. We assembled as a group, and headed up the slope at varying speeds.

The track was first class! (even allowing for the previous 24 hours' rainfall) and consisted of a continual upward zig-zag to the top. Our first-time leader, Heather, panicked when arriving at Sunrise Hut, she found the summit virtually void of the group she had started with. We were eventually re-assembled & enjoyed lunch basking in the afternoon sun and overlooking great views of southern Hawkes Bay.

The fitter/keener fraction of the group headed further along the ridge, where views of Mt Ruapehu and Ngauruhoe could be seen. On the journey down, I split off with a few others and walked out along the river, giving us an opportunity to practise our river crossing techniques.

It was an enjoyable Sunday outing, and a successful first trip led by Heather, especially given the size of the group - 18 people!

We were: Neil Campbell, Maria Hermannssen, Marion Carey, Margaret Easton, Duncan Headily, Gina Fermor, Franciska van Lune, Jenny Pritchard and her friend Rose, Marion Leyland, Sarah Stratton, Monica Cantwell, Judy Callesen, Warren Wheeler, Peter Melialieu, Trishan Singh, and Heather and Laurence Gatehouse.

"POSSUM-TRACKING IN THE SNOW"

- A FINE DAY ON SAWTOOTH RIDGE

(PART I) September 13/14 by Buzz

R12 - Some language may offend

This is a paid advertisement for Buzz's car

[Hmmm... - Ed.]

OK, well nothing was planned for this one - it just happened that the weather forecast was for snow Friday night and clear by Sunday. Couldn't really miss the opportunity and with John hankering to get into the hills, having had a brilliant Taranaki trip the previous weekend, who was I to deny him.

I have to admit I was pretty keen to get out and having listened to others like Andrew Carvell, Tony Gates, Nigel Barrett and Derek Sharp rave about the 1993 Sawtooth Ridge trip and the '94 Winter Classic and the '95..... well you get the picture - and it's always a pretty picture despite the conditions. Needless to say I wanted to do it but not with the fitness essential gang whom I always think I'll hold up.

[*Stop-press: Derek now informs us that he has bought some brand new salopettes which, I am assured, means that he doesn't have to go flat out any more to keep warm.* - Ed.]

Anyway, Buzz and John's impromptu assault on Sawtooth Ridge got underway with a casual start mid-Saturday morning getting up Kashmir Road by 11am. We promptly got our gear together to the rather loud TICK, TICK, TICK of an over heated engine cooling down (and don't even think about giving my Cortina a hard time - it's been damn good and it's not my fault the head has been taken off since for yet more repairs). Please try to ignore this statement if you see a 'for sale' ad for a Cortina in a future edition of PNTMC news.

Anyway, I didn't think it got too hot but those that went on the risk management course might look at it as a potential "lemon" - not the bloody car, remember I like my car, but the fact that it could conceivably be a problem when we got back. Talking about lemons, the cellphone left sitting in full view on the back seat would be a bigger lemon - someone might get tempted to break into my beautiful car and nick it - the phone that is! - and I guess the car 'cause it really is a good car and with a lot of luck and enough bucks in hand it could be yours. Yep, you guessed it - not only do you get the car but we'll throw in the cellphone for free if you're one of the first callers.....

So, on that note we left the trusty stead to cool off for the weekend (accompanied by the cellphone), and headed for the hills. It always seems hard to get the actual trip report started, probably because so much seems to happen before you get going and every other report goes on about how great the trip was - this won't be much different - bad luck, but read on you might enjoy it. At any rate

you can look at the lovely picture of a really good car!

Saturday afternoon we intended to duck over the ridge and up the north branch of the Tukituki River to Daphne Hut and then up Daphne Spur to Daphne Ridge, have a look for a few daphnes (couldn't resist) and stop the night at Howlett's Hut. This we did (except for finding a few daphnes) with snow flurries and sunshine even as we crossed the first open paddocks - things were looking promising as long as it all cleared by next morning.

The stroll up the river was really nice albeit a little cool but not bad. Tramping boots and socks were left at Daphne to dry out and plastic boots were donned for the circuit - we'd be back here tomorrow. Not too many photos were taken on the way in due to the lousy conditions but we were prepared. I had my Canon Elph with the APS films and the Canon EOS 35mm, John his camera for slides and also the video camera. It'd better be a bloody good day tomorrow!

Buzz's gourmet cooking that night - sweet 'n sour pork with tenderly fried carrots, courgettes, yams, onions, mushrooms and pineapple on a bed of light, fluffy, white rice - Mmmm-mmm.

Who needs to be away from home? Our decision to not light a fire meant an early night to bed, in the hope of a great day tomorrow - it was still questionable outside with a half moon shining through a wisp of cloud that was wispy enough to drop light snow.

views. As we approached Tiraha, Sawtooth Ridge came into view and we were mightily impressed - I hadn't been here before - outstanding.

In the middle of the night John opened his mezzanine skylight window with a 'WOW' that wakened the rest of the hut (me) as he gazed out at the view to the north - not a cloud in the sky, and the stunning white Tiraha in full view in the brilliant moonlight. We could hardly get back to sleep in anticipation - we probably should have gone then!

Next morning, usual frozen billy and stiff socks but more importantly - clear skies still there with just a hint of a breeze and a beautiful sunrise to the east shining through the odd patch of radiative fog in the valleys and sparkling off the frost on the lowland paddocks. Be there someday, Howlett's is a beautiful hut with a beautiful view

Then, as we sidled around the top to the west side of Tiraha, into a stiffening breeze, snow capped ridges opened out towards the winter green of the upper Rangitikei Valley. Just beyond stood Ruapehu where, on the backside, we knew Terry and his troops would be enjoying fantastic climbing conditions as well. Tony was supposed to be skiing somewhere in the Ruahines so we figured he would be out enjoying the conditions too. To the south Palmy looked miserable in thick cloud - typical. *[To be continued...]*

and in the mornings it can be really 'cool' as well! So you guessed it again - we sure picked a beauty.

7am and away (too late says Tony), following possum footprints in the snow (hmm - hardy little buggers) through the mountain beech along the rest of Daphne Ridge. Up onto Tiraha (1668m) with crampons attached and just great tramping/climbing conditions and boy what a view!!

Yep, we were happy.

Like I said, you've got to get up on them there hills (and pray for good weather). We were undoubtedly spoilt and didn't we know it - cameras out and continuous stop and start for pictures and just to stand back and admire the

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