
PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217, PALMERSTON NORTH

Newsletter - November 1997

THIS ISSUE

TRIP REPORTS:

Labour w/end in the Kaimanawas
Sawtooth Ridge part 2
not-quite-Oriwa
Cattle Creek (not-quite-Ohutu-Ridge)
Titahi Bay Rock, Mitre Peak
and more...

CLUB NIGHTS

NOVEMBER 13	“Kakapo - Codfish Island”	Wayne Beggs (DoC)
NOVEMBER 27	“Southern Alps Valleys”	Rob Suisted
DECEMBER 4	Committee Meeting	
DECEMBER 11	CLUB END OF YEAR BBQ	at Brian Lawrence’s place

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 & EVENTS

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.

Nov 13 Club night

“Kakapo Recovery Programme on Codfish Island” by Wayne Beggs (DoC)

Wayne visited the island in May 1997 to assist with nest minding. This promises to be a fascinating evening, with Wayne presenting a selection of slides of the Codfish Island environment and of course the kakapo themselves.

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 Tongariro 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 trappers
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 trappers
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.

Nov 29,30 River Crossing, Navigation
I, All Terry Crippen 356-3588

A weekend of instruction and practice to further your various tramping skills.

Saturday 10 am at the Ashhurst Domain Navigation A short practical compass exercise to lead into Sundays activity. Also to warm you up for the River Safety practical. Meet at the Ashhurst Domain public shelter

Saturday 1 pm at the Ashhurst Domain River Safety Practical: Correct river crossing methods are essential for most trampers. This practical session is under the guidance of an instructor from the Manawatu branch of the NZ Mountain Safety Council. Meet at the Ashhurst Domain public shelter. So come with your normal tramping gear: boots, polyprop, and a pack containing a load approximating a weekend trip - well done up in watertight plastic bag.

Sunday depart 7 am Navigation practice: Somewhere in the Tararua ranges. A full day activity, in pleasant bush surrounds and some interesting features. Everyone can benefit from this, novice trumper or experienced bush navigator.

All should be enjoyable and worthwhile. Contact Terry for details.

Nov 30 Gorge Walkway E
John Phillips 358-1874

Cancelled

Dec 4 Thursday trampers
Pam Dransfeld 357-0008

Dec 4 Committee meeting

Dec 7 Titahi rock all, I, T
Dave Henwood 353-2370

Depart 7:30 am. 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.

Dec 7 Rangi Hut E/family
Kath Lyttle 329-8608

Depart 7.30 am. Travel via Apiti to the road end and take an easy sidle up to Rangi hut passing through a succession of lowland forest, beech, higher altitude kaikawaka and tussock. On a fine day you will enjoy fabulous views over the Rangiwhahia hill country & Ruapehu to the west, and rolling tussock tops to the east. Lunch at Rangi hut and then an easy down-hill back to the cars. Suitable most ages.

Dec 11 Thursday trampers
Carolyn Brodie 358-6576

Dec 11 Club night: End of year BBQ

This is the last 'club night' for the year and will be a repeat of the tradition of previous years', with a BBQ out in the country at Brian Lawrence's place. From 6-30pm on, bring all your goodies to BBQ and eat and share, as well as your liquid refreshments. There may be a spot of venison.

DIRECTIONS: Take the main road in the direction of Sanson/Bulls. Turn left into Penny Road about 200 metres before the Mt Stewart lookout/memorial; Brian's place is about 1 km down on the right hand side. See you there.

Dec 13-14 Glaciercraft M, I
Andy Backhouse 353-0774

Depart Sat 7:30 am This follows on from the Snowcraft instruction. Safe glacier travel is an essential skill for most climbing and trans-alpine tramping in the High Alps of the South Island. This will be a day or weekend trip, depending on demand. (In the past we have held this activity in Feb but have moved it into Dec to allow practice before the summer South Island trips).

Dec 13-14 Avalanche Flats E/M
Richard Lockett 323-0948

Depart 8.00 am Saturday. You will enjoy a drive on a dinkum back country road behind Shannon to the top Mangahao dam then wander up the forested Mangahao river valley to the well appointed Mangahao hut for the night. Lunch on the way at Harris creek hut. Back out the same way on Sunday.

Dec 18 Thursday trampers
Rosemary & Ken Hall 356-8538

Dec 27-30 Mataemateonga Walkway M
Malcolm Parker 357-5203

Depart Palmerston North 8.30am Sat 27 for Wanganui and pick up transport to the start of the Matemateonga track off the Whangamomona road. This is a holiday trip where the emphasis is on relaxing and enjoying so you will spend three easy days enjoying the bush along the walkway and staying in comfortable and uncrowded huts. On Tuesday the 30th you arrive at the Wanganui River and catch a lift on a jet boat upriver to the Mangaparua stream were you can walk in to the "Bridge to Nowhere". A jet boat ride back down

the river to Wanganui arriving about 5.00pm. Transport will cost about \$120-\$150 depending on numbers. **Note:** To enable bookings to be made in time please contact Malcolm *before December 6.*

January 10-24, 1998 Arthur's Pass F, T
 Terry Crippen 356-3588
 Depart evening of Sat 10 to catch the 1:30 am ferry on the Sunday. 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, and in similar areas, to the club trips of the last 3 summers. The 9 day tramp will probably be: Waimakariri, Taipo, Julia Valleys, Popes Pass, Wilberforce, Bristed Valleys, Half Moon Saddle, Avoca, Waimak. We

will attempt some basic 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. For these trips Snowcraft III skills and experience, some rock climbing skill and the ability to carry a 9 day pack are required. Cost will be approx \$200-\$250 and includes transport down, all party food (breakfasts, dinners and brews), DoC fees, NZAC hut accom and the odd luxury in AP. We will be travelling down by car, so 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: Since food and transport take quite a bit of organising for this type of trip, the closing date for applications is *last club night in November (27th)*, with deposit of \$150.

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.NZ.

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.

EXTENDED TRIPS THIS SUMMER
Malcolm P & Terry C

The club is running two scheduled extended (longer) trips this summer holiday period, along similar lines to the two run last summer. One to the Matemateaonga Walkway and one to Arthur's Pass National Park. Check the "Up and Coming Trips & Events" for details. Please note early closing dates for names with deposits for these trips.

NEW MEMBER

The club has one new member this month:

Nigel Green
2 Walkers Road RD7
Palmerston North
Phone: 354-4823

Welcome to the club Nigel.

FOR SALE

Garmont Explorer Tramping Boots, Size 10 (45). Seven months old. Half size too small for owner, \$200 (\$310 new).

Contact Richard Lovell 358-4423

BOOK REVIEW By Tony Gates

"Traversing the Tararua S-K"

Accounts of week-end, two-day, and 24-hour Schorman-Kaitoke traverses of the Tararua North Island New Zealand via the Main Range, Tarn Ridge, and in reverse!

By Wellington Tramping and Mountaineering Club/ Cuthbertson Enterprises (1997)

This is a tidy little paperback produced by a prominent Wellington club on the occasion of their 50th anniversary. It is a valuable historical document, listing changes in vegetation, animal

numbers, huts, equipment, and people. This is a group of stories from club newsletters of a famous endurance Tararua tramp that was popular back in the 1960's and 1970's, and is occasionally attempted during the 1980's and 1990's. It was never an official race, with official rules.

The tramp may be seldom attempted, or even completed these days, but every Tararua trumper knows about the places it goes to. It begins at the Mangatainoka valley, at the 1960's entrance to the Forest Park near Herepai, and heads south via a variety of routes to end up at Kaitoke, near Upper Hutt. The easiest route is via the valleys, the usual route via Dundas Ridge- Girdlestone- Holdsworth- Totara Flats- Kaitoke, and the most notorious route via the main range all the way! Those first to even consider it kept their plans secret to avoid inter club rivalry! By the mid 60's however, the TTC, WTMC and HVTC were sending numerous SK expeditions to see if it could actually be done. There were (of course) numerous failures, but some did achieve success in a weekend. Lots of entrants seemed to "conk out" north of Holdsworth, and of course the weather was seldom kind. Many who completed it spoke of incredible exhaustion, dehydration, and "never again", and considered it much more demanding than Himalayan climbing!

The numerous entrants to the SK during the 1960's never did complete their goal of completing the main range version in under 24 hours, despite numerous plans and organisation. This was in fact finally achieved in 1995, and only with support (the same person ran the Southern Crossing in 4hrs 42). The closest anybody came to completing it solo and without support was in 1989, in 25 ½ hours. Perhaps we will have to attempt to take the longest time possible over the trip!

TRIP REPORTS

OHUTU RIDGE (AKA CATTLE CREEK)

August 23-24 by Sarah Stratton

This was my first weekend club trip. With the forecast set for snow and more, I packed all my winter gear in sight, and bought as much chocolate as I could possibly carry! There happened to be a slight change in the route plan, given that myself and Trishen were new to the club and that the weather conditions were not

suitable for a ridge route. We were to stay the night at Mid Pohangina hut instead.

Saturday morning, an early start-I was pretty tempted to sleep in, and when we got to the track start, I was almost wishing I had! Putting on more or less all of my gear in sight, set off with our intrepid gang of five with the first hut to shelter in...Stanfield Hut. Following and fording the west Tamaki river we came across snow quite

early in the piece. When we did reach the hut, taking quite a bit longer by normal time standards, Mid Pohangina hut became a 'slight possibility' as a place to stay the night- The plan to sleep the night under a tent fly was also abandoned- I think we would have been able to rustle up a snow cave!

At a turning point, on the way to Cattle Creek, Mick suggested the creek descent as the better option- It was pretty hard going. With so much snow, the track was indiscernible, and rain was adding some extra litres to the river. This was some good training I believe for Graeme's southern crossing!

Trish decided that the easiest method of river crossing was swimming at several points and I sat down to rest every now and again in the positively glacial waters. Several waterfalls down the back of my underpants later I was really looking forward to the prospect of a warm hut...I think some cross country skis would have been good for the snowy bits.

Since it took us so much longer to reach Cattle Creek Hut and that the weather was not improving, we called it a 'day' at Cattle Creek Hut, hoping that the conditions would improve on the Sunday.

Given the option again of going to 'Mid-Po' Hut, Trish and I figured it could wait and we therefore made our way back towards Stanfield Hut, taking the ridge route to add some variety. It was a whole lot easier than the river! By the time we had reached the 'summit', patches of blue had started to appear in the sky- heralding the kind of day that highlights how much fun winter tramping can be!

Took a route that brought us up to the Holmes ridge and out to some farmland- If there was any views to be had, this was definitely the day to catch them. Walked back to our starting point and were whisked back to civilization before the rain had a second chance of drenching what little dry gear we had left.

As a first trip, this fits into one of my epic lists, and hopefully one of many more fun times to come with the club. Yup, I have been back! We were...Mick Leyland, Lew Pritchard, Graeme Peters, Trishen Singh-Mahal, and Sarah Stratton

“POSSUM-TRACKING IN THE SNOW”

- A FINE DAY ON SAWTOOTH RIDGE
(PART II) September 13/14 by Buzz

We continue on from last month's report, with our party members sidling around Tiraha to stunning views across the upper Rangitikei valleys to Ruapehu.

We head on down the north side onto Sawtooth Ridge. To our amazement those possum footprints appeared again - very keen. The wander (climb) along Sawtooth Ridge was relatively easy, although steep drop-offs either side made one a tad wary and I guess there were a few tricky spots - certainly not the Snowcraft VII that Nigel Scott experienced a couple of years ago up there - mind you, we didn't slip, thankfully. Neither did the possum, it seems (tracks still with us), although a few sideways skid marks across some icy steep bits tells me that this possum was shitting itself at the time! Saved only by "crampon" claws!

Two-thirds the way along and the wind picked up a bit and the Palmy cloud could be seen to be heading our way up the Pohangina and Oroua. Still it was glorious and the sparkling ice crystals lifted over the ridge crest to be swirled in the lee eddy - magic.

As we climbed up onto Ohuinga (1686m) the cloud came and went along with a reasonably strong wind making the experience even more magical with a feeling of real alpine remoteness. We revelled in our surroundings. Truly this was great. Getting off the east side of Ohuinga was somewhat tricky and involved a long backward drop toe-pointing down a steep gully to the south before sidling across to the saddle joining Black Ridge. Here we paused in the shelter of Ohuinga for lunch, and yet more photographs.

Setting off again about 1-30pm, the saddle down to Black Ridge was actually the most awkward part of the whole trip as the ridge line was razor edged with very steep icy slopes to the right and not quite so steep but somewhat unstable almost slushy stuff to the left.

We were somewhat behind on our estimated schedule. However, at this stage we hoped to be back at Daphne by 5.30 and to the car around 8.30pm. Crampons off on Black Ridge and pretty much down hill all the way. Still a fair bit of snow cover and - you guessed it - bloody possum tracks again. This was one *keen* possum! Passed Tarn Biv at 3.45 and

a sign saying 3½ hours to go to Daphne. Whoops, boy are we going to be late or what! On we went with only the odd stop for a drink.

The track was very good till it got to the last steep drop down to the river where slips and mud obviously made for difficult track maintenance. What the hell, it was downhill and anyway there was Daphne and it was only just after 5.30 - we made good time and were back on schedule almost except that we stopped for a bit of a snack and a rest.

We left our plastic boots on (could this be a lemon?) for the trek down river so as to keep our tramping boots dry. Good move and bad in the twilight. Plastic boots don't have much grip and with algae covered rocks and diminishing light we had a few awkward crossings. At one stage John, going first, slipped and the water was suddenly almost chest deep [*something to do with the fact that I was nearly horizontal at this point* - Ed.]. Buzz naturally took a different crossing, bright guy, and only slipped in to his waist (bugger it all).

Anyway, we got to the end of the river section a little wet and getting decidedly tired but still happy-ish. Perhaps we had revelled a little too long while up the top - damned easy to do. I think it was about here as we did the climb out over the last ridge that I figured it had been a long day and still we weren't at the car. Onward and upward and shit - memories of an overheating car. It'd better go!

With head lamps on two very weary trampers finally emerged onto farm land and after stopping to fill water bottles at the last creek (for the car - we actually thought about it) we got there 10pm.

We did it. Andrew had told me that they had taken 14 hours to do the trip during that "classic of '93" - Ha, we beat them - we took 15 and yes I suppose you could say it was fitness essential. And to cap off a great day we had cellphone reception and the car went like a dog but still it went! (and it's a real beauty).

We were (and still are) John Phillips and Alan Bee.

NORTH RANGE ROAD

September 14 by Catherine Farquhar

Seven people got away to a remarkably prompt start this day and enjoyed a very windy walk along part of North Range Road. We did experience some calmer spots in the pine forest section of the track where we stopped for lunch. Certainly any remaining 'winter cobwebs' were blown away on the return trip!

We were: Catherine Farquhar, Margaret Easton, Marlene Henderson, Judy Wilson, Duncan Hederly, Sarah Stratton, Catherine Gibbs.

SOUTHERN CROSSING - TARARUAS

September 19-21 by John Phillips

A party of five was to be on this trip but Tony & I, not relishing a long Saturday, set off from Otaki Forks about 6pm Friday evening in light drizzle, bound for Field Hut.

This was my first venture into the southern Tararuas, so there was some degree of anticipation about doing this well-travelled route. Darkness set in as we reached the bush, and the drizzle persisted for the rest of the evening's walk. The

track was easy to follow under torchlight, however, and we reached the hut just after 8pm.

We had a reasonable night's sleep as none of Tony's horror stories materialised about half of Wellington descending on the hut Friday midnights.

Its hard to keep a good man down & Tony was off 7-30am the next morning, up to get a view from Table Top. And so he did according to his photos I saw later - it all started clagging in as I made my way up 10-20 minutes behind him. It was pleasant walking nevertheless, with a hint of sunshine & blue sky above the mist, and no wind. It was a little more sombre above the bushline as the cloud really set in, but there was plenty of snow & some interesting ice formations among the tussock. We were glad we didn't decide to go for Kime Hut the previous night.

We holed up in Kime Hut to wait for the Saturday party of three to catch up. With Tony 'in the pit' & myself applying every available layer of clothing to keep warm, I found it quite bizarre that such a well appointed hut above the snowline (on a popular crossing route) should be devoid of a stove/fireplace. Fortunately the cloud began to clear and it became unusually warm & humid (outside), with great slabs of snow sliding off the hut roof.

Graeme, Mick & Llew arrived just before midday and, after a quick lunch, we set off towards Mount Hector. There was no shortage of snow but it was all fairly soft on reasonable grades and we felt comfortable at our decision not to bring crampons & ice-axes.

The final bits of sastrugi ice were falling off the memorial cross as we stopped at the summit for a quick snack and photo session. From here on the cloud lifted sufficiently to make a really pleasant walk along the Beehives & Armstrong around to the dress Circle - striking deep white snow along the lee edge and glimpses back to Mount Hector ad across to Kapiti Island to the west.

After another snack break the cloud set in again as we approached Alpha, and the track turned into a small stream with the melting snow as we lost altitude. Our Saturday contingent were starting to feel a little weary at this stage after such a long day. However, from Alpha summit it was a short

drop down to the superbly appointed Alpha Hut for the night.

For those who haven't seen the refurbished hut - it would be a place one might consider for a holiday let alone a tramp - heaps of kitchen space and a superb deck overlooking the moss-festooned mountain beech forest around it - well done DoC!

About 8pm, while washing dishes outside, we were intrigued by a number of torch-lights bobbing around 100m or so down the track from the hut, with stressed calls of "where's the bloody track?" Soon a party of 6 or so stumbled out of the bush into the hut. They had left the Kaitoke roadend about 11am that morning and, by the looks of the pack contents upended on the kitchen bench, had brought half of Foodtown with them. I distinctly recall seeing several cartons of eggs, for example. As it turned out, they had apparently lost the track only 100m before the hut & might have been in strife if it wasn't for our own lights visible from within the hut!!!

Sunday morning and we set off down across Hells Gate (a bit of an over-statement I think) to Omega, then south along Marchant Ridge. This walk was through superb mountain beech forest, a delight given that the cloud was not going to give us too many views of the surrounding ranges.

Mick and Graeme were keen on doing the river route rather than the ridge. Surprisingly we caught them up further ahead as they had missed the Omega track turnoff. They set off down the Block XIV track instead and we got an even bigger surprise later when, sitting down eating lunch further along Marchant Ridge, Mick and Graeme appeared from behind us! They had given up on the Block XIV Track after losing the track & bashed their way back up to the ridge track!

More surprises later, on the bush burnout near Marchant when, having dropped behind the rest of the party a little, I get Tony Gates running up behind me, huffing and puffing after trying to catch *me* up - when I'd dropped behind, he waited for me & meanwhile I'd sidled around the other side of the rock bluff where he was waiting. He soon spotted me half a kilometre off on the hillside *ahead!*

No more surprise re-unions for the remainder of the trip as we dropped down to the old Dobsons

Hut site and then along the most incredible wide mud corridor through to the Kaitoke roadend.

A good trip enjoyed by all. We were: Graeme Roberts (leader), Mick Leyland, Llew Pritchard, Tony Gates, and John Phillips.

NOT-QUITE-ORIWA

October 11-12

by James Broadbent

Weather forecast: Showers clearing by lunchtime Saturday, fine Sunday:

TG: "Sounds OK, lets go to Oriwa Biv."

JB: "Yeah, right on."

So we go to the Waikawa Roadend and start up the track to Waitewaewae Trig. Its a good track, intermittently marked, and recently cleared of supplejack, but pretty muddy when its raining, like today.

JB: "No worries, it'll clear up soon."

TG: "Yeah, then we'll be able to see where we're going."

It's about 2½ hours up to the trig, and we turn east and go along the rather flat ridge to point 969.

JB: "Shame it hasn't cleared much."

TG: "I know, it makes the navigation a pain."

So we get out the maps and compasses, and navigate down into the upper headwaters of the East Waitewaewae (described by Merv Rogers in *Tararua Footprints* as "...truly delightful"). Its slow going in the small, steep and not very delightful creek, and we go up to the ridge to the north of us.

JB: "You know, I think the rain's getting heavier if anything. Bloody misty too."

TG: "Why don't we put up the fly, and wait it out."

There's a few reasonable campsites on the ridge, but we need water so we have to go back down to the creek, a couple of hundred metres down from where we left it.

TG: "Hey look, some open flats."

JB: "They're truly delightful."

So that ends up as our campsite. Fly up, dinner eaten by 4pm, into our pits and out of the rain.

TG: "If we're to go on to Oriwa we'd have to leave by 5 this afternoon."

JB: "Yeah, at least."

Its 4.45 and its stopped raining and the sky looks a lot brighter.

TG: "What do you think, shall we press on?"

JB: "Naah, its just Huey playing games with us, he'll make it rain again soon."

Sunday, and sure enough, it's rained all night, which pretty much cuts out any plans we had of getting to the Biv and returning via the Makaretu. Misty & miserable conditions, so we just go back up to Waitewaewae and slip-slide-away down the track back to the car.

Good trip all the same. There's nothing like sitting in a pit under a fly in the rain yarning away about past adventures, and planning new ones, particularly getting to that Oriwa Biv!

TG: Tony Gates

JB: James Broadbent

TITAHI BAY ROCK

October 11

by Lyn Murphy

Titahi Bay north of Wellington is a good spot for rock climbing novices like myself as well as the more experienced. The cliffs below the radio masts have a good selection of short routes including some with permanent bolts at the top to put the ropes through.

It is a picturesque spot beside the sea with good views out to Mana Island and that special character only rusting car wrecks can offer. Andy was quick to point out how climbing helmets are built to take massive impacts from above, very reassuring here where plummeting vehicles are a greater hazard than loose rock.

We were lucky enough to get a fine day and not be hit by either. We started with the slab before progressing on to routes around the corner. While Peter and Warren clambered up and abseiled down a few and made it look easy, I made a world record attempt at staying in the same place on the verge of what seemed to me an impossible move only a metre or so from the top. It seemed like two hours but may have only have been.....hmmm 40 minutes. Poor Andy, my patient belayer, who had just climbed the same route without a rope, tried every form of encouragement possible including coming down alongside me to survey the situation. It was only his eventual suggestion that I could perhaps climb off my comfortable perch and try going back a little and up a slightly different way that finally inspired some shaky upward momentum.

Suffice to say I don't do this often but it all goes to show, even nervous late-starters can have a go.

Later Andy told us a bit about the colourful array of climbing tackle on his harness. He gave us a bit

of a run down on their history and we had a go at using some of them the easy way - with our feet firmly planted on the ground. We clambered up the path, had an ice-cream and headed home.

We were: Lyn, Peter, Andy and Warren.

MITRE PEAK

18-19 October by Brian Large

Warren Wheeler invited me to climb Mitre Peak on this weekend but, viewing the Tararuas at 7am on Saturday, or more correctly peering through the rain toward where they should be, I half expected a cancellation. However, dead on time, France's version of the all-terrain vehicle (the famed Renault 12) roared to a stop in front of me. Introductions complete, away we went.

A cool breeze kept the four of us from overheating on the three hour walk into Mitre Flats hut. Lunch followed, sitting in the sun outside the hut watching cloud swirl around the tops. Around 2-30pm we set off to bush-bash our way to Lookout Point. Whoever had looked out from Lookout Point had looked out long ago as there was naught to see but trees. So, we continued up to the top of the ridge for a view of tomorrow's 'lots of ups'.

We returned to the hut to find four other occupants (one with a tail and 4WD). Under Warren's *close* guidance ("the courgettes should be sliced lengthwise", and "the carrots will have to be removed from the other chopped vegetables, please"), a most 'excellent' meal was prepared. The evening was spent telling really bad jokes and listening to bursts of static from the hut warden's radio as he tried unsuccessfully to find a station - much to my relief. The moreporks finally got their say around 10-30pm.

Sunday we set off in calm weather and high cloud for 3 hours of up, arriving at Mitre Peak around 11am. The views were stunning, albeit a little short-lived (around 3 or 4 minutes in fact). Cloud and a very chill wind cut lunch to a brief snack before we descended to warmer climes and lunch at the hut. The 3-hour walk out to the car-park seemed to have more ups than I remember, but I still had enough energy to enjoy it. The Golden Arches of Masterton provided sustenance before our team leader, with an unerring sense of direction, set off for home via Cape Palliser. Having eventually found the shorter northern

route, we arrived in the Manawatu around 7-30pm.

I thoroughly enjoyed the trip and good company provided by Warren S., Dave, and Warren W., and offer the following tips to other guests of the PNTMC. *Do* go tramping with vertically challenged people; 6ft+ racing sardines (Dave & Warren W.) take big steps. Also, *don't* let Warren S. offer you any anti-chaffing cream - I have my doubts that his wife's chutney (mistakenly taken along for the purpose) would prove effective.

Peak trampers were: Warren Wheeler, Warren Soufflot, Dave Grant, Brian Large.

TOP MAROPEA

October 19 by Neil Campbell

The forecast was not encouraging: Rain making its way down the North Island. However when we set off from Palmerston North at 7:00am it was not raining. We started walking at about 9am and reached Sunrise Hut by mid-morning. By this stage there were the first signs of the rain.

We put our coats on and headed off to Armstrong Saddle. I was surprised by the lack of wind. The track down to Top Maropea Hut is in good condition. Top Maropea Hut is a small comfortable hut. There is a cleared area beside this hut which would be suitable for tents. As we had lunch in the hut the rain increased in strength. We finished lunch and were back at the carpark by mid-afternoon.

On the drive back we stopped at Norsewood Tearooms. A nice way to finish a very pleasant walk. We were back in Palmerston North well before 5pm.

We were: Neil Campbell and Eddie Buhler.

KAIMANAWA RANGES

October 25-27 by Sarah Stratton

Wild horses wouldn't have stopped me from taking the opportunity to check out this area, and this weekend gave us ample opportunity to explore this territory.

Our journey began on Friday evening, on which we were able to sample the delights of the hot pools of Tokaanu and Warrens bedtime stories.

...So the four bears got up on Saturday morning, and headed for the hills. Left Warren's car to the care of fate and started our tramp towards Umukarikari.

The forest cover was sufficiently open from time to time allowing spectacular views of Ruapehu and Ngauruhoe, and the weather was on 'our side' which made for pleasant walking. Lunch stop was at Sharp cone, the highest 'point' of the day-well, there were others! Plenty of great views of the mountains + towns below, Taupo etc along with lots of sun.

We did spot a hawk on the Umukarikari ridge, which let us approach quite close- No sign of any horses though.

From Umukarikari, we made a gentle descent to Waipakihi hut-and cooled our heels in the river. This was a decision-making point - whether to spend a comfy night in the relatively empty hut or carry on. You guessed it, we headed on up, over the ridge and took a sharp descent to the Rangitikei River.

Just on reaching the camping spot, we discovered someone had beaten us to it, so we found the next most comfortable spot. Ron and Nick put dinner together (a yummy Irish stew) - no bedtime story this night though!

Saturday morning - another start to a bright day. This was to be a challenge - up to Te More and along the Island range with the intention of re-joining the Rangitikei River for the evening. There was the option of going up to Makorako, the 'shark fin', and we decided it was fine just to look at - this time, anyway.

Lunch stop was just before a heavy climb up to the island range - some of it was quite 'hairy'. A high wind blew up all of a sudden as we made our way across and we experienced about 1hr or so of rain, the only 'storm' on the tramp. Had an 'epic' bush bash down towards the river - I was really ready for a bedtime story at the end of that lot! Managed to summons up the energy to cook the dinner, with some assistance from the crew. Nice camping spot under the trees.

Monday was a first light start - a lot of ground to cover in daylight - with another bush bash toward Thunderbolt, it looked to be a long day. Fortunately, deer had carved some sort of a trail

we could follow more quickly to the top than anticipated - Phew! Quite a long ridge path with clear views all around with plenty of ups and downs. Sometimes the terrain reminded me of Central Otago - rocky, with not many trees. There were some interesting stripy patterns on the ground - frost action, I believe (?)

Along to Motutere, and then another sharp downwards trail to the Waipakihi river, where we spent a good while resting, dressing blisters and re-fueling. The last 'up' of the day was up to a trig point - and once again we were in view of the three volcanoes, Ruapehu smoking merrily away. On our tramp up also noticed a bush-fire near the Waipakihi.

Our final descent towards the underground powerhouse took us into darkness. Fortunately it was a very easy graded track for which my knees and the others' blisters were grateful! We spotted some glowworms on the way back to the car, and were happy to find that fate had done a good job of looking after it. I was pretty relieved to find this after 14 hours I'll say!

I thank Warren Wheeler for his 'even-tempered' leadership on the trip (oh and the bedtime stories), Nick Pringle for going up front/ keeping the pace and Ron de Rose for his track-finding/following!

Anyone for Makorako?

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