
PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217, PALMERSTON NORTH

Newsletter - March 1998

*****THIS ISSUE*****

NEWS: More Net Surfing, and up-&-coming AGM

TRIP REPORTS:

**South Island: Mt Aspiring, Young-Wilken Valleys.
also: Club Patron's pursuits, Taranaki rock,
Iron Gates Gorge, Rangi**

CLUB NIGHTS

MARCH 12	"Club Summer Trips"	various
MARCH 26	AGM / Wine & Cheese	
APRIL 2	Committee Meeting	venue to be announced
APRIL 9	"The Pyrenees"	Terry Crippen
APRIL 30	"Himalaya Botany"	Dave Bull

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 trumper 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.

March 19 Thursday Trampers
 June Sowerby 355-2690

March 21-22 Rangi - Oroua (Dave Larsen)
moved to the following weekend: March 28-29.

March 21-22 SAREX M/F
 Mick Leyland 358-3183

This years Search and Rescue exercise will be run by the Dannevirke SAR Committee. Club SAR list members, and others with tramping experience who are keen to become active in this field, contact Mick.

March 22 Sunrise-Waipawa Loop M/F
 Warren Wheeler 356-1998

Depart early Sunday morning for this popular part of the eastern Ruahines. Via an excellent track and a well kept hut, there is easy access to the tops. There are a couple of possibilities for loops: along the tops over Te Atuaoparapara to Waipawa Saddle and down the aggrading riverbed, or the Wheeler Moon Walking Junkies Scree descent route.

March 26 Thursday Trampers
 John Stantiall 354-5521

March 26 **Club Night: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING and WINE & CHEESE**

Starts 7-30pm (as do all club nights from now until October). This evening will kick off in a leisurely fashion with the serious stuff (wine & cheese that is!) first. Have a chat with other members over a wine & nibbles about nominees for club positions. Remember that nominations

for Patron, President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and general Committee members really need to be given in writing to our Secretary (Sarah Todd) *before* the AGM, which will commence after the wine and cheese when spirits will be high and members' interest in the administration of our club will be at a peak!

Nomination forms will be available at the Wine & Cheese; include the position, name of person you are nominating, your name as proposer, and name of a seconder. So come along for a drink & chat, grab some nomination forms, discuss & decide on your nominations, and have your say on who & how your club is run. See you all there.

March 28-29 Ohutu Ridge M/F
 Mick Leyland 358-3183

Depart 6 am Sat morning and head up to the NW Ruahines. Heading in via Iron Bark Hut this is an area of forest with limestone bluffs and interesting navigation, between the main greywacke Ruahines and flat topped Aorangi.

March 28-29 Mangatepopo rock T
 Clive Marsh 359-5220

Continuing this years rock climbing activities while the weather still holds, the Mangatepopo Valley offers a wide range of climbs in the National Park setting. A range of grades are available, and there will be experienced rock climbers there to help you. Give Clive a buzz for details on departure and accommodation.

March 28-29 Rangi - Oroua M
 Dave Larsen 329-8054

Depart 8 am. This is a combination of track, open tops and river travel, staying at a hut overnight. A good introduction to the western Ruahines. Contact Dave in plenty of time as transport at both ends has to be organised.

March 29 Purity - Wooden Peg M
 Sarah Todd 357-0612

Depart early Sun morning. On the edge of the Hikurangi Range part of the western Ruahines, this spot is well worth the visit. Up through some farmland then Beech forest, then Mountain Cedar to the hut just below the bush line. Then up onto the tussock tops for great views all round.

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- April 2-3 Thursday Trampers (2 day)
Peter Carver 354-4479
- April 2 Committee meeting
- April 4-5 Wharepapa rockclimbing T
Andy Backhouse 353-0774
- Note: this has been moved from March 14-15.
Depart early Sat morning. This outcrop & its neighbouring crags is one of the fastest developing areas in the North Island, with the full range of grades for all climbers, with mostly bolted routes. We will camp at the local school providing us with toilets, water & an early morning bracing swim in the swimming pool. A long drive but well worth it.
- April 4-5 Cattle Creek - Mid Pohangina M
Richard Lockett 323-0948
- Depart 8am Sat morning. This is an excellent crossing of the southern Ruahines, going in from the east up the West Tamaki, staying at Cattle Creek or Mid Pohangina hut for the night. Track and some stream travel through forest. (Let Richard know in plenty of time so transport at both ends can be organised).
- April 5 Herepai E/M
Neil Campbell 359-5048
- Depart 8 am for the Putara road end into the north eastern Tararua's. Head across the swing bridges along the side of the Mangatainoka river through the Beech forest. Then up the track into the Kamahi forest, before taking a right turn to reach Herepai Hut just below the bush line for a relaxed lunch. Good views are close at hand. The return trip is mostly a downhill stroll.
- April 9 Thursday Trampers
Phil Pearce 354-6687
- April 9 **Club Night: "The Pyrenees"**
with Terry Crippen
- 400km long, this mountain range forms the border between France and Spain. With plenty of peaks above 3000m, extensive areas above the bush line, good access, plenty of huts, and a drier climate than our Southern Alps, the Pyrenees offers excellent tramping and climbing. Terry will present a slide show of the two weeks he spent there recently.
- EASTER
- April 10-13 Egmont circuit M
Terry Crippen 356-3588
- Depart 6am Easter Friday. A four day clockwise circumnavigation of Mt Egmont through forest and open lower slopes of Egmont National Park, starting off at Dawson Falls or Stratford Plateau. Three nights either in good huts or under tent fly. Some variation possible depending on weather. This is a popular Easter tramping trip and a good chance to do your first longer tramp. It offers excellent views of the surrounding region and the summit of Egmont above. (Bring your binoculars to spy on the daytrip climbers)
- April 12 Easter Egmont Daytrip M/F*
Warren Wheeler 3561998
- There are several options for this trip, depending on what you punters would like to do. Either way the plan is to climb up Mt Egmont-Taranaki and celebrate Easter and the end of the no-snow season. Plan A is to go up the East Ridge from the Plateau carpark above Stratford (about 4 hours). Leave PN at 5.30am. Plan B is to make use of the full Easter climbers moon and ascend in time for the dawn at around 6am. Leave PN the evening before and camp out. Return from the summit via the Lizard and the North face or the less touristique Surrey Rd exit to the north-east, taking in Humphries Castle one way and Warwicks Castle the other (these are impressive little lava outcrops).
- This trip will go on the day with the best weather - Sunday 12th, but this may change if the "booking" with the powers that be changes.
(*NOTE: change of grade from M to M/F)
- April 16 Thursday trampers
Liz Flint* 356-7654
- *not Merv Matthews as shown in Trip Card**
- April 18-19 Maroepa Forks M/F
Alan Bee 354-9180
- Depart either Friday night to camp, or stay at Triplex, or wander up to Sunrise. If the team doesn't want to go till Sat morning we will leave 6:30 am. Its up and over to Maroepa forks hut via Top Maroepa, returning the same way. A mixture of well formed track some tops and river travel in the Ruahines. If we time it right we'll walk out with the Day trippers.
- April 19 Top Maroepa M
Liz Flint 356-7654
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Depart 7am from the PN Police station. Into the Ruahines from the Hawkes Bay side, this trip will head up to Sunrise hut for morning tea, then onto the tops with great views, and down to Top Maropea hut for lunch. Variations are possible if the weather looks doubtful. Returning the same we may meet up with the weekend trip (a combo with MTSC).

April 23 Thursday Trampers
John Rockell 358-3513

April 25-26 Herepai/ Dundas F
Duncan Grant 354-8252

Depart 6am Sat morning. Heading from Eketahuna up to the Putara (Mangatainoka) road end. Up to Herepai Hut and then the open tops with great views to Dundas hut for the night. The next day down into the Ruamahanga River and a grunt up onto Cattle Ridge, then down to Roaring Stag lodge and out, possibly meeting up with the day trippers. Come along for an enjoyable fit-grade trip into the scenic and rugged eastern Tararuas.

April 26 Roaring Stag M
Malcolm Parker 357-5203

Depart 7am Sunday morning. A popular area in the north eastern Tararuas via the Putara road end, and along the track up the Mangatainoka river, a climb up to the ridge before heading south and down to the Ruamahanga River, a great place for a relaxed lunch, and Roaring Stag lodge shelter if its wet. Returning the same way we may meet up with the weekend party.

April 30 Thursday Trampers
Harry & Christine Allardice 323-4390

April 30 **Club Night: "Himalaya Botany"**
with Dave Bull

David Bull is groundsman at Massey responsible for those interesting gardens you see while strolling up the Turitea stream. They include quite a number of introduced species, some of these (presumably) are the result of David's botanising interests. Tonight he will be talking on his plant collecting trip to the Himalayas, a part of the world where I think we all would like to tramp. Taking an interest in the often unusual plants found at altitude is one of the pleasures of tramping that should be more appreciated. It should be a good evening with big mountains and exotic plants.

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

HI FROM THE TRIPS CONVENOR
Terry Crippen

Routeburn, Waimakariri, Wilberforce, Hooker, Lake Sumner, Young, Wilkin, Matukituki, Dart, Rees; Arrowsmiths, Aspiring, Brewster, Harper, Rolleston. These are just some of the South Island valleys and peaks that were visited or climbed by club members over the holiday period. And plenty of activities in the North Island also. The summer season is certainly the best time for those longer trips to places further afield than the Tararuas or Ruahines. I managed a couple of South Island tramps (one armed with some walking poles for a stuffed knee) combined with a bit of touring round visiting Bluff and Invercargill for the first time.

The South Island is certainly the place to tramp over the summer, with unlimited scope. Its also quite convenient and cheap: \$190 return by plane PN-Christchurch (and it doesn't have to be the 5am Red Eye flight), though-fares from PN to ChCh by train and ferry, or half price on the ferry for cars and passengers booked well enough ahead. Once down there nowadays there are shuttle buses and taxi vans ready to take you to any road end so the days of long trudges on gravel roads are gone. If your not sure of all the various operators ask me or one of the other keen South Island trippers.

Also why not do some touring around while you are there; plenty of trendy cafes and eating places to visit between tramps. And don't forget there is plenty of scope for longer North Island trips, such as the club trip to the Matemateaonga that Malcolm Parker has run for two summers now.

So how come its only a few of us who are doing these longer summer club or private trips down south? The club ran it's annual two week spell to the Arthurs Pass area, and the other South Island tramping was just a few club members on private trips. Having longer South Island summer club trips (as against private trips

of club members) is a excellent way for most club members to develop their tramping. The previous summer we tried to run two club trips to the South Island over the summer holidays, but only the Arthur's Pass one went. The easier grade one didn't get any takers. About a decade ago or more we use to have a couple of club trips, of different grade, to a South Island area. While longer trips certainly take more organising on the part of the leader, they are certainly worth doing.

If, you are a new chum to South Island tramping, and the club isn't offering what you want let me or one of the other trip coordinators know. Or, if you are leader material, and you have been thinking "I should get down South next summer", let us know so we can put something on the next six monthly events card (we start putting it together in April), and hopefully getting more of us into South Island tramping. I would like to see a couple of club trips run down south next summer: an easy/medium one based in one area for about 10 days, doing a couple of four-day trips with a bit of a rest in between: Kahurangi, Nelson Lakes, Arthurs Pass, or Aspiring National Parks; and a harder one like I have run over the last four summers to cater for the budding hard-tramp-climber. I'll certainly be back down South, providing the knee comes right!*

While on the matter of trips it's nearly time for all those suggestions for day and weekend trips for the next Events Card. I've had requests for easy weekend trips - so newcomers can progress in their tramping development. But we need more leaders for this. Also want somebody to take a club trip to somewhere in the top of the South Island this Labour Weekend. (Dave Henwood did a good job with the club trip he took to the Seaward Kaikouras last Labour Weekend.) Offers?

Also keep those Trip feedback forms coming in, if things need mentioning (good or bad) about the club trips you have been on. Leaders or trip participants: forms are available at club night or from leaders. I will summarise points in the newsletter about May.

FROM THE EDITOR

All kinds of articles, whether trip reports, interesting information & anecdotes, book reviews, or even a product review, are welcome for inclusion in this newsletter. If it is a small article, hand-written is okay (deliver to John Phillips, 87 Victoria Avenue) but if handwriting is all you can do, don't let it put you off even large articles.

If you *do* have access to a computer, it does make my job a bit easier if larger articles are on disc. However, more and more people are e-mailing articles to me. If you have the facilities at home or at work, this is a very quick & convenient way to do it - my work e-mail address 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.

I can also scan photos for inclusion in the newsletter. If you get photos printed off soon after your trip, **please consider submitting them as photos can really spruce up the newsletter.**

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

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Please note that the AGM is to be held at the next club night on March 26th following a Wine & Cheese. Refer back to "Up & Coming Trips & Events" in this issue for details.

DAYLIGHT SAVING ENDS

Please also note the starting time of 7-30pm for the Wine & Cheese/AGM, rather than 7-45pm. This starting time now applies to all club nights until October because Daylight Saving is now finished.

RANGI HUT TRACK

Following from last month's note about the slip on Rangi track, DoC had a note in the Evening Standard last week about the Rangi track being closed temporarily and say to use Deadmans track instead, ie. this is more than just a recommendation: **the Rangi track is officially closed & you proceed at your own risk.**

INTERNET TRAMPING & CLIMBING (or what to do when your knee kneeds physio)

Terry Crippen

Following on from Harley's internet weather info here are some addresses that you could try.

The Christchurch Press: <http://www.press.co.nz> (I think its the only main NZ newspaper that is on the internet). This is good for tramping and climbing, South Island and also generally. I have bookmarked three separate searches: tramping, climbing, and mountaineering. So a couple of times a week I just open the book marks for the latest bits of news on these topics (plus stuff on climbing roses). I may print out some for bringing along to club nights. Unfortunately as might be expected a lot of articles are on accidents -but that's just the way the media works. But still worth taking note of. The Press is also excellent for weather info.

Some of the clubs have addresses. Try:
 Tararua Tramping Club;
<http://www.ttc.org.nz>
 MUAC;
<http://home.clear.net.nz/pages/m.u.a.c./pages/frames.htm>
 NZAC;
<http://www.nzalpine.org.nz>
 all these have lots of link addresses to other clubs and connections in NZ and overseas.

Try also
<http://www.doc.govt.nz>

DoC:

Please note that Pauline Coy has changed address
 from 211A College Street to:
 c/- 57 Fairs Road, PN
 Also, new phone no. is 357-0122.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

TRIP REPORTS

“BETTER LATE THAN NEVER”

by club patron, Lawson Pither

Contrary to popular belief: Yes! Your patron is still tramping but at a more leisurely pace than in years gone by.

1996: A successful trip was managed between Napier and Taupo via Pinks, Ballards, Tussock, Boyd and sundry other huts, then out via the Omaru. Duration: 12 days approx.

1998: To celebrate 76 years your patron plus wife spent a fortnight in the South Island completing the St James Walkway and then going up the Hope, Kiwi as far as Hurunui Hut via the Kiwi Saddle and Lake Marion in the Lake Sumner Forest Park. Duration: 6 days.

All round, both marvellous trips. Special thanks *must* go to the Webb household for all the wonderful T.L.C.

We were Sue & Lawson Pither, and Nic & Marg Webb of Christchurch.

P.S. Nicholas, a most active member of his own tramping club, has an interesting reputation, I believe. If Marg is going on any trip he's leading, it is safe for ordinary people to go. If not then only Rheinhold Messner and Graeme Dingle should apply. He just loves a really good crud bash! Lovely!

This next statement is only a rumour with no substance but he's giving serious consideration to inflicting a fee on PNTMC for taking their patron tramping, but we'll ignore the bill when it comes in!

MOUNT ASPIRING (PART I)
 by Andy Backhouse

Not a good start with a strong southerly, as we amused ourselves in the ferry terminal with the other passengers from the cancelled Lynx. But we caught the night ferry & some sleep later despite the lure of Spice World in the movie theatre, and the whistles of Thomas the Tank engine. We drove south through the night with Bruce keeping me awake with conversation. Barry & Clive took over at breakfast for the rest of the way to Wanaka at around noon.

Lunch was followed by visits to DoC & Mt Aspiring Guides then off to the road end & we were ready to leave a little after 3pm. The weather was looking good but we were unsure about where to head for that night. Scott's Bivvy was the preferred option if all went to plan. Barry hadn't been there in living memory, & the rest of us hadn't been there. We reached Mt Aspiring hut with no problems but would need all the remaining daylight to find the rock bivvy.

Fortunately we had no hassles & after a short wade across the West branch of the Matukituki, we found our home for the night. Room for three in comfort we found, so don't be the last there. Next morning we were soon up to the head of the valley & up the slabs beside the stream that comes down from a higher basin. Periodically Barry found "it's all coming back to me" but if there was doubt about the route, the advice was "I don't remember". As a result of this uncertainty we headed up the snow slope above to find at the top it led the wrong way. While I re-read the guide description, a kea came to offer advice. This was Hector Col & we were 70 metres too high.

Before long we were heading up the correct slopes hoping Bruce & Clive would start to recall the area after a previous jaunt down this route. (Search the club archives for more info.) And

after some more climbing mostly on snow by this stage they did, though the deteriorating weather did its best to get us lost again. Finding Bevan Col for a late lunch we headed out across the Bonar, with occasional glimpses of Colin Todd hut on Shipowner ridge. The weather seemed to realise it wasn't going to catch us out that way today so suddenly we had sunshine & needed to find sunglasses & sunscreen with all the snow around.

The new Colin Todd hut was full. With us it had 13 in it, being built for 12. Three climbers were overdue on the NW ridge of Aspiring & it was clearly a windy day to be up there. They returned late that night with tales of rope tangles on the descent because of high winds that met them at the top of the Ramp. They had abandoned their ascent there, & descended along the lower part of the NW ridge, a route most parties wanted to use for their planned climb, or at least for descent. Also in the hut that night, & set to play a part in our adventures, were a party of 4 led by Jon Chapman, an Australian guide on his holidays with friends from Melbourne, & Anton Wopereis & his client Paul, an english engineer living in Brunei.

The next day we had an easy day with the weather indifferent, & clouds obscuring the views. We planned to climb the SW ridge & to descend via the NW as far as reasonable. So the party of 3 were quizzed & Clive & Barry set out to make sure of a route to the foot of the SW ridge that we could follow in the dark, while later Bruce & I set out to see if we could see the descent off the buttress of the NW ridge & to view the Therma glacier & North Buttress which we had designs on. And that night the weather forecast was good.

Up early at 2am for the climb, we were away at 3.15. Clive & Barry led the way, with Anton & Paul then Bruce & I following. After 2 hours we were at the end of the tracks waiting for more daylight before crossing the bergschrund. Anton took the lead here, muttering something to do with guides' responsibilities. Bruce & I followed up to the ridge itself & the rock band on it. A few climbing moves in big boots later & we rested at the top of this, the last flat spot on the route.

Ten minutes behind Anton was a safe distance for us from debris but we couldn't see Clive & Barry until we were much higher & they were stopped near the top of the rock band. There didn't seem to be anything we could do to help so we carried on

up, surrounded by stunning views in the early morning sun. At the couloir we caught up with Paul, as we were leading through unlike the usual guide/client arrangement. The gully was about 70 degrees with a few inches on soft snow on a hard base. Snow stakes had to be tied off mid height & we resorted to icescrews for protection. Three pitches left us just short of the top where we stepped onto the NW ridge a few metres below the summit. After the obligatory photos & congratulatory handshake we headed down the NW ridge to the top of the ramp for lunch. I was surprised to see so much loose rock showing, the route having been covered in snow all the way last time I was here.

[Next month - Search & rescue drama on the descent!]

YOUNG-WILKEN VALLEYS

Feb 2-5

by Terry Crippen

The Aspiring National Park has lots of medium grade tramping country if you are wanting an alternative to climbing. As part of a spell down south Christine and I spent four days tramping in the National Park near Haast Pass. After checking out river crossing info at the ranger station at Makaroro we jet boated down the Makaroro and up the Wilken River to Kerin Forks. This is the way to go! Saves a long half day trudge up the Wilkin, made worse by the jet boats racing past with afternoon loads of Kiwi Experience back packers. From the forks the short 5km distance into the Siberia valley is actually quite a grunt in the heat of the afternoon up past the gorge, but the vista once onto the open flats is well worth it. Its a pity the early climbers were not a bit more enthusiastic in their naming of the peaks here: The names Dreadful and Awful don't do justice to these two mountains. Probably, these climbers found the peaks quite difficult to climb at first - steep schist bluffs make getting to the snow line a problem in this country.

On the way into Siberia Hut we came across DoC upgrading the track complete with mini motor digger! The track had degraded badly over the years when stock was grazed on the flats - the stock has now gone, but instead an airstrip is used to fly in day trampers. Anyhow the large hut is a comfortable stop, complete with outside shower and plunge pool (the adjacent side stream and waterfall), and is well worth a nights stay. The stories from other trampers in the hut about their problems with crossing the Young and Makaroro rivers at the other end of the tramp were a bit

worrying to us - up to their necks or getting swept away! Hopefully that was due to their inexperience (although there is an emergency RT to call up a jetboat if needs be, at a cost).

The next day was up valley a bit, then a 1000m climb up to above Gillespie Pass with impressive views all round. The steep descent into the Young Basin was a good test for my newly aquired walking poles. Young hut is a smaller hut but a very pleasant place to stay for a couple of days, complete with 1930's National Geographics. Our third day was wet so any attempts at investigating the bluffs and peak opposite the hut were curtailed.

The fourth day out to Makaroro was the longest distance but fast, down hill to the Young forks then along the lower valley flats. Then the possible river crossing problems at the Young-Makaroro confluence. Making full use of DoC's instructions as to where the best fords were, coupled with river crossing knowledge, the crossings were a piece of cake - deepest was about knee deep, and not really swift. A relief to both of us. (Something to be said for learning River Safety.) And saving a few dollars - better spent back at Makaroro on food and drink.

The two trampers were Terry Crippen and Christine Cheyne.

RANGI LOOP Feb 15 by June

The day started at the Food town car park at 7am for those who were on time. For those 2 who were late (me being one) weeeeeell... Anyway we jumped in the cars and headed for Rangī. The day was overcast with promises of lots of rain. By the time we arrived at the Rangī carpark there were tiny patches of blue sky every now and then.

We started off up the track at 9ish. It didn't take long to sort out the fast trampers from the slow. Laurence, playing Dad for the day, took the lead, while Heather, playing Mum, dropped back to egg, cajole and encourage us 2 slow ones along. It was just as well that it was overcast otherwise it would have been a long hard hot walk in the sun. Walking in the clouds kept everything cool and pleasant. Any over heating was caused by the exercise not the weather.

The climb up on the whole wasn't to bad. There was only one nasty bit that found me still at the

bottom and everyone else at the top. Once I realised that there was no way that I was going to get out of climbing this bit I put head down and butt up and crawled up for a whole 10 minutes max. When I finally got to every one else Laurence said "that's the really steep part over now all we have to do is the steep part." Gee thanks Laurence. All in all it only took 20 minutes of slog and we were on the top. Here the clouds opened up and out came the sun.

We wandered along the top for a couple of hours with magnificent views before we reach Rangī Hut where we all sat down and had lunch number 2 and patted ourselves on the back for doing so well. From there it was a quick hour down before we jumped in cars (2) some to go home directly and others to go swimming at Pohangina. This was a great day out with entertainment provided by Liz, who convinced a couple of people to eat Pepper wood leaves much to our amusement (and Karyn's distaste!), and who regaled us with many story's of her trips abroad. Oh yes, we also now know what Spaniard is!

Our happy tramping group were: Laurence & Heather (Dad & Mum); Liz & Arthur (members from wayback); Karyn (just move up from the south island); Janelle (first time tramping); Fracine (visitor from USA); April (first tramp with the club); June (ditto).

P.S. from Heather: when we came through DoC had done sufficient work on the slip below Rangī (carpark side of the bridge) to make it easily passable. There were notices up that work to properly repair that section of the track would start on 7 March (if I remember right!), so hopefully it should be even better soon.

TARANAKI ROCK

Feb 21-22

by Sarah Leberman

Another great summer morning in Palmerston North as 5 of us headed of to Taranaki for a bit of rock climbing. I was amased how we all fitted into And's Subaru, plus the gear and it wasn't even a squash. We were Michelle, Maree, Peter, Andy and myself. At the North Egmont car park we met up with John and headed up the Puffer to Tahurangi Lodge. By this time the weather had closed in, but didn't seem too bad so after soem luch off we went in search of Taranaki rock. However, the weather gods were not on our side, as it became increasingly misty and started to rain.

We walked past walls named the Eiger - not that we could see much and then up the organpipe valley to the Left of Nose area. By this time it was raining steadily, so after a photo we decided to head back and try our luck again on Sunday.

Tahurangi Lodge is pretty luxurious and apart from the strong wind lifting off a loose scaffolding plank and providing for interesting sound effects, it was a very comfortable place to stay. Andy took us for some stretching and yoga exercises - amazing the positions you can end up in. We also did a test to see whether our arms were proportional to our body height - see Andy for more information on this. Some of us were normal others weren't!!!

Sunday dawned nice and sunny, so back to the rock we went. Andy led off on Left Nostril a 15, a chimney involving some good squeezes at the top of the climb. He then set up a number of topropes on climbs with great names - such as Cosmic Corruption (14), Bathroom Wall (15), Macpac (14), Mozo (16).

Most of us had a go at all of them. Towards the end of the day Andy led another two climbs including Hangman Herman (17) with a very difficult start, which the guys attempted - not at all easy. These climbs provided a good variety in terms of techniques and climbing styles, from the delicate, smearing type moves of Cosmic Corruption to the more grunty layback of Mozo. Something for everyone and I think it's fair to say that everyone had a great time.

This was my first PNTMC trip and I thoroughly enjoyed it, and have signed up for Wharepapa. It was good to go somewhere different and away from the crowds.

OROUA RIVER - IRON GATES GORGE

March 1st by Karen Bevan-Mogg

The weather forecast was 'not so good' but friends' stories & exciting descriptions in the *Lonely Planet Guide to New Zealand* left me eager to experience tramping Kiwi style ASAP having arrived in Palmerston North only 2 weeks ago. This leisurely-sounding ("It should only take about 4 hours" - quote Warren!) day trip sounded like the ideal introduction.

Our small group consisted of Warren (unfortunately Terry's knee had put him out of action), Steffen Taubert, his partner Charis &

myself, & at 0815 hrs we set off with *some* idea of where Warren was taking us after a quick look at the map.

We arrived at the Apiti Road car park in thick mist, oblivious to the impressive view beyond and at 0930 hrs headed into the alpine forest across the elegant footbridge over Umutoi Creek, and followed a good track to Heritage Lodge. A brief chat with a father & son out hunting for the weekend, then 'onward into the bush' and my first encounter with bush lawyers, the bushman's friend, pepper trees, hook grass & a whole new variety of flora & fauna. Thanks for the botany tutorial Warren!

We continued along the beeches, high up the valley sides for a couple of hours, then dropped down to a convenient snack spot at the Oroua shore.

Then the fun started! Due to the small number of rivers (certainly a lack of crossable ones) in England, I'd no experience of river walking, so the rest of the day proved a real novelty. We got soaked to the knees as we zig-zagged downstream then dried off during a lunch stop, as the mist cleared and patches of blue sky appeared. The walking grew wetter & deeper as the valley became more impressive & narrowed, until we finally reached Iron Gates Gorge.

Well, the path was going to be steep, the sun was out & we were wet anyway, so in we jumped & floated a hundred yards or so in the surprisingly strong current. Stopping wasn't quite so easy! Steffen was hooked, continued to float (until he grounded!) while the rest of us walked. As we rounded a bend & the bed widened again the character of the gorge altered considerably, becoming far more severe & stark, with impressive rock slides and strata to view. A simple wire bridge across proved irresistible to Steffen's circus skills, though negative points for elegance let the performance down.

A conspicuous new ladder on the opposite bank marked the beginning of a fresh path which we followed up the valley side, via a new hut, through the bush to farmland above. We emerged to my first view of the green Ruahine Range beautifully set against the clear blue sky. To the north (I think) Ruapehu & Ngauruhoe peaks were just visible.

The final walk across grazing land provided the cows with more entertainment & conversation (don't ask) than they had all week, and us with a sighting of a pair of paradise ducks. We finally reached the car around 4-30pm.

A *very* welcome ice-cream (or 2!) provided a perfect end to what I hope will be the first of many days out with the PNTMC. Thanks for taking us Warren.

SOME IMAGES FROM THE CLUB'S EXTENDED SUMMER TRIP TO ARTHURS PASS . . .

Clockwise from top left: Crossing the Wilberforce; Urquharts Hut; view from White Col; Mount Cook Lilies at the head of Julia Creek.

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