
PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217, PALMERSTON NORTH

Newsletter - June 1998

THIS ISSUE

NEWS:

Snowcraft 1998 details, DoC track reports,
and the July-Dec Trip Calendar is here!

TRIP REPORTS:

Tararuas (northern & southern crossings),
SAREX, Easter Eggmont (RTM version),
Top Maropea, Roaring Stag, Takapari Trig . . .

CLUB NIGHTS

JUNE 11	“West Coast Travels”	Russell Lake
JUNE 25	ANNUAL PHOTO COMPETITION	
JULY 2	Committee meeting	Liz Flint’s
JULY 9	“The Galapagos Isles”	Sarah Stratton
JULY 30	“River Kayaking”	Hilary Hurst

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**. Please note that at this year’s AGM it was decided that **all club nights now commence at 7:45 pm**, winter or summer. 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.

July 9	Thursday trampers Bev Akers	325-8879	Andy Backhouse Bruce Van Brunt	353-0774 328-4761
July 9	Club night: "The Galapagos Isles" Sarah Stratton		Held at the Manawatu Tramping & Skiing Club hut on the Whakapapa skifield on Mt Ruapehu. Leaving PN on Friday night, as the hut is near the road. This course assumes no previous experience on snow, with lessons on basic snow travel, use of an ice axe, self arresting & an introduction to crampons, with indoor sessions on mountain weather, use of mountain radio, mountain first aid, emergency shelters, etc.	
July 11-12	Maungahuka-Penn Ck Warren Wheeler	F 356-1998	July 18-19	Bannister Derek Sharp
Leave 7am. This trip high into the middle of the Tararuas offers plenty of variety, with an 8 hour walk on Saturday up from Otaki Forks to Maungahuka Hut. We pass historic Field Hut before getting on to the tops, turning left at Bridge Peak and on to the twin Tararua Peaks with their long chain ladder to drop off the downside. Be prepared for some snow and ice. Sunday is more in the bush as we drop down to Penn Creek and return to Otaki Forks.			FE/F,T 326-8178	
July 12	Wellington Red Rocks and Wind Turbine Easy (Social Sunday day walk)	Lyn Murphy (04) 386-3334	This could be a 2-day FE trip as planned, or could be a 3-day F-grade trip if people can get the Friday off. Either way, the general route is likely to be a loop from Kiriwhakapapa roadend in the eastern Tararuas, in via Blue Range, Cow Saddle & Bannister to Arete Biv, then back via Arete Forks and Cow Creek. The 3-day version might take in Girdlestone/Table Ridge.	
Walk along Wellington's south coast from Owhiro Bay to the seal colony at Red Rocks and then on to the ECNZ wind turbine at Brooklyn via Te Kopahou ridge and Hawkins Hill. A walk rather than a tramp, the route is along service roads and tracks and in good weather provides great views of Cook Strait, the snowy Kaikouras, Wellington and the Tararuas. Stay at Lyn's place in Hataitai on Saturday night (a mini tramp in itself) and perhaps fit in a visit to Te Papa, or rendezvous 7.30am Sunday morning in Palmerston North for a 10am start from the Owhiro Bay carpark.			Note: this trip swapped with Laurence's Maharahara daytrip which is now on July 26.	
July 14 (Tues)	Instructional evening for Snowcraft participants only.		July 23	Thursday trampers Graham Pritchard
A lead-up to Snowcraft 1, this will be held at the Central Fire Station at 7pm. This meeting is very important for Snowcrafters as the first instruction will be given, equipment will be sorted and logistics for travel & food will be finalised.			357-1393	
July 16	Thursday trampers Monica Cantwell	326-9691	July 26	Maharahara crossing Laurence Gatehouse
			M 356-5805	
			Depart 7-30am. The classic crossing of the southern Ruahine leatherwood belt. Good views on a good day. If enough people, will have 2 parties doing opposite directions to ease transport arrangements.	
			Note: this trip moved from July 19 (swapped with Derek's Bannister weekend trip)	
July 18-19	Snowcraft 1	I, M/F	July 26	Pohangina Tracks Janet Wilson & Graham Peters
			E 329-4722	
			Depart 8am. A leisurely day checking out a couple of walkways in the Pohangina Valley: Branch Walkway and Beehive Creek.	
			July 28 (Tues)	2 nd Instructional evening for Snowcraft participants.
			A lead-up to Snowcraft II, this will be held at the Massey Climbing Wall at the Massey University Recreation Centre at 7pm. The aim is to introduce ropes, knots and belaying in the warm dry indoor environment to optimise time on the slopes later. We will also organise food and transport for the weekend following.	
			July 30	Thursday trampers

Liz Flint 356-7654

July 30 Club night: "River Kayaking"
Hilary Hurst

Hilary is a member of the PN canoe club - some of you may know Hillary from the now defunct Highlife store. Hilary will give us the lowdown on river kayaking in general, as well as a trip down a NZ river. So come along for an interesting evening.

Trip leaders:

Please discuss with the trips co-ordinator (Terry Crippen 356-3588, 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 Terry Crippen (356-3588) or Liz Flint (356-7654).

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

Enquiries to: Mick Leyland (358-3183), Liz Flint (356-7654), or Laurence Gatehouse (356-5805)

NOTICES

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.GOVN.Z.

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 it can add that added dimension of interest that only photos can!**

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

SNOWCRAFT COURSES 1998

This winter the club will again run these courses designed to teach the budding winter trapper or climber basic techniques that will provide the skills necessary to safely climb the mountains of the North Island in winter conditions & tramp South Island trans-alpine summer routes. They also provide a good introduction to alpine climbing. Each weekend builds on the previous one & the set are intended to be done as a group.

However some people with previous experience may wish to discuss their skills with the organisers. Similarly some may get the skills they

require from just the first one or two weekends. As we did last year, there will be some alpine trips during & after the course to encourage the use of newly acquired skills. There will be a glaciercraft weekend in December again this year to allow those visiting South Island mountains the chance to work on this important part of climbing.

Rockclimbing instruction days/weekends & a snow-caving weekend will also follow on in the spring. See the new trip card for more details. This is (of course) erupting volcanoes, bad weather & lack of snow permitting.

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

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

See "Up & Coming Trips & Events" section in this newsletter for details of each Snowcraft instruction evening and weekend course.

LAST NEWSLETTER

...if you haven't paid your annual sub yet, that is! Send your cheque to PNTMC at PO Box 1217, or pay Peter Wiles, our Treasurer, at club night. \$30 ordinary and \$35 family.

EVENTS CARD FOR JULY-DECEMBER 1998

Terry
The Events Card for the next six months is out. There is a wide range of trips and activities being offered with tons of scope for tramping on those excellent winter days - cold and frosty in the mornings, but fine, clear and warm as the sun rises in the sky, with those snowy vistas that always excite you and make you want to get out and about even more. And those cosy evenings keeping warm, eating and chatting with fellow trampers in the huts at night.

With the winter snow, some snowcraft skills are essential if you venture above the bushline, hence the Snowcraft Course weekends and follow up

climbing trips. But there is still plenty of variety for those who are not into the snow and ice, with local tramping of various grades. Winter and spring is the time to do as much tramping as possible so when summer comes you are fit and ready for those longer summer trips. This year there are three extended Club trips over the summer: two in the South Island, one in the North Island.

Included on the events card are some courses run locally by the NZ Mountain Safety Council. Check these out - they compliment the club's instruction programme.

For further info. on trips contact the various leaders or the two trip convenors: Terry Crippen 356-3588 or Liz Flint 356-7654.

Many members have committed themselves to lead one or more trips/events for this coming six months. Thank you all you leaders. I'm sure all club members will actively support this good effort by going on lots of these trips and events. Don't forget to encourage flatmates, partners, parents, family and friends to come on these trips as well.

Most of the club evenings have also been organised, using members and outside speakers. Evenings include talks on overseas areas, Esplanade activities, and end-of year BBQ. Any suggestions to fill the remaining gaps? (Let Laurence 356-5805 know).

'GUIDE FOR TRIP LEADERS', PINK "HELP" FORM, AND TRIP FEEDBACK FORM

The "Guide For Trip Leaders", essential reading for leaders of Club trips, is good value for all trip participants as it give you an idea of what's involved. Please keep as a reference. Also included with this newsletter is a copy of the pink "Help" form put out by the NZ Mountain Safety Council for possible Search and Rescue purposes, for when you are leading club or other trips. Fill it in, or use it as a guide to compile details, prior to a trip departure (more available at Club nights). The Trip Feedback form is designed for getting feedback, either positive or negative, from those trips you go on, so the club can enhance your future outdoor experiences. Fill them in and drop into the box at the back at club nights. (More copies are available, at club night or from your trip leader)

Cheers, Terry

FIRST-AID COURSE

Mountain Safety Council will be running their weekend first-aid course this year on June 26-28. Contact Cheryl Wright (358-3300) for details.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

Nigel Scott, our club member in Taranaki, has moved to Manaia. His address & phone number is now:

Lower Inaha Road
RD11 Hawera
Ph: (06) 764-8536

Richard Lovell's new Wellington address is:

30 Heke St
Ngaio
Wellington
(04) 479-4916

CLUB LOGO & NEWSLETTER NAME

There has been some interest in the competition for a new club logo & newsletter name, but probably not enough to make a fair decision on it. There has been one suggestion for a logo, while a number of people have nominated the current logo to be retained. We are extending the deadline another month, so get your suggestions & opinions in by the last club night in June. Place your written suggestions in the flowery little box at the entrance table on club night.

Another suggestion has been for the club to produce a small round sticker with our club logo & name on it, so we can stick them in hut books as we pass through. Any comments?

AUCTION/AUCTION

Manawatu Tramping & Ski Club are holding a ski gear auction at their club night on Tuesday June 16th. Starting time 7-30pm at Rangitane Pavilion in the City Council building.

Also, at their June 30th club night (7-30pm, Rangitane Pavilion again), MTSC will be hosting a demo of the latest Gore hi-tech fabrics. I believe some gear might be made available at the end of the night free for loan to people to test out & report back on.

KAPITI ISLAND - Cheap Winter Tours

Tours to Kapiti Island are normally \$30 for adults and \$20 for kids (with under-5-year-olds free). Kapiti Marine Charter are offering a reduced flat rate of \$20 for adults during the May-August

period. Contact Ross Leger at KMC on (04) 297-2585 (phone/fax) or (025) 424-850 (mobile).

TRACK REPORT (from DoC Wellington)

The following structures have been affected as a result of engineers' inspections and required standards:

- bridge on the Atiwhakatu track was removed. Upgrade work has since been undertaken and access is as good if not better than before.
- bridge on Totara Creek track was removed. The access was over a minor watercourse and the absence does not impede access.
- bridge on the Waioatauru Track was removed, and an alternative route through the water course has been marked.

The following bridges have been closed, awaiting decisions about upgrade:

- bridge at the start of the track to the Blue Range - access through the stream.
- further bridges on the lower Blue Range track - access through the water course.
- old vehicle bridge on the Waioatauru track - access via a new marked track through the river bed.
- boardwalk was removed at Whitireia Park, which has not stopped visitor access.

I hope this information helps you.

Steve Sutton (DoC, Wellington Conservancy)

ANNUAL PHOTO COMPETITION

The club's annual photo competition will be held at the club night on Thursday, June 25. The rules for the competition are:

- Slides/prints must not have been entered previously
- All entries must be related to tramping, skiing or climbing
- All slides must have a cross on the bottom left-hand corner of the mount for normal viewing (ie. top right-hand corner when loaded into the carousel)
- All slides and photos must be labelled (on back for photos!) with author's name, and entry category chosen from list below. NOTE: Slides and prints not marked prior to judging in the manner outlined here WILL BE REJECTED (sorry but this is essential to facilitate smooth running of the event).
- Limit of 3 slides per person per category, but no limit on prints

Categories:

1. *Alpine (NZ)*. Predominantly alpine scenery in NZ (ie. above bushline)
2. *Scenic (NZ)*. Scenes of natural pictorial interest in NZ hills, coasts, etc. (ie. predominantly below the bushline)
3. *Natural History (NZ)*. NZ flora & fauna, or detail of interest eg. geology, ice formations, etc.
4. *Topical (NZ)*. People in tramping, climbing, or skiing related activities in NZ.
5. *Overseas Alpine or Scenic*. Related to tramping, etc. overseas or Scenic
6. *Overseas People*. Climbers or people met while tramping, climbing overseas.

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

HEADING FOR THE (BIG) HILLS

An invitation by Dave Henwood . . .

A couple of months ago Terry Crippen wrote in the newsletter about more club trips to the big hills down south. As an ex-Wellingtonian I got quite used to popping over “the ditch” for weekend trips so moving to Palmy has been a bit of a culture shock.

However it isn't as bad as it first seemed. The Richmond range, Kaikouras and Nelson Lakes are all readily accessible for 3 or 4 day week-ends from here. Add an extra day and Arthur's Pass and the Canterbury valleys come into driving range. And if you are really keen you can do what I did at Easter and get as far as the Mt Cook region (or the Ohau valleys which are just a bit down the road from the “Big C”).

It does take a bit more effort (and \$\$\$) than a trip to the Ruahines but the rewards are there – most things are bigger, wider and more spectacular than up north. All you need is a vehicle – or access to one, some enthusiasm and the ability to take a few days off at non-standard times. (A penchant for sleep deprivation is also an advantage – just ask the guys who came on my Seaward Kaikoura trip last Labour Week-end!)

Basically the reason for this little rave is to enquire if anyone might be interested in the odd longish weekend down south during the year (rather than waiting until the Christmas hols). Although my preference is climbing or ski touring, most of the areas I have been into have great potential for transalpine type tramping.

I would be keen to hear from anyone who might be interested in partaking in a southerly expedition some time later in the year. Either see me at a club night or give me a call some time – 326 8892 at home or 356 4808 at work.

Dave

BUSHCRAFT 2 - A report by David Larsen

Kath and I decided it was time to learn more bushcraft skills so we enrolled with Mountain Safety for Bushcraft 2. It was set down for the weekend of May 22-24. With not a very bright weather forecast we set off to our campsite by Waikawa Stream at the end of North Manakau Road. A 30-minute tramp in, crossing one stream getting our boots and socks soaked, saw us at the site by 8pm Friday. Set up tent in the dark for the first night but the second night we had to bivvy.

In the morning we were shown how to build a bivvy from a 2m x 2m piece of black polythene. We then had to build our own for Saturday night. The rest of the day was spent in groups of four, plus an instructor, tramping a course to set co-ordinates. A lot of emphasis was placed on co-ordinating map, compass and terrain skills. Each person in the group was given the opportunity to lead the group over a fresh section. The area was great tramping country with beautiful streams and practically no tracks.

The second day followed a similar pattern and included river crossing techniques and emergency firefighting. We had a great weekend even though it was wet, learning a lot of very important safety skills. Its a real must for anyone wanting to enjoy the bush beyond the well formed tracks. We are now looking forward to Bushcraft 3 in June.

TRIP REPORTS

A DIFFERENT NORTHERN

March 15-17

by Noel Bigwood

It started off as a Northern Traverse actually, but

due to forecast strong Southerlies that were meant to last all Monday we went to "Plan C" and this is what happened . . .

Due to Robin's work, Sandra didn't manage to get us to the roadend until 4-40pm on Sunday night. (Actually we were lucky to even start, due to a fast moving Audi about 7k from the roadend that nearly shortened the trip and Sandra's nice new car at the same time). That left us with a race against the darkness so we generated a fair amount of sweat making the best of the light while it lasted. We had to put our torches on and slow down for the last 25 minutes but we made good progress to arrive at Roaring Stag Lodge at 7-45pm. On the way in the promised Southerly arrived about 5-40pm and we were immediately glad of the trees around us.

During the night we were snug as the Southerly blew over with some showers but the morning dawned clear so we were off at 7-10am heading for Cattle Ridge. Just across the bridge the (very well cut) track goes through a stand of manuka - this has lots of standing dry firewood if you stay at the lodge.

The grunt up to Cattle Ridge Hut went pretty well so we got to the hut in about 90 minutes then stopped for a brew. On the move again we enjoyed beautiful views with an almost clear sky. The descent to the Ruamahunga River was very steep with patches of loose footing so care was taken but progress was still good. At the river we brewed up again for an early lunch relaxing in the sun and soaking up the atmosphere.

As we climbed the spur towards Dundas, Robin said there were tracks of 2 people ahead of us. Sure enough we soon saw them ahead and found 2 barley sugars they left for us after they saw us. Johnny and Paul beat us to the Hut by about 10 minutes. Being a perfect gent Johnny already had the billy on so a hot cuppa was downed in no time. They were on an "scape" trip, taking their time and spending as long as possible in the hills. Paul had found a rock with an "ace" pattern on it and was taking it with him (my estimate of its weight was 1.5kg). Our trip from Roaring Stag to Dundas had taken 7½ hours.

During the night there was more wind and showers. From 1am I lay awake pondering all the consequences and escape routes if the creeks were up (I could hear the creeks near the hut had

freshened).

0500 we got up and were tramping again by 0610. It was cold, windy and claggy. The higher we got, the stronger the wind. At least the wind was steady, not gusty. 0750 brought us to Dundas where we stopped for a snack and drink by the trig.

Finding the tarn we set out on 280 Deg (Grid) for Triangle, still not able to see more than 50 metres. From Triangle we travelled on 330 Deg (Grid) till we found the stake. We headed west and suddenly we were below the cloud (and the wind). We paused for a snack, took in the views, then headed down through the bush.

While the track hasn't been cut for 25 years or so, someone with a can of dazzle has made the route fairly easy to follow so we arrived at the old Avalanche Flats hut site by 1120hrs. We had a hot, relaxing lunch then departed at 1200hrs taking the spur south of the side creek just upstream to climb steadily up to .865 then picked up Deception Spur for our descent into the Ohau.

There is absolutely no trace of the track that existed prior to the 1936 storm so it was a good navigation test until the last few hundred metres where someone has cut a basic route through the undergrowth. At 1546 we drank and snacked again at the North/South Ohau confluence.

On our way down the river we saw a stag watching us from a slip. He wasn't very jumpy so he obviously knows what a rifle looks like. The walk as otherwise was uneventful. We got to the roadend at 1755 then walked down to the bridge where we washed our feet and waited for Linda who arrived (early, thankfully) at 1840.

Leader: Robin Bigwood. Scribe: Noel Bigwood.
Support crew: Sandra Collins, Linda Flynn.
SAREX 21-22 March by Dave Grant

The weekend of this year's annual SAREX exercise dawned clear and fine. The intrepid PNTMC team of Peter Burgess, Warren Soufflot, Alan Bee, Dave Grant and Graham Roberts (Team Observer) caught a lift with Noel of the Palmerston North Police. We made our way to the search base on a farm next to the Ruahine ranges behind Norsewood, joining there with some 40 to 50 other people taking part in the exercise. Other local tramping clubs included two

teams from Massey University Alpine Club, and one from MTSC.

After a welcome from the Police Area Commander we spent the morning working through concurrent sessions to brush up on necessary skills such as navigation, track & clue awareness, radio use, and first aid. All very useful. The search scenario was presented by the co-ordinator, Dave Baker from MTSC, after lunch (and some time spent soaking up the sunshine while the tucker settled down).

The “emergency” that unfolded was: a light plane carrying four people en route from Napier to Palmerston North that morning had failed to arrive, and was suspected to have crashed in the ranges nearby. The eight teams were assigned a search area each and then the action commenced. Each team had to be fully equipped for a night out in the bush and enough food for evening and morning meals. Plus of course the appropriate maps and a radio to allow for passing situation reports from the search team to the search headquarters and receipt of instructions back.

The PNTMC team’s task was to search in the northern headwaters of the Mangatewainui Stream, heading up towards the Ngamoko track. We were dropped off in farmland about half an hour from the bush edge in mid afternoon and worked our way up-river into the bush, with all senses on the alert for any sign of a crashed plane or its survivors!! There were several small whares on the way that had to be located and searched. The Birch Whare near the junction with the Apiti Saddle track proved a bit elusive but was eventually found empty, in a very poor state of repair, and with no sign of recent visitors.

While at the Birch Whare corner we made another scheduled radio contact with Search Control to report our progress and were told to search up a nearby side stream heading off to the north east. This creek proved to be a narrow grotty little affair often choked with logs and with one quite gorgey section. Darkness was rapidly approaching at this stage and we were informed by HQ to find a suitable place and make camp for the night. Not an easy job in that sort of country!! The wind had also got up to gale force, sounding like a 747 roaring overhead, and even in the protected confines of our grotty gully we had some serious difficulty pitching and anchoring the tent fly. We talked next day at the de-briefing to

one of the MUAC teams and learned that their tent had actually been blown down (Macpac Minaret!!) and they had spent the rest of the night in the open (raining!!). One of our consolations once darkness fell was the large number of glow worms gleaming from nearby banks.

7.30 next morning we had broken camp and were making our way back downstream. The stormy weather of the night had passed and conditions were again fine. Working our way up the Mangatewaiiti again we then climbed out of the river up to the Ngamoko track. About this time we learned that two survivors of the plane crash had been found unhurt and that they and the rescue party were heading back to the crash site to pick the other two survivors one of whom had a broken leg. All this was quite near us, close to the track leading down the Makaretu. We were instructed to catch up and lend assistance. Contact was finally made at the Makaretu Hut and by this stage two other search groups had also joined with the rescue party. The injured had made a miraculous recovery and everyone hightailed down the Makaretu to Happy Daze hut to meet up with transport back to Search HQ.

Following lunch at the base and time to swap stories with the other search teams about hardships encountered and how close we must have been to making first contact with the crash survivors, the debriefing session was held. The Team Observers all reported their parties had performed well and Dave Baker as Search Controller was happy with way the exercise had gone. So then it was time to head homewards feeling satisfied with an exercise well done but with one further small drama to unfold. On the way back through the Manawatu Gorge we came upon a minor collision between two vehicles which required the services of Noel in his police capacity, allowing the rest of us time to stare down into the Gorge at the wreck of the recent refrigerated truck crash, and watch a group of people on tubes float their way slowly downstream. We finally got back to Palmerston North about 6pm after an interesting weekend.

EASTER EGGMONT WEEKEND TRIP

by Nigel Scott

Our Easter Egmont trip got under way at 1.30pm on Good Friday. Due to the lack of partakers from the Big City, we Taranaki-ites decided to go anyway, since we had organised the Farm

Workers. All the Bunnies had obviously stayed home in their warrens to eat their eggs.

Three unlikely lads, of various abilities, wandered up the Ihaia Track in the direction we believed a Mountain could be awaiting. Light rain accompanied us to the road-end, and that was where we left it. Once in the bush we found spectacular fauna surrounding a superb slatted walk-way, on a gentle gradient heading toward the old Oanui Hut site. On reaching the Hut remains, we found a couple of day walkers resting, and joined them briefly before heading off on the "Round The Mountain" track.

Paul had not long since found that he had lost his sister's borrowed, expensive (aren't they always) sunglasses somewhere along the way. (I have taught him well, having lost my Serengeti's somewhere in Arthur's Pass a couple of trips ago!) Paul well knew he would be as popular as the proverbial thing on a stick!!!! We have decided that lesson 1 in the instruction book was probably to check your pit-stops before moving on..

After much squelching, slopping and slipping we eventually arrived at Kahui Hut, 4 hours into our trip, to find 2 members of the Waikato Tramping Club preparing their evening nosh. We were lucky to get a bunk each as 7 others turned up in due course, also looking for a bunk. We all managed comfortably though, between a 6-bunk hut with bench seating and a two-man tent. They were a great group of people, and an enjoyable night of yakking and joke-telling followed.

By 8-30am we were packed and ready to head off on our second leg, which we expected would be a full days walk. The weather was certainly on the improve, as forecasted, and was looking good for the remainder of the trip. Within the hour we had met the first, of what would have been close to 20 trampers making their way around to Waiaua Gorge Hut. By this time we had gained enough height to be above the treeline and into the scrub. The west coast and the Pouakai Range were in sight by now and also the rugged Mountain top was clearly visible, creating a sense of anticipation for the following days climb up the East Ridge with the day trippers. We soon encountered the quickly eroding gorgy section, of which the track had clearly been wiped out several times and consequently been re-cut further

up the slope. Once around we headed down to where the original track would have been.

Soon we were at the Stoney River track, a few minutes before Holly Hut, where we had a good lunch break. At least 10 bods were soaking up the sun and reading or whatever. Apparently the previous night had seen 40 odd people cram into Holly Hut, so we were pleased (in fact, jolly ecstatic) that we had not planned on stopping there for the night. While we organised our lunch, about 5 guys started playing Hacky Sacks, and as I used to play soccer, I was most impressed with their ability to keep this thing in the air for so long without handling it.

Onwards and upwards we went, planning to get to the plush, flash Tahurangi Lodge for the next 2 nights. A good view of the "Ahukawakawa" (sphagnum moss) swamp was had soon after leaving Holly Hut. A very good planked walkway lay in front of us and a gentle but somewhat laborious climb followed. A little cloud was coming slowly up to greet us but meantime we still had some great views. Around one spur after another we went, past the Boomerang Slip and Humphries Castle. In all we ascended 500 meters from Holly Hut to Tahurangi @ 1500m.

Having previously arranged with the club President to either be there or leave a key for us, we caught the eye of some working party members who kindly let us in. Having showed us around they soon left us to it to go home, and we settled in for a hot shower and comfortable night. I was told that whoever I let through the door was my responsibility, so we had to be careful, particularly with dozens of people wandering past the Hut going up or down the North Ridge, many of whom wanted water. One guy had apparently climbed to the top and back in a T-shirt and shorts with no water or food or any other essentials (& no I don't mean Sky T.V. for the Rugby!!!!). Can you believe the stupidity of some people, not to mention they give the rest of us trampers a bad reputation when they have to be rescued.

As usual we played a card game called "Up & Down The River", with a chap who had stayed on with his family after the working bee. The next morning (Sunday) @ around 8-15 am, we headed in the direction of the Policeman, as advised by one of the local experts from the club. With good views we were able to find our way easily to a

saddle above Warwick Castle, which in turn gave us great views of the Policeman, and the Summit. We traversed around to the base of the Policeman where we had planned to meet others. The view was such that we could follow their progress as they ascended the Ski-field and the ridge up to where we awaited, unbeknown to them. Even though we had waited about an hour, we were anything but frustrated, as there was no wind or clouds, and we could see for jolly miles, and a good rest was a bonus, given that we still had 600m left to climb.

Refer to "Mt. Egmont Summit" by Laurence Gatehouse (May Newsletter) for remainder of this day trip. We stayed back at Tahurangi Lodge in comfort, for the night.

Easter Monday dawned another cracker day which fuelled thoughts of a "North Ridge-Fanthams-Dawson Falls finale" to polish off a great weekend, but thoughts of carrying full packs, tiredness and injury put paid to the momentary great vision. Once geared up we put ourselves into cruise mode and wandered on down to the ski-field, around to the plateau, where we bumped into a foursome and others doing the reverse of our Round the Mountain Trip. One hour later we arrived at Dawson Falls car park, expecting to find a car awaiting us, but alas NO (you can't get farm workers like you used to), and so we had to walk half way down to the farmland before they arrived. In all, we had a cracker Easter and, thanks to the day trippers, had not missed out on Easter eggs or Buns they had bought with which to celebrate Easter.

We were Nigel Scott, Paul and Gavin.

TOP MAROPEA April 19 by Liz Flint

19 humans and 2 dogs set out on a combined trip with MTSC from the Police station at 7am. The weather was foggy for much of the trip to the Sunrise carpark but I was totally optimistic the day ahead was going to be a beauty - the numbers told me everyone else thought so too.

The plan was for all of us to meet at Waipawa Hut turnoff and again at Sunrise for a cuppa and snack before trotting to Top Maropea for lunch. I arranged for Neville to lead the way and I would tuck myself near the back. We must be all getting fitter because in no time we had all met up at the

Waipawa turnoff, the back lot being not even 5 minutes behind.

A quick drink and snack before setting off on the track had us looking forward to a lovely cuppa at Sunrise. Poor Nev had just time to sort out how to turn the gas on before the rest of us arrived, the slowest, taking about 1hr 36m - nearly thought I was with Thursday trampers again!

Peter, Lynda and Judy decided as their dogs were quite young that they would go across the Armstrong Saddle and give them a run. It was here we met up with Hillary and Bev (Mountain Woman) on their return from the night at Top Maropea.

We continued as a long snake to Top Maropea Hut where we lazily had lunch in the sun. Neville was dying to fly his kite off his peak (1499m) and left with a group of "kities". The rest of us followed about 15 minutes later expecting to see the kite flying but you wouldn't believe it, not a drop of wind anywhere. Poor Neville, we could imagine his disappointment.

After watching numerous attempts we picked ourselves up and ambled across to Sunrise to sit in the warmth. The mist rolled in quite quickly and soon the "kities" were back. After another chance to talk we set off at a relaxed pace down the hill. As Hillary had said the track was pushchair stuff to Sunrise.

A lovely trip was had by all. We were: Liz & Arthur Flint, Wendy Harper, Sarah Stratton, Richard Brookes, Neville Gray, Neil Campbell, Hugh Wilde, Rod McKenzie, Frank, Robyn, Phillip & Stephen Usmar, Peter Rawlins & Lynda Hunt & dog Jess, Judy Callesen & dog Cinnamon, Johannes Forster, Catherine Gibb and Lars Van Uffelen. Thanks for a great trip everyone!

ROARING STAG April 26 by Neil Campbell

We left Palmerston North at about 7.30 and were on the track to Roaring Stag by about 9.00. We were fortunate to have fine weather. It took a bit under 3 hours to get to Roaring Stag lodge. The track is in good condition although muddy in places. The hut toilet is currently in a yuk condition. At the Ruamahanga River, beside the hut, we had a pleasant lunch in the mild sunshine. After the lunch we walked about 50m upstream to

a small section of the river which is suitable for a little swimming. Being a card-carrying wimp I left it to the others to briefly immerse themselves in cold water. We finished with an ice-cream stop at Eketahuna. Thanks go to Warren for leading a very enjoyable walk.

We were: Warren Wheeler, Nikki Smith, Sarah Stratton, Karen Burgess, and Neil Campbell (scribe).

SOUTHERN CROSSING

- OTAKI FORKS TO WALLS WHARE

2-3 May 1998 by Warren Wheeler

So this is THE Southern Crossing - what a great wander this was for the five of us thanks to the fine weather. We were lucky: in cold windy rainy conditions it wouldn't be much fun at all.

We left Otaki Forks a bit after 8.30am and headed up past Field Hut with its new historical wall displays and up to just below Bridge Peak for lunch. The last of the cloud was clearing as we crested Field Peak just past Kime Hut but south of Atkinson was still buried in clagg. Thanks to Paul leaving his Leki pole behind at Bridge Peak three of us had a wee wait while Nigel and Paul hooned back to find it. They returned victorious at about 4.15pm but even Nigel appreciated a bit of gear swapping to lighten his pack before continuing.

Although this delay guaranteed that we would arrive at Alpha in the dark it also meant that the cloud had time to clear completely and gave us beautiful views to the Marlborough Sounds, Wellington and the Wairarapa as the sun settled towards the horizon - a red ball behind distant sea cloud.

As it got darker we could make out Wellington Harbour outlined by the city lights - magic. The views certainly made up for the slippery muddy sections of track between Hector and Aston. We didn't see any deer in the Dress Circle to our left but spotted a lone tramper going our way - turned out he had come up the Winchcombe Ridge to Hector "it would be better to go down"!!

We finally had to use our torches to go over Alpha and reached the hut at 7.00pm. Dinner was quickly put together and featured pre-cooked chicken (Nigel's essential) plus pasta, and cheesecake (Nikki's essential) - the cool night ensured the cheesecake set nicely and although

there were belly aches about "the smallest dinner ever eaten" we all went to bed happy after jokes and a few good belly laughs.

Alpha Hut is a nice new DoC lodge-style accommodation in a nice location just below the bush-line. There is bunk space for 20 on the new-style thin mattresses which need a carry-mat for extra insulation against the cold, right Nikki? There's plenty of room for dancing or extra sleeping spaces but a singular lack of seating with only two small tables and no bench seats, only wall seating on two sides. There's also a huge length of cooking bench top but no internal sink and, (while I'm being picky) although there is a lovely view from the open door, the loo is hard to find and isn't sign-posted: 8 out of 10 to DoC: its only \$4 a night, but.

Sunday morning dawned fine and sunny and after platefuls of hearty porridge and a clean-up of the bench mess left by the 4 others sharing the hut we headed off just before 9.30am. Unlike the day before it was downhill most of the way which tested dodgy knees sorely. It was a pleasure to be walking along through the goblin forest with views out to the clagged-in windswept tops to Hector - oh yes we were lucky all right.

Even the exposed ridge of the Bull Mound was a breeze instead of a gale. This seemingly little used track was not all cut up and muddy and offered an amazing and unusual mix of open tops and vegetable sheep, low growing alpine beech, and alpine bog with the odd tarn thrown in for good measure. Deer prints hinted at the scope for hunters up here. The steep track down to the Tauherenikau River brought us down through tall rimu and rata forest and after getting our knees wet crossing the river we spotted a nice sunny rocky beach for lunch with a pool for a quick dip. The grassy campsite nearby looked like it had recently been flooded - might have been interesting....

A little further on we reached Cone Hut and read a notice about the recent release of some weka from Kapiti and the vermin eradication being carried out to help them survive - this explained the ferret trap (?) with a freshly laid egg lure we had just passed. Cone Hut was built in 1946 and is a rough-hewn masterpiece which is well worth a visit.

The track out is easy going with just a small climb up from Cone onto the long ridge, and a steady drop down to the long swing-bridge over the Waiohine River to the carpark. We made good time on this section through splendid forest and arrived just before 3.30pm, a bit ahead of our scheduled pick up. We hardly had time to stretch down and clean boots before our drivers Laurence and Heather returned from their little walk up the gorge track.

I reckon it would be hard to get better conditions to do this trip and I hope it remains as a memorable weekend for many years to come for Nikki Smith, Nigel Scott and his lads, Paul and Gavin. Thanks to all of you for your lively company, and thanks to our drivers Laurence and Heather Gatehouse.

TAKAPARI TRIG via Takapari Road and the
“Lost Track” May 3rd Janet Wilson

A lovely calm Manawatu morning had become a cold windy Hawkes Bay day by the time our group of 8 had gathered at the Tamaki Road end. We set off at 8:30am at a brisk pace up the very recently cleared track to the A-Frame Hut. It was parkas on as we left the shelter of the bush, and at the hut most people put on another layer. We all watched in polite silence as Liz attempted to demonstrate how to put on her longjohns without first removing her shorts - she'd replaced her boots before standing to pull the longjohns up . . . this nearly earning her the honour of writing this trip report.

We bid farewell to Monica and her canine companion who headed back the way we had come, and headed off along Takapari Road, the leatherwood providing reasonable shelter from the strong wind. Once on the ridge track towards the trig it was a bit more exposed at times. The cloud obligingly cleared and we had good views to both sides.

A small old sign not long before the trig indicates the “Lost Track”. We dropped our packs for a quick detour to the trig before dropping off the ridge and sheltering in the leatherwood for lunch. Too cold to sit still for long. The descent from here was *very* slippery though the track was clear and in good condition.

At a saddle in the bush another old “Lost Track” sign (up a tree to your right as you descend)

indicates the turnoff towards Stanfield Hut. The track here is very indistinct and overgrown but you soon pick up the occasional track marker and it eventually intersects with the “Stanfield-Cattle Creek via the Ridge” track. This is also very overgrown in parts. We reached Stanfield Hut in time for afternoon tea and then headed off down the river, back to the cars by 4-30pm.

An enjoyable 8-hour day - probably a little long for a Medium-grade trip. Someone commented that they'd felt a little challenged but everyone felt glad they'd done it - isn't that how its meant to be!!? It was my first trip as leader and I thoroughly enjoyed myself. We were Graham Peters, Liz and Arthur Flint, Dave Larsen, Monica Cantwell, Lynne Atkins, Lars van Uffelen, and Janet Wilson.

“. . . track's this way, folks”

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