
PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217, PALMERSTON NORTH

Newsletter - July 1998

THIS ISSUE

NEWS:

Photo competition results (incl. a few photos from the winners);
Avalanche awareness lecture, another book review,
and the latest on Club logo's

TRIP REPORTS:

Tongariro NP traverse, Midwinter @ Rangataua,
Orouakeretaki, Coppermine Creek, Burn Hut, Wharite

CLUB NIGHTS

JULY 9	"The Galapagos Isles"	Sarah Stratton
JULY 30	"River Kayaking"	Hilary Hurst
AUGUST 6	Committee meeting	Peter Wiles' place
AUGUST 13	"Torres del Paine, Patagonia"	Sarah Lebermann
AUGUST 13	"A Physio's advice for trampers"	Wayne Wolfsbauer

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.

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.

July 9 Thursday trampers
Bev Akers 325-8879

July 9 Club night: "The Galapagos Isles" Sarah Stratton

Sarah Stratton, club member and recently elected (co-opted?) committee member, will talk on her trip to the Galapagos Isles. This is an extremely interesting part of the world where Darwin made the observations that lead to his theory of evolution.

July 11-12 Maungahuka-Penn Ck F
Warren Wheeler 356-1998

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.

July 12 Wellington Red Rocks and Wind
Turbine Easy (Social Sunday day walk)
Lyn Murphy (04) 386-3334

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.

July 14 (Tues) Instructional evening for Snowcraft participants only.

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.

July 16 Thursday trampers
Monica Cantwell 326-9691

July 18-19 Snowcraft 1 I, M/F
Andy Backhouse 353-0774
Bruce Van Brunt 328-4761

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 18-19 Bannister FE/F,T
Derek Sharp 326-8178

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.

July 23 Thursday trampers
Graham Pritchard 357-1393

July 26 Maharahara crossing M
Laurence Gatehouse 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.

July 26 Pohangina Tracks E
Janet Wilson & Graham Peters 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) 2nd 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.

Aug 1-2 Snowcraft 2 I, M/F
Andy Backhouse 353-0774
Held at Kapuni Lodge on Mt Egmont. Leave P.N. early Saturday morning for the lodge which is about 1&1/2 hours from the Dawson Falls car park. The course is intended to reinforce the skills learnt on Snowcraft 1 & extend them. In particular, the focus will be on basic rope handling, setting up snow belays, and crampon techniques. The outdoor activities will be supplemented by indoor instruction as weather and daylight permit, with such subjects as avalanches, knot tying, basic route navigation, route planning, etc. Prerequisite: SC1

Aug 1-2 Totara Flats E
Liz Morrison 357-6532

An easy family walking weekend with a good track, no huge distances, and a well-appointed hut. Walk in from the Holdsworth carpark over the small saddle to the Waiohine Valley and Totara Flats Hut. Back out the same way Sunday.

Aug 6 Thursday

Aug 6 Committee meeting

Aug 8-9 MSC Outdoor First Aid All
Cheryl Wright 358-3300

Aug 8-9 Howletts Hut M
Llew Prichard 358-2217

A great little hut nestled on Daphne Ridge in the eastern Ruahines. Good views over Hawkes Bay on a nice day. Bit of farmland travel, a few ups and downs over the lower ridges, up the TukiTuki river and then a more serious climb up to Howletts. Almost guarantee snow.

Aug 9 Field Hut table top E/M
Heather Gatehouse 356-5805

Depart 8am. Starting from Otaki Forks, we'll cross the river and walk up through abandoned farmland, then into bush and up the ridge to Field Hut. Hopefully the weather will be good enough to warrant going a little further, up onto Table Top to catch the views. Back down the same way after lunch.

Aug 13 Thursday trampers
Neville Gray 357-2768

Aug 13 Club night: "Torres del Paine, Patagonia"
Sarah Lebermann

Sarah did some trekking in this stunning area in Argentina last year & will be sharing some slides. Other than that, our man on the spot (club night organiser Laurence Gatehouse) tells me they speak Welsh and play rugby in Argentina. Pretty good recommendations without the tramping?

Aug 15-16 Mokai-Wakelings F
Dave & Duncan Grant 357-8269/354-8252

Depart 6.00am. From behind Taihape we will head up and along the Mokai Patea range to Wakelings hut on Saturday (exact route depending on snow conditions). On Sunday we will come out via Maroepa Forks. A chance to stretch your legs in the NW Ruahines.

Aug 16 Rangi Hut E
Stuart Hubbard 356-8782

Depart 8-30am. A popular club day trip in the mid-western Ruahines. A maximum 2-hour jaunt up through the bush & a very picturesque arched footbridge to Rangi Hut, set among the tussock with great views across to Ruapehu. A good opportunity to check out the snow too! Latest reports are that access across the Viala Cottasons is good, but apparently the gas heater has been removed from the hut, so rug up!

Aug 20 Thursday trampers
Sue & Lawson Pither 357-3033

Aug 22-23 Snowcraft 3 I, F/T
Andy Backhouse 353-0774
Bruce Van Brunt 328-4761

This will be held at the MTSC hut at Whakapapa again, which is a short distance from the road. In this course more advanced techniques will be presented for steeper slopes of ice or snow, use of ice anchors, and multiple anchor belays. Indoor sessions will again be used for instruction on topics such as use of avalanche transceivers, basic alpine rescue, etc.

If there is sufficient interest, we will have another Tuesday evening, this time at the City Rock Climbing Gym at 38a Grey St to practise more complex rope and belay systems, at 7pm on an evening prior to this weekend. Prerequisite: SC2

Aug 23 North Range Rd E
Katherine Farquhar 356-8295

Depart 8-30am. This is an Easy or Medium trip (depending on people's preferences) close to town. The walk follows a 4WD track along the top of the range back of Palmy, with good views weather permitting. It will be necessary to check road access with the windfarm development closer to the day.

Aug 27 Thursday trampers
Pam Wilson 357-6247

Aug 27 Club night: "A physio's advice for trampers" Wayne Wolfsbauer

Wayne Wolfsbauer, a physio at Palmerston North hospital (and a former club member), will give a talk on those stretches and warm-ups you should be doing before and after tramping. This will be followed by a question and answer session.

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.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 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.

NEW MEMBER

We have a new addition to the club this month:

Lars Van-Uffelen
24 Weston Avenue
Palmerston North
Phone 357-3944, 358-1387, 359-5030

Welcome to the club Lars.

COURSES BEING OFFERED BY MOUNTAIN SAFETY COUNCIL:

AVALANCHE AWARENESS LECTURE

Vern Meyer, an instructor with the Mountain Safety Council, will be holding a lecture on Avalanche Awareness on Thursday 30 July. We don't have much detail at this stage but we do know that it will be held at the College of Education (exact location?) - keep an eye out for brochures which will be released in the second week of July (Dave Grant tells me that Mountain Equipment should have some of the brochures when released). there will also be field days as a follow-up to the lecture, one being at Whakapapa on 1 August, the other at Turoa on 2 August.

OUTDOOR FIRST-AID (8-9 August)

A comprehensive course covering the type of situations that can occur in the back country. The emphasis is on improvisation, 24hr care and evacuation. An Outdoor First Aid Certificate is issued to all successful participants. Cost is \$85 and the course starts on the Friday night. Contact Cheryl Wright 358-3300 soon as it's filling fast.

OUTDOOR TRAINING SCHEME (September)

This course is designed for people who would like to experience the outdoors, but who lack the necessary knowledge, skills or confidence to do so; or who already go into the bush with others and would like to develop their own skills further. Includes a series of evening talks at QE College throughout September, and a weekend trip away. Cost \$30. Contact Phil Luders (06) 329-2558.

RIVER SAFETY INSTRUCTION(28 November)
River crossing methods and techniques, risk management and river dynamics are covered on this course. The day is designed for both the trapper who wishes to upskill on techniques and the novice. A practical is included. No cost. Contact Terry Crippen (356-3588) or Noel Bigwood (357-0116).

CLUB LOGO & NEWSLETTER NAME

The latest in the club logo saga is that it has become a bit of a saga - well, not really . . . A few rough drawings have been submitted, but significant opinion has been expressed that the current logo should be retained. I am also told that there is a fair bit of history behind the choice of the current logo - perhaps one of the veterans of the club could enlighten us all with a little article next month?

Anyway, somebody suggested the bright idea at the July Committee meeting that we could retain the basic idea of the current logo, but re-hash it a little to give a more stylised modern feel to it. Well, Heather Gatehouse has come up with this little version and we've included it in this month's

issue for you all to consider. If we don't get an overwhelming "yes" to this concept, I might publish the other new suggestions next month, rough as they may be - or we could get the more graphically skilled amongst us (Heather?) to transform the rough pencil drawings into

something that might look pretty smart for a logo.



We will be seeking members' opinions at club nights and the like & will let you know. Or ring a Committee member to have your say.

FOR SALE:

CLIMBING BOOTS

Asolo leather climbing boots, traditional style semi-rigid (3/4 shank) single piece upper. Good for Snowcraft people. Size 10, going for \$50. Phone Terry 356-3588.

SWANDRI JACKET

woollen, full zip, light grey, almost new (slightly too small for me) Size OS, \$40. Phone Terry 356-3588.

ANNUAL PHOTO COMPETITION RESULTS

A summary by Tony Gates
25 June 1998 saw a full house at our familiar Society of Friends room, with a stunning display of slides and photos. John Cleland, in his usual "partially democratic" style, sifted through a good volume of slides, short listing what he thought were the best few, then giving club members the chance to vote. This led to a few "disagreements", with some photographers' pride somewhat dented! There was certainly a wide display of subject material, and of winners.

As you can see, the name Crippen appears fairly frequently below. It should be noted that he was indeed the winning photographer on a number of occasions, but frequently also the subject. There must be some star quality there!

COLOUR SLIDES:

NZ ALPINE

1. Popes Pass, Wilberforce (Gary De Rose)
2. Mt Cook above the Hooker (Harley Betts)
3. Tongariro (Harley Betts)

NZ SCENIC

1. Wilkin River (Terry Crippen)
2. Tiwai Falls (Sarah Todd)
3. Mangahao Valley (Sarah Stratton)

NZ NATURAL HISTORY

1. Leatherwood stump, Ohutu Ridge (Tony Gates)
2. Lenticular cloud (Harley Betts)
3. Penguins on rocks (Andy Backhouse)

NZ TOPICAL

1. Mud on the Heaphy Track (Tony Gates)
2. Camp silhouette (Harley Betts)
3. Rock climber (Wayne Bennett)

OVERSEAS SCENIC/ ALPINE

1. Tarn, Spanish Pyrenees (Terry Crippen)
2. Ski trails, Lake Louise, Canada (Wayne Bennett)
3. French Pyrenees (Terry Crippen)

OVERSEAS PEOPLE

1. Three kangaroos (John Phillips)
2. Winter Climbers in Marble Canyon Bank (Keith Charlton)
3. Aussie bush camp (John Phillips)

PRINTS:

NZ ALPINE

1. Ngauruhoe (M Carey)
2. Ascending through frozen tussock (Neil Campbell)
3. Howletts Hut (Wayne Bennett)

NZ SCENIC

1. Wharite under snow (Warren Wheeler)
2. Tararuas at sunset (John Phillips)
3. Abel Tasman sunset (Sarah Stratton)

NZ NATURAL HISTORY

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1. Ruapehu Eruption (Harley Betts)
 1. Innovative advertising, Amsterdam (Sarah Stratton)
 2. Gun Forest (Neil Campbell)
 3. Near Ballachulish (Sarah Stratton)

Congratulations to all the winners, and thanks to all for participating.

ANOTHER PHOTO COMPETITION!

This is by way of some advanced notice. MUAC are planning an inter-club photo competition, possibly with some commercial sponsorship. It is to be held on Monday 28th Sept 8pm in Massey AH2. Could all the finalists in the club photo competition and any one else with good photos please think about entering. This especially includes those photos that have done well in previous club competitions.

The categories (with a separate section in each for prints and slides) are:

- 1) Flora and fauna
- 2) People and places
- 3) Alpine
- 4) Landscape
- 5) Action

There are some cracking photos out there so lets get a bit of recognition for our lens skills. Further details, incl. how to enter, in this newsletter closer to the date.

2. Windblown trees (M Carey)
3. Cormorants (Laurence Gatehouse)

NZ TOPICAL

1. Between upper and lower Tama Lakes (Margret Easton)
2. Rock Climbing (Harley Betts)
3. Relaxing on river rocks (Peter Burgess)

OVERSEAS SCENIC/ ALPINE

1. Yala Peak near Langtang (Sarah Stratton)
2. Ben Stavar (Sarah Stratton)
3. Pelicans, Galapagos (Sarah Stratton)

OVERSEAS PEOPLE

BOOK REVIEW

by Tony Gates

“This Game of Ghosts”

by Joe Simpson (1994) Vintage Books, London

This is Simpson’s sequel to his award winning story of his mountaineering accident in Peru “Touching the Void”. Its another Simpson Classic, detailing parts of his life in the mountains, and at home in the local pub. It is essential reading for any mountaineer.

When reading this book, one is left with the feeling that Simpson might just win another literary award here. He has an amazing ability to relate his experiences to the reader. His descriptions of the local pub or a bus trip from Rawalpindi to the Karakoram are gripping stuff, and both examples appear death defying! He leaves life insurance agents with no illusions!

The book is partially autobiographical, telling of Simpson’s childhood, his school and university years, and his first major climbing expeditions to the European Alps. He freely admits to having

more than his share of accidents in the hills, and writes about his life virtually hanging on a thread (ie the ghosts). There are tails of avalanches, rock falls, and rescues. Also, on a sombre note, he writes about deaths of various friends and accomplices (a subject that he continues to write about in latter books). Simpson is however quick to discuss why people love and climb mountains.

Simpson makes the second ascent of Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square (I guess the first was when it was constructed by Queen Victoria) to hang Greenpeace protest banners, and is nearly pulled off by local policemen until he could haul up his rope! Other political protests are written about in the book, as Simpson ascended some smoke stacks and factory walls to hang protest banners.

TRIP REPORTS

ORUAKERETAKI AREA

May 11

by Terry Crippen

This daytrip into the SE Ruahines was down to be led by Merv Matthews, but Merv had a bad dose of the flu, so was unable to go on it. Merv however supplied me with detailed and accurate route guide info for this interesting circuit on unmarked tracks just south of the Oruakeretaki valley. This is one of number of small valleys between Coppermine Creek and Kumeti. This part of the Ruahines was burnt, grazed and generally abused earlier on but is now on the way to being forest once more.

From where we left the car it was a steep grunt up the farmland to the start of the Forest Park. Along the ridge the forest is regenerating very impressively, young Miro were everywhere, and all the once eroded or grassed faces were reverting back into bush, first with tree fern then with mixed native scrub types. Plus, for all the birds, abundant fruit on the taller remnant Miro, as well as on the small Coprosma bushes.

The track is not hard to follow, but don't take walking poles as one of us kept getting his tangled up (his excuse for being in the rear). Further up, the bush becomes scrub and the ridge is more exposed to the elements. A lesser defined track connected this track to the main track that heads to Keretaki hut (we would save that for another trip).

With Merv's excellent route guide we were able to ". . . continue along the trail for a few metres keeping a lookout for a faint trail on the right which leads to a small sheltered clearing . . ." This was the lunch spot, just the right size for the five of us needing the shelter since it was quite windy and raining. After lunch we continued on-route

which took us down the next spur to the south, and down to the car.

An excellent 4 or 5 hour loop. Thanks Merv for your contribution in making the trip a success. The five of us were Gary deRose, Kathryn Farquhar, Ron deRose, Warren Wheeler, and me Terry. (The farmer to contact for access is Grant Trotter)

COPPERMINE CREEK

May 17

by David Attenborough (alias Sarah Stratton)

Every so often, the native Palmerstonians and visitors alike, are known to frequent a certain area of the Ruahines. This, famous, historic sight, we all know, as the Coppermine creek area, and it, provides, the framework of a bygone era, that, of, the mining days of the early 1900's.

This trek, undertaken by many walkers leads us to old trailings, magazines (not the observer sunday times, mind), and a hut site- the dwelling, long, since, destroyed. Now, only track descriptions can give us a minds eye of what it must have been like then.

For the intrepid, there lies a myriad of routes to link the separate sites of the old mine, gun emplacement and other relics of interest. The truly amphibious nature of the New Zealand tramper allows them to transfer from one area to another with relative ease.

Moreover, the magazine, where ammunition was once stored, during the war years, this now is the home of the cave weta- By the aid of a bright torch-one can observe these creatures in their true creepie-crawliness!

The visit to the mining site is followed by a further attempt across a narrow creek- where arms may be linked to aid the, somewhat, treacherous crossing. Having made it to the other side, the trail leads onwards and upwards to a most, spectacular sight... and that is, near to the top of the trail, a magnificent, marvellous example of the effects that Manawatu's high wind velocity produces. Yes, a well, windblown (totara?) tree-a great spectacle indeed. Much of the vegetation in this windswept area may not survive. This however, has stood the test, and what a marvel...

Following on, the trail crosses into farming country- ferns, moss, mud and small trees are replaced by grass, more mud, wire fences and of course, New Zealand's second 'native' animal, the sheep. Here, one is afforded a magnificent view of a country town-Woodville.

The steep descent to river land is followed by another careful fording of the mighty torrent. Though, in such rare conditions as a fine and clear day, we are fortunate in being able to cross many water masses that would normally be so, much, more, difficult to ford indeed.

Following on from the days activities, these trampers take nourishment in the local township nearby, whereby chips, sandwiches, pies, ice creams and sweets form the staple diet-necessary for replacing the large energy requirements of these creatures. Further nourishment follows, once the trampers reach their dwellings, where they partake of some beer, rest, and catch up on the rugby result.

Thankyou.

Trip members were Sarah Stratton (1st time leader and scribe)

Tanya (trail finder and pace setter)

Duncan (good, keen tramper)

BURN HUT May 26 Llew Pritchard

The forecast was for a fine clear day so 14 of us aged 6 to 60 set out for No.2 dam Mangahao on a wet misty day in search of the promised blue skies. I think you got it wrong again Jim. We arrived at the dam around 9-30am, still raining, so it was on with our best wet weather gear.

I kept mentioning the super 12 rugby game but it was going to take more than rugby and rain to deter this lot. We pushed on over the dam, down the Mangahao river to the last creek crossing

which was now running a bit high and dirty. I thought rugby might win this time, no way. With the aid of a kindly left No 8 wire we slopped our way over, headed up the main ridge on to the tops before dropping into Burn Hut.

David and young son decided to go back before the last creek - good decision, things did not get any better. Mud, mud, rain and more mud. 12 of us burst into the hut around midday, wet gear and bodies everywhere, billy on the brew and a quick snack. After a while it looked drier outside than in. Burn Hut is quite a good hut and gets very little use. We were confident we had set a new visitors record and headed back out.

Still raining and muddier. The added traffic had turned parts of the track into a continuous mud flow. We all took turns at sitting in it for some reason, enjoying nature or just having rest. We arrived back at the No 8 wire crossing to find it a bit higher, a bit dirtier and a bit more fun. After 3 hrs in and 2.5 hrs out we made it safely back to the cars and home in time for the 2nd half of the rugby. (good game)

Apart from all the wind, rain, mud, cuts and bruises people were still smiling so I assume the still enjoyed it, if not they will remember it.

We were, Monica, Liz & Arther, David & son, Mick & Marion, Sarah, Tania, Andrea, Rose, Lars, Llew, Jenny and dog Tam.

Don't be surprised to see this trip on the card again. Ive been here twice now and still haven't seen a damn thing.

TUROA to KETETAHI

Queens B/day weekend

by Maree Limpus

Hitting the road at 6-30am Saturday morning, our party of six (grown by three thanks to Warren's amazing arm twisting skills), plus one hitcher (Harley heading for a mate's place) headed out in Warren Soufflot's finely tuned and aerated van. It was cold (very) but fine as we stopped in Taihape for the essential last ice-creams, hot pies, etc before heading for Sue & Lawson's place and our generous shuttle drivers.

With Lawson in the back with the packs & Sue behind the wheel, we headed up the mountain. We made it to Mangaehuehu Hut for lunch with fantastic views of Ruapehu and threatening cloud formations. We headed for Rangipo Hut and, leaving the beech forest behind us, we entered the

lunar-like landscape that would be our environment for most of the next two days.

With a few squallorly showers & a cold tail wind to help us along we finally arrived at a very quiet, very hot and very full Rangipo Hut at around 4-30pm. We (aided by Wayne's birthday bottle of bourbon and sense of humour) proceeded to rectify the quietness somewhat, although for practical reasons we mostly limited ourselves to the porch.

With a lack of bunk space, three of our party opted for the porch for the night which was sheltered from the wind and hail, and we gratefully accepted bedrolls donated by MTSC and Tararua Tramping Club members inside.

Sunday dawned cold and windy with rain threatening as we headed out for Oturere Hut. Crossing various gullies & with the occasional wind-induced ground hugging experience we finally made it to Waihohonu Hut. It was here, after some discussion, we decided to leave Heather & Laurence as Laurence had hurt his knee & would take the flatter route out to the Chateau on Monday. The rest of us left for the less crowded hut of Oturere with even stronger winds forcing us to link up occasionally to maintain ground contact - exhilarating stuff! Again we shared the hut with some Tararua club members plus one Dutch tourist who had cycled the length of NZ. We crashed out early, being fairly knackered and cold.

With Monday finally came the good weather Warren W had been forecasting - frosty, calm and clear. It was a beautiful trip up to the summit of Tongariro with superb views of sparkling mountains and lakes & a light sprinkling of snow. Taking a cross country route to Ketetahi we managed to sink half an hour into trying to fill North Crater with precariously placed boulders - Warren S and Wayne's display of grit and determination was truly inspiring!

After a brief stop at the springs it was a fast trip back down to the van before setting off to collect Heather and Laurence - the latter whose knee had dramatically improved. With a stop at a pub for a great feed we were all back in Palmy again around 10pm.

We were: The thee W's (Warren Wheeler, Warren Soufflot and Wayne Bennett), Laurence & Heather Gatehouse, and Maree Limpus.

MID-WINTER AT RANGATAUA

19-21 June

by Warren Wheeler

Friday night: fresh snow and the Desert Road closed, sounds promising.

Sure enough on Saturday our easy day trip to Blythe Hut was picture-postcard, with snow down to 1000m in the forest and a ski-able amount on the road from the 9km barrier up to the track turnoff. We sympathised with Llew for not bringing some grunge cross-countries but had mixed feelings for the heavily laden couple in plastic boots with a long walk ahead to Ruapehu summit - still not as hard as in the old days though, is it Sue?

There was a little snow melt and the odd shower off the overhanging branches - just enough to warrant throwing on the parka. Waitonga Falls was a magical place with snow just covering the rocks in the stream bed. Under blues skies we lunched at Blythe, with people wandering off up the track to catch the views and Harley left cursing his faulty camera. Going by the log book Blythe is well used for Mid-winter feasts although there was no-one there when we arrived - perhaps we could go there next year?

As it was the festivities, or should I say Feastivities at Sue and Lawson's lodge, slowly crept on us as first one course then another were presented - it was not until the penultimate Main was served that Lawson said Grace! This banquet style suited the evening well with plenty of time for conversation and a smoke outside for Llew and Mick who reported there a bit of "dristy mizzle" about. The evening continued with Harley excusing himself to "toe to the goilet" and, well, you get the idea.

Interluding the food was a torch light tour of starry-nighted Rangitaua (what's left of it), a perfect way to motivate the digestive juices and settle us down for the evening - replete and completely at peace with the world, sigh.

Sunday was a rest day - the usual thing, you know - up before breakfast to see the reflections at Rotokuru Lakes (no Mid-Winter Dip - they are sacred healing waters after all and well...so

wonderfully winteringly cold in the sun, but), a handy bit of chainsaw work by Llew to let some more light into the lodge, cleaning up, farewells, and thank you to our host and hostess, and away home...but not before Richard had his rail "fix" by taking Harley and I for a wander along the railway west of town to see the old and new viaducts....and a nice little walk in the sunshine it was too.

The ten of us festiviters were Richard Lockett, Harley Betts, Monica Cantwell, Llew and Jenny Pritchard, Mick and Marion Leyland, Sue and Lawson Pither and Warren Wheeler (scribe).

WHARITE

27 June

by Peter Burgess

Neil Campbell and I met at 9am in the Foodtown carpark and after a quick glance at the rather grey looking weather we headed off in our separate cars up to the top of Wharite. Perhaps fortunately the forecast snow hadn't eventuated, otherwise I doubt if my car would have made it up the steep road to the summit. We didn't waste any time in the cold misty conditions at the top before jumping into my car for the drive round to Coppermine Road end.

Setting off from here at a little after 10:30 am it was an easy stroll along the bush track to the junction with the Coppermine Creek and loop tracks. At this point the track to the summit shoots up at an alarmingly steep gradient, which has the advantage of gaining height quickly. Before very long the bush gave way to shrublands dominated by leatherwood higher up. This is apparently the largest continuous tract of leatherwood in the country. Fortunately the track through it is very good.

After a short break we continued through the mist along the undulating and gradually rising track towards the summit. There was little wind, but it was quite cold and starting to sleet, so we didn't spend too much time admiring the non-existent views.

When we arrived at the large signs pointing to two alternative routes down I was surprised to see it was only about 2 hours since we had left the bottom. Last time I came up this way, I made the mistake of returning via the alternative route pointed to by the very large sign saying "Coppermine Creek Hut via Coppermine Creek".

This track is non-existent and the route requires much leatherwood bashing followed by a long stream bash through dense cutty grass, which left my legs, hands and face badly scratched. I don't recommend it unless you are Derek Sharp!

After another short break for a snack we pushed on to the top. The top of the radio mast was invisible in the mist and we were glad we could take refuge in Neil's car rather than having to walk back down. In all the walk took less than 2½ hours, though it never felt like we were going fast.

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deliver articles/disks to:	87 Victoria Avenue, P.N.	358-1874 (home)
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