

PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217, PALMERSTON NORTH

Newsletter - December/January 2000-01

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

**New Trip Card, another book review (and map) featuring Mt Everest,
and Sonnets on Surviving Seminars**

TRIP REPORTS:

**Reports on Track & Clue Awareness / Navigation & River Safety
Awareness / Kahuterawa Track Activities;
Lake Ruapae**

CLUB NIGHTS

DECEMBER 14	End of year BBQ (+ annual awards)	Ashhurst Domain
JANUARY 25	Evening Club BBQ	Horseshoe Bend
FEBRUARY 8	Trekking in Nepal	John Phillips
FEBRUARY 22	Massey Climbing Wall	Terry Crippen

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**. All club nights commence at 7:45 pm **sharp**, 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. A 50c door fee 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.

EXTENDED SUMMER TRIPS

Important: Please let trip leaders know of your wish to join up well in advance.

Late Dec- Jan Matemateonga or Egmont M
Malcolm Parker 357-5203

4 day tramp along the Matemateonga Range, following the surveyed road. A good track, this is a great laid-back tramp with nice forest & some great views from Mt Humphrey.

Jan 2001 Godley- Sibald- D'Archiac F,T
Peter Wiles 358-6894

A party of four is planning to head into the Godley Valley on January 20th, for about 10 days climbing. Possible peaks of interest are; Sibbald, D'Archiac, McClure, and peaks on the divide south of Sealy Pass.

12- 26 Jan 2001 Wanganui - Whitcombe F
Tony Gates 357 7439

A trans alpine West Coast trip, helicoptering in, climbing, then tramping out.

13- 14 Jan PNTMC 2001 M/F
Warren Wheeler 356 1998

Depart 6pm Friday night to Mangatepopo Hut in Tongariro National Park. This will be our base to climb our first 2001 metres for the Millennium. First up is Pukekaikiore-Ngauruhoe then on Sunday, Tongariro-'Merald Lakes-Central Crater. This trip gets us off the beaten track and offers an exhilarating experience of this fabulous volcanic area.

14 Jan Centre Ck, bush bash M/F

Janet Wilson 329 4722

We'll meet in the Pohangina Valley at a time & location to be decided - give Janet a ring. This daywalk heads up the Pohangina River from the DoC base, then part-way up Centre Creek past a waterfall before we bash our way up to Takapari Road. Loop back down to Centre Creek Biv via the track & back out to the road end.

Anniversary Weekend

20-22 Jan Tararua's Mitre M
Chris Underwood 359-4274

Depart 7am Saturday. Chris is planning a trip into Mitre Flats before the big climb up onto Mitre, Tararua's highest peak. We may complete a loop from here via Girdlestone, Three Kings & Baldy before heading back out to the roadend.

25 Jan Thursday trampers
Jill Spenser 329-8738

25 Jan Club Night: BBQ, Horseshoe Bend

Come along with your friends, your smiles, your summer tans, your Christmas tales, and your food, and get the new year off to a great start with the summer BBQ. This great event will take place at 6.30pm at Horse Shoe Bend just up the road from Tokomaru. Bring your BBQ (if you have one), togs and mosquito repellent.

28 Jan Rangi hut E
Warren Wheeler 356-1998

Depart 8.30am. This is arguably the best easy 3-4 hour family walk in the local area, with lots of variety. A nice steady uphill walk on an excellent track through mixed beech forest, New Zealand mountain cedar, and the notorious leatherwood belt onto the tussock tops for fine views from the western flanks of the Ruahine Ranges north of Rangiwahia. Lunch at the hut, a dip in the pool, a mighty slip to inspect close up, and more!

28 Jan Te Hekenga Xing FE
Mick Leyland 358-3183

Depart 5am. A challenging but very rewarding venture (approx 12hrs) for the very fit amongst us! Head in to Howletts from Kashmir Rd end, crossing the Ruahine Range via the imposing Te Hekenga. Coming out via Rangi Hut on the west side. If enough people (there's 4 already) we may

have 2 parties from both ends to simplify transport arrangements.

1 Feb Thursday trampers
John Rockell 04 902-4415

1 Feb Committee meeting

2- 6 Feb (incl Waitangi day) Kahurangi M
Tony Gates 357-7439

Tony plans to fly to Nelson, and utilise public transport to access Kahurangi National Park at Graham Saddle (alt 900 m), and tramp through the delightful Mt Arthur Tablelands to the Karamea River. Ultimately, he hopes to look at the impressive limestone bluffs of Garibaldi Ridge. Early expressions of interest essential.

3-4 Feb Stanfield-Mid Pohangina M
Llew Pritchard 358-2217

Depart 7am. A crossing of the southern Ruahines, starting from the east side in from Dannevirke. The route takes us up Stanfield Creek and over into another creek that leads down to Mid Pohangina Hut for the night. Down the main Pohangina River & out to the DoC Base.

Waitangi Day

6 Feb Mangaweka discovery E
Liz Todd 323-6246

For details on this trip, give Liz a ring.

8 Feb Thursday trampers
Graham Pritchard 357-1393

8 Feb Club night: "Trekking in Nepal" **John Phillips**

Our intrepid club trio of John, Alan Bee and James Gordon were in Nepal for over a month in October-November. John will have a great slide show on their treks to Annapurna Sanctuary (set in an amphitheatre of 7-8,000m peaks), the remote alpine country around Dhaulagiri (incl. 2 alpine pass crossings of >5,000m), and the stark Tibetan-like landscapes of the upper Kali Gandaki valley.

10 Feb Forest Hill Ramble E
Dennis Moore 357-5651

Depart 9am. An easy few hours' ramble up behind Dennis's place in the foothills back of Palmerston North. We'll head up through the Earnslaw One forest to a lake, then follow the lake

outlet stream back down to Dennis's place. An easy outing handy to Palmerston North.

11 Feb Iron Gates Gorge E/M
Warren Wheeler 356-1998

Depart 8am. This is a classic easy river trip with (challenging) attitude. After travelling a couple of hours along the sidle track up above the Oroua River past Heritage Lodge we meet the river at a great swimming hole. We then follow the river downstream - rock hopping, stream crossing, the odd swim and pack float on a hot day - until we reach the great Iron Gates Gorge itself on the edge of the Ruahine Park. We pack-float/swim through to emerge cleansed, refreshed, our eyes opened to a whole new world... magnificent fun and highly recommended.

15-16 Feb Thursday trampers
Liz Flint 356-7654

17-18 Feb Toka -Ngamoko circuit M/F
Dave Grant 357-8269

Depart 6.30am. Strike up to Tunipo from Heritage Lodge, thence NE along the Ngamoko range to "14072" dropping down to Top Gorge hut for the night. Carry on up the Pohangina on Sunday morning and climb out onto the Ngamoko tops again at "14701" (hopefully, otherwise up to the Pohangina saddle and around). Drop down into Tunipo creek, following it down to the Oroua then out along the Irongate track back to the road end. A chance to visit some "off the beaten track" areas of the southern Ruahines.

18 Feb Toka top M
Peter Darragh 358-8744

Depart 7-30am. A good daytrip onto the tops of the Ngamoko Range in the western Ruahines. Great views in good weather.

22 Feb Thursday trampers
Neville Gray 357-2768

22 Feb Club night "Massey Climbing Wall" **Terry Crippen 356-3588**

Come along to the Massey Recreation Centre and try your hand at rock-climbing. Practise your belaying and abseiling for both rock and the coming winter snow conditions. We will have club gear available and club instructors to get you started or refine techniques. Contact Terry Crippen 356-3588.

Trip participants:

If you are interested in going on a trip, please contact the leader at least three days in advance. Trips usually leave from the Foodtown carpark in Fergusson Street with transport provided by car-pooling. 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 or any suggestions for future tramps please contact one of the trip co-ordinators Terry Crippen (356-3588), Janet Wilson (329-4722) or David Grant (357-8269).

Trip leaders: Please discuss with the trip co-ordinators, 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.

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

Enquiries to: Mick Leyland (358-3183), Terry Crippen (356-3588), or David Grant (357-8269)

NOTICES**THE EDITOR IS BACK...**

Well, 6 weeks in Nepal sure makes it hard settling back into work, including getting newsletters done - my apologies for this one arriving a bit late. Many thanks to Tony for doing an admirable job while I was away & we might give the colour-photo-insert idea some more consideration, although it does add to the cost of the newsletter.

There's some serious-looking South Island ventures happening this summer, plus the Matemateaonga Walkway which must be the club standard now for a laid-back North Island summer walk. Check out the new trip card too, for some great walks and club nights next year.

Meanwhile, I need to get out and make use of these legs of steel before they turn to jelly (I've been back at the desk for a month now). See you on the trails & all the best for a great Xmas and New Year of summer walking.

John the Editor

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

As John is back at the editor's desk, the usual arrangements will resume: e-mail articles to john.phillips@horizons.govt.nz and deliver/post hardcopy articles to John's work address:

c/- horizons.mw
11-15 Victoria Ave, PN

If you're e-mailing, we'd prefer you to include your article as an attachment (please use Microsoft Word Version 7.0 or Rich Text

Format), unless it is quite a small article, in which case it is fine to type it directly into the e-mail.

Note that e-mails with certain attachments (particularly scanned photos) will be filtered by a "quarantine" system at horizons - you will get an automatic e-mail reply from the horizons 'postmaster', confirming this. Don't worry about this, all material gets through to us once it is checked for viruses etc. by horizons' staff.

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

FROM THE PRESIDENTS PC

Running late, running late, running late but a chance for a few quick keystrokes before this issue goes to Press. This is the time when any holes in our plans for the holiday ahead start to materialise, and we realise some rapid stitching is required if the whole isn't to fall apart. Or we are so naively confident that we don't even notice the holes forming and only dumb luck saves us.

This was supremely well-illustrated last night at the End-of-Year BBQ at Ashhurst Domain when the expected-as-usual portable barbies did not appear because their owners were committed elsewhere this year.

Ahhh, yes. The Perils of Presumption. So much for having everything under control. And the weather after Wednesday's Blue-sky day was gloomy and despondent, threatening rain. Oh dear. Even with our trusty cellphone trolling the

ether we were unable to reel in a barbie. Very strange because it is the height of the season after all. Frowns deepened. Stomachs churned. Only a miracle could save us now.

And lo, it came to pass - - - to cut a long story short the nearby AgScience End of Year Function was not a Picnic - and their family-sized BBQ, a wheel-less Thomas the Tank Engine of inspired design, was (after a suitable delay to let us fully lick our wounded pride) man-handled into position, and was soon sizzling our steaks in splendid fashion. Disaster was narrowly averted. Notes duly taken....

So don't be done like a dinner (or a certain BBQ) when venturing into the hills this summer - be prepared. Take nothing for granted. Okay, so you are on to that, no worries – excellent.

And for those “unhappy campers” you might bump in to – may your generosity and good will help them avert a Disaster too.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and happy tramping into the New Year.

Warren Wheeler
President PNTMC

EVENTS CARD FOR the first half of 2001
Terry

The Events Card for Jan to June 2001 is out. Lots of trips for summer and autumn. Thank you to leaders who have committed yourselves to lead trips. 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.

For newcomers please read the comments regarding the grading of trips printed on the events card and in the Newsletter.

REMEMBER to contact the leaders at least 3 days in advance - phoning up Friday night for a weekend trip is a bit too late!

For further info. contact trip leaders, or the trip co-ordinators (Terry Crippen 356-3588, Janet Wilson 329-4722, or Dave Grant 357-8269)

A range of club evenings have been organised, beginning with the traditional BBQ at Horse Shoe

Bend. Please try to come along to as many of OUR club nights as possible. As well as the excellent selection of topics being presented club nights are a good chance for a chat & hear what others have been up to. Our Club night organizer is Warren Wheeler, phone 356-1998 for further info.

"GUIDE FOR TRIP LEADER", PINK "HELP" FORM, AND TRIP FEEDBACK FORM

Terry

These three forms are always available at club nights - either up the back by the servery or on our bookcase. Trip leaders don't forget your responsibilities when planning and leading trips. Make use of the Guide for Trip Leaders. Please take a copy or two - take one with you on each tramp you lead for continuing reference. This guide is also good value for all trip participants as it gives you an idea in whats involved.

The pink "Help" form is put out by the NZ Mountain Safety Council for possible Search and Rescue purposes. Trip leaders take some copies and fill in or use it as a guide to compile details, prior to the trip's departure.

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.

SURVIVING SEMINARS

the man is talking
but I'm not listening
he says the pasture grows
five percent faster
but it's not significant
and I'm thinking

how the sun
dried my socks at Ngamoko
as I sat wondering
in the December wind
eating an orange
with my back to the wall

he's showing a slide
something about sheep
but I see sunlight
deep in green pools
the way water on rock
shrank to nothing
before my eyes

I can see
the edge of light
where the river turns

he feels the prospects
are good perhaps lucrative
the water's cool I'm wading
thigh deep and the surge
is strong but I'm walking
towards the sun

the man answers questions
and I wonder will I meet
the bark and bound of a black dog
shattering sunlight across the river
on an afternoon in December

it all depends he says
on the weather.

Pete McGregor

BOOK REVIEW by Tony Gates

"HIGH EXPOSURE" by David Breashears (2000). (Can't find the book, so don't have the correct publishers details- sorry!)

The subject of the May 1996 tragedy on Mt Everest, when Rob Hall (plus) died, has been written about many times. I have reviewed books in past newsletters by; Krakauer, Simpson, Monteath, Boukreev, and Dickinson, as well as the IMAX film featuring that topic. Here is another book on mountaineering, featuring Everest, and the May 1996 tragedy. It is the story (so far) of the climbing and photography life of the author. It's a good title, a good subject, and a very good book.

Breashears begins his climbing and photography career on the rocks of Colorado and California, soon graduating to the Himalayas, where he combined both. He continues to do both. Ed Hillary and Tensing Norgay just happened to be

	Deaths on the descent	Total no. of ascents	Ration of deaths to ascents
K2	22	164	13.4
Annapurna	6	102	5.9

Makalu	7	146	4.8
Kangchenjunga	7	150	4.7
Everest	36	1052	3.4
Gasherbrum 1	3	159	1.9
Broard Peak	4	210	1.9
Nanga Parbat	3	168	1.8
Mansalu	3	176	1.7
Dhaulagiri	5	292	1.7
Lhotse	2	119	1.7
Xixabangma	2	169	1.2
Gasherbrum 11	3	422	0.7
Cho Oyu	5	988	0.5
Total	108	4,317	Av ov 2.5

on his first expedition! If America is a land of opportunity, then David Breashears fits the mould of a person creating his own career and climbing to the top (literally and physically). He found his way to Everest on a number of expeditions, and to the summit twice, before that fateful month of May 1996 (when he got to the top once again). He worked with the great Kurt Deimberger on Everest, and in the Dolomites with Sylvester Stallone on the Hollywood epic "Cliffhanger" The book stresses his obvious love of the mountains, and the people that go there. It continues with the much aired arguments about the events leading up to (and after) Hall's death near the top of Everest. (The author is an authority on the subject because he was there, and he knew most of the key players). The book also frankly discusses painful family issues such as parental divorce.

More books on people dying on Mt Everest will probably emerge (if they haven't already done so). Beck Wethers, the client of Rob Halls who "came back from the dead" twice, emerges as a real hero

in Breashears book. He has a book out now, which is at the top of my Christmas pressie list. Sandy Pitmann, the Editor from New York who

was a customer of Scott Fischer's, and was so gallantly rescued by Anatoli Boukreev on South Col, will surely write her story.

TRIP REPORTS

"CLUELESS AND OFF TRACK"
(TRACK AND CLUE AWARENESS)

12 November 2000 by Pete McGregor

The cop behind the counter stared at me blankly. "The course was yesterday," he said. "A bunch of them went down to Levin yesterday."

Great, I thought. Dragging myself out of bed and unconsciousness at some absurd hour of the morning only to find that someone had stuffed up and told me the wrong day. The cop offered to ask around to see if anyone knew anything more. He disappeared, leaving me exasperated and wondering what to do with the extra five or six hours I'd just gained by getting up so early. Just then the main door burst open and a woman clutching a daypack marched across the foyer. I recognised her as one of the police contingent on the SAREX in March. She nodded at me, and after a few brief questions all was sorted. It was the right day; everything was arranged; we'd be off to Levin shortly.

Sure enough, the other participants began to arrive, and soon we were whisked off to the Levin Police Station. I sat in the back of the van as Warren regaled Janet and Graham and me about the virtues of the "Mid-Fold Traverse". "The best thing about it," he said, "is that there are nine river crossings." At that point I decided once and for all that Warren's a lunatic. But he wasn't finished. "And there's no mud!" he exclaimed. The Mid-Fold Traverse being in the Tararua, I also decided that he was either delusional or an outright liar.

We disembarked at the rear of the station and were escorted beneath an enormous "DB Draught" banner into the common room for a quick outline of the programme. We spent the next hour or so in a semi-darkened room, getting a well-presented introduction to the intricacies of tracking. Our instructor was Chris Hurring, who had trained as a tracker in the army before joining the Police. Chris was at some pains to ensure that our expectations of our abilities were realistic - in other words, that we'd probably be hopeless at it, although he was far more diplomatic than that.

He impressed me as thoughtful and a careful listener, attentive to what was being said; qualities I could imagine in a tracking context as being highly valuable, and I wondered whether those qualities had made him a good tracker or whether instead the training had fitted him with those qualities. In the end I decided it didn't matter - if I were lost I'd hope he was on the tracking team.

We took a break for morning tea, and joined the station cops in the common room. On the TV the first All Blacks/France test was in progress, punctuated by frequent un-police-like comments about refereeing and French tactics. We sat at a safe distance at the back of the room and polished off the chocolate biscuits. Ruth and Sherm both graciously declined the offer of the last afghan thus enabling me to commandeer it without starting another Afghan conflict. Shortly afterwards, Doug Howlett scored for the All Blacks; the whole room erupted with whoops of delight, and I realised just what Chris and the other instructors were sacrificing to train us that day.

After a short review of what we'd been over, and a chance to question Chris about some aspects of TCA, we returned to the vehicles and drove to a nearby reserve. Here, we were taken one by one along a section of track where various objects had been laid out. The aim was to give us the experience of searching for clues; to help us realise the intense concentration needed, and to show us just how easy it is to miss things. And it's very easy indeed! I spotted about half the objects, which was about average. To my knowledge, none of us saw anywhere near the full number, despite the fact that they were all in full view. But while this was enlightening, even more so was the static exercise, where we stood at the bottom of a slope and attempted to see as many of the "planted" objects as possible. How on earth is it possible not to see a glowing Cyalume stick hanging in a tree?? Well, I don't know, but most of us (me included) managed to do exactly that. I got the machete 'though!

Humbled, we returned and consoled ourselves with enormous, police-provided lunches and listened to Kieran's and Sherm's accounts of hair-raising helicopter rides. "I was flying up the Otehake in a wee Robbie," Kieran said, "and it was bouncing around all over the place. I was hanging on like grim death, and then I saw that the pilot was flying the chopper using just his thumb and forefinger. When we landed, I found out why - his other fingers were missing. His nickname was 'Tweezers!'"

After lunch we drove to another reserve, closer to the Tararua, where we attempted to follow tracks through the bush. Mick and I, followed by Rob as instructor/assessor, managed reasonably well until about halfway, when all traces of sign vanished utterly. Try as we might we could find nothing to relocate the trail, so we resorted to cheating - in other words, ploughing on along the compass bearing we'd been told to follow. Rob was highly encouraging, mostly, I think because he wanted the exercise to finish on time so he wouldn't miss the Lennox-Tua fight. Further on, we again found sign, and managed, with a considerable amount of imagination, to follow it to the end on the far side of the reserve.

We returned to the cars and lazed about in the sun, waiting for the last teams to arrive. Warren tugged at the leaves of a small, shrubby tree. "This looks like pohutukawa," he said, scrutinising it before concluding that it wasn't. "It's an amazing thing, Growth," he said, fondling a small spray of newly-flushed foliage. "You look at this and you wonder how it all happens. What's going on? One minute you've got this," he said, running a soft shoot through his fingers, "then WHOOSH! - look what happens." He gestured at the entire tree.

"Yeah," I said, ignoring his strangely erroneous view of how fast trees grow, "it's hard to get your head around the concept."

"Hmmm," Warren mused, "it sure makes you wonder how a moment of hot lust in the back seat of a car can produce a monster like Hulk Hogan."

"Er, yeah, ha ha ha," I laughed nervously, edging away. Fortunately, the last of the teams returned and I hurried over to listen to Chris round off the day. He attempted to reinflate our seriously flattened egos by saying that the dry conditions in the reserve were as bad as it was possible to get for tracking. But while we were clearly not up to being able to locate lost parties

with consummate displays of tracking prowess, the main objectives of the day were well and truly accomplished. I now knew some of the jargon; I'd gained insight into the processes; and I'd been shown how difficult - and how important - it is. I'd had a great day of learning and socialising. And yes, Virginia, there is a free lunch.

We were: Warren, Janet, Graeme, Lis, Arthur, Terry, Mick, and me (Pete) from PNTMC; and others from MUAC, MTSC, LWTC, Police, etc.

NAVIGATION & RIVER SAFETY TRAINING

23 November by Warren Wheeler

Our annual Navigation training morning at Ashhurst Domain looked like being washed out but the drizzle didn't come to much and added an air of authenticity as we struggled to estimate how far away a distant object was in the mist (ranged from 400m to 237m, but was actually only 140m). We learned how important it was to count one's paces (every second one actually) and whether we were a 50 or 60 pacer (per 100m). We practised walking on a straight bearing by using a party member as a mobile post to aim for (trees are also good but they can all start to look the same up close - there are also no trees above the snowline).

We were then given an exercise sheet to follow. With bits to fill in. And this was supposed to be my day off. Still, with Terry offering hints and instruction along the way (is that the northernmost corner of the building...?) we first followed a short compass course and learnt how to interpret the meaning of "peg" (a small wooden dowel barely visible in the grass except to those with senses sharpened by the recent Track and Clue Awareness Course). Then off we wandered along a short path through the bush, timing and pacing ourselves as we went. Ditto for a bush-bash following a marked trail (strips of white plastic bags are not that easy to follow, no). Then the difficultest part - calculating what our different rates of travel were (yes, they were different).

I can't say I would like to have to keep track of every step along the way for every trip we do, but there are tricks with beads and fingers that help, and the practise can be fun. It is certainly fairly easy to pick up, and an invaluable skill at times, especially for Search and Rescue situations when you really need to know where you are.

So, next trip, get pacing and counting, and see how accurate you can get time-wise and location-wise.

River Safety in the Afternoon

After a quick bite of lunch we joined the few others from Mountain Safety Council and beyond for River Safety Training, starting in the shelter with a bit of theory on river dynamics and essential jargon from a river rafting guide (pools, eddies, weir, frowns, strainers, white water, green water).

Noel Bigwood then presented the Mountain Safety Councils Recommended Method for Safely Crossing Rivers, and how to assess whether it is even safe to get into the water (what do frogs say? "knee-deep" – I forget the other memory-joggers but they relate to speed of flow < walking pace, and clarity to see your feet – get the picture?). Oh, and how to back out safely. These apply to inexperienced parties in particular but help set the alarm bells for hard out trampers as well.

We were enlightened about the evils of the Macho-pack (always wants to be on top), how best to float down-river using your pack as a float on your back, and how then to reach the shore by ferry-gliding (actually paddling like crazy across the current) and (worse case scenario, kiddies) how to untangle ourselves if you end up snagged by your pack in the water.

Our enthusiasm was shaken a bit by the news that the Manawatu River was up a bit but feeling confident we drove off to the Saddle Road bridge on the Pohangina River, parked the vehicles just upstream and marvelled at the changes wrought by this years floods. We then easily crossed (knee deep, clear, slow moving - Tick) and assembled for the real thing just above a nice swimming hole below the white cliffs.

After seperating into two groups of five we all loosened packstraps, tightened waist-bands, lined up in optimal height/strength order, reached out and did some serious "binding" before shuffling off, wading into the torrent, going in up to pants level and then backing out. All without breaking our arms/backs despite the hideously painful contortions which seemed to be required. So far so good.

Now for the "Oh dear I've fallen in the water" exercise. Some of us enjoyed this so much we did it twice, bouncing off the pressure wave at the

cliff and frantically paddling and kicking to implement a theoretical ferry-glide. Hard work. Others' lips turned blue.

Finally we were each dunked with due ceremony in a simulated pack-snap, unclipped ourselves and slipped out to see what it was like without the flotation benefit of our pack. Much harder work, but being more desperate we seemed to kick and swim to shore more quickly.

After emptying gumboots and packs, and in a happy mood with the sun shining, we made a bee-line for our dry clothes back at the vehicles. First rule – get to shelter and get into dry clothes ASAP. Got it. Rrrright. Good point.

This is becoming an annual event for me, and despite getting cold and wet is one I quite enjoy. It is excellent revision, is good to see how others respond and builds confidence for leading club trips. Definitely recommended – see you there next year. The PNTMC contingent were Christine Cheyne, Christine Taylor, Warren Wheeler and Terry Crippen.

KAHUTERAWA ACTIVITES

26 Nov

Terry Crippen

A good time was had by Warren Wheeler, Peter Burgess and myself, on the Sunday attacking the supplejack and other scrub, inside the PNCC Water Reserve! (The part that we are allowed in). We went in via the Council access road off South Range Road to the top end of Platinum ridge that overlooks the Kahuterawa catchment on the west and the Otangane on the east at the northern most end of the Tararua ranges.

Our objective was to connect up the Platinum ridge track to the track up from Quartz Creek - these had been marked and/or cut on previous trips. We could have done with three pairs of loppers in some places with the excessive amounts of Supplejack. We found a few open rocky viewpoints and occasional old markers. We had planned to meet up with Ian, Llew, Andrew and Ray for lunch in the Kahuterawa where they had been working on the sidle track but our progress was slower than expected. So once we had connected the track sections Peter and Warren headed down into the Kahuterwa and out to Black Bridge (checking out the progress on the sidle track) while I retraced our handywork back to the vehicle and drove round to pick them up. Llew, Andrew, Ian and Ray had finished their days

activity so the two groups didn't meet up. However, all in all a successful day.

So if you are wanting to investigate the area over the summer: consult the sketch map in the October newsletter and: the cut sidle track up the true right of the Kahuterawa goes nearly to Ross Creek; then there is a section of stream travel, then another section of rough track between Ross and Quartz Cks; then the steep grunt up to the spur and Platinum ridge. Once at the south end of Platinum Ridge you can follow the track to the access road returning the same way; or follow the rough loop track (one section still to be marked and cut - from Otangane Stm back up to Platinum Ridge).

BUT PLEASE REMEMBER - you are not allowed over the north side of the road ie into the Tiritea catchment which is the City Water Supply. And you are not allowed onto the private farmland at the west end of the access road. And dont forget to contact PNCC.

LAKE RUAPAE

3rd December

by Heather Bewick

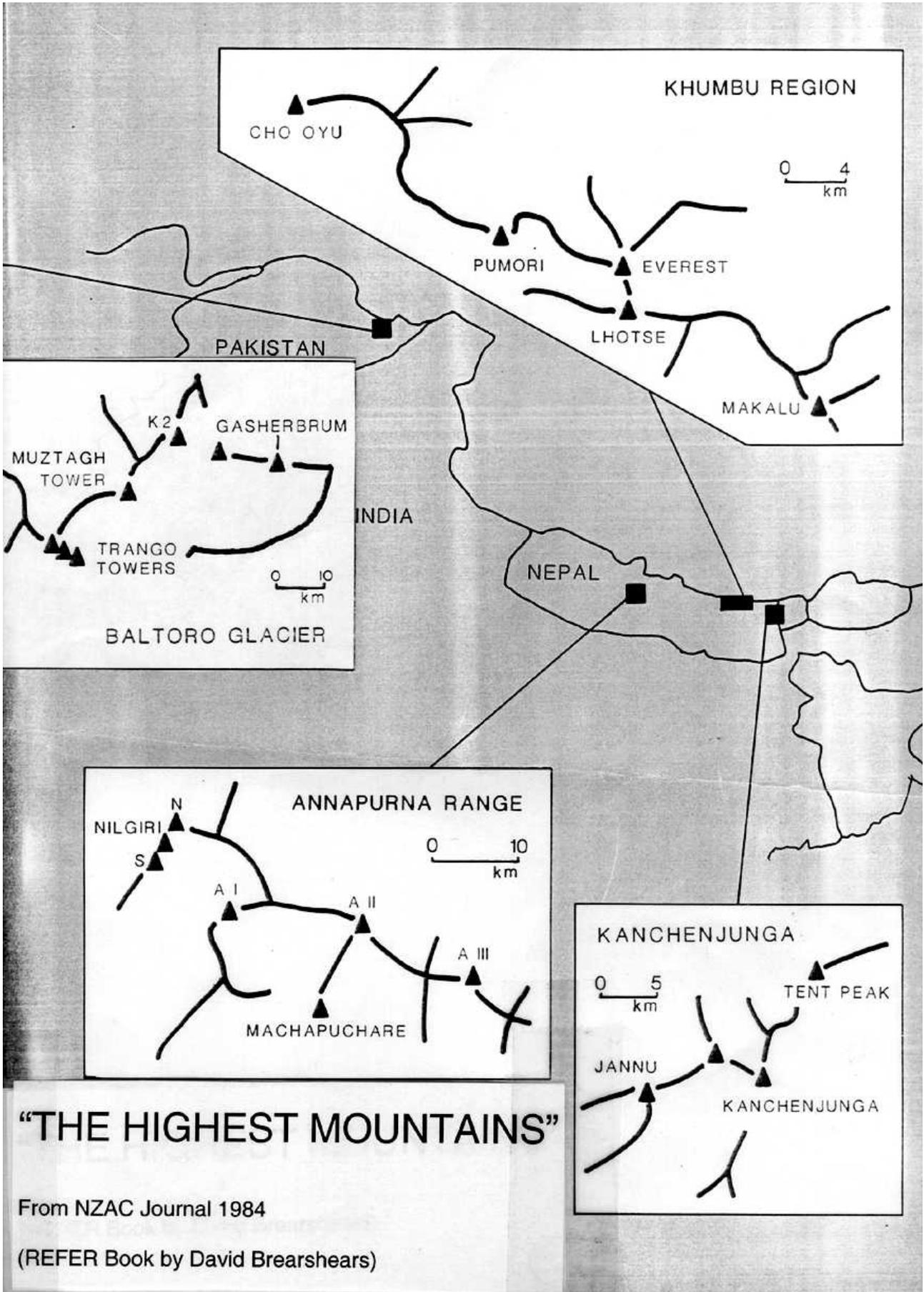
I'm pleased to report that the Lake Ruapae trip is a scenic, steady, and straight forward tramp. I haven't been in the Tararuas for nine years, and my memories were of scrambling up and down steep faces, in grotty weather, and not enjoying it (aside from the sheer physical challenge). [*What's changed?* - ed.] Instead, good weather for Saturday saw us make good time over the Roaring Stag track, past a few recent slips, and a good view provided by a tree climb. After the track junction to Herepai Hut, we dropped down to the Ruapae Stream, and made camp at the lovely Ruapae Lake.



[Photo: Tony Gates].

Tents, tent site pitching, map reading, and cooker lighting were all quite new to me, so the casual lessons were much appreciated. The scenery was great, in forest, beside a tranquil lake, hearing occasional bird calls, and breathing "bush air"- it was great for some mellow "time out". Heather's lazy lakeside log- repose ended with a splash near her toes, as a rather large "granddaddy" eel was interested in his visitors. Tony was quickly lakeside, armed with camera, and offerings of bread and chilli beef jerky. He followed the eel on its travels around the shallows, even scratching its belly! This was his highlight of the trip, judging from his delighted response.

Rain from early Sunday morning saw an end to our plans to stretch our legs, explore, and visit Cattle Ridge Hut. The Ruamahanga River was mega flooded. Still, we needed to practice our river crossing techniques to cross the Ruapae Stream. We met two jokers from VUWTC, who were just as happy as us to join forces when confronted with such a barrier. The river crossing was of course done with much style and grace. We returned to the car by lunchtime, making the trip time a little over 24 hours. Altogether, an enjoyable trip, and a nice introduction to PNTMC knowledge, humour, and enthusiasm for me. Trampers: Tony Gates and Heather Bewick.



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