



# PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217, PALMERSTON NORTH

**Newsletter - September 2002**

*Tramping track- limited formation, often with steep grades. Suitable for averagely fit, experienced, and properly equipped people. Constructed to "boot" standard. DOC national track classification.*

**Interclub Quizz and photograph competition coming up.**

**TRIP REPORTS:**  
**Snowcrafts 1, 2, and 3**  
**Three reports of the ascent of K2 and Mt Cook**  
**Old Coach Road, Kahuterawa**  
**Howletts Hut**  
**And a lightning quick Tararua Northern Crossing.**

## CLUB NIGHTS

September 12	Mt Aspiring	Bruce Van Brunt
September 23 (Monday)	Interclub Photo Competition	MUAC.
September 26	Department of Conservation	Steve Sutton
September 30 (Monday)	Interclub Quizz	MUAC.
October 10	Craters and Lahars	Vince Neall
October 14 (Monday)	DOC user group meeting.	
October 31	Rock climbing at City Rock	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

Trip grades depend on many factors, especially the weather. A reasonably proficient tramp can be expected to do the trips in 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.

### Sept 12 Club Night, Mt Aspiring

Bruce van Brunt presents his show about climbing in the Mt Aspiring Region, one of NZ's most popular climbing areas. Bruce has spent some time here up on the ice and snow, and is familiar with many of the routes.

Sept 14-16 Please note, the Whakapapa climbing trip has been cancelled, and a leader is wanted for a day trip climbing on Ruapehu. Contact Trip coordinators Andrew Lynch (325 877) or Janet Wilson (329 4722).

Sept 14-15 Avalance Awareness, Mt Ruapehu  
Each year the NZ Mountain Safety Council has a series of lectures and field days on Avalanche Awareness, a good follow-on from our Snowcraft Programme and essential stuff if you intend to head into the snow covered hills and mountains, winter or summer. Vern Meyer of Outdoor Experiences is running this one: Evening Lecture Whakapapa Village, 7pm Sat 14 Sat, followed by a field day on Ruapehu's slopes Sunday 15. Cost \$105. Contact Vern directly: phone 07 333 7099 email [outdoorexperiences@xtra.co.nz](mailto:outdoorexperiences@xtra.co.nz) (phone Terry Crippen 3563-588 or Bruce van Brunt 328-4761 for addition info if you like)

Sept 15 Hardings Park M  
Merv Mathews 357 2858

Hardings Park is an area of PNCC-owned land in the Tararua foothills adjacent to the Turitea Water Reserve. In the past, access has been available only to hunters with a Council permit, but the area is to be reclassified as a scenic reserve, making it available to trampers. The recent formation of the "Sledge track" now provides ready access to the park. The trip begins at the 'Black Bridge' at the end of Kahuterawa Road, follows the Kahuterawa Stream along the Sledge track (1 hour) then up Platinum Ridge to the loop junction (½ hour). We then do a large loop taking 3½ hours, using hunters' tracks, and a portion of the Council access road. There are good views to both sides of the ranges from several clearings on the way. If there is time, we will take a side path to the mineshafts where the Council has thoughtfully

provided new aluminium ladders for the adventurous. Departure time: 8.00am.

Sept 21- 23 McKinnon Hut M  
Dave Grant 357 8269

This is a classic western Ruahine alpine tramp, so you will need to come prepared for snow and ice. Depart PN 8.00 am Saturday morning, return Sunday evening.

Sept 21 (Sat) Herepai Hut E/ M  
Charlotte Sunde 353 8658

A favourite local place, with good access (for the most part at least) to the tussock tops. Great views. Depart 9.00 AM.

### Sept 23 (Monday) Inter club photo competition

Between members of MUAC, MTSC, and PNTMC, this competition will be judged on the night, for both prints and slides. Categories listed below. The venue is Ag Hort 1, at 7.30 pm.

### Sept 26. Club night Department of Conservation

Steve Sutton, from DOC Wellington, will be talking to us about the new Government funding, what that means, and what we now need to do to plan ahead. The Tararuas are used as an example.

Sept 28- 29 Porongaki circuit M/ F  
Barry Scott 354 0510

Another classic west Ruahine valley, with beech forest, leatherwood, tussock, and lovely huts.

Sept 29 Powell Hut M  
Fiona Donald 356 1095

Depart 7.15 AM Sunday at Foodtown, for Masterton and the Tararua Ranges. A steep climb up to a spacious new DOC hut for lunch. Also offering are stunning open views, bush and tussock. Come prepared.

### September 30. The Interclub Quizz.

MUAC are organizing this fun event this year. I recall that their last effort was brilliant, so we can expect a lot of laughs, and plenty of practical and intellectual things to do. Tony is organizing a team, so contact him soon for your place in it.

### Oct 3 Committee meeting, at Warren's place.

October 5- 6 Tongariro- Ngauruhoe M  
Warren Wheeler 356 1998

Depart Friday night 6.30pm and stay at Mangatepopo (hut or nearby lodge). The main plan is a winter "PNTMC 2002". Day 1: up over Pukekaikiore and then crampon up the west face



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 Janet Wilson (329 4722)

## NOTICES

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES can be Emailed to [tony.gates@horizons.govt.nz](mailto:tony.gates@horizons.govt.nz), or stuff can be delivered to him at home or work.

c/- horizons.mw

11-15 Victoria Ave, PN

If you're e-mailing, please include your article as an attachment (Microsoft Word Version 7.0 or Rich Text Format), unless it is a small article, which can be typed directly into the e-mail.

You may get an e-mail reply from the horizons 'postmaster'. Don't worry, all material gets through once it is checked for viruses etc. by horizons' staff.

The deadline for anything for the Newsletter is the FIRST THURSDAY of the month.

### **MISTAKE IN LAST MONTHS NEWSLETTER**

In the August newsletter the notice "Communication by email" was confusing, and incorrect in part. PLEASE IGNORE IT. The normal setup, as on the "Guide to Trip Leaders" (and contained in the letter sent to leaders recently), still applies. That is: Leaders, please ensure before heading off with your Club trip, that you write down detailed intentions so that the Club knows where, when, and especially who are on the trip. This preferably should be left with, or phoned through to, one of the OVERDUE TRIPS CONTACTS; Terry, Mick or Janet. Otherwise try Andrew Lynch who is the other TRIP CO-ORDINATOR (Terry and Janet are Trip co-ordinators as well), so the chances are that one of us will be home. (See elsewhere in the newsletter for their phone numbers). Otherwise leave your intentions at your home with someone reliable so we can at least get to it if necessary.

### **EMAIL ADDRESS LIST**

Committee members who are connected to Email are listed below. Please note that changes to this list may occur from time to time, so we will try to keep it as up to date as possible.

[warren.wheeler@horizons.govt.nz](mailto:warren.wheeler@horizons.govt.nz)

[terry\\_crippen@clear.net.nz](mailto:terry_crippen@clear.net.nz)

[P.WILES@wiles.gen.nz](mailto:P.WILES@wiles.gen.nz)

[tony.gates@horizons.govt.nz](mailto:tony.gates@horizons.govt.nz)

[atlynch@ihug.co.nz](mailto:atlynch@ihug.co.nz)

[B.vanBrunt@massey.ac.nz](mailto:B.vanBrunt@massey.ac.nz)

[gaewyn.grant@xtra.co.nz](mailto:gaewyn.grant@xtra.co.nz)

### **NEW MEMBERS.**

A warm welcome to;  
 Marcus Kirchberg  
 78 Rugby St, Palmerston North.  
 06 356 1163 021 269 0234.  
[M.Kirchberg@massey.ac.nz](mailto:M.Kirchberg@massey.ac.nz)

Helen Ronald  
 237 Broadway Ave, Palmerston North.  
 06 358 5520.  
[Helen\\_Ronald.nz@flightcentre.com](mailto:Helen_Ronald.nz@flightcentre.com).

Sue Galbraith  
 30 Manawatu St, Palmerston North.  
 06 358 6527.  
[susangal@hotmail.com](mailto:susangal@hotmail.com).

Jim and Davina Jones  
 14 Douglas St, Palmerston North.  
 06 356 2670.  
[jimjones@massey.ac.nz](mailto:jimjones@massey.ac.nz),  
[zebedee73@hotmail.com](mailto:zebedee73@hotmail.com).

### **ALPINE AND ANTARCTIC CALENDARS**

I have seen some Craig Potton and Hedgehog house 2003 calendars in the shops already, so was reminded about our annual PNTMC order (with a bulk buy discount). The price to members, with this discount, is \$16.00 each. Contact Peter Wiles for your order.

**WANTED TO BUY**

Leki pole. Ph Monica, 326 9691.

**INTERCLUB QUIZZ, FOR THE TREVOR BISSELL MEMORIAL BILLY.**

MUAC have organized this event for Monday September 30, at Ag Hort 1, Massey University. So come along and support your club team, laugh at them, and find out who will win the coveted Trevor Bissell Memorial Billy.

**INTERCLUB PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION.**

Massey University Alpine Club are organising the 2002 interclub photo competition, to be held on Monday September 23, at 7.30 pm. The venue is Ag Hort 1. Please bring entries beforehand.

Categories are for slides and prints, in each of;

People  
Rock and alpine  
Landscape  
Flora and Fauna  
Action  
Humour.

**TRAMPER AS PHOTOGRAPH MODEL**

The cover photograph of the latest FMC Bulletin, enclosed with this Newsletter, features a club member features. Can recognize our friendly dairy farmer and Mongolian traveler, Andrew Lynch, battling a windy day in the Tararuas?.

**WEDNESDAY TRAMPING GROUP**

We go out every second Wednesday on easy tramps. Come and join us. For more information, please phone Judy 357 0192, Jennifer, 323 3914, or June 355 2690.

**MAP ERRORS**

Dear PNTMC members,

I'm contacting you in connection with a number of significant errors on Topo map 260 S25 LEVIN, which we were alerted to last month by Noel Bigwood (Police SAR) A subsequent field check undertaken by DoC confirmed that a number of issues need to be addressed as they do pose a potential safety risk to park users. LINZ will be undertaking an urgent limited revision of this map sheet, which should be available within 2-3 months. Until then, all new sales of S25 will be accompanied with a "Notice of Changes", notifying users of the major changes to be aware of. In order to reach users who have already purchased this edition of S25, along with LINZ contacting map retailers, we intend posting a notice on the LINZ website and seek your assistance as a channel to distribute the notice to appropriate users known by you. Attached to the notice will be an invitation to return affected copies of the map to LINZ for a free new edition when it becomes available. Assuming you are comfortable with this course of action, please could each of you provide me with a postal address to send copies of the notice? Note: I cannot send a digital copy which contains graphic map segments as they are too big to send as attachments!

Thanking you in advance

David Mole  
Manager, NTHA, Land Information New Zealand  
Private Box 5501, Wellington  
04 460 0583/ 021 66 3038

**TRIP REPORTS****SNOWCRAFT 1, August 3- 4 2002. A joint effort by the multi national team**

Friday night; 6 pm Meeting at Foodtown, Palmerston North!!! Once the stragglers had arrived, food carriers were organised along with transport.

6.30 or thereabouts, its Whakapapa return for the Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club on Snowcraft One. Fifteen of us in three vehicles. There was to be 16 of us but unfortunately Duncan had broken his wrist cycling home from work the day before.

Our first rendezvous was Taihape for dinner, and then onto the shelter at the Chateau to change into gear. It was a perfect windless and starry night as we made our way to the MTSC lodge.

Protocols, bed about midnight, only to be awoken a short 6 hours later with cups of tea in bed. It wouldn't be the same without the squeak of the trolley making its round. After a wonderful breakfast of sausages, eggs, porridge, baked beans etc we were out of the hut at 8 am sharp and heading up the mountain in our little groups of; the Flounders, Avalanches, and the Snow Leopards.

The Flounders tramped up the mountain looking for the perfect place to practice the use of crampons. But the more we moved on the more Ruapehu looked like Queen Street on a Friday night! Many groups had the same idea we had, so there were instruction groups working on most slopes Bruce had in mind for us. Didn't they know this is our mountain! Moving on, we found the ideal slope, nice and icy and out of the sun. Bruce finds the sun evil. He amused us with a description of his house with no windows facing

north. Our ideal slope out of the sun was adjacent to the ideal slope for learning self-arrest. It wasn't long before one of the Queen street trampers was taking over the self-arrest slope. At least they softened it up for us.

After learning use of crampons and ice axes, self-arrest instruction took place. This necessitated lots of crawling up snow covered slopes. Literally crawling up after sliding down the slopes on our bums, tummies, etc and trying to stop, trying to use the correct method. This we called self-arresting. And then the old German v. British "hatred" was reintroduced!!!! All in good fun of course.

Yes, the cup of tea and ginger nut in bed was most welcome, although I had to check that it wasn't dosed up with something after my rash comments on the mountain. Being from Coventry, my automatic reaction upon hearing a siren noise from down the valley was to exclaim, "The Germans are coming" As soon as I had said this I heard a sharp reply; !\*?\*?\*?!\*?!\* (some unprintable German comment!!) from up the slope. And what was more, Barbara (who was flying back to Germany straight after the weekend) was holding my feet, as I was about to practice a backwards headfirst, self arrest! Luckily we joked it off. Anglo - German relations were restored and she didn't aim me towards a rock.

For one of us, hanging down the mountain head first with someone holding on to your feet, waiting for you to say "I'm ready, let go" was an experience not to be forgotten easily.

"Wayneing" down a slope is a technique by name not in the mountaintcraft manual, learnt by the Flounders. Wayne apparently doesn't know how famous he is. To hear the whole story you need to talk to Bruce or Janet.

The Avalanche group culminated our step cutting and self arrest training with an ice and rock climb up a steep slope and over a bluff - good practice in mixed terrain travel. This required us to remove our gloves to obtain better grip of the rocks - always a useful practice provided it aint too cold - and to work out how not to loose your ice axe when the hands are occupied with the rock. We then traversed alongside the bluff and descended again through more mixed snow and rock. Then a wee bit of glissading down into a snow bowl. Marcus found a snowboard that the Flounders saw whizzing off down a valley before, without its rider of course. The rider had never found it again it seems! Snowboard 1 next year?

And not forgetting the avalanche transceiver practice. We were wondering what Terry was doing at one stage wandering around digging holes in the firm snow with his ice axe apparently at random. Was he gardening, or just gone a bit (more) crazy? Burying the avo transceiver apparently and making decoy holes.

The Snow Leopards, meanwhile were also enjoying the delights of self arrest and other strange activities utilising ice axes and crampons - none of which should be tried at home in the lounge or on house roofs.

Sunday turned out to be a wet, soggy affair, so it was some talking sessions in the hut at first; on avalanches and on weather (wx for those in the know) then some soggy snow activities out side before the "pack up and hut turning off" duties.

It was agreed that this trip was extremely well organised. Thank you Terry. There is now a tongue and cheek saying, that to be "Terryed" is to be organised or volunteered into doing something that you hoped somebody else would do. Accommodation and food (even for vegetarians) made for a wonderful trip, not forgetting the people, (especially the instructors; Bruce, Janet and Terry). And Sue is top notch in the cooking department.

Snowcraft 2 in two weeks time for those able to attend. I know we are looking forward to another superb weekend.

The multinational team was from Germany (x 4), Guernsey (x1), England (x1), Denmark (x1), Ireland (x1), USA (x1), New Zealand (x6). It comprised; Elaine Herve, Heike Hann, Barbara Michel, Davina Jones, Jim Jones, Helan Ronald, Sara Scott, Krystyna Foulkes, Marcus Kirchberg, Sue Galbraith, Alex Fuso, Jacqueline Hoeglund, Terry Crippen, Janet Wilson, Bruce van Brunt.

### **A Perilous Journey - Kahuterawa Valley, Sunday August 11, By Kevin Pearce.**

Elaine Herve, Richard Lockett, Lin (from Shanghai), Monica Cantwell, Fiona Donald, Barbara Mare and myself were quite unaware of the dangers that lay ahead when they left town on a grey day in winter. The track seemed quite ordinary, as far as tramping tracks go, but the numerous warning signs indicated otherwise. Fortunately, by proceeding with EXTREME CAUTION, and avoiding the unstable track edges, trips and falls, we suffered no casualties. (The danger warning signs really are over done.) It was very much a there and back trip. Time allowed some to reach the ridge top before an appointment in town required them to turn back.

The rest of us made the rocky knob. We found no platinum or pearls. We did not get wet although it was a bit cold in the wind. It is very good to have a real tramping track so close to town. Our walking time was longer than our driving time by a fair margin.

### **K2-Mt Cook Expedition, August 18 2002. by Duncan Hedderley**

In the chill pre-dawn light, Warren checked my crampons. In the distance there were intermittent groaning sounds which could have been glaciers shifting. Jean and Janet had gone ahead and were setting belay ropes for the ascent. As the sky above Base Camp lightened, we began the ascent of K2.

The climb was not arduous, partly because of the fine equipment (crampons, ice-axes, helmets, prussic loops) and expert tuition provided, and partly because the K2 trig near Baines is only 32 metres above sea level. It gave a nice view of the Tararua with a dusting of snow, and the source of the groans (not calving glaciers, but bemused calves); it kept us warm; and it did give us an opportunity to use some Snowcraft gear and techniques (Warren had intended it to be a bit of extra practice for Snowcraft attendees; unfortunately it got scheduled on the same weekend as SC2)

After several ascents and descents (the fastest up in 30 seconds, by Warren - and I can assure you, by the end he was without oxygen), we dropped back to Base Camp (Jean's tent) for breakfast - coffee, rolls, jam, eggs, bacon and bubbly.

As the sun rose further, we broke camp and drove to our second objective of the day. Mt Cook, at 52m ASL, is probably the highest point between Palmerston North and Tasmania. Our ascent was less technical, but gave us practice in tramping skills (traversing barbed-wired fences) and mountaincraft ("That slope looks like it could be an avalanche chute" "Hmm, yes, there's no gorse on it, which means it's probably been swept clean recently").

And so, after a pleasant morning's lunacy, we headed back to PN.

We were: Chief Sherpa Warren Wheeler, Janet Wilson, Jean Garman, Nigel and Suzanne and Megan Gregory (bemused Canadians), and Duncan Hedderley.

### **K2 and Mt. Cook: A Canadian Perspective. August 18, 2002**

We saw the scheduled climb in the Event Calendar of the P.N.T.M.C., and it sounded like a

great adventure. That's what we came to New Zealand for- Adventure. Nigel asked Mick Leyland, whom he happens to work for, what all this was about. Mick told us it would be a great day out, a different day out, and to go for it. It wouldn't be a hard tramp and would help us break in our new tramping boots.

We needed to get an early start to meet the tramping club at 6:00 am for the climb of K2 and Mount Cook. 5:20 am came around pretty quick. All three of us were scrambling to find our hiking clothes. It seemed quite warm out. We managed to get a thermos of tea ready. We weren't sure if we'd need one but you can never have too much tea. By 5:50 am we were ready to leave.

We arrived at the meeting place 8 minutes later. Duncan and Jean were standing shivering. Janet and Warren arrived, and Warren gave us our climbing permits?? Woah! He brought out a book and asked us to read a section about some other poor souls who had attempted to climb K2 without all the proper gear. I told him we hadn't come prepared for snow although we did bring our rain pants. Oh 32,000 mm not meters. Okay.

Janet and Jean started transferring equipment from their cars to Warren's car. What a lot of equipment. These guys were really serious climbers. We headed out and I found myself wondering if we were going to make it to the top of K2 in time to see the sunrise as planned. Maybe we should have left earlier.

We arrived at the site, saw the huge mound-tain and realized it really was going to be interesting. What did they have planned. There was a moment of anxiety when the car got stuck briefly in the farmers field but we managed to push free.

We got our first taste of the cold southerly when we stepped out of the car. The first thing we did was put on more layers. Then we helped set up our base camp. The most important thing first. The tent. While we set up the tent, our lead climbers Jean and Janet got to work on the gear. We were all assigned helmets, pickaxes and crampons. They showed us how to use the equipment properly. Very cool! Then they got working on the ascent. While we waited for the head climber, Jean to make her way to the end of the first rope, we had a foot race to the top of K2. Warren timed us all and Megan set the record to beat with a time of 38 seconds.

The first post was securely in place, so it was time for us to put on the harnesses and learn how to ascend. This was getting more interesting by the moment. As our lead climber, Jean, ploughed up

the slope ahead of us. We each in turn made our ascent to the top of K2. Warren joined us at that point smashing Megan's record with a time of 30 seconds for his free ascent.

The sun came peeking over the trees as we stood there and we enjoyed its warmth and the view of the area. It's amazing how far you can see from such a vantage point. It was now time to descend, but not so easy. There was more to learn. They showed us how to use the breaking device to control our descent. This was very exciting. Quite an amazing feeling sliding backward down a mountain like that. By far the best part of the climb. Certainly enough to awaken an interest in mountain climbing.



With K2 conquered, we removed and cleaned the equipment and prepared for our breakfast. We could smell the coffee brewing. We were cold and hungry and ready for our meal of bacon and eggs and rolls with cream cheese and jam. Warren broke out the bubbly and he made a toast to our valiant efforts. We enjoyed our meal. I had fleeting thoughts of another huge event (Mt. Cook) still to come and wondered if I was up to it. We had a brief pensive moment together before we broke camp and then set to work packing up all the gear. We were off to our next destination: Mount Cook.



We arrived at the site for our ascent of Mt Cook and were greeted by a herd of Yaks or cows I suppose. The sun was now shining brightly and the wind had died down. The time in the car at 50°C had helped to warm our chilled bodies. Duncan didn't say a word about being too hot so we assume he too was enjoying the heat. Once we had parked, we set off across the foothills in the direction of Mt Cook. We could see it off in the distance. It was a lovely hike across the dunes. Warren was a wealth of information on the area as we walked along listening and asking questions. Our own private tour. Finally we reached the base of the mountain and we wound our way up the slope. We had a nice view of Palmerston North in the distance and the Tararuas. Warren surprised us again with a snack of crackers and Caviar to celebrate our conquering Mt Cook. We took our time basking in the warmth of the sun. Then we made our way back across the top of the dunes enjoying the view as we walked. We chose to go through the bush on the final leg of the journey to enjoy the flora, and Warren introduced us to the names and uses of many of the plants along the way. What a wonderful introduction to New Zealand. When we arrived at our cars, Warren presented each of us with a certificate of achievement. We were very pleased with the way the day had turned out. What sounded like a strange event turned out to be a wonderful morning full of fun and adventure. We headed back to Palmerston North and sorted out our gear in the parking lot. We discussed upcoming events, and made arrangements to meet again next week for another adventure that Janet will be leading. We were made very welcome by the club members and are looking forward to many more outings and events.

Nigel, Suzanne and Megan Gregory

### **K2- Mt Cook, August 18 2002. By Jean Garman.**

In the still quiet of the pre-dawn the members of the expedition made their way to the meeting place. Introductions were made, climbing permits were issued, supplies, gear and maps were checked and then they were off to find the mountain. Their passage through the relatively flat hinterland on the approach to base camp was uneventful and somewhat uninspiring as it wasn't until the last corner was turned that the South Face of K2 (32 000 mm) finally came into view. It was just before sunrise but there was sufficient light to appraise the climb, discuss possible routes and determine where the major (somewhat prickly) obstacles lay. Base camp was rapidly set up and well marked with flags so that they could find their way back if the weather deteriorated before their return. Climbing gear was checked

and fitted in an air of eager anticipation. The lead climbers set off putting in fixed ropes to speed the journey of the other summit hopefuls. The snow conditions were very firm with a very low avalanche risk and the weather was calm and clear if not a little chilly. After a long hard struggle the last rope was finally in place and the remainder of the expedition party followed on through to the summit, which by now was bathed in a glorious sunrise. Panoramic views of snow capped mountains glistening in the early morning light stretched to the north and to the south. The jet stream winds were exceedingly chilling and after the obligatory summit photos a rapid abseil brought the brave adventurers back to base camp. With all this strenuous effort they had worked up quite an appetite which was amply sufficed with fresh rolls, cream cheese and jam followed by the obligatory bacon and eggs all washed down with celebratory bubbly and for those who liked to live dangerously, blueberry soup. Unfortunately the siting of base camp left the gorging explorers in the shade which was little if no warmer than the giddy heights of the summit. Soon it was decided that the time to decamp had come and the next challenge to be undertaken. A quick detour to check out local flood protection structures and then the next summit, Mt Cook (58 000 mm), was sighted in the distance. A somewhat longer approach was required for this mountain. It involved passing through a herd of rabidly curious 'yaks' who inquisitively followed closely on the adventurers heels for as far as they could. As the staunch men and women of the expedition party drew closer to the mountain once again a careful examination of possible routes was made and potential dangers (also prickly) assessed before the final push to the summit was made. More photos were taken and now on a balmy comfortable summit the group took time to partake of bubbly, crackers and caviar and to check out all recognisable viewpoints. A different descent route was chosen and before long gloating over the extraordinary success of summiting two such prominent mountains within a single morning the group headed for home to ticker tape parades and the adulation and of their peers.

Expedition leader, Warren. Lead climbers, Janet and Jean. Mountaineers of incredible physical prowess, Nigel, Sue, Megan and Duncan.

### **Snowcraft 2 at Whakapapa, August 17- 18. By Sue Galbraith.**

Friday night rendezvous as SC 1 at Foodtown, 6pm for 6.30 departure. Travel arrangements and gear carrying is down pat now

Dinner at Taihape, but this time no sitting down for an extended meal. Full party met once again at

the shelter at Whakapapa to gear up for the walk to the lodge. There was a definite change in mountain conditions this weekend. For non 4-wheel drive vehicles chains were essential on the icy road. Krystyna's car even with chains on couldn't get any further than the bottom of the Bruce loop. The Lodge was a welcoming sight tonight, covered in snow and picture perfect. Conditions for Saturday were a concern and Sunday even worse. We were all in bed before midnight.

At 8 am we headed off in our groups guided by Terry, Barry and Alasdair. We plugged our way in heavy snow up the mountain often up to our thighs and found suitable slopes to work on belaying techniques and anchors. Unfortunately ground conditions were not suitable for crampons. Weather conditions deteriorated by mid afternoon. Skiers headed down from the high slopes as the wind came up. But for us mountaineers this wasn't a problem.

Snow stakes as anchors for belaying could not be used in these snow conditions. The snow was far too soft. So other methods were practised. The Deadman anchor was found to work the best with the soft snow to dig into. Anchors such as the Snow Bollard did not work well. The rope would rip out too easily. Today we were back at the Lodge by about 4.30 pm to organise dinner, once again roast beef was on the menu. Terry took some of us outside to experience the mountain radio service. A very cold procedure. The contact is invaluable to know weather conditions and talking to the outside world. (AND it works best if you press the transmit button when trying to talk to base!) Saturday night saw a blizzard. The instructors room was woken up in the early hours of the morning with the exit door coming open with the strong winds and proved very difficult to close securely.

Sunday morning weather conditions were surprisingly reasonable. So we took off to find a sheltered slope. But it was deep loose fresh snow, good for avalanching. After 2 hours the wind came up to an uncomfortable level, so it was back to the Lodge and inside belaying wherever possible for more practice. Stairs are great!

We packed up and headed off about 2 pm. for the return to Palmerston North. Once again a great weekend on the mountain. For me it is very deflating to return to PN. I can describe it as post mountain depression.

Thank you to the instructors, Barry Scott, Alasdair Noble and Terry Crippen. You make it all possible. The rest of the crew were; Elaine Herve, Heike

Hann, Davina Jones, Jim Jones, Helen Ronald, Krystyna Foulkes, Marcus Kirchberg, Sue Galbraith.

Here's to Snowcraft 3 and Taranaki!!!

**Fern Walk and Old Coach Road, August 25. By Monica Cantwell.**

Two lots of transport left our usual place at 8.30 am, picking up myself en route, and also my friend Rose from the notice board just past the Waterford, plus out leader. The weather was not good (rain), but no wind.

We started off with the fern walk first, and had a competition going as to who would guess the time it would take. I said 1 ¾ hours, others said 1 ½, which was closer, but we did walk back down the road and not the bush track. After having a break and a bite at the carpark, we then crossed the road and walked the old coach road. Discussion was, was this the actual road that the coaches took?, and why was it called the fern walk?- more bush than ferns. The rain had stopped, but there was plenty of water around, and one small bridge washed out, but plenty of tree roots to cross on. The weather brightened, and my trusty umbrella (good idea, people thought) was put down. We then embarked to the Waterford for coffee, wine, hot meals, and carrot cake to finish a lovely day. Great company and conversation. I estimate the trip to have been about 4 hours. Thanks to our leader, Janet.

We were; Elaine Herve, Duncan Hedderley, Warren Wheeler, Terry Crippen, Rose Straun, Graham Heap, Monica Cantwell, Janet Wilson.

**Blizzard and full moon at Howletts hut, August 24- 25. By Tony Gates.**

The much vaunted "Ruahine Classic" was doomed to failure from the beginning, what with all that grotty winter weather, floods, and blizzards. We merely wandered into Howletts hut and back again, which was a worthwhile trip in itself.

From Kashmir Farm, Marcus and I splashed and skittered our way through Midge's Sidle track to the Tukituki River. Daphne hut provided a welcome haven, and a good chance to brew up in preparation for the strenuous climb up Daphne Spur to Howletts hut. We met several VUWTC people, so Howletts hut was warm and busy on our arrival. There was no time to read, as we shared food, jokes, and tales of tramping the Ruahine Ranges. The snow around the hut was rapidly melting, and the wind howled.

I looked out of the hut door at midnight, and the basins were bathed in gorgeous full moon light.

The weather was however still disgusting, so there was no difficulty in crawling back into my pit for more sleep. The Blizzard continued on Sunday, dumping heaps of snow all about. We nicked back down to Daphne hut, and then joined forces with VUWTC to battle our way out the Tukituki river. It was a reasonable flood, and I had considered staying at Daphne. We were mighty glad to reach the sidle track, then enjoyed a good sweat back to the car.

We were; Marcus Kirchberg and Tony Gates



The descent down Daphne Spur [Tony Gates]

**Snowcraft 3, Taranaki, August 31- September 1. By Jim Jones.**

"You're late", Terry said as I arrived at Foodtown carpark on Friday night. One car had already gone. My pack was slung in the back of Terry's Pajero and we were off, 5 min behind schedule on our way northward. Motto #1: don't be late. However, it was just as well - in locking up the house I noticed my wet weather gear hanging on the hook by the back door. Phew! Motto #2: keep your s\*\*\* together. Dinner was had on the pavement outside the St George chippy in Wanganui, then more driving, some fumbling for keys in a Hawera letterbox, and then we were there. The night sky at Konini Lodge, Dawsons Falls, was starry with a crisp frostiness that bode well for the morrow. A short sleep later we were up, breakfasted, and walking by 7 am to Kapuni Lodge, a very nice Egmont Alpine Club building above the tree-line looking out over south Taranaki, which was sunbathed and glowing iridescent green. The mountain pierced the sky behind us, brilliant white on a deep "like, we are almost in space" - blue. Tiny specks could be seen climbing their way up the east ridge and every one of us wished we were them: a perfect moment. Instead we had a cup of tea and lightened our load.

We split into two groups, the pros and the cons. Now, let me introduce the crew. The pros were led by the talented Bruce van Brunt who, if he

doesn't mind me saying, would excel as the romantic love interest in a turn-of-the-twentieth century mountaineering movie. Accompanying him were Lance Gray, the can-do man of the team and a veteran of last year's Snowcraft, Warren, flushing with his success of a recent double ascent (read all about it elsewhere), Paul, an English emigree from New Plymouth who Bruce first met in a Mt Cook NP hut and convinced to come along, and Malcolm, fit as they come - I think that about people who prefer walking downhill. The cons, named only to differentiate us from the pros, were a large party consisting of some nine-ish people led by our mentor Terry Crippen, who needs no introduction. There were two other men, Markus, ever willing to lug the big load, and much appreciated for this by Jim, who is writing this article and has already incriminated himself enough. There were many women in the party. The two I especially remember were Helen Ronald and Sue Galbraith, but Terry will swear there were at least four more. As Helen and Sue are worth many more than they appear, they are exciting prospects for invitation to future mountaineering trips. They also punch above their weight.

We climbed quickly up through the tussock, which was poking through the snow near the lodge, then up onto the smooth slopes towards Fanthams Peak. The cons started practising belaying and did that all day in its various forms. The pros did the pro thing, climbing up to Fanthams Peak and played at being big-boy climbers up there. We (the cons) enjoyed our lunch. The wind was breathless, only teasing us, the sun dodged in and out of clouds, got quite murky for a wee while then, at the end of the day, peeled away to reveal the mountain-top, cut sharp by the knife sky. A bunch of unmovable specks could be seen sitting on the south face as we made our way down in the failing light. We wondered.

Dinner was a more patchwork affair than previous snowcrafts, planned by groups, rather than for the whole party. Nevertheless, no one went hungry and all were belching pleasantly. Chit-chat was the usual par for the evening with a little wishful thinking as Bruce and Terry pulled out their Mt Cook NP and Arthur's Pass NP maps and we all looked at routes, thinking longingly of adventures to come.

Day two was more practise, higher up the slope this time for the cons. The sun was hotter and out

more often too. Lunch was even more enjoyable. The pros decided to stay below the cloud cover and their lunch can't have been as much fun as ours. We met the unmovable specks and learned the reason why they had been stuck like flies last evening: one had knackered his ankle: Motto #3: don't get knackered. Another had frostbite. Motto#4: climb with gloves on and not just polyprops. And they were from Auckland. Motto#5: (readers choice).

Trip home? Hard work when tired. Din dins was had at Happy Chop Chop. I forget the real name but just as well. It was not memorable so shouldn't go into that legendary list of eating out joints for PNMTTC roadsters. (And of course there was the follow the leader convoy round Hawera, returning the key and checking out blind alleys on the way to the eating place.)

The crew consisted of, at least: Jim Jones, Helen Ronald, Marcus Kirchberg, Sue Galbraith, Malcolm Leary, Lance Gray, Warren Wheeler, Bruce van Brunt, Terry Crippen, Paul Ackland.

#### **Farewell to the Tararua's, September 3- 5 2002. By Jonathon Astin.**

I farewelled the Tararua's with a Northern Crossing and boy I had plenty of weather.

From the Waingawa road end, I made it to Tarn Ridge hut via Mitre before the rain (6 hours) and had some awesome views. On Wednesday it was rain, wind and cloud. The trip to Arete Bivvy was unforgettable with horizontal rain driving into the side of my head, desperately trying to read the compass and stay upright. Crawled on all fours over the Waiohine Pinnacles and staggered into the bivvy, ears ringing from the rain+ wind. The dog had her eyes closed the entire time!

A quick brew, then over Arete, Pukematawai and down to Te Matawai hut then over to the new Waiopehu hut. Brand new design but still no heating.

Today down the mud-trail called the Waiopehu track to Poads road.

A classic Tararua trip, hardly any photo opportunities but plenty of memories.

The dog is still pissed off...

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Club Patron	: Lawson Pither	357-3033
President	: Warren Wheeler	356-1998
Vice President	: Terry Crippen	356-3588
Secretary	: Dave Grant	357 8269
Treasurer	: Peter Wiles	358-6894
Membership Enquiries	: Warren Wheeler	356-1998
	: Elaine Herve	354-2499
	: Mick Leyland	358-3183
Gear Custodian	: Mick Leyland	358-3183
Newsletter Editor	: Tony Gates	952-2871 (work)
deliver articles to Tony	horizons.mw	357 7439
at->	11-15 Victoria Avenue, P.N.	(home)
e-mail articles to->	<a href="mailto:tony.gates@horizons.govt.nz">tony.gates@horizons.govt.nz</a>	025 246 1901
Trip Co-ordinators	: Terry Crippen	356-3588
	: Janet Wilson	329-4722
	: Andrew Lynch	325-8779