



PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217, PALMERSTON NORTH

Newsletter - October 2002

*In spirit do I visit the groves of the Huia
On Tararua, those mountains of the south.
Po-nehu, of Ngati-toa, conquerors.*

[From Tararua Chain and Bridges, by Peter Jagger (2002)]

**News- Successful Search and Rescue in the sand dunes
Interclub Quiz and photograph competition results.**

TRIP REPORTS:

Sunrise Hut

Kahuterawa

Pourongaki Circuit

Powell hut in the rain

Tramping with Bears in Canada

CLUB NIGHTS

October 10	Craters and Lahars	Vince Neall
October 14 (Monday)	DOC user group meeting.	(Milson Hall)
October 31	Rock climbing at City Rock	Terry Crippen
November 7	Committee Meeting	Andrew Lynch's house
November 14	Mt Fuji, Japan	Doug Strachan
November 28	BYO slides/ photos	PNTMC

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 trumper 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.

Oct 10 Club night Craters and Lahars.

When is the crater lake going to burst the rim? Will the resulting lahar be another Tangiwai Disaster? These and other questions will be put in perspective by our resident volcanologist at Massey, Dr Vince Neall.

Oct 12- 13 Taranaki climb F/ T
 Leader required. Please contact Trip coordinators Janet Wilson or Andrew Lynch.

Oct 12- 13 Cattle Creek Hut E
 Richard Lockett 323 0948
 A close overnight tramp near Dannevirke, following the Tamaki River, and the DOC track. Nice spot. Depart PN 9.00 AM.

Oct 13 A frame- Standfield hut M
 Gina Fermor 354 2499
 Hopefully the day trippers here will meet up with the weekend trampers above. Plenty of interest for those who enjoy the Ruahine ranges.

Oct 14 (Monday). DOC user group meeting, at the Milson Community Hall, at 7.00 pm.

Oct 19 (Sat) Whirokino/ Moutua Loop E
 Warren Wheeler 356 1998
 Depart 8.00am to explore the lower end of the Manawatu River near Foxton, with guide Warren showing how the flood control stopbanks, huge drainage pumps and large floodgates have helped develop this old flax-growing area into valuable farmland. Oh, and we will see lots of water birds (and their cute babies) and end up visiting the last remaining swampy lowland forest in the Moutoa Reserve beside the river.

Oct 20 Toka M
 Laurence Gatehouse 356 5805
 Depart Saturday morning for the tussock tops of the Ngamoko Range, behind Apiti. An interesting knob poking out about the Pohangina Valley. Bring a good water bottle.

Labour Weekend.

Oct 26- 28 Arrowsmiths F/ T
 Tony Gates 246 1901

This climbing trip proposes to fly to Christchurch, rent a car, and then tramp and climb in the Arrowsmith Range, behind Mt Hutt. With good weather and snow/ ice conditions, there should be some excellent peaks to climb.

Oct 26- 28 Whirinaki Forest Park M
 Barry Scott 354 0510

Possibly the best of the best remaining native forest in NZ is found in the Whirinaki Forest, on the edge of the Urewera Ranges. A memorable tramp to an area seldom visited by PNTMC.

Oct 28 Coppermine Creek E
 Duncan Hedderly 355 1820

A recent Wilderness magazine featured a story and photograph of the PNTMC and Coppermine Creek. Join Duncan, and follow the route that many others have taken through the forest and farmland of Coppermine Creek, behind Woodville. Departs 8.30 am from Palmerston North.

October 31 Club Night Climbing at City Rock, with Terry Crippen

A chance to practice or learn some climbing skills in preparation for the two rock climbing trips coming up. Instruction and gear supplied, just come in suitable clothing and foot wear (you can hire climbing shoes). An enjoyable evening, costing you \$7.00. City Rock: 217 Featherston St, phone 357-4552, behind Phil Turnbull Motors just along from the Rangitiki St intersection.

Nov 2- 3 Maroepa Forks M/F
 Janet Wilson 329 4722

Tramping in via Sunrise and Top Maroepa Huts, this pleasantly appointed DOC hut is a well worth while destination in its own right. Good camping in the valley. Depart PN 8.00 am

Nov 3 Titahi Bay rock climb I
 Peter Darragh 358 8744

Depart PN 8.00am to the Titahi Bay crags, where we can tackle a variety of easy to difficult rock climbs. Equipment to be arranged. Good follow up from Snowcraft, or an extension with rope techniques at sea level.

Nov 7 Committee Meeting

Nov 9- 10 Mangaohane Ruahine 4WD E
 Dennis Moore 357 5652

Dennis plans to depart Friday evening to camp beside the upper Rangitikei River, then drive by 4WD most of the way into Ruahine Corner

boundary, then to the hut for the evening. A lovely piece of the country, with tussock grasslands and limestone geology.

Nov 10 Kelly Knight- Wooden Peg M
Liz Flint 356 7654

An interesting, central western Ruahine day tramp, with variety, views, and very big hills. Bring a water bottle.

November 14 Club Night

Mt Fuji, Japan, with Doug Strachan

Doug is a polished club night presenter and photographer, and will regale us with tales on his time in Japan.

Nov 16- 17 Central Nth Island Rock M/ T
Pete McGregor w 356 7154

With summer here by the time of this trip, it will be a pleasant time on the rocks. Pete is a dedicated rock climber who will show you some neat places, and guide you up some rocky crags. Equipment will of course be required.

Nov 16- 17 Waterfall Hut M/ F

Mick Leyland 358 3283

This classic central Ruahine ex NZFS six bunker in the upper Kawhatau Valley is a favourite spot for many of us. Mick will take you there, and back again, via different routes, looking at scenic Ruahine beech and tussock country.

Nov 17 Waipawa Saddle- Sunrise F
Peter Wiles 358 6894

The plan is to leave PN 6.30 am, with the intention of cruising up the shingle and scree of the Waipawa valley to the Saddle on the divide. If the weather is okay, I plant head over the tops, northwards, to Armstrong Saddle and down the easy track via Sunrise Hut. There might be the odd patch of snow on the tops.

Nov 23- 24 Ruapehu snowcaving M/ T
Tony Gates 357 7439

We will depart Saturday morning for Ohakune, and climb to Ruapehu's summit plateau to set up camp. The choices are; tenting, igloos, or snowcaves, depending on what we want to do. An excellent place to visit, but come prepared.

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 Andrew Lynch (325-8779).

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, 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.

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.

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terry_crippen@clear.net.nz
 P.WILES@wiles.gen.nz
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 atlynch@ihug.co.nz
 B.vanBrunt@massey.ac.nz
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NEW MEMBERS

Welcome, and happy tramping to;
 Jean Garman
 296 Aokautere Drive
 RD1, PN
 06 354 3536
 jean.garman@fonterraresearch.com

Nigel, Suzanne, and Megan Gregory
 2/ 35 Knowles St, PN
 06 354 8124
 gregory@inspire.net.nz

NEXT TRIP CARD

The next PNTMC trip card, for the period January until June 2003, is starting to be organized. The Trip coordinators, Janet, Terry, and Andrew, will be requesting ideas from you, and offering you the opportunity to lead a trip. Please think about leading one or two. The late summer- autumn period is the best time for settled weather and long days to take a trip to some of your favourite places.

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.

SAR TRAINING COMING UP

Club SAR team members, keep in mind further dates/ training. For further info, contact Terry

1. Nov 3, Stretcher carry, Ruahines (chopper).
2. Dec 4 Helo safety, Christmas function.
3. March 1- 2 2003 SAREX Tararuas (with Chopper hopefully)
4. April 5- 6 2003, Track and Clue, low angle rope work (something new).

HISTORY MADE AT INTERCLUB QUIZ, FOR THE TREVOR BISSELL MEMORIAL BILLY.

MUAC organised this event for 2002, and a jolly good one it was too. Perhaps it was a home team

advantage, perhaps it was the difficult questions, or maybe the lack of showing by the MTSC's usually strong team. Throughout the evening, MUAC wasn't always leading on the score board, but in the end, their skill and finesse gave them their historic win- the first ever for MUAC. The PNTMC team of Fiona Donald, Elaine Herve, Tony Gates, and Richard Davies did their best.

MUAC scored 37.5 points, PNTMC 35.5, and MEQ 34.5 in a keenly fought event, with lots of difficult questions, and plenty of laughs.

INTERCLUB PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION.

Massey University Alpine Club organized this event for 2002. Sponsors' generosity was much appreciated. And to those non entrants, please note that the prizes were equal for each place getter, regardless of position.

Yvonne van Leeuwen, from Rifleman Publications, Feilding, was the judge. She offered an interesting and informative commentary, and provided this list of results. Thank you Yvonne.

RESULTS: SLIDES

People

1. Kayaker. Lee Davies, MUAC
2. Fire. Lee Davies
3. Drinka Potta Coffee. Lance Gray, PNTMC

Rock & Alpine

1. Silhouetted mountaineer. Lee Davies
2. T Bar silhouette. Lee Davies
3. Sawtooth Ridge. Tony Gates, PNTMC

Landscape

1. Mt Owen. Lee Davies
2. Opararara River and forest. Lee Davies
3. St James Walkway. Aiden Haig, MUAC

Flora & Fauna

1. Dolphins. Lee Davies
2. Kayaker & seal. Lee Davies
3. Frosty leaves. Tony Gates

Action

1. Kayak polo. Lee Davies
2. Ski jumper. Lee Davies
3. Mountain Biker. Lee Davies

The overall best slide was "Mt Owen", by Lee Davies.

RESULTS: PRINTS

People

1. Syme hut. Rebecca Clarke, MUAC
2. 4 people. Aiden Haig
3. Person at tent. John Doolan, MTSC

Rock & Alpine

1. Mount Ruapehu. Nick Bennett, MUAC
2. Sunset at Syme Hut. Aiden Haig
3. 2 people. Aiden Haig

Landscape

1. Beech Forest. Gwilym Haynes, MUAC
2. Nikau palms. Gwilym Haynes
3. Morning sun on Mitre track. Warren Wheeler

Flora & Fauna

1. Bush Robin. Doug McNeur, MTSC
2. Aussie Creek. Sarah Mazengarb, MUAC
3. Troll den. Warren Wheeler

Action

1. Tramping at Ruapae Falls. Warren Wheeler
2. Inaction. Doug McNeur.

Humour

1. President thinking. Warren Wheeler
2. Smurf in rapids. Lee Davies
3. Body traverse. Liam Bowler, MUAC

The overall best print was "President thinking", by Warren Wheeler.



The overall judges' favourite photograph was the slide "Oparara River and Forest" by Lee Davies. Lee is obviously a talented and dedicated photographer who deserves our congratulations for doing so well. We hope to see more of his

work sometime. Lee, and others in MUAC dominated the interclub photograph competition, due I guess to them competing on their home turf, and the limited number of entries from ourselves and MTSC. But their winning streak was by no means comprehensive, so Warren deserves congratulations too for his showing.

From the Presidents PC

Our SAR training paid off recently when the PNTMC team found the lost party within half an hour of being dropped off by helicopter in the sand dunes north of Foxton. Tony Gates was understandably relieved when his first shouts raised movement from the semi-conscious young man. Janet Wilson was the Team Leader and had the role of Primary First Aider responsible for assessing his condition while Yvette Cottam called in the helicopter on the radio. I helped carry the stretcher to the helicopter which soon arrived to ferry him out to hospital.

Although as searchers, we are obliged to act in an impartial and semi-professional manner, it is difficult not to feel personally concerned for the person's on-going welfare. For the sake of "closure" it is natural to want to go and visit the person in hospital, but our role requires that our involvement remains largely impersonal and "professional", in much the same way as nurses care for their patients for example. More training focus could be given to this "soft" aspect of SAR to support the more usual "hard" technical aspects such as navigation, search methods, and so on. SAR can be tedious and onerous, and it was pleasing to be so closely involved with an early and successful outcome.

It was somewhat disappointing to see recent Interclub events so poorly supported (again), with an all-time low being the no-show of an MTSC team for the Quizz at Massey. I shouldn't throw stones because there were only 2 PNTMC supporters in the audience, but. Thanks to the Quiz team members especially Fiona Donald for daring to be co-opted from the safety of the audience to complete our 4-member team. The audience greatly appreciated her willingness to be publicly humiliated, oops, I mean "entertaining", in subbing off Tony and attempting the infamously difficult broom traverse, much to the amusement of the audience. After a very difficult barrage of questions and activities the MUAC team narrowly edged out PNTMC and Mountain Equipment, thereby becoming the first MUAC team to ever win the Quiz, a truly historic occasion. I was most impressed that the 3 teams had sufficient alpine skills to complete the task of roping up two team members for glacier travel, and that anyone knew that the names of the two pointers in the Southern

Cross are Alpha Centauri and Alpha Proximus (or something).

It was also disappointing not to have more of our top photographers represented in the Interclub Photo Competition due to their absence from PN – but what was the MTSC excuse? The excellent photos by Lee Davies of MUAC were deserved winners but the mostly Massey audience had only just seen these at their Club Photo Comp the week before. Consequently the “Interclub” event was not quite the intended showcase of local talent and an opportunity to celebrate our shared appreciation of the outdoors that transcends club boundaries. Despite the MUAC win, I can with due impartiality say that the winning shots from our Club Photo Competition would have been of equal or higher standard and would have given the judge some very hard choices.

On a more positive note it was pleasing to see the annual Snowcraft courses were well-attended by both members and non-members, thereby furthering our aim of fostering outdoor recreation in the community. Thanks to the Club instructors especially Terry Crippen for the considerable organising involved (we know you love it Terry).

Steady progress is being made by Peter Wiles on sorting out the details for getting our web-site on-line. There is some debate over what domain name we should use. The most obvious one of www.pntmc.org.nz is most favoured by the Committee, but a final decision is yet to be made as other more memorable options are available eg. “tramps4u”. We hope to make a decision on this at the next Committee meeting in November so any feedback to myself, Peter or other committee members would be welcome.

The recent club night presentation by Steve Sutton the Recreation Planner from Doc Wellington gave us further insight into how the increased Conservation budget is to be spent over the next 10 years and the role of clubs in helping develop the required priorities for expenditure. We can look forward to involvement at a local level through the PN User Group for the Wanganui Conservancy – not exactly thrill-seeker territory but someone has to do it (!).

No doubt many of you are looking forward to making the most of all the spring snow that is around – I wish you safe mountaineering and good tramping.

Warren Wheeler
President PNTMC

Book Review. By Tony Gates

The Chain at the Tararua Peaks, and Bridges in the Tararuas from 1907. By Peter Jagger (2002), published by Peter Jagger, Wellington.

The author is a stalwart trumper from way back, who has just completed his third book on an interesting aspect of our tramping history and heritage in the local ranges. However uninteresting you may think that the book might be when reading the title, remember that you cannot always judge a book by its cover.

This is a little over 100 pages of meticulously researched and presented information. It is a sturdily bound A4 softback with numerous black and white photographs, a few colour ones, and some simple maps and bridge plans. Photographic quality is not always good, but there are some lovely period photographs. I particularly liked the photographs of several fashionable 1920 style “tourists” crowding various bridges- surely the stuff of nightmares for OSH. The value of the book as a Tararua reference text will make users of all other tramping areas wish for a historian author like Peter Jagger to discover the history and facts of their tracks and bridges. Source material from various Tramping Club (and other) publications is often reprinted as original- a sure mark of authenticity. The author adds a worthy commentary on salient and interesting facts about these structures, making a fascinating story.

Firstly, he reasons for the name “Tararua” or “Twin Peaks, and discusses various “twin peaks” that may be the ranges’ namesake. It is obvious however that the peaks of Tunui and Tuiti, now known as the Tararua Peaks, were correctly named in the first place. Their importance is obvious today, as a geographically central point visible from the eastern and western plains, and a not insignificant natural barrier. Exploration of these scrub and tussock covered peaks is discussed with a passion by many trampers who have battled the Tararua weather, terrain, and vegetation. Following chapters include a considerable variety of bridge types, covering road bridges, private foot bridges, Army bridges, NZFS cages and handwires, then what we are probably all most familiar with, the NZFS “walkway” suspension bridges. DOC bridges show further changes and refinements in the art of bridge building, sometimes by contractors. The final bridge shown is a log foot bridge, much the same as the ones of 150 years ago- the author found it during 2002, recently constructed!

TRIP REPORTS

Sunrise Hut, September 8. By Duncan Hedderely.

It looked promising - 11 people saying they wanted to come, and the best weather forecast for any region of the country. When we actually gathered at Foodtown, one person (Ash) was not there, but Yukio was, even though I had not expected her. We made sure each car had at least one person who knew where they were going, waited a while for Ash, then set off.

At the roadend we had a surprise - a note that DoC were dropping 1080 in the area, and it would be locked off for 36 hours afterwards. We figured that if we were at risk of getting a load of toxic muesli dropped on us, we would not have been able to get this far, so set off up the hill. It was mild, and the ridge shielded us from the wind most of the time. Megan set a good pace, while Graham's ski-stiff muscles brought up the rear. Uttah (have I spelt that right?) and Sewoong coped well, given that it was their first time in the hills. We reached the hut about lunchtime. Someone has been making some changes there - new bunks, new windows and doors, the back porch has been enclosed, and there is now a verandah looking east. Nigel set to brewing tea on the verandah with his new stove; everyone else stayed inside, marvelling at the wind (and feeling very glad the hut was securely anchored) We had eaten, and were contemplating trips you could do from Sunrise in the summer when a guy came into the hut and asked "Are you from the tramping club?" "Yeah, the Palmerston North club" "Hi, I'm Ash" It turned out he had been on call the night before, and was not able to get to Foodtown for the start time; so he had driven in and come up after us (This man deserves a DB). So we gave him time to have a sandwich, then braced ourselves and headed back down. Back at the carpark, we watched the lambs, and commented how much difference 600 metres altitude makes to the temperature. Then, in a spirit of exploration, we headed off for Onga-onga. Trampers be warned- The general store at Onga-onga does not have scoop Ice-Cream. However, after all we had come through, this high-calibre international team were not going to let a little setback like that stop us, and we managed to fashion a reasonable alternative from Trumpets and Paddle Pops found on site.

The team were: Monica (NZ), Neil (Aus), Graham and Hilda (UK), Nigel, Suzanne and Megan (Can), Yukio (Jpn), Uttah (Jpn), Sewoong (SKor), Ash (NZ) and Duncan (UK)

Hardings Park, Kahuterawa Valley, September 15. By Merv Matthews.

The day started out cloudy and cool with showers predicted for later in the day. We met up at the large new parking area at the end of Kahuterawa Road where a high-tech composting toilet has been installed, both facilities courtesy of P.N.C.C.

The first stage was a one-hour jaunt along the Sledge Track which has been further improved through the labours of Ian Argyle. A picnic table has been placed at Ross Creek, a convenient spot for those just wanting a two-hour return trip along this pleasant new track. A further half hour up Platinum Ridge brought us to the junction of the Hardings Park loop. Time for another drink before setting out for spot height 550 and the long descent to the Otangane Stream.

Just before reaching the stream we arrived at a large grassy clearing - a good spot for another rest and a snack. Disturbed ground showed that wild pigs were active there very recently. The stream was crossed without difficulty, followed by a bit of a scramble up the bank on the other side until we picked up the marked track known as the "long spur" route. Along the way a number of small clearings opened up to give us good views of the Wairarapa, but we didn't linger too long as the cold wind made it rather unpleasant.

After an hour or so we emerged on to the 4WD track which in turn led to the Council access road and the highest point on the trip at 622 metres. This spot was sheltered from the wind so it made an ideal lunch stop, and gave us the opportunity to quiz our new Canadian friends about life in their home country. Warren, in typical wisecracking mood, kept us amused too.

Next came the half-hour walk along the Council road until we picked up the marker for the next part of the loop track. This led quite quickly to Rocky Knob at spot height 556 and the side trip to the mineshafts. Council staff have made an excellent job of making the area safe for visitors by encircling the vertical shafts with netting in such a way that access was not restricted. In fact they have made it very easy for the adventurous to descend the shafts by providing long aluminium ladders. Young Megan showed that she was willing to go down into the depths, unlike her parents and most of the others. Two of the shafts had further horizontal shafts extending from the bottom, and Warren used his camera flash to provide light enough to see how deep they went, announcing that the longest one was about 20 metres or so. Unfortunately no-one discovered any seams of platinum.

We returned to Rocky Knob and continued our homeward run, By this time several members of the party were streaming blood, the result of encounters with Bush Lawyer, in spite of Merv going on ahead and trimming a lot of it with his trusty secateurs. The rain did not eventuate, and the round trip took 7¼ hours.

We were Nigel and Suzanne Gregory and daughter Megan, Charles Little, Duncan

Hedderley, Martin and Anne Lawrence, Warren Wheeler and Merv Matthews (leader).

Foxton Beach Search and Rescue, September 19. By Tony Gates

Our Search and Rescue organization was called up recently, and was involved in its successful outcome. Team 7 from PNTMC found the lost person well before lunchtime.



Team Seven at Foxton Beach [Tony Gates]

We arrived at the Foxton Beach Surf Life Saving Club by 8.00am, with search teams from two Horowenua hunting clubs, MTSC, PNTMC, LWTC, RNZAF, AREC (Radio), and the Police. We were all equipped for only one day in the sand dunes, because the distance we were expected to cover was not great. In the end, 45 personnel involved covered probably 5 or 6 kilometres up the beach, and a similar distance inland- all coordinated with field radios, GPS, and transport for some provided by the RNZAF Iroquois.

Aiden Bowler, the missing man, had wandered off up the beach, and had been missing for two nights. Luckily the weather had been warm- and our day searching was going to be a fairly windy, with rain forecast for later. The Iroquois ferried in teams up the beach, or inland, to rather indistinct locations. It seemed to me to be a rather slow

process, as we were waiting around for some time. However, once on the ground, after a good sand blasting from the helicopter, we commenced "purposeful wandering". How could a person ever find their location here without a GPS? Later, the police questioned if we thought night time searching would have been possible. One would think the answer would be positive, but, despite there being large open areas, there were plenty of thickets, and the map showed much less forest than there actually was.

After about an hour of searching along our southern most boundary, I saw Aiden's legs from about 50 metres away, protruding from under a clump of toi toi beside a two wire fence. Yvette must have seen them at the same time. Aiden immediately responded to my calls with some mumbling and movement- a real relief. He was semi conscious and couldn't confirm who he was, and we were unsure of his injuries or general

health, but could at least offer him some comforting words.

The Iroquois soon arrived, with its crew of three, plus a paramedic, and landed 50 metres away. Aiden was in good, if business like, hands, responding in varying levels of consciousness. He must have been tired, hungry, and dehydrated, and appeared to have a few minor injuries consistent with running into the fence post. We eased him into the stretcher, and the Iroquois flew him immediately to Palmerston North Hospital. Aiden is expected to make a full recovery.

The MTSC team arrived to offer assistance and discuss the search, then the Iroquois arrived to ferry us all back to base. Lunch (the RNZAF are great caterers), a debrief, then back home in time for a couple of hours work. Thanks to Senior Sergeant Bill Nicholson, who organized the operation, to the AREC and RNZAF crew, and to all the other searchers. If and when there is another search and rescue, then the public can rest assured that there are experienced and willing people available to assist.

Team 7 members were; Janet Wilson, Yvette Cottam, Warren Wheeler, and Tony Gates.



Rescue by Iroquois. [Tony Gates]

**Pourangaki Circuit, September 28- 29 2002.
By Lance Gray and Tony Gates.**

Tony has often waxed lyrical about the beauty of the Pourangaki River valley with its blue duck, deer and sense of remoteness, so I was champing to get in there and have a look. The classic Pourangaki circuit starts at the Mangakukeke road-end which by Ruahine standards has simple public access. By contrast the conclusion to the circuit finishes near the Pourangaki river deep in the middle of Mr Churchill's farm. We are eternally grateful to the continuing goodwill shown by Mr Churchill especially since it is the height of the lambing season.

On the Saturday Jean, Ivan and I wandered up to Purity Hut and surveyed the drama of life and death as lambs were born and dying in front of us. Jean and I, suitably traumatised, relaxed as we made the transition from farmland to the beech forest and away from the plaintive cry of potential lamb chops. Tony by contrast took Ivan's car to the Pourangaki River end. From there Tony tells us he wrestled "Crocs" on his way along the riverbed to Pourangaki Hut. While he must have wrestled Crocs, given how wet he got, (you sure it wasn't those chest-deep wades?), he didn't see any deer which was his primary purpose.

While Tony was man-handling reptiles, Jean, Ivan and I were wandering up into thinning cloud on Wooden then Iron Peg. In fact as we reached Wooden Peg the cloud lifted and we were treated to a wonderful vista of the Hikurangi, Whanahuia and Hawke's Bay Ranges. Spring-snow lay in reasonable volumes all around though we didn't need crampons. Lunch was eaten just above Iron Peg Creek where we soaked up the views and wished it could remain that way forever - given the Spring weather we were very fortunate - a point reinforced by the crazy weather the following day. After this brief respite we potted along to the start of the well sign-posted Porongaki Hut track. From here it was a descent from 1600 to 800 metres to a junction of two side creeks and the main river itself.

While the bridge is helpful across the main stream it appears to be a difficult spot to get to if the side-creeks are in flood. The hut itself is situated in a particularly fetching location among masses of Horopito on a large grassy flat. The deer obviously like it too as there is masses of sign everywhere. Tony had the fire going as we arrived so a brew needed no second invitation. Entertainment was also on hand with Tony reading accounts of pick-up lines from a magazine he'd acquired. My favourite was, "I am lost, can you please show me the way back to your place!"

Sadly with Jonathon gone the intellectual depth of conversation has deteriorated already, though I do remember Jonathon taking an unnatural amount of interest in the Anna K issue in Howletts. One final point, Jean made special mention of the consistency of Tony's snoring which apparently is less awakening than others.



Derek Sharp and Nigel Scott cruising Hawkes Bay Range, August 1996. Wooden Peg is on the left skyline, and Iron Peg on the right. The Pourangaki drains to the left. Or trip had much less snow and ice than this. [Tony Gates]

We slept in. Sunday was an overcast day, and with only six hours or so out to the car, we hardly needed to hurry. We departed the hut by 8.30 am, and soon were sweating on up the track to the leatherwood, tussock, and mist. We dressed up a bit once on the tops due to the chilly wind. The good poled route led us around to the Kelly Knights Hut track, but we did need a little map and compass work, and the GPS was called into use once or twice for a location and altitude check. Thoughts of descending Dirty Spur were abandoned in the mist. Then it was all downhill, mostly steep, to Kelly Knights Hut, and lunch. Included in the hut library were copies of "Womans Weekly" "Wilderness" and "NZ Outdoor" (all at least two years old). We didn't stay long to read them.

It is a rapid track out, taking about an hour if you hurry. The track featured numerous Ourisia flowers (the pretty white ones), and several views of the lower slopes of Dirty Spur- saved for next time. The trip ended back with the sheep, in the mud of Bayfield Farm.

Trampers were; Jean Garman, Ivan Rienks, Tony Gates, and Lance Gray

Powell Hut September 29. By Fiona Donald.

Two people had expressed interest to go on this trip; "Great", I thought, "that will mean one car load...perhaps the early start has put the others off". As the week went slowly by more people said they would like to come so wow, it was 2 cars going down to the Tararua Range (behind Masterton.) Then the tricky bit, the late callers on Friday night...potential transport problems? Aah, soon resolved with people providing their own transport. So, 3 cars were going now. Excellent! The more the merrier, despite the fact the forecast was for showers and gusty nor'westers people were not being put off. But wait, there's more! In my quest to be a good leader, I telephoned one of the overdue trip people about the tramp. Suffice to say Mick and friend wanted to tramp as well. Whew! 4 cars plus a Sunday morning last minute addition and 13 of us were on our way! Yuko, Duncan Hedderly, Richard Lockett, Nigel, Suzanne and Megan Gregory, Monica Cantwell, Jo and Lawrence O'Halloran, Llew and Jenny Pritchard, Mick Leyland and Fiona Donald (leader).



Fiona on the rocks near Powell Hut. Totara Flats, Waiohine Valley, in the background.

On a good day we would have seen superb views. (see attached – July 02). On Sunday it was extremely wet, self-evident by the numerous waterfalls cascading down the track, and for some people being soaked. It was mildly wild– outside the hut the wind screamed around the hill, battered the walls in huge gusts and generally

sounded worse than it was; at times it was gusty going up to the hut tho' it was fortunate nothing happened on the way back down. Mick was in charge at the hut while Monica and I were the anchors at the back. Despite the inclement weather everyone enjoyed it. A good day by all.

Tramping with bears in Canada, September 2002. By Jonathan Astin.

Hello all.

Well my short stay here in Canada is drawing to a close and I thought it was about time that I put my fingers to the keyboard.

My flight over to Vancouver was relatively uneventful. My only mistake was to wear my tramping boots on the plane which drew attention at customs probably because of there high explosive carrying potential. I also had to demonstrate that my laptop was indeed functional and not just a laptop-shaped weapon of mass destruction.

Vancouver is a lovely city, incredibly easy to get around and I was lucky enough to have a friend (Dave Henwood) to stay with. His house is in a middle class suburb and its straight out of an American movie set. The red fire hydrants on each corner, tree lined streets, two storied wooden houses with sprinklers on the lawns, people raking leaves, squirrels eating nuts.It was almost like I had been here before (which shows I watch too much American TV). The only problem I had was looking the wrong way when crossing the road. Some of you will know I had problems with this back in NZ, so here it was a nightmare. Vancouver has both the sea and the mountains close at hand. Apparently there is a ski area only 30 mins from downtown Vancouver and it operates under lights so you can finish work and then go skiing. I spent most of my time just looking around and was able to get rid of all my NZ coins to the beggars. Ha Ha Ha

Canada is a weird mix of American, English and French culture. For example they play Hockey and American football but soccer and rugby is also popular. They use the metric system, except for produce which is in pounds. They drink lots of coffee but also have every sort of tea you could imagine and every sign in English is translated in French. One thing that pissed me off was the GST was never added to the price so you were forever adding 14% to calculate what you had to pay.

From Vancouver I caught the Greyhound bus to Jasper. 14 bloody hours. Canada is the second biggest country in the world and you forget it at

your peril. Jasper National Park is the northernmost park in the Canadian Rockies and it joins Banff National Park in the south. There is a highway that bisects these parks called the Icefields Highway and I basically hitched my way South from Jasper to Banff doing a number of day and 3 day tramps. They have very few huts here and random camping is not allowed so you stay at these primitive pre-made campsites. These campsites consist of a tent pad, a fire pit and most importantly a "bear pole" to hang your food up. You pay \$6 Canadian to stay per night or you can do as I did and buy an annual pass for \$42, which made my accommodation bill pretty cheap!

The things that I enjoyed the most was the wildlife and the autumn colors. I accidentally arrived at the perfect time - September is when most of the tourists are leaving, the trees are changing colour and the weather is actually rather settled. Although the nights are below freezing the temperatures in the day got up to 25 degrees!

The only problem is that the bears are preparing to hibernate. Every park ranger I came across would inform me that bears this time of year need to consume 35,000 calories a day. At first I would try and crack a joke - "Do you think that guy over there is around 35,000 calories"? Or "how many Mars bars is that"? But they never smiled, not even a twitch.

Bears are a serious business here in Canada.

In the end I would just nod gravely while wondering how many calories I had in me. I bought a bear bell to hang on my pack. The idea is to give the bear plenty of warning so that he can leave the area. A frightened bear just might mistake you for a 35,000 calorie pile of Mars bars, and you don't want that. However the bloody bear bell drove me bananas dinging all the time so I gave up and used my whistle every now and then. It must have worked as I never saw a bear. Whenever you passed a fellow hiker the topic of conversation would turn to bears. One fellow asked me if I had seen any "skat". Thinking that this is some kind of skunk-cat hybrid I answered in the negative only to have him point out that I had some on my boot.

Bear shit.

Another fellow I encountered had a belt full of anti-bear equipment that would have made Batman proud. I made the mistake of asking him what it all did:

"This here.." He replied, removing what looked to be a small fire extinguisher. "Is a bear horn. When

you see a bear, you fire this here horn and the loud noise usually scares them off, however sometimes they charge and then you have to use this". And he produces a large skyrocket. "This here is a bear banger. You pull this fuse here and it shoots a rocket at the bear and usually scares them off, however sometimes you can overshoot and the rocket can explode behind the bear driving him towards you in which case you use this" And he pulls some insect repellent from a holster. Only it's not insect repellent it's bloody pepper spray. "And this stuff works really well" he confides "I tested it on the neighbor's dog...it never barked at me again." Then he looks about as though expecting the neighbor to suddenly jump out of the bushes at him.

By this stage I was desperately trying to escape the conversation since I was obviously dealing with a man who had at best a tenuous grip on his sanity, in possession of a multilayered bear defense system, with the nearest officer of the law some 200 km away. I decided retreat was the better part of valor and I pointed out that I saw some fresh skat 200m back along the trail. "I'd better check it out then" and with some mutterings about the dubious habits of foreign hikers he was off to menace some poor bear.

In all fairness this guy was a very extreme case and the majority of people I met were friendly and interesting. Often I would encounter solo trampers talking to themselves which I always assumed was a bear warning system rather than a mental condition. It wasn't unusual to encounter hikers singing and most of these people I felt should be savaged on general principle.

Bears aside, I had an amazing encounter with a moose in Jasper National Park. I stepped out into a clearing and there he was larger than life. I mean I knew moose were big but this thing was bigger than a horse. He looked up, blinked, squinted and then having made up his mind that I was probably not: A - edible, B - another moose, decided to crash his way through the forest leaving me with the feeling that moose are not: A - graceful and B - very intelligent.

I made the mistake of using a bivvy bag instead of a tent. I do not recommend this as it places you at eye level with any ground-dwelling nocturnal wildlife that happen upon you at night. My first night out I was alone and it was like being a small kid again as every noise scared the crap out of me. I mean, I have no idea what the difference is between the mating call of a porcupine and a bear about to consume a trumper sheathed in GoreTex. However I soon became adapted, even to the squirrels that would jump on top of me and

peer in. One night I was terrorised by a porcupine trying to eat my pack. Porcupines like to eat anything salty including boots and sweat-encrusted pack straps. I awoke to this chewing sound and looked around to see this dog-sized pile of spines happily munching on my \$500 pack. Naturally I persuaded him that I was not happy with the situation (with a stick) but he would wait until I fell asleep and then resume eating. I had to spend all night on Porcupine sentry, after that I learned to hang my pack up on a tree as well.

Other than moose and porcupines I saw herds of elk, some caribou, mountain goats, bighorn sheep, marmots, pika, golden eagle (amazing to watch catching the updrafts), woodpeckers, skunks, ravens, jays, ptarmigen hens and heaps more that couldn't identify. It made me realise how empty the NZ backcountry is in terms of animal life. I missed seeing wolverines, wolves coyotes and cougars although I did come across cougar tracks.

Most of the tramps in Jasper and Banff are fairly popular so the trails were well defined, in terms of tramping difficulty they were not challenging at all. One thing that cracked me up was that the topographic 1:50 000 maps here are absolutely useless as the trails and campsites are not marked accurately. In fact if you were to follow the map you could end up getting lost. I bought one map for my first tramp then gave up in disgust.

The Rockies are a spectacular mountain range with dozens of peaks over 3000 m. Mt Robson the highest in the Rockies is a truly breathtaking peak of 3954 m. The abundance of rock snow and ice routes around here is staggering. The Rockies probably has the most consistent and accessible ice routes in the world. It made me itch for my ice tools. Halfway between jasper and Banff is the Columbia Icefields which feed 8 massive glaciers. One of these - the Athabasca glacier is the the Rockies equivalent of the Franz and Fox glaciers as it ends close to the road. There is a short walk to the terminal face and the wardens have placed all these helpful little signs along the way depicting small children falling down hidden crevasses never to be retrieved, people slipping on the ice and snapping various limbs and my favorite, a sign warning old people not to over exert themselves at this altitude or they may have a heart attack and die. With such advertising I was expecting a glacier full of menace, with towering seracs and gaping crevasses full of child-like skeletons. Imagine my disappointment when I discovered the terminal face was only 1 cm high. You could step straight onto the most boring glacier I have ever seen. They even drive trucks on it.

All of the tramps I did started at altitudes higher than anything in the Ruahine/Tararua ranges. I was generally well above 2000 m with some passes close to 2800 m. The Rockies unlike the Southern Alps get little precipitation, I suppose it's because they are so far from the sea. The locals like to talk about the sudden weather changes in the Rockies but I was here almost 2 weeks and it only rained once for about 6 hours and the rest of the time the weather was settled. I never got wet feet in 14 days of hiking!! On my last night the snow arrived, all 4 inches of it. It was like being in a Christmas card with the snow flakes falling and settling on the lodgepines and larches. I felt like sparking up some christmas carols but soon got a grip as I realised I had to somehow get out of my bivvy bag and get changed without freezing my nuts off.

My hiking over, I decided to catch the night bus from Banff to Vancouver to save a nights accommodation. A good theory but I was unable to get any sleep due a baby which I swear was either screaming, crying, vomiting or shitting all the way to Vancouver. After 2 hours I was seriously thinking about offering the mother some gladwrap to put the baby out of its misery, but I thought better of it and spent the remaining 10 hours picturing a 35 000 calorie pile of babies being eating by a bear.

I also had the mandatory "what a small world" incident, when I met this guy at the bus station in Vancouver who was in the Scouts with me in Pahiatua. I actually didn't recognise him so the conversation was fairly one sided.

So that sums up my experiences here. It has certainly been a worthwhile and I will have to come back and do some climbs here. Hope everything is well with you guys, I'll talk to you again in England.

Jonathan.

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