



PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING & MOUNTAINEERING CLUB (INC)
P.O. Box 1217 Palmerston North

NEWSLETTER

11/73
Hon. Secretary,
Kevin Pearce, 74-129
ext. 860.
Membership Convenor:
Heather Crabb, 77-668.

COMING EVENTS.

29th November. CLUB NIGHT.

John Williams is to talk on his past sojourn in Antarctica and show his ability to perform an excellent imitation of a penguin. At the Society of Friends' Hall, 227 College St., at 7:30 p.m.

SUPPER DUTIES: Trevor Stretton, Susan Margetts, Barry

Morley.

1st-2nd December.

ANNUAL DINNER.

A small unobtrusive hint not to forget our "dinner date." Fun, food and frivolity for all at Hotel Rangī -- guaranteed to be even more exciting than last year's (according to the organisers.) Phone Lawson Pither, 85-616.

5th December. COMMITTEE MEETING.

At Russell Johnson's, 11 Lifford Place, at 7:30 p.m.

8th-9th December. BARBECUE.

Enjoy a weekend at Castle Point. Bring a fishing rod.

Cost: \$?.00 approx. Names to: Tim Short, phone 76-906.

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FANCY DRESS.

21st December. To be held at 37 Ranfurly St.

ALL WELCOME

Bring your friends. Bring your own liquids. Bring your own records.

Supper charge of 30c.

7:30 p.m. onwards.....

Shake the milkman by the hand!!

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15th December. RIVER CROSSING INSTRUCTION COURSE.

4 Little trampers, crossing streams gay and carefree

1 was swept away by a flood -- then there were three.

3 little trampers, holding a log as they ought

Lived to return another day, for they'd practised what they'd been taught.

This will be held at Otaki Forks and I would like to see all club members and others

attend.

Ring Trevor Stretton, phone 84-925.

16th December. FIELDS HUT AND/OR LOWER OTAKI GORGE.

To be run in conjunction with Saturday's activities.

Grading: Easy. Leader: Kevin Pearce.
Names to: Trevor Stretton, 84-925. Cost: \$1.50

22nd December. PIRIPIRI CAVES.

Wanted -- Brave, fearless knights to help protect damsels from dragons (wetas and glowworms) which are bound to inhabit the caves. P.S. remember also it's better in the dark. It is essential to wear warm, old clothes and to bring torches and spare clothes to change into.

Leader: Elli Schlee, phone 84-925. Grading: Easy.
Cost: \$1.00.

22nd-23rd December. PIRIPIRI CAVES -- MID POHANGINA HUT.

To make the weekend a little more strenuous a party will continue to the Mid Pohangina Hut after visiting the caves with the "Saturday only" people. Believe me this river trip will be quite handy to wash off the mud collected in the caves.

Leader: Elli Schlee, phone 84-925. Details as above.

NO. 2 CHRISTMAS TRIP.

For those unable to go on this year's Christmas trip to Nelson Lakes it is planned to organise a 3 to 5 day outing from the 27th December, in the North Island. Depending on the demand and fitness of participants details of area and length of trip etc. will be arranged on the spot.

If interested please phone Trevor Stretton, 84-925.

NOTICES.

Folks, there will be no club night in December. Club night activities resume on 31st January, 1974.

TRIP LEADERS.

Would persons who have been given trips to lead and then find they can no longer lead them please contact Trevor Stretton, 84-925 or Russ Johnson, 87-777.

CONGRATULATIONS

To Sue Streeter who has been awarded the National Mountain Safety Committee Bushcraft and Snowcraft Instructors Badges.

Congratulations and felicitations also to Judith Domney and Blayne McKellow on their recent engagement. We wish them every happiness for the future.

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PAST EVENTS

25th-26th August. ARMSTRONG -- WAIPAWA SADDLE.

8:30 a.m. the "Fearless Four" set off in brilliant sunshine sprinting onwards and upwards (puf, puf) to Armstrong's Saddle. Through snow sprinkled bush with the sun glistening through prisms of ice (Oh, Shucks.) Lunch at the saddle then up onto the tops and 2 feet of snow (swimming is fun.)

On reaching Te Atuaopara para one short sighted crank (not T.S.) had a great idea of dropping down here off the tops as a means of a short cut. He will be attending our next bushcraft course. After tobogganing about 1,000 ft. down there came sudden cries of "Rocks up the rear." Next we struck waterfalls and after much deviation reaching Waikamaka Hut about two hours longer than ordinary (N.B.) people.

That night with an onslaught of fur came blood and guts though even being grossly outnumbered, P.N.T.M.C. (one more time) managed to hold the enemy back.

At dawn, the "White Spirit Phantom" struck (?) again for his first time in the Ruahines. Destroying human rights and private property leaving shrapnel in this path at \$3 per head.

Once more the "Fearless Four" stood its ground, climbing up to Waipawa Saddle and up to Three Johns, back down to the saddle and following the Waipawa River out to the road end.

Then after special thanks to Omar Sharif for the loan of his camels, excitement mounted and drove off (Yuk!)

Members: Paul Gandell, Keith Margrain, Eric Short, Tim Short.

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THE BALFOUR SEARCH. 10th-15th September, 1973

THE EVENTS PRECEDING THE SEARCH.

Mr, Kenneth Balfour of Wellington, a Scout leader, accompanied by three Venturer Scout's, entered the Tararua Ranges from the Mangatainoka road end, near Eketahuna at 10.00 a.m. Thursday, 6th September. It was their intention to traverse to Dundas Hut on Thursday, to Tarn Ridge Hut on Friday, thence over Mitre to Cow Creek Hut on Saturday and back to the starting point via Roaring Stag Lodge on Sunday. They were unable to find Dundas Hut in the mist and not having a tent, camped out in a cave. They decided to return to Putara Hut Friday and started early without eating breakfast. The weather was still bad with rain, mist and wind. On Ruapae Peak the party had difficulty finding the route, and Mr. Balfour became separated from the boys who waited on the summit for about an hour before being forced to seek shelter in the headwaters of Harris Creek. The boys spent another night out, returned again to Ruapae but without locating Balfour. They then headed out to the Mangahao Dam which they reached Sunday afternoon and contacted the Police.

THE RECONNOISSANCE SEARCH.

Three search teams, which included members of our Club (see September Newsletter) entered the Tararuas Monday morning and carried out a reconnoissance search of the principle ridges and streams and of the huts in the area of Ruapae. A light aircraft was also used to search ridges and huts further afield. The weather was fine and sunny with fresh snow rapidly melting. No trace of the missing man was found. It was apparent that the situation was serious and that it must be assumed that Balfour was injured or ill. Kevin Pearce was appointed Field Search Controller at 3:20 p.m. Monday and further teams including more club members were called in. Some of these entered the field Monday evening and others Tuesday morning.

THE SEARCH

Bad weather on Tuesday morning prevented the Iroquois helicopter from being used to place teams and hampered efforts in the field.

Rain on Tuesday night caused rivers to flood, further hampering the search. However, an improvement in the weather Wednesday morning allowed teams to be moved by helicopter. Then the weather again deteriorated.

The search area included open tussock tops, steep leatherwood covered slopes, bluffs, gorgy streams with waterfalls and bush. The teams reported that it would be possible under the prevailing weather conditions to pass within a few feet of an injured person lying in the tussock or leatherwood without being aware of his presence.

As a week went on teams were withdrawn from the field and were replaced by fresh teams so that by the end of the search a total of 96 persons had been in the field. Base staff, in addition to the Field Search Controller, included a Police Liaison Officer, a Police Log Keeper and two Amateur Radio Emergency Corps Radio operators. The Field Search Controller was rested for 24 hours, the log keeper was replaced once and the radio operators were replaced every two days during the search. Headquarters staff worked up to 18 hours per day.

The Search was finally abandoned on Saturday 15th September when all hope of finding Balfour alive had faded. In the prevailing weather conditions further efforts could not be justified.

Two more reports of the activities of Club search teams are given below.

Team 6	Russ Johnson)
Team 7	Brad Owen) See below
Team 12	Trevor Stretton)
Team 3	Lawson Pither.) See Sept. Newsletter.

BALFOUR SEARCH TEAM 6.

For some of Team 6 Monday 10th September started at 4:30 a.m. However, we didn't reach F.S.H.Q. until late in the afternoon.

Monday night was very comfortably spent in a borrowed hayshed. The F.S.C. instructions for Tuesday were for us to search the Ngamaia stream and its tributaries up into the leatherwood. This was duly done and very cold, wet and gusty conditions.

The army canteen fed us that night with half cooked corned beef (oven not operating properly) and great quantities of cabbage which they literally heaped at our feet (the oven fell over.) We retired to bed with heavy stomachs (or was it heavy hearts.) Wednesday's orders were to be on standby. At 5.30 or thereabouts the voice of the controller gurgled forth from the mudhole in front of our "bedchambers" saying that we were to go in with the Wellington Teams and search from Ruapae to Herepai on the northern faces. Then out of the clouds a marvellous machine arrived (called a chopper or egg beater by some) and before we could even finish our "cuppa" we were on Ruapae.

What an area!!!

If we were 1,000 men we could not have guaranteed that we would not have missed our man.

The army canteen gave us a real treat before we left for P.N. that evening; stewed steak and steamed pudding.

Slaves of Tararua 6 -- Ross Elliott (R.R.G.) Russell Joblin (Police) Bob Mills (Police) Russell Johnston.

TEAM 7

Arrived at base in the late afternoon and after our briefing it was unanimously decided to leave for Putara Hut straight away. The start of the track at the bush line was found in fading light and then upwards.

The task the first day was to make a general search of the tops north from Kareti to Ngapuketuru and our lightweight team got buffeted around a bit in the gales. We completed our task and joined the 21 other people in the 9 man hut. Next day off on the tops again to make a closer search of the east side, mainly in leatherwood, then back out to base.

Team members: Brad Owen (leader) Mary Ann Whitehead, Shirley Whitehead, Pauline Gibbons.

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6th-7th October. HOWLETTS -- OTUMORE -- MOORCOCK BASE.

Friday night saw four keen trampers setting off up the Tukituki river towards Daphne Hut. Although not the warmest of weather some of the party decided to have involuntary swims on the way. At about 10:30 p.m. a secure fly was set up. Despite contrary reports someone from another party loosened the fly while we slept on and ignored the flapping thing.

After an early start we reached Daphne Hut, had breakfast and set off for Howlett Hut. After lunch and a partial drying out session we departed. Strong winds and mist on top of the ridge made it a feat to hold onto a map and compass let alone read it. Pohangina Saddle Hut was reached late Saturday afternoon. We were pleased to see the hut right on the ridge it was calculated to be on. Four trampers and two hunters settled into a four man hut and had an enjoyable night. Early morning saw the arrival of the "slow party" who had taken a short cut via Sawtooth Ridge. The hut was later converged on by hundreds of trampers on the day trip. Eventually all trampers made their way back to Moorcock Base Hut by several different routes.

Participants: Tim Short (leader), Russell Joblin, Trevor Bissell, Bruce Lockwood.

6th-7th October. SAWTOOTH -- POHANGINA SADDLE.

The wind was strong and visibility was restricted. Never-the-less the traverse of the Sawtooth Ridge was completed and Tim Short and Co. were caught up with. Party members Kevin Pearce and Ian Hoare are looking forward to the manicure that was promised by Tim in the Howletts Hut log book but as the conditions of the promise are in dispute they must wait until the next trip to the hut settles matters.

13th-14th October. POLICE S.A.R. SQUAD SNOWCRAFT COURSE.

New Zealand's 'top' policemen for the weekend were probably Keith Wrigley, Bob Mills, Russ Joblin, Steve Heapy, Maurice Brown and Brian McAlister. Together with Club instructors Lindsay Sandes, Lawson Pither, Sue Streeter, Kevin Pearce and Brad Owen they spend the night at 7,800 feet on the slopes of Mount Ruapehu. Kind weather, good snow and enthusiastic and competent pupils made this a particularly rewarding weekend for our instructors. Three of the party (in a vain attempt to save hut fees?) spent the night in a snowcave.

20th-22nd October. A LABOUR WEEKEND MIDDLE CROSSING OF THE TARARUAS.

Chris Dench, Kevin Pearce, Keith Margrain.

Friday night to Plateau Stream. Slept under tent fly. Waitewaewae, Crawford and grind up to McGregor Bivvy, Saturday. Wind, strong wind, gale force wind, rain and mist, Sunday. Blew into Powell Hut, insulated by resident fauna, "Have you just come up?", "Are you boy scouts?" Holdsworth Lodge and Home Sunday night.

21st-22nd October. KAITOKE -- ALPHA HUT.

-- THE HALF DROWNED SEAL.

After the compulsory half hour wait for a late lady and gentlemen, they finally did arrive with some excuse or other. As we arrived at the Kaitoke Y.H.A. we were met by James, who offered us a cup of coffee (from then on nobody fell asleep) which was

immediately taken up. After a slow drive up to the car park and where all dressed or undressed, we were off, with James in the lead and that lady at the rear (claiming she was keeping us moving) and the universal spacing between everyone (100 metres.)

On gaining Dobsons Hut we stopped and one of our number volunteered to stay here the night just in case we didn't make it out (Lucky Fella.) It was decided to go to some other hut instead of Alpha, because the fitties were going to stay at this hut and we were going to have comfort through the night.

The track down to Tauherenikau River is steep and Marchants Stream is steep and a flood -- add them together (S+D=G) and what have you got..... Ka Splash and a half drowned seal. We had a nice leisurely stroll up the fording point and it was there that it was decided to carry on until we found a better ford, because of the flooded river. Finally we did cross the river, with a bit of help from the fitties and with no loss of life (help! help!) -- well with hardly any.

After a most unadventurous night in a full hut it was found that the river was up another metre or so, making it near impossible to cross. We took off hurriedly at 7:30 a.m. up to Cone with a couple of Deerstalkers and a couple of trampers. Hours later we made Tauherenikau Hut, stopping there for a while, then split up, to going up the 1½ hour track to Dobsons Hut, whilst the others came out in style (walking believe it or not) via the Smiths Creek route.

We all arrived (except two) back in sad looking Palmerston North one hour overdue. Pity it wasn't one day, but better luck next time I suppose.

Those people calling themselves the trampers were:

Karyn Bishop	-	Her Ladyship
John McFarlane		Chief Guide
James Read		Crash Dieter
David Ryan)	Members of T.E.S.S.
Paul Ross)	
Glenn Osborne)	(The Exclusive Society of Smokers.)
Peter Darragh		N.B.G. (No B... Good.)

20th-22nd October. MODIFIED SOUTHERN CROSSING -- LABOUR WEEKEND.

On Saturday morning the three musketeers chased away the rain clouds from the Otaki Forks to Vosseler Hut. Tim was sure we had seen the last of the bad weather and that we would have a good day for the crossing. As it turned out Tim's ability to follow a track was better than predicting the weather. Vivien was blown off nearly every peak on the way across -- pity it wasn't a northerly, otherwise she would have made a 'first' by doing a 'flying crossing.' Talking about crossing, we had some good practice crossing the Tauherenikau when half flooded. Our party of three teamed up with a party of four and a dead tree and the eight of us made it to the other side. I still think our other P.N.T.M.C. party would have tried swimming across if we had not shown them the same trick.

I piked from sleeping out that night and chose the hard bunks of Tutuwai Hut. I was most disappointed that Tim and Vivien had not been flooded out by the heavy rain that night. We escaped from the water logged valley by climbing out over Mount Reeves and then hijacked a railcar from Woodside to Palmerston.

Party members: Vivien Mawson, Tim Short, Frazer Argue.

27th-28th October. MANGAHAO -- SCOTTS RD. (Or was it meant to be Albert Rd!)

We had been warned to expect 'moderate' amounts of supplejack and bush lawyer and higher up "short leatherwood tops with intermittent patches of tussock." Consequently it came as quite a shock to the system when only after 5 minutes we were confronted with a series of seemingly bottomless mud pools. After the mud pools came the promised bush lawyer and supplejack, after which we encountered another unmentioned hazard, a maze of old logging roads.

Through some miracle we stumbled upon an old blazed trail the discovery of which we, or should I say I, believed meant the end of our troubles. But of course to quote T.S. Eliot "In our end is the beginning," we were now faced with a series of wire deer snares and the dreaded slippery roots. Upon reaching the leatherwood we found we had to be content to share it with the deer. As for the "short leatherwood tops with intermittent patches of tussock" well either we are all midgets or someone was having us on, because most of the leatherwood was well over our heads and as for the tussock, there wasn't any. Deciding that 2 inches in four hours was slow progress we headed down to No. 2 Creek which ran into the Tokomaru River where we met yet another hazard; nothing had been said about getting our feet wet. After the river came further hazards -- two thistles, one hill and four lumps of cow dung, so with wet feet we finally arrived at our correct destination? For those who may have noticed the absence of reference to nocturnal habits let it be known that as only nine hours of actual bush bashing was done on Saturday, and as sleeping was not mentioned prior to the trip, this hazard was not encountered.

Thanks to Ian and Ray Hoare for the taxi service.

Trip members: Tim Short, Russell Johnson, Keith Margrain, Glenn Dixon.

3rd-4th November. N.Z.D.A. LODGE -- TUNUPO -- TARNs -- N.Z.D.A. LODGE.

Well, Saturday morning found six members of the P.N.T.M.C. and two extras awake and rearing to go (as they usually are?). Into the cars and off to Feilding to pick up Peter, who, lucky man, had had an extra half hour in bed. Unfortunately the road end was reached only too quickly and here pikers were tried, found guilty and sentenced to a weekend of hard labour.

The track to Tunupo Peak began steeply and to the horror of at least four trampers continued to climb. With sweat streaming, muscles aching, hearts beating the same four seriously considered the delights of the Oroua River 1,000 ft. below but the Demons of Doubt were effectively destroyed by the rest and the whole party continued to slog uphill.

Upwards through the bush; upwards through the scrub; upwards through leatherwood. Lunchtime and Brent led some very thirsty trampers to water where a brew was boiled -- on a primus (much to Graeme's disgust. Lunch over and Brent left us for the dubious pleasures of a weekend's shooting. Upwards through more leatherwood; upwards onto the tussock; and still upwards until, at least all 5,100 ft. of Tunupo -- CONQUERED.

A short rest (one of many) then South along the tops until down, down, down to the tarns and Ngamoko Bivvy. Tents were pitched in 500 mph winds, pudding prepared, the more "common" songs sung, milo (tea, coffee, tang) brewed and z z z z z z z.

Sunday morning dawned as mornings do and with pleasant dreams rudely interrupted, slow stirrings indicated there was to be no sleeping in. Eventually.... braving the high winds, rain and poor visibility which Huey decided to bestow on us, we once again started climbing. At the top of the ridge..... mama mia! the wind!.... However we quote "didn't panic" and dropped straight down a gut to the Umutoi Stream. Somehow the party negotiated the numerous waterfalls without serious injury (including Gary who was rather good at taking the direct route.) Then surprise, surprise, a very easy, pleasant wander down river to the cars and a patiently waiting Brent.

I suspect many bruises were nursed on Sunday night but we all think we enjoyed???? the trip.

Trip members: Trev Bissell, John Williams, Peter Darragh, Gary Davies, Mark Hindmarsh, Graeme Lythgoe (HVTC), Brent Bishop, Karyn Bishop.

(IMAGINARY) EVENTS PRECEDING SAREX 10th-11th NOVEMBER, 1973.

Seven persons left the Te Parapara road end near Rangiwahia at 0800 hours on Thursday 8th November on a tramping trip to Iron Gates hut and Table Flat Road. They tramped up to Mangahuia Peak and then south along the tops.

Under the misty conditions prevailing, they continued too far south and descended the southern slopes of Trig Q into the headwaters of a small stream. Darkness overtook them while they were descending the stream. They could not find anywhere to pitch their one small green nylon tent in the darkness so they slept out. During the night heavy rain fell (probably a local shower!) and the party spent a miserable night. They started off at first light on Friday morning without eating breakfast and reached the Oroua River at grid ref. 504848 at 0930 hours. Although the river was up and discoloured they attempted to cross to the track marked on the opposite bank on their map. They entered the water independently. Pither and Raymond Mills were swept off their feet but managed to reach the true left bank several hundred yards downstream. When they clambered out they could see a tent camp on the opposite bank and after searching for, but failing to find the track they decided to stay put.

When the remaining members of the party saw the two disappearing down stream they turned back towards the shore. However, the imaginary Parkin also lost his footing and was carried down river. He gained the true left bank and started to make his way out sidling high above the river. In a side stream at grid ref. 493843 he had an unfortunate and fatal encounter with a waterfall.

The remaining members of the party were rather alarmed and dismayed by their experiences in the river and the sudden disappearance of their friends. Confusion reigned and there was a mad and unsuccessful scramble to find their friends during which Berry became separated from the party. He sidled high along the true right bank, eventually pitching camp on a high terrace at grid ref. 487842 at dusk on Friday. While away from the tent getting water and firewood in the dark, he suffered a most unfortunate accident and became hidden under some ferns (ready for a contact search on Sunday.)

Stretton, McLauchlan and Bruce Mills found the bridge (502847) and sidled along the true left bank. Stretton and McLauchlan eventually reached the start of the Iron Gates Gorge but lost a pack and also Bruce Mills, who was lagging behind, on the way. While trying to bypass the gorge, McLauchlan fell suffered a fractured skull. The pair decided to stay put at the confluence of the Umutoi and Oroua.

Meanwhile, Bruce Mills had come upon the track up from the river to the Heritage Lodge and made his way out to Table Flat road and raised the alarm.