



PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

**P.O. BOX 1217
PALMERSTON NORTH
NEWSLETTER**

November 1992 Edition

Gear Custodian

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ALL TRIPS LEAVE FROM THE FOODTOWN CAR PARK IN FERGUSSON STREET. IF YOU WANT TO GO ON A TRIP, PLEASE ADVISE THE LEADER AT LEAST THREE DAYS IN ADVANCE. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN AN ALTERNATIVE DAY OR WEEKEND TRIP, CONTACT THE LEADER OF THE SCHEDULED TRIP.

Members are reminded that a charge for transport will be collected on the day of the trip, the amount depending on the distance traveled and vehicles used. Leaders should be able to give an estimate in advance.

THURSDAY EVENING PROGRAMME

Please sign your name in the visitors book. There is a door fee of 30c which includes supper.

The PNTMC committee meets on the first Thursday of each month, at 436 College Street. Meetings are held for all club (and intending) members on the last Thursday of each month and the Thursday two weeks prior to that evening. The venue is the Society of Friends Hall, 227 College Street, Palmerston North, at 7:45 pm.

TRIP LIST

NOVEMBER

<u>NOVEMBER 21-22</u>	Ruapehu Pinus Contorta pulling	Perry Hicks 355-1393
<u>NOVEMBER 28-29</u>	Ruahines Pohangina Easy	Paul Scheyvens 357-4138

DECEMBER

<u>DECEMBER 5-6</u>	Oroua hut maintenance (for DOC)	Tony Gates 357-0990
<u>DECEMBER 6</u>	Xmas lunch Rangī Easy	Julian Dalefield 357-3543
<u>DECEMBER 12-13</u>	Mangahau Dundas Fit	Brian Lawrence 324~0536
<u>DECEMBER 12/13</u>	No Mans aircraft wreck Easy +4WD	Dennis Moore 357-5651
<u>DECEMBER 19-20</u>	Tamaki River/ Cattle Creek Easy	Arthur, Lis Todd 323-6246

CHRISTMAS TRIPS (dates to be confirmed)

DECEMBER 20-30 MT COOK N.P. Climbing Trevor Meyle 356-8782

DECEMBER 26-JAN 4 (approx dates) KAIMANAWA-KAWEKA crossing Medium Tony Gates 357-0990

Club Nights

NOVEMBER 26 CHRISTMAS DINNER Venue to be arranged

DECEMBER 10 Club Evening To be advised.

THURSDAY EVENING PROGRAMME

NOVEMBER 26. Christmas Dinner. Venue this year is the London Park Cafe, at 217-223 Cuba Street. Dinner from about 7.00 pm. Contact Tony for details. Make an evening of it.

DECEMBER 10. PNTMC club activities. This is a sort of "BYO", an opportunity for you the club to show your own photos and slides, and to tell the club of your recent trips. Details in next newsletter.

And there will be many more interesting Thursday evenings put on by PNTMC and friends. We hope to arrange another talk by DOC for early next year, on the "Conservation Management Strategy". They want to keep us (the users) informed, and they want feedback on how they perform. Stay tuned.

EVENTS PROGRAMMED FOR 1993

1. BBQ
2. Pauline is planning to block book MTSC's hut at Whakapapa for sometime late January or perhaps February. A good weekend for a general wander about the mountain.
3. Greg Preston Climbing in Greenland
4. Clive Jones Climbing in Argentina
5. MACPAC Kaweka Challenge February 20-21 4 course options, start preparing now.
6. DOC "Conservation Management Strategy", by Andrew Spence, of the Wanganui Office. An audio visual presentation looking at management of the Conservation Estate.
7. PN.TMC activities featuring Christmas in the Kaimanawas and Kawekas etc. Bring along your slides.
8. AGM - End of March

PINUS CONTORTA WEEKEND

We have a confirmed booking for a Pinus Contorta pulling weekend 21-22 November. The essence of this caper is a group environmental interaction effort. It is planned to leave on Saturday morning and to camp out on Saturday night, so you have a bit of time till then to air your tent or fly and get around to checking the seams for leaks. This is an event we have not participated in for a few years, so keep this weekend free and start to get your hands into condition for the big pull. Give your name to Perry Hicks ASP.

EDITORIAL

The grass is always greener on the other side - or so it might seem. I was grovelling in the scrub the other day up Penn Creek way (Otaki River) thinking of all the pleasant tramping to be had in the Ruahines, and I was stuck in a grotty Supplejack infested gully. But tramping is supposed to be fun, and wasn't I at least in the hills, where we usually dream of going to? The Otaki River valley has some of the most delightful tramping to be had anywhere; I guess I was simply not in a delightful area. Don't let this put you off, you have to take the rough with the smooth (find a way through) which is pretty well what life is about anyway.

Well, finally long warm days are here, and it is almost like summer. The bush will dry out and it should be much more pleasant tramping. It will be a good time to get on the tops of the Ruahines now that most of the snow has gone. There will, however, be still evidence of the big snows of winter '92 for some time to come. Next time you are past Rangī, have a look out for avalanche signs. Quite a few areas of tussock were swept clean and some new slips may appear.

Talking of Rangī, our beloved hut has had a facelift and now boasts three gas cookers and a gas heater. Coming soon, Tony will be having a work party (emphasise "party") to paint the hut and to tidy up the rubbish. We would also hope to shoot over to Triangle and Iron Gates for a tidy up. It's worth the effort.

Last month, Vaughan Keesing presented an extremely interesting, by all accounts, on the exotic heathers of Tongariro National Park. Steve Glasgow showed some absolutely superb slides of caving expeditions and admirably illustrated the great beauties of the underground. He is an expert caver. Contact Steve if you aspire to go caving.

One last word, please support your editor and your club newsletter. Happy summer tramping.

NOTICES

GAS AT RANGI

Reliable reports just to hand inform us that gas has been installed at Rangi. So shake out your billy and head up there with a tea bag and tryout this latest technology (before it gets wrecked).

CHRISTMAS TRIP KAIMANAWA-KAWEKA CROSSING

Well, here it is, your big opportunity, your big tramp, you too can cross the Kaimanawa and Kaweka Ranges with us.

The central North Island plateau is a vast area of wilderness. There is tussock, beech forest, big rivers, a few tracks and the odd hut. The three principle ranges, the Kaimanawas, Kawekas and the Ahimanawas are administered by DOC but there are also substantial areas of private land.

We hope to tramp (sweat?) over the Umakarikari Range to the headwaters of the Rangitiki River. There should be really pleasant spots to camp, wide open spaces and good handy beech forest. We would bypass Boyd Lodge, then tramp up onto the tops of the Kaweka Range. There are several nice huts there, and hopefully good views of the Mohaka and Ngaruroro valleys. Our destination is the hot pools of the Te Puia Lodge area and the mighty Mohaka River.

Contact Tony ASP if interested.

TRIP CARD

With a bit of luck we should have a trip card prepared for the December newsletter.

CHANGE OF LIFESTYLE

Mike is getting married on the 26th and will be moving back to his past environs at New Plymouth. Best wishes to you both and we will be seeing you from time to time on THAT MOUNTAIN and especially that favoured haunt of Tahurangi Lodge.

Many of you will know John and Marilyn; they have a new daughter - congratulations to them.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Mike Johns
59 Eliot Street
New Plymouth

ANUAL HUT PASSES

Rather than have a lot of individual hassles, we propose to put in a bulk order for season's hut passes with DOC. We can get the maximum discount this way. Price is \$44 or \$45, I understand. If interested give your name to Tony or Peter.

GEAR FOR SALE

Urs Schupbach is selling his collection of climbing hardware... a bit of a wish list here:

Snargs	\$30 each
ice screws	\$20 each
snow stakes	\$5 each
carabiners	\$10 each
screwgate carabiners	\$15 each
Piton hammer	\$8
exentric nut – large	\$5

See Mick Leyland for the above gear and see Urs for the following gear:

ski mountaineering skis with bindings

ski poles

leather mountaineering boots size 7

2 compasses

A collection of North and South Island topographic maps

Wetsuit size M gauge 3.2 mm

Dome tent

(Looks like some material here with your name just about written on it Derek?)

TRIP REPORTS

OVERHEATING ON THE MOUNTAIN ... September 19-20

This had to be one of the best snowcraft weekends for the year. Good weather (yes), good food, a stylish 4WD car, a good hut and a good keen mob. Derek Sharp, Paul Scheyvensr Tony Gates, Chris and Rod Saunders enjoyed the weekend overheating on Mt Ruapehu.

We left PN just at dawn, and sped up to Waiouru under a clear sky. We couldn't get all that far up the Tukino skifield road due to deep snow drifts and ruts, so it was a bit of a stroll up to the hut. Te Heu Heu and a few other peaks towered tantalisingly above the route to the hut. It was hot! The sweat was fair dripping off some of us, and the suncream really was doing its stuff. Much of the route was a heat trap without any wind. At least travel was on reasonably firm snow. Our destination, Whangaehu Hut, was a very welcome sight.

The heat proved too much for some of the team, who promptly crawled into the pit by 3 pm! Overheating seems to affect people in different ways and it can be rather debilitating for a short while. Some, however, potted around the hut while others tried to rehydrate and recuperate. By evening, with the smell of food, everyone seemed to have come right. After a short walk and a ski it was time for a good night's sleep.

The principle advantage of staying in a high hut is its proximity to the mountain; and Whangaehu Hut is strategically placed to provide access to much of the mountain. Great ice climbing potential is at hand, the best skiing on the mountain and for us very suitable snowcraft terrain. We roped up, plugged into the mountain and practised what we wanted to do. Snowstakes, crampons, ice screws and belay equipment were tested and our legs got well exercised. We all would benefit from practice on reasonably easy terrain, slowly progressing to some pretty steep slopes. Derek finished up by dragging Tony up a frozen waterfall - a vertical slope that really got the adrenalin pumping. You should have heard their comments. The others could but watch the action.

After a late lunch it was time to depart. This time we were covered up from the fierce sun and raced off down to the skifield in time for a bit of a ski. The snow was getting pretty soft by the time we reached the car. Enough for now, can't wait for the next climbing trip.

TARANAKI - EAST RIDGE Labour Weekend by Peter Wiles (With a shot peened facial for free)

The Sunday before Labour Weekend, Lance and I left PN at 4.45 am for the Stratford Plateau side of Mt Taranaki. We arrived at the car park at 7.30 and found it covered apart from the graded area about 20 cm deep in snow. It was a dead calm clear morning and the mountain was magnificent sight. We set off up the track then onto the skifield - first up the T-bar and then up the rope tow (which was completely buried in places. The heat was appalling. I noticed Lance progressively getting further behind. At about 2100 m Lance declared he was buggered and we elected to head home. The snow was rather tricky as the slope increased - mirror polished knobs of sastrugi ice.

The following Sunday or Labour Weekend I elected to have another go, even though the weather was not quite as favourable. Lance was unavailable (getting married in Ireland the very day NZ time). Bruce stepped in at short notice to fill the gap and to add to his infatuation with Taranaki. At Bruce's place he told me he couldn't find his snow goggles. Surely this was not going to stop us before we started was it? I remembered that in the car I had a pair of old clip-on shades for my specs. If I used them and Bruce borrowed my snow goggles we should get by?

Towards Patea we could see the top of the mountain clear of the cloud. By the time we reached the car park, we had driven up through and emerged from one layer of cloud. At least heat was not going to be a problem at this stage. The snow had gone from the car park but there was still heaps under the vegetation. We made good time up through the ski field and just as we assumed there was no one around the T-bar and then the rope tow started dragging a handful of guys up. The snow was excellent in terms of walking on.

We stopped at 2100 m to have a break and put our crampons on. Shortly afterwards we entered another layer of cloud. After gaining another 200 m, we noticed the gradient had increased somewhat to about 40°, the ground rather more icy and some ice bulges were visible above us. We assumed we had reached the base of the Sharkstooth Spur. We could only see about 5-10 m above us and even less beneath and to the sides. We figured that it might be a good idea to get the rope out and start belaying at this stage. The wind at this stage which was not much of a problem and tended to diminish. What lay ahead could only be guessed at. After 3 rope lengths (the steepest sections about 50°), the angle declined a little and the ground became more snowy and the ice bulges less significant. (It is hard to judge angles when there is no horizon. On the other hand we couldn't see what the exposure situation was below.) After another rope length we began to get glimpses of the crater rim to the south of the Sharkstooth. We wondered if in a dense whiteout whether we would see the drop off down into the crater at the top. No such worry. On the next pitch we merged into fairly clear air and on the 6th pitch arrived on its summit. The time was now a rather horrifying 2.30 pm. We walked along the crater rim to the north before taking a gully into the crater and then climbing out onto the summit. It was now 3 pm and there was no one around. It was below freezing with patches of cloud coming in from the south. There was a further dense layer of high cloud at probably 3000 m or so and some sort of huge turbulence stabilized wind cloud detached from the mountain by several hundred metres to the north whose centre was about level with us. Out of the wind it seemed a good idea to tackle some lunch. Views to the north west and east tended to become more fleeting.

We descended via the northern entrance and quickly started a long sidle towards the east. The sky seemed a bit clearer for a while and we had reasonable views. Initially the ground was rather steep but improved after dropping about 250 m. By 4.30 pm we found the situation changing rather dramatically for the worse. The wind had increased to the point where on the exposed spurs it was getting hard to move and the pelting of ice particles on the

legs (covered) was painful but nothing in comparison to the face and especially the (my) eyes. The cloud now made visibility very limited even when it was possible to open my eyes. I wondered about the risk of avalanches from the accumulations of wind drifted snow on the lee of the ridges and the prospect of large lumps ice falling from above. Since we couldn't see where we were and we wondered whether there were any bluffs in our path? We passed below a bluff about 5 or 6 metres high with massive icicles about 4 m long hanging down (the bottom 2 m hanging clear of the rock). The tips were dripping slowly. I wondered whether in this wind what the chances of one of these falling off was? Anything higher up would be travelling at such a speed you would never see what hit you. We didn't hang around. We reached a slight spur which we couldn't cross - the wind / facial impact was too severe. I began to wonder if we would have to reverse direction and try to head for Tahurangi Lodge (assuming we could find it). After a brief discussion we backed off the spur away from the wind and tried dropping alongside for about 30 m. Fortunately we found we could now cross the spur and continued floundering blindly onwards. We became increasingly uncertain of our position - the only hard information was that we were at about 2050 m. A compass was useless in this situation.

Suddenly, in a fleeting clearance we saw some rocks. Then they disappeared. We ploughed on. Then we saw them again and soon we reached one of them. It only took a second to figure where we were - there were our tracks of the ascent. We were as good as home. We rapidly dropped down another 200 m before escaping from the cloud. At the bottom of the rope tow the wind gusts were strong enough to blow me over. Anyone at Syme Hut, we figured, would be getting the full treatment. We reached the car at 6.30. Bruce had logged his first technical climb and had managed to get through the day without putting his parka on!

Back along the road to Hawera, the evening appeared to be quite still, the high cloud had broken up and we peered at the evening sun. The mountain was shrouded in a veil of wind cloud revealing its general shape but not its surface. We were ready for bed by the time we reached PN around 9.30.

Bruce van Brunt and Peter Wiles.

EGMONT No 3. - October 10-11

After a successful instruction course (Windcraft), the hard core climbers headed back to the great North Island peak of Egmont. After yet another successful walk up on Friday night (i.e. we didn't get wet) we prepared ourselves for the climb next day.

We had a good sleep but awoke to high winds and cloud – conditions were not good with wet soft unstable snow. We decided that it wasn't worth plodding up in these conditions if there was to be no view, so we decided to play it safe and stay put. We found out later that the cloud ceiling was about 2300 m and that it was quite nice on top - never mind. After another good quite night in the lodge, we awoke the next morning to heavy rain and warm temperatures with high winds and a white-out; so it looked like another short day. We packed up and headed down for lunch.

We were: Mike Johns, Tricia Eder, Pauline Coy and Trevor Meyle.

A DIFFERENT WORLD - Skiing on the Fox Glacier, September 1992 by Tony Gates

It was windy. The helicopter pilot was not keen on flying, and told us we were crazy wanting to go into the mountains in those conditions. So we were glad for the shelter of Pioneer Hut, altitude 2500 m, in the centre of the Fox neve.

We encountered crusty, difficult snow conditions on our first day, intermixed with patches of hard ice, and the occasional avalanche. Pioneer Pass, overlooking the Tasman Valley, was our destination. An awesome place.

Day two dawned clear and calm, with the promise of a long hot thirsty day. There was no hurry to depart the hut. Climbing skins on the skis, water bottle full, rope and associated equipment packed (and carried), then we were off to climb Lendenfeld one of the 3000 m peaks.

It was icy for the first bit across the neve, then lovely soft powder snow to skin on beside the huge seracs and bottomless crevasses of the icefall. The hauntingly beautiful ice cap of Mt Tasman dominated our view to the south. The vastness of the neve unfolded beneath us as we gained altitude, and we could look down onto vast areas of the Southern Alps. Marcel Col, overlooking the Tasman Glacier gave an incredible lunch site. The sky was crystal clear with no wind. A grunt through soft snow put us on top of Mt Lendenfeld, from where we could see Mt Cook (minus a big chunk) and Mt Tasman. Despite altitude headaches, it was a great feeling standing 3000 m tall. The descent on skis was rapid.

Next day we visited the Franz Joseph neve, which was better skiing, but the climbing lacks the glamour or the really high peaks surrounding the Fox. It was hot! Snow on the north facing slopes softened up beautifully by 10 am and excellent skiing on virgin slopes was found everywhere. We only had 1200 vertical metres of the same below us! The plan was for some of us to ski down the Fox Glacier to Chancellor Hut, just above the bushline, then walk out.

The others arranged for the chopper to pick them up from Pioneer Hut after lunch, so some equipment, excess food, and the rubbish could be flown out. (A \$100 well spent.)

It was a magic ski down, then a real struggle on foot through the lower reaches of the Fox Glacier. We had to dodge crevasses and avalanches and the occasional patch of scrub. Most of the route followed goat trails around spectacular bluffs and ice falls. It was a relief to reach the touristy walks.

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