



PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217
PALMERSTON NORTH
NEWSLETTER

April 1994 Edition

Gear Custodian

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ENQUIRES CONCERNING OVERDUE TRIPS

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TRIPS OFTEN LEAVE FROM THE FOODTOWN CAR PARK IN FERGUSSON STREET UNLESS THE LEADER ARRANGES OTHERWISE.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN GOING 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.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN A DAY TRIP MID-WEEK SEE DETAILS BELOW, OR RING Lawson and Sue Pither (357-3033), or Monica (354-3834), Nancy (358-8241), John (358-3513).

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.

Club 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 unless otherwise notified in the newsletter.

The PNTMC committee meets on the first Thursday of each month.

SCHEDULED EVENT LIST

APRIL

Committee meeting 7th
Club Nights: Thursdays 14th and 28th

Date	Trip	Grade	Leader	Phone
APRIL 14	Club Night: Hopkins-Dobson explorations by Tony Gates			
APRIL 16	Ohau-Tararuas	E/M	Perry Hicks	355-1393
South Ohau, departing 7.30 am. We intend going up the sidle track to the South Ohau Hut and return via the river. An easy trip can be run in conjunction for those who would like to go as far as Ohau Shelter.				

APRIL 16-17 Tama Lakes M Patrick Janssen 356-3116
We will walk into the lakes and camp out at the upper lake. On the second day, if weather is suitable we will explore the surrounding hills.

APRIL 23-25 (ANZAC)

APRIL 24 Kapiti Island All Tricia Eder 357-0122
Departure is at 6.45 am. Phone contact is made with the boat operator on the morning and if the weather is okay we will proceed. The available spaces are already filled but if you are interested in making the trip, I am willing to make up a list for club members and contact DOC to arrange a future group booking. Cost - \$25/adult + \$3 reservation fee + mileage.

APRIL 25 Pohongina-Centre Creek E/M Daryl Rowan 356-4655
Daryl intends to depart at 7.30 am. Linda led a trip here recently and was so impressed and enthusiastic that Daryl wanted to go and check this out for himself. Expect some rock scrambling and some dampness. A really nice trip.

APRIL 23-25 Tararua Middle Crossing M/F Trevor Meyle 356-8782
Give Trevor a ring if you are interested in this classic Tararua trip.

APRIL 28 Club Night: Search and Rescue by Jim Neuman

APRIL 30 Haukura Ridge M/F Derek Sharp 326-8178
Depart at 6.30 am for Putara Road end. We will stroll over East Peak, and browse through the Haukura Biv Hut. Then walk off the end of the Haukura Ridge to take the shortest and hopefully the easiest route back to the road end. A medium/fit trip for those who desire and easy bush bash. (A trip recommended for the adventurous and those who enjoy the excitement of the unexpected!)

MAY

Committee meeting 5th
Club Nights: Thursdays 12th and 26th.

Date	Trip	Grade	Leader	Phone
MAY 1	Kaiparoro Clearing	E	Brenton Sheppard	06-376-8474
Last year this trip had a change of destination because of a flooded stream. So this is your chance to walk up to the clearing and hopefully find the crashed aircraft on the way. Lunch at the clearing and on the way back molest a few freshwater crayfish. Depart 7.30 am to meet up at Eketahuna at 8.45 am.				
MAY 8	Harris Creek	M	Richard Lockett	323-6489
A good day trip for the medium fit. We aim to go up the river to the hut for lunch. Then go beyond the hut before returning to the road end.				
MAY 7-8	Mangahuka	M/F	Brian Lawrence	324-8552
Depart 7 am and head via Otaki Forks to Penn Creek Hut. Day 2, climb to Vossler across Bridge Peak on to Kime Hut for lunch and then back to Otaki Forks.				
MAY 15	Waipawa	E	Tui Craven	355-4179
This is a beginners tramp, departing 8.00 am. We're going up the track and down the river (creek?) Strictly a cruisey tramp.				
MAY 14-15	McKinnon Hut	M	Llew Prichard	358-2217
This is in the western Ruahines. Llew encourages people to come along on this trip, especially those who enjoy adventure and would like to practice their navigation side. They will meet up with the fit trip at McKinnon Hut.				
MAY 21	Oroua-Kiritaki	E/M	Perry Hicks	355-1393
Walking in from Loveday Road and completing the circuit by coming out at Fairbrother Road.				
MAY 20-22	Nichols-Tararua Pks	F	Derek Sharp	326-8178
MAY 28	Tunipo	M	Patrick Janssen	356-3116
MAY 28-29	Iron Gates-Ngamoko	E/M	Terry Crippen	356-3588

THURSDAY EVENING PROGRAMME

Later in year: Graham Langton on some aspect of the history of New Zealand mountaineering and much more.

CLUB EVENING (This Thursday 14th April)

Tony Gates will be presenting a slide show on some recent tramping and climbing activities in the Southern Alps. There will be pickkies of; The Garden of Eden, the Clyde Valley, the Perth/ Whataroa, then lots of nice pickkies of the Hopkins- Dobson- Ben Ohau area. Tony endured some grotty weather, then lots of nice sunny days.

The Hopkins Valley, near Mt Cook, has a delightful blend of river flats, beech forest, tussock, and mountains. All grades are catered for. It is the sort of place we should go to more often, and maybe we will. Come along and find out more about this lovely valley.

EDITORIAL

The AGM went with a real zing this year. Maybe it was the wine and cheese that brought members out in droves (about 30, I believe) and with several non-members as well, there was little in the way of spare seats. Great stuff folks. Well done. Everything went through with plain sailing. We have a new constitution. It was a pity that Tricia could not be there to see the support that she was mustering.

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There seems to have been quite a bit of activity covering a diversity of adventures over Easter. Four ventured into the Kaweka Range for a well worthwhile trip. Four or five went into the Central Ruahines, whilst two duo teams visited different areas of Ruapehu. The weather was favourable generally, although Derek and Nigel (at Whangaehu Hut) reported 6-7 cm of snow on Sunday night! Keep up the fun.

The committee for 1994/95 consists of:

Tricia	President	Responsible for club nights
Derek	Vice President	Responsible for Trips and opening club nights in Tricia's absence
Nigel	Secretary	Minutes and official paperwork, membership enquiries
Peter	Treasurer	Accounts, Newsletter production and distribution
Pauline		Membership enquiries
Mick		Gear and the RED BAG
Mick, Linda and Tricia		SAR representatives
Linda and Mick		Overdue trips
Tony		DOC liaison and environment
Peter and Nigel		Keys to Society of Friends Hall
Nigel		Key to PO Box

NOTICES

NEW MEMBER

At the AGM, the meeting voted to accept Chris Morey as a member. Please welcome Chris to the club. Chris may be contacted at Flat 4, 5 Ranfurly Street, Phone 354-9658.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Nigel is now back at Ashhurst and his new address and phone number are 33 Wyndham Street, Ph 326-8847.

SUBS ARE DUE

Yes it's that time of year again. At the AGM it was resolved to maintain the subscriptions at the existing rates - Family \$30, Ordinary \$25 and Junior \$10. Please get them into the Treasurer either by hand or via the mail (PO Box 1217).

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

If you are unable to make it or expect to be late, please ensure that your apology is forwarded to the secretary in advance. Next meeting at place Tricia's place 57 Fiars Road.

MAP ORDERS & HUT PASSES

We have begun assembling a second map order. Budget for an average charge of \$9/map.

POISONING OPERATIONS IN THE RUAHINE RANGES

DOC and Hawkes Bay Regional Council are proposing to carry out large scale aerial possum poison operations in the Ruahines and Kawekas during May 1994. This is principally to protect farm stock against the likelihood of the spread of Bovine Tuberculosis from wild possums. 1080 pellets will be dropped on approximately 50,000 hectares, stretching 144 kilometres from the Tukituki River up to the Ngaruroro, over both DOC and

private land. There is also a sizeable chunk of the Lake Colenso-Ruahine Corner area to be poisoned. Beware of the little green pellets!

There are arguments both for and against this type of blanket coverage operation, and disputes as to the effects on other forest fauna, namely deer, but there is no doubting that the possum population needs to be reduced. Hopefully this will do it for the time being.

Also rumoured is a large scale poison drop into the Tararua ranges. We will try to keep you informed.

THURSDAY TRAMPING GROUP

This is to report this group is live, well and functioning. It is made up of a loose-knit group of people who belong to tramping clubs and non-tramping clubs. We go out each Thursday. The trips usually take up most of the day. Departure times vary and it depends on who is leading as to where we depart from. A moderate level of fitness is required.

So far this year we have visited the Atene Skyline Walkway, the Manawatu Gorge Walkway, Herepai and the Branch Road Walkway at Pohongina.

Interested and available to take part in this activity? Then phone Sue Pither on 357-3033 or Monica Cantwell on 354-3834.

TRIP REPORTS

Don't forget (leaders) please get your trip reports in or use your short lived powers to delegate to an unsuspecting team member. How about a letter to the editor, perhaps, or some good gossip, or a poem or what ever.

TRIP REPORTS

DUNDAS - HEREPAI 12-13 Feb by Terry Crippen

Peter Darragh and Terry Crippen decided to enlarge the Herepai day trip into an overnight trip by going to Dundas Hut. Leaving the Mangatainoka road end on Saturday morning, we headed over to the Ruamahanga via Roaring Stag Lodge track. The first of the two long climbs (besides the one to get to Roaring Stag) was up onto Cattle Ridge. This was immediately followed by a steep descent down into the Ruamahanga again upstream of the gorge. This was our lunch and swim spot. A short sidle – then the second of the big uphill grunts brought us to Dundas Hut for the night - a good shelter from the strong winds on the top.

Sunday morning came with a textbook example of a southerly change kicking the guts out of the northwester that had continued to shake the hut all night. So with fine and still conditions, we headed north over Pukemoremore and the West and East Peaks, to arrive at Herepai Hut just as Stuart and his day party were preparing to head onto the tops. We declined their invitation to go back up with them. Instead we had lunch and a snooze before heading down to the road end with a stop along the way for a another swim - this time in the Managatainoka.

HEREPAI - 13 Feb 94

Those present -Stuart Hubbard, Monica Cantwell, Pauline Coy, Chris Morey, Chris Morton, Adrian Regnault, Peter & Judy Stockdale, Llew and Jenny Prichard, and her friend Rose, plus two dogs.

Herepai Hut is an easy 2-2½ hours from the Putara road end, near Eketahuna. We assembled at the road end at 9 am and followed the track along the river valley. Peter and Judy's dog coped well with the two swing bridges, but Llew and Jenny's Labrador needed some "encouragement" to get across.

The gradient of the track increased sharply after the second bridge, and coupled with a very warm day led had some of us suffering a little. The track is rather slushy in places even in the middle of summer, as it is sheltered by bush for much of the distance.

We reached Herepai Hut around 11.15, and had a leisurely early lunch. Terry Crippen and Peter Darragh met us here on their way down from Dundas Hut. From here the party continued up the ridge to what the map said was Herepai, where we had excellent views in all directions. The warm temperature and lack of wind offered a distinct contrast to the conditions encountered at midwinter by your scribe and Terry C.

After motoring back to the hut, we retrieved daypacks and made our way back to the cars, stopping for a well earned swim enjoyed by both humans and dogs.

Welcome to Chris Morey, on his first trip with PNTMC and welcome back to Chris Morton, getting his boots dirty again for the first time in 5 years.

The weather was utterly perfect. The moon was full, the men fit and well prepared, and the river low. It was the annual Waiohine Gorge tubing trip, one of the true Tararua classics.

If there were an area designed specifically for tramping, it would be the Central Tararuas. It is not all that frequently visited by us, maybe this story can inspire you. Open tops, beech forest, big valleys, big rivers and gorges, huts, and river flats are all found in the Central Tararuas. It was the Waiohine River we were here for this time, with its scenic deep gorge.

Andrew, Tony, Nigel, Pete and Darryl all met up near Carterton, shuffled cars, then aimed for Powell Hut for the night. First problem, nice tiny pack couldn't fit everything. Solution, extras into a sack over the shoulder. Second problem, torch won't go. Solution, none immediate. Camp at Holdsworth Lodge. No way. Share torch light? Possible. Utilising the prolific moonlight was the obvious solution. Sweat poured off us as we fair sprinted up past (grotty) Mountain House to (the luxurious) Powell Hut (two tickets, gas on tap, and a warden!). A well deserved brew was consumed on the porch at 11 pm, watching the Wairapara bathed in moonlight.

Saturday, and we zoomed off into the murk. A few clear spells as we raced over Mts Holdsworth and Isabelle, then the loooong descent to Mid Waiohine Hut. Warm and sunny, lovely tall Podocarp trees, and deep pools in the river. However, not much water flowing down the rapids. And not very inspiring for those who knew the best gorge in the Tararuas further down, the gorge has even deeper pools, cruisy rapids, and scenery non-river trips never see. And its amazing scenery, with sheer cliffs, branches from trees on both sides touching, and always the river.

Non tubing trips will never know these places, so here's how you do it. To successfully get down these Tararua Gorges, one firstly needs a lot of guts. A few basic items of equipment are utterly essential, such as wet suit, truck tube, helmet, and a very small pack. To keep stuff dry, so named canoeist "dry bags" are probably the best bet. We saw some people stuffing their sleeping bags into several plastic bags only to find their packs weighing maybe 50 kilos – mostly of water! Screw top plastic containers are good, with food in sealed wrappers to keep it dry. And Nigel discovered the merits of having a "nano-pack" (small).

At Mid Waiohine Hut, we cooked up a huge stodgy brew that fired up our bellies well and good. With all our necessary stuff loaded into dry bags, wet suits squeezed on, pump like mad to get our tubes ready, we set off into the puddle that was the mighty Waiohine Gorge. After several gorge trips, we had worked out tying a car tube inside a truck tube provided maximum floatation and ease of carrying the thing when tramping. Much to his dismay, Darryl's car tube somehow got pierced substantially by the valve holder on the truck tube, and his set up was looking pretty sad. That is until he found another tube in the bushes behind the hut, someone had most likely carried their tube all the way there, been intimidated by the river, so just left it there. Lucky for Darryl! Once in the river, the puddle didn't last long, in fact by the time we reached the swing bridge down from Aokaparangi, we had already enjoyed a couple of swims, and were looking forward to many more. The water was warm-ish, and there was plenty of it further down. Some others in the gorge planned to walk wherever possible, which is OK, and is a bit faster than floating in places, but once in the long deep pools with no way around, the truck tube reigns supreme. Swimming may be OK, but floating is much better. And a lot more fun, as we found out. You could lie effortlessly on the tube, drifting down the rapids (and waterfalls!) and paddle by hand where necessary. Some waterfalls and rapids, ahhh, you do not go down! There were some waterfalls that, just as you floated past the point of no return at the top, you thought there was a chance of actually not surviving the rapid alive. You pop out at the bottom, hopefully (though not always) intact, and hey, you realise you are still alive! So you go to float the waterfall again! Exhilaration. But the tube, not the most hydrodynamic of vehicles, often takes an unplanned course, as the river appears to have a mind of its own. No two rapids are the same. From below, sometimes you would look up at the rapid towards a friend floating down, he tips out, and a pack or a tube continue to float down river without its owner. The owner is left clinging to a rock like a drowned rat. Most of the time you wish for more current in the water, as it gets a bit slow floating in places.

Presently, we came to Mangahuka Stream, a pleasant open area we usually stop at for a brew. We knew by then that we were through the worst (best) of the gorge, and Hector River was not far away. Then it would be a short, exciting stretch down to Totara Flats. The sun was still beating mercilessly down, and we wallowed in the delightful water. We drifted past Mangahuka Stream, then past the really "tight" part of the gorge, the part that never sees the sun. Then we were there, in the wide open valley below the Hector River confluence. Huge grassy slips, gentle rapids, and happy men. A rather surprised young deer gawked at us drifting silently past 10 metres away, then bolted for the bush.

Rounding the last corner, we disturbed two empty handed fly fishermen. Then we were there, at the famous Totara Flats. We had sunshine for about half an hour at our campsite at the mouth of Totara Stream, so our wet suits etc dried out well. Everything basically dry. A simply gorgeous spot, watching the fishermen prove who is best (the big one got away) and battling the sandflies. We saw many young trout jumping just before dark, apparently they like it near the mouth of a side stream. More stodge for dinner - delicious. The full moon tried hard to keep us awake.

Sunday was a sun day. A late lazy start, plenty of time to spill out all our remaining supplies, waterproof, and tidy up. What a sight trooping across Totara Flats, resplendent in our helmets, with tubes and wet suits. The warden at Totara Flats Hut (another two ticket hut!) was suitably impressed. Back in the river, five minutes down from the hut, we further inflated the tubes to make it easier, dressed up again, and were soon on our way again. Gentle rapids, standing waves, and good times. Even saw an eel under us, in a deep pool.

The lower end of Totara Flats is a delightful area, one of the nicest in the Tararuas, and we saw it from the best perspective, from the river. Long slow rapids carried us lazily down until Makakaka Creek, below Cone Saddle, where there is a series of bottomless pools, and a couple of exciting rapids. It certainly didn't take long for us to reach Clem Creek, where we had lunch, and a few maniac rapid runs. Felt like we were nearly out then. Walls Whare, at the road end, more people, then Waiohine Shelter, and it was all over. Everyone was exhilarated, slightly exhausted, and busting for the next gorgeous gorge.

TE HEKENG A CROSSING 6 FEB - by Nigel Barrett

As this was going to be a day crossing we departed PN at 4.00 am in order to make full use of the available daylight. The forecast for this day was exceptional - light winds and no cloud - but I soon started experiencing doubts when patches of water appeared on the windscreen, while we drove through the Gorge. Our entry point was Moorecock Base on Kashmir Road, head to Daphne Hut, then up to the tops from Howletts Hut. The rain was steady at the Base so those of us without coats tended to get wet quite quickly. Good time was made on a good track, but where the Daphne track meets the Tukituki, we met a murky swollen river. It looked crossable, and not wishing to turn back so soon, the crossing was attempted. Several crossings had to be made; each one taking up precious time. In two places, to cross would have been foolish, therefore time consuming bush-bashing was required. After two hours of negotiating the river, we finally reached the track to Howletts.

A cracking pace was set on the way up, reaching Howletts a bit before lunch. Two younger chaps were coming down with stories of wind and rain for two days, which we were really pleased to hear. They were equally pleased when we told them of the river condition.

After lunch, we headed to Tiriha and sick and tired of getting wet, I cut my pack liner/survival tube into a makeshift raincoat, which was marvellous. As time was short, the climb to Tiriha was non-stop and once reached a compass bearing was taken (taking careful note of how far it was to the next veer in the ridge). We moved on and there was surprisingly little wind around, but the cloud was thick, hence we shot past the veer and carried on for about 10 minutes too far. Having realized, we got back on track and made good time to Te Hekenga (Mick and friends were nowhere to be seen).

We sidled around to the south of the peak, as last item I was there a slip had made a 10 m section of the ridge impassable (as it was so unstable). We got back and onto the track and headed down the sidle to the Whanihuia Range. The time at this stage was 2 pm-ish and the car another 6 hours away - a daunting prospect! As we descended we got below the cloud and things started to warm up a little, hence it was time to stop and peel.

The climb up to Managamahue seemed twice as high as the map told us. I, personally, was keenly scanning the open tops, the slips and the valleys for all those deer that Tony had told me were there, but alas as usual there was none to be seen (DOC has recently removed 2,000 from the Ruahine tops, I am informed.)

Once we were on Mangamahue, we were back in the cloud again, so after yet another compass bearing, it was off to the Rangi turn off 4 km away. During this time, the cloud lifted revealing fantastic views of the central Ruahine tops. It was looking to be a pleasant evening stroll out to the car. It was here that the mistake was made. (I should have realised that we should sidle the middle peak of the Whanahuia Range.) Instead in a lapse of concentration, we headed to the top of it and into the cloud. It should have been simple to get back onto the ridge, but instead we navigated onto a parallel spur and descended for 20 minutes when we heard running water - not what one can usually expect on a ridge top! At this stage (tired etc etc.) we headed off in completely the wrong direction. When we realised, we were getting too tired to move on so we got our sleeping gear out (consisting of 2 bivy bags, a cut survival tube) and hit the sack. We were rewarded by a fantastic sunset (one of the best I have seen) and fortunately a windless and cloudless night with a great view of Rangi Hut. (The total hours tramping that day was 14½.)

We rose at sunrise and found that we were a few feet lower down than when we had gone to bed. It was no time to waste now, and get out to phone to call off any search. (A bit of a shame really because it was a first class day and still with some food I was very tempted to head back to Daphne.) It was a perfect walk out - sunny, warm and no wind. We were at the car park at 9 am-ish and walked for an hour along hot and dusty Renfrew Road to the nearest house. Trish got Liz to come and pick us up. She had a wonderful spread of cheese, biscuits, drinks etc. etc. which was consumed with ease. A fantastic crossing by Nigel Barrett, Chris Saunders and Roderick Saunders.

GLACIER TECHNIQUES ON RUAPEHU - BRUCE VAN BRUNT

The glacier techniques trip was originally scheduled as an overnight trip, but by the mutual consent of the two participants, the trip was honed to a day trip on 12 March. To ensure adequate time was available, we left PN at the tender time of 5.00 am, arriving at the Turoa car park at 7.30 am. The effects of the previous cool weather were evident: the summit ridge and Girdlestone had a light mantle of snow. There were isolated patches of snow down at the car park, but these were small and the snow did not form a continuum until somewhere above the "High Noon" T-bar.

Leaving the car park around 7.45 am, we made good progress up the deserted ski fields. After a short break at the Giant Cafe, we continued upwards putting on crampons above the "High Noon" T-bar. The weather was fine: not too hot and not windy. The summit ridge looked as if it might be iced over; we thus elected to stay left of it and climb first to the crater rim. We reached the crater rim while still in the shade. The thin skin of sastrugi ice over the upper slopes produced a noisy light tinkling sound in the slight wind. To get from the rim to the summit, we were obliged to sidle around the summit to gain access to the ridge. At this stage we were using two ice axes each. Our first attempt was aborted owing to an unpleasant combination of loose rock and plastered ice; our next attempt a few metres further east was successful and we found ourselves on the summit at 11.00 am. The visibility here was very good: there were clouds to the north and east but the view was worth the effort. The breeze, however, made the summit cool.

Having imbibed that delicious summit air pregnant with hydrogen sulphide, we descended down the ridge quickly turning off into the Waihianoa Valley to avoid the ice problems. We then sidled around until we came to the saddle connecting Girdlestone and Tahurangi. Below us lay the Mangaehuehu Glacier - our target for the day, but it was lunch time and we were in no hurry. The weather was still good but the daytime clouds were beginning to fill in the Waihianoa Valley.

We descended down the glacier. The warm summer had taken its usual toll: several crevasses were visible. We roped up for glacier travel and began our descent zig-zagging down the glacier; occasionally stopping to investigate (from the top) various features in the crevasses. There was fresh snow over the ice and many corniced edges. The deeper crevasses were blue-green in colour and some had surreal looking icicles hanging down into their depths. We could see bedrock at the bottom of some of them at least 10 m down.

Near the terminal, of the glacier, we found a "user friendly" crevasse in which to practice abseiling, prusiking and ice climbing. We were not alone here; a group of MUAC climbers discovered this coveted crevasse and were making the most out of it. We selected one of the walls that was vacant and abseiled from an ice screw down to the bottom some 6 m below. After a couple of hours practising the aforesaid techniques, we emerged back on the surface and packed up headed down to the car. We were on the road before 5 pm feeling satisfied that we had accomplished everything that we had set out to do.

Party consisted of Peter wiles and Bruce Van Brunt.

ROARING STAG

A small but determined party of three set out to the Eketahuna - Putara Road, to the road end and along the track. At the T-junction at the top of the ridge, we turned left down to Roaring Stag. We returned via the same way. We had a good day and were back at the car park shortly after 3 pm. We were Monica, Tony, Judy and dog.

TAKAPARI ROAD

After a double run at the hill, we managed to get all three vehicles up and parked at the gate. Seven of us set out to cross over the Ruahines to the A-frame Hut and back again. We had clear skies, no wind, bright sunshine and magnificent views. On the way back, we picked up Liz and Bonny (her faithful companion). Others in the party were Margaret, Candy, Hilary, Richard, Chris, Peter, Judy and four-footed friend.

TE ATUAOPARAPARA

Six of us set out at day-break and made our way up to Triplex car park in the Mid Eastern Ruahines. We were up at Sunrise Hut by 11.00 am. After a tea break, we decided to push forward to Te Atuaoparapara, as the weather conditions seemed okay. It was cloudy on the top with some drizzle, but not much wind. We made our way down to Waipawa Saddle, then down to Waipawa Chalet and out along the river. At the car, we were tired but satisfied at completing our goal. In the party were Barry and Christine, Chris, Peter and Judy, and Stephanie and a four-footed friend.

MOUNT ASPIRING - Mid February by Peter Wiles

We left PN at 5 am and arrived at the Matukituki road end at 10 pm that evening having covered 950 km of driving between us. It was already too dark to find the Raspberry Creek Hut so we crashed at the car park. At first light we got under way and arrived at Aspiring Hut at about 8.30 am. It was time for breakfast. An examination of the hut book revealed that a Wellington party of six were heading up valley via French Ridge to

Colin Todd Hut; in fact the sixth member was just leaving as we started eating. This knowledge was a worry because our exploits the previous year had revealed that Colin Todd can cater for four easily but can only handle its nominal capacity of eight with great difficulty. What happens if there are any other parties up there? We were planning to spend a week up there.

We also had a further dilemma to resolve - which route to take to Colin Todd? The French Ridge / Quarterdeck route or the Bevan Col / Gut route? We decided on the latter because although French Ridge offers accommodation at a good hut our observations in late January 93 suggested that the Quarterdeck might be difficult to negotiate in mid February and in any event is less direct and involves climbing an extra 500 m. The Bevan Col route has its complications, however, Scott's Bivy is not very good accommodation and if it should be occupied then one has to camp out in the elements. In addition, in bad weather, parties are cut-off and cannot progress either up or down valley until the river level is manageable. In addition there is the "Gut" to climb through, which involves decided risks.

Although it was a hot day we managed to make reasonable progress and reached Scott's Bivy by mid afternoon. It was empty and since the weather was fine and the forecast okay we decided to gain another 100 m up the valley (about half way between the bivy and the bottom of the Gut). We set up a small fly on a sheltered grassed area for the night. This proved to be a slight mistake because a wind blew all night causing incessant flapping (and the weather was fine). We got away next morning in good time (about 7.00 am) because we wanted to ensure that we gave ourselves a reasonable chance of getting to Colin Todd before the Wellington crowd. At the bottom of the "Gut" we decided to take the upper route this time because last time we took the lower route (could not cross the river) and because the guide book suggests that the upper route is easier. The track initially climbs fairly steeply on scree and gains the ridge crest but contrary to my expectation does not stay on it. Instead, it cuts back onto the rock face high above the gorge. The route is extremely exposed on very narrow ledges with small hand holds. There is no possibility of belaying as there are few if any usable natural anchors for the rope. With very heavy packs and a gusty wind (although fine and dry conditions) we made our way nervously onward and upward. I think the only thing that made us keep going was the knowledge that we had no desire to turn around and try to go back downwards. Before too long the route improved and we felt more relaxed before emerging at the wide basins in the upper valley. I previously recall the next 500-600 m climb to the Col as being an exhausting drag up hot and relentless rock slabs. We must have taken a better route this time as it did not seem so energy sapping. Here we met a couple of parties coming out who reported that the Quarterdeck route was very difficult and intimated that they might have been the last to get through for the season. After a couple more hours we were at the snow and half an hour later at the Col. We roped up for the walk across the Bonar Glacier. We arrived at the hut at about 1 pm, just as the last party in residence was leaving. There was no sign of the Wellington masses and in fact they never made it for the reason reported above!

For the first night we had the hut to ourselves. The weather next day was poor. In the afternoon, Geof Wyatt and two of his clients arrived. They had also camped out below the bottom of the Gut, but unlike us had got rather wet, despite their bivvy gear.

The next day was a bit better and we all went for a reconnaissance trip towards the base of the "Ramp". The Ramp is the standard route off the mountain for most parties and is also considered the easiest route onto the mountain. The ramp is located about 300-400 m above the hut and about 1½ hours walk up the glacier. Approaching the base of the Ramp, we could see some initial problems. There were a heap of disorganised (unstable) room sized blocks of snow to find away through and onto the top of, to provide access to a small bluff that forms the base of the Ramp. Once over this bluff, then access leads onto the snow slopes / hanging glacier of the Ramp proper. At our vantage point we could not see the snow slopes of the Ramp, for two reasons – the angle drops beyond the initial bluff and the snow is mostly hidden, and the top of the bluff was in cloud. Our initial attempts to find a route through the snow blocks were fruitless. After three of the most promising options failed we began to fear that our hopes might be dashed before we really started on the peak. (During this Wyatt and his group disappeared to check out the "Buttress" route.) By taking the least promising and fourth option, we finally found a viable route (passing in and amongst some very unstable looking blocks of material). From the top of these, we bridged across the gap between the snow and the rock onto a narrow ledge that led right and after a few metres, up into a water shoot, then up a couple more metres and further right onto a ledge, that rapidly widened, then up further onto a patch of snow. The snow stake came in handy at this point. From here we were unsure where to go. The snow faded out onto some ice covered rock that did not look very inviting so we opted to explore another ledge leading right. After about half a rope length, it became obvious that the way forward was up the bluff immediately above. This was about 15 m high and fairly straight forward climbing except that it started raining at this stage. However, at the top of this rock section lay the start of the snow ramp proper - which disappeared into the cloud. We had completed our reconnaissance. We returned to the hut for what we thought was a well earned lunch.

Next morning we all intended to climb. However, at 4.30 am the weather did not promising so after a look outside, Geof called things off and went back to bed. At 6.00 am, he had another look and decided to "go for it" via the Buttress route. We set off towards the Ramp. However once we were at the base of the snow blocks, a huge dark mass of cloud started to arrange itself at the base of the glacier and appeared to start to move in towards us. To us, it seemed like a re-run of the previous day's weather, so we decided to abandon the attempt at this point. (Geof's party had turned off to the Buttress and were nowhere to be seen.)

We decided to head back, but in the next 15- 30 minutes the cloud started to break up and back off. We realized we had made the wrong decision! Be that as it may, we opted to do some more reconnaissance. This time of the Buttress route. We could not find Geof's route (it turned out that they had stepped off the snow onto a patch of rock), so we pursued our own route up toward the west ridge. It soon became apparent that we were not going to make much more progress on our intended line because of a crevasse that ran a huge distance cutting us off. We duly abandoned this route. We headed back to the ridge just above the hut before heading up the rocks to the Shipowner's Ridge and then along the west ridge towards the Buttress. After turning the first significant tower along the ridge on a narrow ledge we found that any further progress was going to be rather difficult on a mixture of sloping slabs and the occasional patch of snow. At one stage, we could hear the others on the mountain somewhere but because of the patches of mist floating by could not see them. We decided to return to the hut. At this stage Pat's knees started to complain.

Later in the afternoon another party of two (women) and a solo party of one arrived together. Late in the evening a further party of three arrived. There were now 11 at the hut! About 6.30 pm, Geof's party returned successful. Gear was strewn about the place as if a garage sale was being organised. The evening was fine clear and calm - superb, but would it hold for tomorrow? The forecast (on the radio) suggested turning nor-west and the wind freshening. We had heard that all before - both in 93 and in the last few days.

The hut was crammed and another three were camping outside in a tent. I spent most of the night listening for the sound of the wind returning. We got up at 4.30 am and were ready to go at 5.30, however, it was still too dark at this stage so we waited a few minutes before heading off up the initial rocks before putting our crampons on, roping up and descending onto the glacier. The two women were going to initially follow our route and then turn off (hoping to follow Geof's route) and then tackle the Buttress. Pat and I and the solo chap from Auckland decided to tackle the Ramp. The remaining party of three did not fire at all.

The morning was superb with the valleys filled with cloud up to the bottom of the glacier. There was some high cloud but most importantly it was clear and calm. We reached the Ramp without any problems, except that we found that the blocks of snow had moved over the intervening two days so that the gap to be bridged over to the rock was nearly twice as wide and was rather more tricky. At the Ramp proper, the snow was well frozen and we used both ice axes and our hammers. We climbed unroped, initially directly upwards at 40-45°, until a crevasse was crossed and a corner rounded, and then sidled at a reduced angle for awhile, before the angle increased again and we eventually emerged at 2,500 m on the west shoulder.

The immediate pressure was now off. We spent about half an hour here, topping up with food and drink and taking photos of the superb view from Tutuko in the south to Mt Cook in the north. After the rest it was time to press on with the remaining 500 m. The first 400 m is a walk up a path of sorts composed of a scree of schist dinner plates. The remaining 100 m or so consists of the summit icecap / snow arête. Once at the base of the arete, we stopped to put our crampons on and get our ice axes out, then it was on to the summit. There was a fair breeze over the summit and with it intermittent streams of mist which meant that the view from the top was rather variable. We each arrived at the top at various times between midday and about 1 pm. We had lunch back at the rocks at the bottom of the ice cap. During this time the cloud that filled the valleys first thing had rapidly built up and was now level with the top of the ramp. Reluctantly, our minds began to focus on wondering what going back down the Ramp was going to be like. (Those who have read the most recent FMC Bulletin may have noted that in the last four years, three people have fallen to their deaths while descending the Ramp. It is no place to take lightly. The huts also have graphic warnings.)

The chap from Auckland who was with, fortunately seemed thoroughly competent and was happy to descend on his own devices. Pat and I belayed down using our snow stakes as anchors - nine consecutive rope lengths. Meanwhile the cloud tended to break up and the going became hot now that we were sheltered from the breeze - and the snow was now soft. In a couple of places it was obvious that there was hard ice only 20 cm or so beneath the veneer of snow.

Once we were at the bottom of the snow we climbed down the rock section but unanimously agreed that we would abseil the bottom bluff rather than head back into the snow blocks. This proved to be more than a fortuitous move. While we were setting up the abseil (there is a handy rock with a bundle of slings arranged for the job) the snow blocks decided to rearrange themselves before our very eyes!

Once back on the glacier, we decided to travel unroped. Even this route was not without unexpected risks as part way down an ice cliff had shed tonnes of material onto our path during the day. We arrived back at the hut shortly after 7 pm.

The hut was now occupied by a pair of Brits. About an hour later the two women arrived back after having returned via the Buttress. In all it had been a rewarding day. I think we all slept much more contentedly that night.

Although we still had the supplies to spend three or four more days up here, we decided that with annual leave being a precious commodity and that were taking up critical hut space we should head out while the going was

good. So in the morning five of us headed out via Bevan Col. Although the trip across the glacier was completed in calm clear conditions the descent down to the top of the gut was in cloud and breeze. (We had been noticing from the hut that the weather prefers to avoid climbing up the glacier but instead pushes through the lowest point between the western and eastern sides of the divide.)

Back at the Gut, we opted for the lower route and took advantage of following the female duo down the route. Getting around the first waterfall was not too difficult. Things get trickier after that. At one point we decided that it was easier to climb back up a bit and climb directly down to the stream (river) and travel the bed until we reached the top of the middle waterfall. Here a critical crossing at the crest of the waterfall was required. I should have protected this with the rope but ploughed on regardless getting across okay but soaked in the process. Pat came across on the rope. Now we were back on the slabs again. Here we tended to take differing routes. Pat took an innovative route that none of the remaining three of us cared to follow. However progress had to be made and again I got the rope out to lower one of the women's packs followed by my own. At last we were in the clear. Nothing could stop us on the walk out now except for one thing – Pat's knee tendons had all but seized up. Walking was at half pace at best. We reached Aspiring Hut at dusk. In spite of the hut being overflowing with people, we arrived with the advantage that most people had eaten. Now it was time to tuck into double helpings of almost everything! We even managed to find spare mattresses to put on the floor.

Next morning (brilliantly fine we walked out to the road and drove all the way back to Picton.
Peter Wiles and Pat Janssen,

QUOTE

To laugh is to risk appearing the fool
To weep is to risk appearing sentimental
To reach out for another is to risk involvement
To express feelings is to risk exposing your true self.
To place your ideas, your dreams before a crowd is to risk their loss
To love is to risk not being loved in return
To live is to risk dying
To try is to risk failure
But risk must be taken because the greatest hazard in life is to risk nothing.
The person who asks nothing, does nothing, has nothing and is nothing
They may avoid suffering and sorrow but they cannot learn, feel change, grow, love, live
chained by their attitudes, they are a slave, they have forfeited their freedom
only a person who risks is free.

AGENDA

28th AGM of Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club (Inc.)

Wine and cheese 7.30 -8.00 pm

Attention to order 8.00 pm

Apologies

Minutes of 27th AGM

Matters Arising

President's Report

Treasurer's Report

New Member(s)

Changes to Constitution

Fees for 1994/95

General Business

Executive Committee for 1994/95

Close of Meeting

PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB (INC.)

President's Report 1993/94

(This evening will present the President's report on behalf of Patricia Eder.)

This is the 28th President's report to be presented to the Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club.

I (Tricia Eder) have had the privilege of being President of the Club for the past year. Although the task has not been an onerous one, it has been a challenge.

This evening I hope you, too, will be challenged when considering where you see the future of our club.

Later we are going to be voting on changes to the club's rules or Constitution. The changes are intended to "better reflect the current circumstances" of the club i.e. the reduced club membership numbers, and the need to employ inclusive language in the document when referring to club members.

Each year we report on the activities and membership status of our club. Membership for 1993-94 has dropped from about 60 to 50! (At the lowest equal level as far as the records go in our club's 28 year history.)

During the 1980's we were an actively growing club. We had a turnover of membership but were replacing those who did not renew their membership, and we were gaining more members.

New members for 1993/94 were a grand total of four with one pending. This was not sufficient to replace the 10 or so who did not renew subscriptions from the previous year largely due to having to leave the area or due to a change in family circumstances. Our future viability depends on our ability to turn this trend around.

It is said that club memberships generally are in decline. But it is not satisfactory just to accept this general trend.

We must at least aim to retain the status quo, if not aspire to increase membership once again. There is a need to take pro-active measures to achieve this. Your suggestions on how to meet this challenge will be welcome - later this evening under General Business.

TRIPS

Our members continue to be very active. Day and overnight trips are organized for each weekend. The Ruahine and Tararua Ranges are the most frequently tramped areas. Trips also went to Taranaki and Tongariro National Parks, the Kaweka and Kaimanawa Ranges, Cape Kidnappers and the Southern Alps.

Two six-monthly trip cards were produced, with half the club's members involved in leading an event - predominately tramping trips. Trips catered for the full range of fitness levels. A larger percentage of trampers showed a preference for medium/fit and easy/medium day trips. If you feel you are not being catered for, approach your committee or better still why not become involved when the new trip card is being formulated.

Unfortunately even with the best plans, trips are sometimes cancelled, or people pullout for various reasons. Trip leaders and those who were prepared to go on the trips can be very disappointed. It is desirable that reasonable notice (not the day before) of your change of plans is required, so that alternative arrangements can be made.

MID-WEEK TRAMPING.

This item is one which has been addressed since the previous AGM. An enthusiastic group take regular Thursday day trips. The contact people are Monica Cantwell and Sue Pither. The newsletter prints this information.

MOUNTAINEERING

The mountaineering dimension of our club appears to be a diminishing activity. The 1993 snowcraft instruction weekends had very low attendance rates. One factor contributing towards this could be the difficulty in having enough sufficiently qualified instructors who were available for the weekends. We hope to go some way to addressing this lack by having three club members attend an alpine instructors course at Ruapehu in June. Are there any club members who have mountaineering skills and would be prepared to encourage and develop these skills in others?

SEARCH AND RESCUE

There were no search and rescue call outs for our club during 1993/94. We have three club representatives on the Palmerston North Police Search and Rescue Committee, which generally meets twice a year. The annual SAREX, held on 5-6 March, was organized by the Palmerston North district. Linda Rowan and Mick Leyland were on the organising committee for the event. They were involved in setting the search scenario and Linda correlated the four map areas into one laminated map for the teams to use in the field, and Mick was the shadow for one of the junior lost parties.

The exercise was held in the Southern Ruahines, based from the Sixtus Lodge facility. We had a 3-person team participating and were one of the teams that found one of the missing parties.

Our club continues to be able to field fit, fast and competent trampers. Is there any interest in club members organizing their own search and rescue weekend?

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

At the 1992/93 AGM club members expressed a desire to change the club's Christmas dinner venue. As a result, a BYO was organised and held at Brian Lawrence's home at Mt Stewart. A large number of members attended, enjoyed themselves and fully endorsed this style of event.

John Cleland presided at the annual photographic evening. There has been an increase in the number of prints being submitted for critique and a corresponding decline in the number of slides presented.

PNTMC hosted the Trevor Bissell Memorial Trophy inter-club quiz competition. This was another well attended event. Nigel Barrett, Perry Hicks, Paul Scheyvens were the club's representatives. Pauline Coy and Mick Leyland expended much energy and effort into devising the various fun categories. Derek Sharp and Tricia Eder were supporting cast on the night. All of which was brilliantly compared by Bruce Van Brunt.

Mid-winter celebrations were held at the Putara Outdoor Education Centre. This was very well attended by both families and trampers, because of the easy access as well as being in close proximity to the hills. For the first time families with young children were able to participate. Trampers had the choice of several trips into the Northern Tararuas. And the dinner, suffice to say that the delicious dishes that appeared - rapidly disappeared. By popular request this venue has again been organised for the mid-winter fest and we hope it will be similarly well attended.

The Annual Debate (for the Boot) between PNTMC and MUAC, was again canned through a lack of enthusiasm, on the part of willing participants to make up the debating teams. This is a fun evening for the audience, but its revival is likely to eventuate only if three people volunteer to make up the debating team.

CLUB NIGHTS

There has been a variety of activities and presentations. The Committee would welcome your suggestions as to what you would like club evenings to include. How to increase the attendance numbers at club nights and how to address the follow up of interested visitors and prospective new members?

PUBLICITY

Our thanks goes especially to Monica Cantwell, voluntary publicity officer, who organises and places advertising notices and posters at various outlets around the city. Richard Lockett places notices in Feilding. From these notices and the recent advertising in the Guardian and Tribune, we get many enquiries about the club. Unfortunately new membership does not reflect this interest. Why?

In 1988, it is recorded in the Committee meeting minutes that for every 30 enquiries, the Club gained on average three new members. Advertising is effective, but it is obvious that a great deal must be carried out to achieve a positive outcome - and something else as well?

COMMITTEE

My thanks goes to the committee members for their efforts over the past 12 months. Lawson Pither, Patron and Auditor and for his involvement in the redrafting of the constitution. Peter Wiles, Treasurer, newsletter editor and publisher and submission writer on current issues. Derek Sharp who has held the Vice President's position and along with other committee members has fronted the club meetings in my absence. Nigel Barrett who has managed the secretarial affairs and has kept us informed about the Massey Rock Wall proposals. Pauline Coy who organised the telephone tree system which was in direct response to a request made at the last AGM. Pauline and Perry Hicks organised the Pinus Contorta weekend, on which next time we would like many more members to participate!

Tony Gates who dealt with submissions on environmental issues and the bulk ordering of Alpine and Antarctic calendars, maps and hut passes. Mick Leyland who has been gear custodian, club night tea and coffee maker and by popular vote, the one who led the most unexpectedly interesting off-track trip.

I'd like to thank the overdue trip contacts - Sue and Lawson Pither, Daryl and Linda Rowan and Mick Leyland. And also thanks to the Society of Friends, for the continued availability and use of their hall.

And finally I would like to express my thanks to all who led club trips, those who made presentations at club nights and everyone of you who participated in club activities.

Patricia Eder
President
31/3/94