



PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217
PALMERSTON NORTH
NEWSLETTER

December 1994 Edition

Gear Custodian

Newsletter Editor & Newsletter Distribution

President	: Tricia Eder	357-0122
Membership Enquiries	: Pauline Coy	354-9126
	: Nigel Barrett	326-8847
	: Mick Leyland	358-3183
	: Peter Wiles	358-6894

ENQUIRES CONCERNING OVERDUE TRIPS

Mick Leyland	: Ph. 358-3183
Daryl & Linda Rowan	: Ph. 356-4655
Sue & Lawson Pither	: Ph. 357-3033

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).

Trip Grades

Grade of trips can depend on many factors, most especially the weather and state of the track. As a guide, a reasonably proficient trumper would be expected to cover the graded trips in about the following times: Easy (E) 3 – 4 hours, Medium (M) 5 – 6 hrs, Fit (F) about 8 hrs, Fitness Essential (FE) >8 hrs. (Tech) refers to trips graded technical requiring either special skills and / or gear.

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 7:30 pm during winter and 7:45 pm during summer unless otherwise notified in the newsletter.

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

SCHEDULED EVENT LIST

DECEMBER

Date	Trip	Grade	Leader	Phone
DECEMBER 17-18	Whangaehu Hut/Ruapehu	F/T	Peter Wiles	358-6894

I may extend trip to three or four days if weather looks favourable.

<u>DECEMBER 18</u>	To Be Arranged	E/M	Tricia Eder	357-0122
	Xmas trips ideas			
<u>DECEMBER 27-04</u>	Kahurangi Nat Park	M	Tony Gates	357-7439
Followed by:				
JANUARY 07-15	Arthurs Pass 3-Pass	M	Terry Crippen	356-3588

BBQ 26th January 1995. Venue to be advised in the next newsletter.

EDITORIAL

Hugh Barr (FMC president) gave an excellent presentation to the club last month, amply justifying a trip up to us. Hugh's presentation was very well complemented with a series of slides. Hugh began by describing what FMC was, how it was formed and what it was doing. He then moved on to the more controversial aspects of FMC's lobbying - access issues, DOC's commitment to conservation?, leasehold land/crown lands and Waitangi Treaty claims. Irrespective of whether one was inclined to agree or disagree with all he said, the issues all require lots of thought and cannot be swept aside.

Since Hugh's presentation, the Crown seems to have resolved the Steven's Island deal to the satisfaction of most parties. Compromise deals such as this might be the fruits of some of the current lobbying. But it's early days yet.

All this led me to cast my eye over the recent DOC discussion document regarding the accommodation of visitors to the DOC estate. DOC is becoming more and more cash strapped and it is not too hard to see why. Some of the claimed costs are listed below (as they are detailed in the document). It is not clear whether these costs are competitive tender costs or whether DOC overheads are included.

DOC's Schedule of Costs for Amenities

Backcountry huts (10-40 bunks)	\$50,000-\$300,000 each
Fully serviced campgrounds	\$1-2 million each
Standard campsites	\$10,000-\$100,000 each
Tracks (short distance - path standard)	\$50,000-\$80,000 per km
Tracks (long distance - walking track standard)	\$30,000-\$40,000 per km
Visitor centres	\$300,000-\$1 million each
Picnic areas with toilet facilities	\$30,000-\$60,000 each
Toilet blocks (two-pan)	\$15,000-\$50,000 each
Carparks (80 spaces)	\$60,000-\$100,000 each
Signs/interpretation signs	\$1,000-\$10,000 each

Question? Assuming that money will be preferentially spent on accommodating overseas visitors, because they are the ones who by-and-large are prepared to pay, what funds will trickle down to the amenities that most of us are interested in locally?

NOTICES

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Stuart Hubbard is now at 35 Worchester Street, phone 356-8782.
Barry Scott is now at 95 Moonshine Valley Road, phone 354-0510.

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.

Hut passes continue to be available as required at \$40 each.

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 whatever.

QUIZ RESULTS

Once again the PNTMC fielded a formidable team in the annual quiz. This year Massey Alpine Club hosted the event at Massey University. Our team consisted of Nigel, Terry and Stuart. In addition Bruce assisted in judging the contest. We were a bit short of support for the team: our only supporter was Terry who was immediately promoted into service as a team member.

The contest consisted of short answer questions, a bit of charades and identification of New Zealand fauna and flora. A highlight of the contest was the "table traverse" which consisted of crossing over and under a table top without touching the floor. This event was skilfully designed to jeopardize the dignity of the contestant.

In short it was a lively entertaining evening. The bad news is that we did not win. The honours go to Mountain Equipment; with second and third places to Manawatu and Massey respectively. Better luck next year!

TRIP DECISIONS?

If you decide you want to go on a trip, please ensure that you have contacted the leader by the Wednesday before, so that logistical decisions can be made. Recently, there have been several instances of people expressing an interest in a trip on the evening before - the leaders in some cases, having made other plans at that late stage.

BOOK REVIEW By Tony Gates

"TARARUA" The story of a mountain range

By Chris Maclean (1994). Whitcombe Press, Wellington

Some book advertisements claim that, once picked up, their books cannot be put down. This is such a book, a compelling read, with many excellent pictures, cartoons, maps, and photos (Note, not all photos are "glossy", depicting a sunny day, rather a more truthful, somewhat misty Tararua). This is the definitive book on the Tararua Ranges. "The Listener" praises it. You will too. If ever you buy a book on tramping, it has to be this one. You get a lot of book for your dollar, a large, hard covered affair better than most. At just under \$50.00, "Tararua" is a real bargain.

Eleven chapters make up the book, in a roughly chronological story. After a fine introduction, Maori impressions of the Tararua Ranges are discussed, early European thoughts, and a comprehensive historical story. (The author is a historian.) The first chapter is a general, multi disciplinary view of the Tararuas. Maori knowledge, nomenclature, and mythology in chapter two lead to some of the first European explorers searching for Hapuakorari, or Oriwa Lake, a special place to the Maori. Then it was all on last century, with exploration and in part, exploitation by; gold miners, stockmen, roading and hydro dam engineers, timbermen, and even conservationists and recreationalists. The basis of the Forest Park was formed in 1881, then, with political pressure and a lot of hard work, the beginning of "Tourist Tracks" that we know so well these days. Then there were some huts built, some of which are still used today. The 1920's saw the Tararua Tramping Club, and others, flourishing. The fashion photos of this period are amazing! Chapter 7 is aptly named "The Golden Years", describing more hut and track building, tramping and skiing, and many well known personalities. Differing opinions between recreationalists and Government Departments developed; and conservation became an issue. World, War Two interrupted use and enjoyment of the Tararua Ranges only momentarily, then the 1950's saw a great increase in New Zealand Forest Service development, namely for deer cullers. Many of their huts are still frequently used today. The final chapter describes "A New Era" that involves DOC, helicopters, polypropylene, Goretex, on tap gas in some huts, hut fees, metalled tracks, bridges, and cell phones. Now that's what I call tramping!

This is not a field route guide in the manner that this newsletter is. It is a coffee table and reference book. Christmas is nearly here, and here is the ideal Christmas pressie!

A TRAMPERS GUIDE TO THE RUAMAHANGA / MANGATAINOKA CATCHMENTS.

The Mangatainoka is a small river in the northern Tararuas, draining some heavily bushed valleys in from Eketahuna. Good public access to much of the northern Tararuas wanders through the Mangatainoka, then the Ruamahanga catchments, including perhaps the easiest route up onto the tops, via Herepai Hut. The Ruamahanga and Mangatainoka catchments are therefore frequently visited by trampers.

Mangatainoka

There is a carpark and small picnic area at the end of Putara Road. The only track leading from there splashes through the mud of the farmland alongside the Mangatainoka River for five minutes or so to the first swing bridge. It then continues at a more or less flat gradient on the west bank through reverted farmland, and to the second swing bridge, about half an hour upstream. From there, the track will really sort you out, as it climbs steeply up onto the large, flat ridge. Heavy podocarp forest cannot fail to impress trampers, as there are numerous tall, straight trees up to about 700 metres altitude. There is a particularly delightful stand of Miro/Matai/ Rimu forest on top of "655", the flat topped knob that the track sidles under in the lower Mangatainoka (in between the carpark and Herepai Hut).

Shortly afele- the track gradient eases off, there is a signposted track junction, right - twenty minutes to Herepai Hut; left (south) - 90 minutes to Roaring Stag Lodge. The track to Herepai Hut follows the southern edge of the Mangatainoka catchment. The hut is nestled in a handy spot for day trippers and weekenders, just five minutes from the tops, and with a good view of them and the Ruapae catchment from the hut roof.

The track onto the tops climbs steeply, and is exposed and eroded in places. Both the Mangatainoka and Ruapae catchments drop steeply away from the track, and look to me like leatherwood infested series of bluffs and waterfalls. But I don't want to put you off! Herepai peak is a mere blip on the ridge, just in the scrub, Ruapae is the

first main peak, on the main range, bordering with the Mangahao Catchment. That is where the pleasant tussock basins begin, stretching largely uninterrupted south to Mt Holdsworth. Ruapae is well worth a visit of a fine day! East Peak is a short distance south, then there is the deep saddle in the leatherwood (1145 m) to cross before the steep climb up to West Peak. Take care at the saddle, for it drops down on the Ruamahanga side to Chamberlain Creek, considered the most rugged in the entire Tararua Ranges. Abseiling equipment very necessary for that one!

Dundas Ridge

The mighty Dundas Ridge, towering above the Horowhenua Plains, leads southwest from West Peak. As this ridge borders with the Mangahao, it has already been discussed in that section. Derek and Nigel have a campsite along this ridge.

Bannister Ridge

Similarly, this ridge has been written about in the Waingawa chapter of the guide. Briefly, Bannister Ridge is pretty rugged, requiring reasonable conditions, fitness, and confidence to cross. It is one of those legendary ridges on the Tararua tops that is seldom visited due to the rugged nature of the terrain, and relative remoteness. There are no huts on the ridge, only Arete Biv, on Arete Bench, at the western end, and beyond the eastern end, Cow Creek Hut way below, and Cattle Ridge Hut to the north.

The route east from Arete peak, rather Arete Peak east, follows an easy tussock slope down towards the very head of the Ruamahanga. Easy terrain rapidly gives way to thick leatherwood and bluffs down there, so avoid! Heading east, climb up to "The Twins", and follow the obvious ridge over several ups and downs and direction changes to Waingawa trig. From there, the steep terrain relents, and wide open spaces on Cattle Ridge open up.

Cattle Ridge

Like Cow Saddle, Cattle Ridge was named for the beasts living there early this century. The upper; Ruamahanga catchment curves around Cattle Ridge in steep, rugged forest and leatherwood, but the ridge top itself, in the tussock, is largely flat, presenting easy travel. From Waingawa Trig, the edge of the Ruamahanga catchment descends gently to the bush edge above Cow Saddle, then steeply to Cow Saddle. There is a fine campsite just below the bushline, with water during all but the driest times. Cattle Ridge proper rolls gently north-east from Waingawa to Pukekino in tussock, and some wind swept gravel flats. There is a small notch in the ridge designed to frustrate tired trampers. A bit of leatherwood and Spaniard there too! Then more rolling tussock flats, as the ridge drops gently through some clusters of Leatherwood to Cattle Ridge Hut, a wee way above the creek at the bushline. The flat areas may cause some route finding difficulties in poor weather. Allow two hours plus to tramp the length of Cattle Ridge.

There is a steep and very muddy track descending through the bush from the Cattle Ridge Hut to Roaring Stag Hut. One hour down, two up. Swing bridge over the Ruamahanga River.

Roaring Stag area

From the Mangatainoka track turnoff, allow maybe one and a half hours. It is an easy ridge either way, passing through some delightful podocarp forest near Ruapae Stream. Some pleasant, albeit small river flats are found at the confluence of the Ruamahanga and Ruapae, five minutes upriver from Roaring Stag Hut. It may not be the tidiest hut in the Tararuas, but believe me, it is a welcome haven in grotty weather.

Delightful heavily bushed river terraces follow the river down to the confluence with Cleft Creek. No official track exists, however the route is not difficult to follow on either bank. Follow the west bank to join up with the track to Cow Saddle. Roaring Stag Hut to Cleft Creek one and a half hours, and a further one hour up to Cow Saddle.

Lower Ruamahanga Gorge

The river takes an obvious kink away from the fault line, at the confluence with Cleft Creek, and flows out to the east through the lower gorge, then the farmland near Mt Bruce. Under normal river flows, this gorge presents no real problems to tramp down, bar a few crossings maybe waist deep. On the whole, the river banks can be easily followed. Blue Range Stream joins the Ruamahanga about one third of the way down from Cleft Creek. Alternatively, there is an overgrown but adequate track following the southern bank. Access in from the farm is not well defined.

TRIP REPORTS

WAIPAWA RIVER - Sunday October 30th by Arthur Todd

Eventually only four people met at the Foodtown carpark: Arthur & Lis Todd and Ellen & Larry Rose. We arrived at the carpark on North Block Road at 8:45, and after an early morning tea set off for Sunrise Hut and Armstrong Saddle. En route, much time was spent explaining aspects of the New Zealand flora to Ellen and Larry. After a brief lunch in the sun near Sunrise Hut we set off for Armstrong Saddle.

By this time the westerly wind was quite strong, and Lis and Larry decided to retreat directly to the car. Ellen and I saw the snow near Te Atua-aoparapara, and set off to traverse the ridge crest to Waipawa Saddle. Despite the strong wind we sampled the snow, scree and leatherwood; and the views over the range and Tongariro

volcanic centre were excellent. The strong wind required concentration to maintain balance along the narrow part of the ridge. The return trip was boulder-hopping and splashing down the Waipawa River from Waipawa Saddle.

This was an excellent introduction to the Ruahine Range for Ellen and Larry, who are new to the New Zealand bush. The combination of bush, scrub, tussock, snow, scree, easy river crossings, a variety of track qualities, and extensive views all within a confined area makes this a favourite place of mine at almost any time of the year.

PURITY-IRON PEG 11-12 November by Terry Crippen

Another attempt on the Hawkes Bay Ridge had been scheduled for November - good spring time weather was hoped for. However, this was not to be. Peter Darragh and Terry Crippen headed across road end farm land just as dusk on Friday evening for another night tramp to Purity Hut. The weather looked promising after more than a week of nor-westerly conditions. It was still and the tops were almost clear. Arriving at Purity Hut involves two people to open the door now - one pushing while the other bangs the door frame with the back end of the axe. The door frame and door seem to be getting more and more out of alignment.

Saturday morning 5.30 was still but misty. As we headed up to Wooden Peg, the wind got back to its nor-westerly activity, the visibility got worse and the temperature began to drop rapidly. (The cold front forecasted for Sunday was arriving a day early.) By the time we got to Iron Peg, mittens and pack straps were beginning to freeze.

Seeing this was collectively our fourth visit to Iron Peg in such conditions this year necessitating abandoning a Hawkes Bay Ridge traverse, for either direct routes down to Waterfall or Pourangaki Huts, we were disinclined to do either again. So little resistance was expressed by us as we turned round and headed back to Purity Hut for a long early lunch and brew - deciding to be satisfied with a short overnight trip.

P.S. The Hawkes Bay Ridge trip has been rescheduled (yet again) for Waitangi weekend next year!

Have a grand Christmas and then head out to some green pastures (hills and mountains) over the New Year. Relax, have fun, take your time, watch that sun, and have a good storey to tell (preferably on paper) for us next year. Safe travelling and tramping.

Sender: PNTMC.,
P O Box 1217,
Palmerston North.

Postage Paid
Permit Number 286
Palmerston North