

PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217
PALMERSTON NORTH

NEWSLETTER

July 1996 Edition

Club Patron	: Lawson Pither	357-3033
President	: Terry Crippen	356-3588
Vice President	: Tony Gates	357-7439
Secretary	: Warren Wheeler	
Treasurer	: Peter Wiles	358-6894
Membership Enquires	: Liz Flint 356-7654 and Warren Wheeler 356-1998	
Trips co-ordinators	: Terry Crippen (356-3588) and Liz Flint (356-7654)	
Gear Custodian	: Mick Leyland	358-3183
Newsletter Editor	: John Philips	358-1874

ENQUIRES CONCERNING OVERDUE TRIPS

Mick Leyland : Ph. 358-3183
Terry Crippen : Ph. 356-3588
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 (Wednesday or Thursday) SEE DETAILS BELOW, OR RING Liz Flint (356-7654), or Lawson and Sue Pither (357-3033), or Monica (326-9691).

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. Beginners should start with Easy graded tramps.

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.

Tramping with a difference! An opportunity to bring the dog along for a pleasant stroll to a nice local area.

JULY 25 Midweek tramping Mike Corns 358-4869

JULY 25 Club Night "Trekking in Nepal" Phillip Brown
Phillip is a club member and globe trotter who visited this land of very high mountains last year, and has a few stories to tell us and slides to show. Trekking, or even mountaineering, in this corner of the world in from Kathmandu is a thing many of us aspire to, so come along and relive Phil's holiday.

JULY 27-28 Mitre Flats/Mitre M+F Warren Wheeler 356-1998
Depart 7.30am. An easy walk (max 5 hrs) over endless tree roots up the valley track to the large hut at Mitre Flats. Weather and snow conditions permitting, we will go up Mitre Peak, the highest point in the Tararuas (approx 3 hrs up). Other options include exploring the streams and valleys, or just lounging in the hut and sunshine before walking out the same way.

JULY 28 Herepai Hut E/M Judy & Peter Stockdale 355-5277
Depart 8:00am from PN Police Station. A joint tramp with the Manawatu Tramping and Skiing Club (MTSC). Departs from one of the closest road accesses in the Tararuas, and follows the well worn track up to a popular hut, with some good views of the Ruamahanga Catchment, and good access onto the tops.

JULY 30 (Tues) Instruction evening (for Snowcraft Course participants only).
Location is at the Rock Wall, Massey University, Rec Centre, where you can learn the ropes as it were (no pun intended).

AUGUST 1 Midweek tramping Peter Johnstone 358-8596

AUGUST 1 Committee meeting 7:30 pm at Mick Leyland's, 38 Pahiatua St

AUGUST 3-4 Snowcraft 2, Egmont Andy Backhouse 353-0774
Bruce Van Brunt 328-4761

Pre-requisite: Snowcraft 1. Details in Notices below.

AUGUST 4 Holdsworth M+F Chris Saunders 358-4899
This is probably the most well known of all Tararua peaks, and the most easily accessible. There are good tracks, a large and luxurious Powell Hut at the bushline, and a genuine Tararua experience. Chris knows the area well.

AUGUST 8 Midweek tramping Nevelle Gray 357-2768

AUGUST 8 Club Night: "A year in the Antarctic" by Howard Nicholson, of Palmerston North.
The Antarctic continent is a place few of us will visit, but many of us would like to. Howard Nicholson, of the MTSC, wintered over down there in the late 80's as a science technician, involved with seismic studies in the Dry Valleys. Come along to hear his presentation on his travels about the snow and ice, and life at Scott Base.

AUGUST 10-11 Hinerua Hut M Mick Leyland 358-3183
Nestled close to the bushline on the eastern Ruahines, Hinerua Hut provides great views and, if you are lucky, relatively easy access to Sawtooth Ridge and the high Ruahine Tops. Good alpine practice. Depart Saturday morning, at a reasonable hour.

AUGUST 11 Top Maropea M/F Liz Flint 356-7654
Another joint tramp with the MTSC. Top Maropea is another delightful hut nestled near the bushline in the Ruahine Ranges. The route follows the well worn track to Sunrise Hut, then past wild, gaunt erosion scars to the tussock tops, and down to the hut. Return will probably be the same route. A reasonable level of fitness definitely required, and some good equipment, including ice axe. Departure time to be advised.

AUGUST 15 Midweek tramping Jill Spencer 329-8738

AUGUST 17-18 Snowcraft 3, Whakapapa I Andy Backhouse 353-0774
Bruce Van Brunt 328-4761

Prerequisite SC 2. Refer other information about the Snowcraft course in Notices below.

AUGUST 18 Chris's Special M Chris Saunders 358-4899
Details to be discussed in the next newsletter. Stay tuned.

AUGUST 20 (Tues) Interclub Quiz evening at the Pavilion, on the Square.
Organised by MTSC this time. Every year, MTSC, PNTMC, MUAC, Mountain Equipment, and Highlife get together for the interclub quiz, a fun evening for all to enjoy. Questions will be presented for the competitors to answer, and some tasks, such as pitching a tent in a certain time span. Some "volunteers" will be required for our team. Its about time that PNTMC won!

AUGUST 22 Midweek tramping Doug Wakeling 323-4127

AUGUST 24-25 Ruahine Winter Classic F/T Derek Sharp 328-8178
Derek's winter classic in the Ruahines is a tradition stretching back many years. He hopes to visit the high central tops, so crampons and ice axe are essential, as well as some Snowcraft experience, warm clothes and a fair bit of fitness and determination. Route to be decided close to the date of departure, but will probably include Rangioteatua and Teatuoparapara. A classic for the more experienced club members.

AUGUST 25 Purity E/M Judy Callesen 357-0192
A joint tramp with MTSC. A wonderful winter spot, as you will probably see, touch, and smell snow up at Purity. Perched high on the slopes of the Hikurangi Range, Purity hut is reached in a few hours from the car. A steep climb in places, rewarded with great views. Muddy. These day trippers may meet up with Derek's fit trip (above).

AUGUST 29 Midweek tramping Merv Matthews 357-2858

AUGUST 29 Club night: BYO slides, videos, prints and yarns.
This is a chance to share your exploits with friends. There may be a few snapshots of Snowcraft, the Ruahines and Tararuas, and maybe even the mountains of the South Island.

AUGUST 31-SEPT 1 Kime Hut M Peter Darragh 323-4498

From Otaki Forks, the graded track climbs up Judd Ridge to Field Hut (2 hours), then onto the tussock tops, and then Kime Basin and Hut (a further 2 or 3 hours). A very popular area of the Tararuas, providing possibly the easiest access onto the tussock tops. Here is your chance to climb Mt Hector in the snow. Bring your ice axe, and if you are that way inclined, your skis!

AUGUST 31-SEPT 1 Southern Crossing FE, T Leader required

The moon will still be pretty full now, and there will probably be plenty of snow and ice about, so you might get a true classic Tararua trip - a moonlit tramp on the tops. Tracks are well marked (and worn) low down, and huts are well used. The newly renovated Alpha Hut will be nice to see. Great views of Wellington and environs, and the southern Tararuas.

SEPT 1 Field Hut E/M Dave Larsen 329-8054

This is a day trip to meet up with the Kime Hut trip as they descend. Good tracks, but old huts; in fact Field hut was made in 1920 by totara logs possibly 1000 years old cut out of the forest- it is an historic place. Springtime, well nearly.

EDITORIAL

Well, winter has DEFINITELY arrived and, by the look of some of the trip reports starting to come out, club members are not wasting any time getting out above the snowline. We've had to keep the newsletter down to a manageable size (after last month's mammoth edition), so some of the trip reports will be carried over to the August issue.

On the subject of the newsletter, a member commented recently on the style and format of the newsletter, and wondered if we could consider a more modern style befitting of the 90's. We use a Gestetner to print the club newsletter, and this is the main limitation to any significant changes to the style and format. However, while limited in quality and printing options, the Gestetner method has been very cheap to use when compared to other methods such as photocopying or offset printing.

We are therefore limited to minor changes such as font style, unless we completely change the method of printing. To do this would mean a significant increase in costs, which would need to be reflected in membership fees. We would welcome members comments on this issue - please approach a Committee member or, even better, come along to a Committee meeting to air your views.

NOTICES

WANTED - NEWSLETTER ARTICLES!

If you have been on a recent club tramp (or even an unscheduled trip), or if you've read a book about tramping or mountaineering, or know of any relevant news or snippets, we would like to hear from you! Trip leaders in particular - after the trip please find someone who was on your trip who may be interested in writing a report, if you cannot write it yourself.

For those who do write reports, small articles are okay hand-written (deliver to John Phillips, 87 Victoria Avenue), but it makes the editor's job a bit easier if larger articles are on disc. Even better, if you have the facilities at home or at work, why not "e-mail" it to me at my work e-mail address which is PHILLIPS@MWRC.GOVN.Z. I am editing on "Microsoft Works" software, which can convert Microsoft Word as well. If you use any

other software, give me a ring on 357-9009(work) or 358-1874(home) and I may be able to indicate whether it is compatible or not. Please note the deadline for each month's issue on the front page of the newsletter.

APOLOGIES for an error in the June newsletter.... The trip report "Waipawa to Rangiwahia" was dated March 22-24. In fact this trip was nearly 2 months later! It should have read May 10-12. I thought it must have been Llew Pritchard's Sunrise-Rangi trip of the former date, but it was in fact Graeme's surprise "Special" (...it 'surprised' me more than anyone, it seems). Trip reporters can indicate a date (and author name too) on their report to avoid this kind of error. Thanks, ed.

OUTDOOR FIRST AID COURSE - 13/14 JULY (Be quick for this one, there may be some places left.)

How is your ability to carry out first aid? What about first aid in the hills when you need to improvise and medical help is not just a (cell) phone call away? A bad cut, a broken limb, frostbite or hypothermia? Hopefully such situations seldom arise but, if they do arise, having the appropriate skills can be quite handy, and may even save lives. The NZ Mountain Safety Council (Manawatu) is running a weekend course and if it is like the one I (Terry) went on a few years ago it should be great value and enjoyable. 13-14 July, Camp Kilsby near Linton, cost \$50 includes meals etc. Contact Cheryl Wright 357-1169 for enrolment forms. Pre enrolment essential, 20 places only.

SNOWCRAFT COURSES 1996

This winter there will be three snowcraft courses designed to teach the novice on snow some basic techniques that will provide the skills necessary to safely climb the mountains on the North Island in winter and tramp many South Island transalpine summer routes. Each course builds on the previous course and the three course programme is regarded as integral. The club is planning some post Snowcraft III alpine trips this winter and, in autumn next year, a glacier craft course will be offered. In addition, there are plans to initiate a rockcraft programme to address yet another important aspect of mountaineering. The novice thus has the opportunity to learn the alpine skills necessary to tackle many South Island mountains.

The Snowcraft Instruction courses this year will be more formal than in previous years incorporating both field experience and lectures. The huts have been selected to afford the convenience for evening lectures and minimize night travel from the road end. The focus in these courses will be upon teaching and not on simply reaching the summit (though this is always a possibility).

The courses are open to club members and the general public. Numbers, however, are limited owing to available instructors and hut capacities. For more information regarding the programme contact Bruce van Brunt (328-4761) or, after June 28, Andy Backhouse (353-0774). The following is a brief description of the courses:

SNOWCRAFT I (19-21 JULY)

This year we will be holding the first snowcraft course at the Massey University hut on Mt Ruapehu near the Turoa skifield. We will leave Palmerston North on Friday night for the hut, which is a short walk from the road. The course assumes no prior experience on snow. The programme consists of lessons on basic snow travel on gentle and moderate snow slopes. The objective is to introduce students to various techniques for walking on snow

and the use of an ice axe. The outdoor activities will be supplemented by evening sessions in the hut on diverse topics such as mountain weather, knot tying, etc.

Prior to the trip there will be a meeting in Palmerston North for all participants to attend. This is scheduled for *Tuesday 16 July*. This is an important meeting as it is here that the first instruction is given, and material concerning the programme distributed. Moreover, it will be here that the required gear will be sorted out and the travel logistics finalized for the trip.

SNOWCRAFT II (3-4 AUGUST)

The second snowcraft course will be held at Kapuni Lodge on Mt. Egmont. We will leave Palmerston EARLY Saturday morning for the Lodge, which is about 1 1/2 - 2 hours walk from the Dawson Falls car park. The course is designed to reinforce the skills learned in Snowcraft I and extend them. Specifically, the focus will be on basic rope handling, setting up snow belays, and crampon techniques. Again the outdoor activities will be supplemented by evening sessions. It is hoped that by the end of this course the participants will have developed confidence on hard snow and modest snow slopes, learn some useful cramponing techniques, and be capable of setting up a basic snow belay using a snow stake or snowpig.

As with Snowcraft II, there will be an evening session prior to the trip on the *30th of July*. The session will be held at the climbing wall located in the Massey University recreation complex. One goal here is to introduce the student to rope handling and belays in the comfort of an indoor gymnasium. This will optimize our time on the slopes. The logistical details of the trip to Egmont will be finalized at this meeting.

SNOWCRAFT III (AUGUST 16-18)

We will be back on Mt Ruapehu for this course at the MTSC hut near Whakapapa. In this course more advanced techniques for alpine travel will be presented including climbing techniques for steep snow/ice slopes and the use of ice screws. The outdoor activities will again be supplemented by sessions in the hut.

MOUNTAIN RADIOS FOR HIRE

Did you know that the NZ Mountain Radio Service has radios available for use? Apparently they are fairly compact and lightweight (equal in size & weight to a pack of butter) and only cost a few dollars per day, in addition to a modest booking fee. Both the Central North Island and the Wellington branches have contacts in Palmerston North. If you are interested in hiring a radio, contact:

Travers Moffit (Central North Island MRS)

45 Abraham Cresc, PN; Phone 06-357-0865 or 025-851-222

or Hugh Wilde (Wellington MRS)

179 Cook St, PN; Phone 06-356-9450

MAPS, HUT PASSES, MANUALS AND CALENDER SALES

Topographical and park maps, at the discounted prices, and FMC purchases (see the back pages of your FMC bulletin) are now handled by Nigel Barrett (326-8847).

For DOC Hut Passes (\$40 to club members) and Alpine Calenders: see Tony Gates (357-7439).

NZ MSC manuals: Bushcraft (new edition this year, worth while for everybody to get one) \$12, Mountaincraft (good for snowcraft course participants) \$10, Outdoor First Aid \$10, Hypothermia \$6, Risk Management \$12: see Terry Crippen (356-3588).

Please pay your moneys on or before delivery thanks.

FOR SALE

Scarpa Telemark Boots size 8.5; leather (lace ups) with vibram welted sole, immaculate condition (too big for me!) \$200.00 phone Charles 356-7412

NEW MEMBERS

Please extend a warm welcome to our latest new members:

Laurence and Heather Gatehouse
12 Galway Avenue, P.N.
Phone 356-5805

MOVING ON

Two committee members have, or are about to, move on: Nigel Scott to greener pastures (dairy farming) near Morrinsville and Alistair Millward to read books in Wellington (do a literature degree). Thanks to both Nigel and Alistair for their work on committee and their enthusiastic contributions to the club.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Nigel Scott Quine Rd, RD5, Morrinsville

NEW PHONE NUMBERS

Maree Limpus 025-595-958

PHOTO COMPETITION RESULTS

The club's annual photo competition took place on the evening of June 27 and, as usual, attracted a high level of interest with plenty of good quality entries. Unfortunately our usual judge, John Cleland, could not make it, but in any case the various categories were judged in the usual manner - by audience vote. Place winners in the various categories were as follows:

NZ Alpine:	1st Slide	Whataroa valley under cloud (Tony Gates)
	2nd Slide	Whataroa valley (Tony Gates)
	3rd Slide	View from Homer Saddle (John Berends)
	1st Photo	Fiordland peaks from Key Summit (John Phillips)
	2nd Photo	Ruapehu eruption (Alan Bee)
NZ Scenic:	1st Slide	Coastline south of Jackson's Bay (Peter Wiles)
	2nd Slide	Lake Waikare-iti (John Phillips)
	3rd Slide	East ridge, Mitre Peak (Kieran Collier)
	1st Photo	Fiordland rainforest/waterfall (John Phillips)
	equal 2nd:	Lake Waikaremoana (Graeme Roberts)
		Sunset, Lake Hawea (John Phillips)
NZ Natural History:		
	1st Slide	Ruapehu eruption (John Phillips)
	2nd Slide	Melting snow, Ruapehu (Tony Gates)
	3rd Slide	Yellow Daisies (Derek Sharp)

	1st Photo	Spotted Cormorant (Lawrence Gatehouse)
NZ Topical:	1st Slide	Portrait of Senor Gates (Derek Sharp)
	2nd Slide	Approaching Fantham summit (John Phillips)
	3rd Slide	Leaping off Shark's Tooth (Kieran Collier)
	1st Photo	Terry scaling rockwall (Warren Wheeler)
	2nd Photo	Thursday trampers (Liz Flint)
Overseas Alpine or Scenic:		
	1st Slide	Flinders Ranges, South Australia (John Phillips)
	2nd Slide	The Eiger, Switzerland (Terry Crippen)
	3rd Slide	Cradle Mountain National Park (John Phillips)
	1st Photo	Skiddaw, Cumbria UK (Lawrence Gatehouse)
Overseas People:		
	1st Slide	Rockclimbing, Morialta Gorge, South Australia (Alistair Milward)
	2nd Slide	Bushwalking, south coast West. Aus. (John Phillips)
	1st Photo	Caught in the snow, Derbyshire UK (Heather Gatehouse)

Perhaps some material here for the Club Photo Album (see Tony 357-7459). A big chance to be part of the Club archives!

SOME BOOK REFERENCES Margaret Riordan

I have discovered two books in our new City Library that may be of interest to those who attended the talk by Ted Smith recently: "Continents in Collision" by Keith MILLER (Dewey No. 915.46) which is the story of the International Karakoram Project in 1980. There are several references to Ted Smith, and a photo of a "younger version", eating on a mountain top. "A short walk in the Hindu Kush" by Eric NEWBY (Dewey No. 915.81), describing a fascinating expedition to this area by the author and a friend in 1956.

BOOK REVIEW by Tony Gates

"The Mountains of New Zealand", by Rodney Hewitt and Mavis Davidson (1954). Reed, Wellington. (NB: Hewitt was one of those lucky people to meet Arawata Bill)

This is a methodical route guide and description of its namesake. It is a coffee table book with good quality black and white photographs, and is a pleasant read. Some descriptions remain applicable today, and this may in fact be the most recent, possibly only literature on some areas. Approximately one third of its 127 pages are devoted to the North Island (including the Auckland Ranges!), then right throughout the Southern Alps.

I once read a book review about similar literature that considered this type of book was published approximately once every ten years. The last one was Hugh Logans' "Great Peaks of New Zealand" (1991), and before that, Peter Radcliffes' "Land of Mountains" (1979).

TRIP REPORTS

TAMA LAKES by Maree Limpus May 5

With the weather as close to perfection as is possible, and the mountains of Tongariro National Park clear and sparkling, it couldn't be anything but a great trip. Arriving at the Waihohonu track end at 8:45am we crunched our way through glassy ice and snowy frost along the flat sandy track. As we passed through patches of beech forest, scrub and tussock, Mt Ruapehu and Ngauruhoe would take turns appearing in all their splendour on either side of us. We also passed many great camp sites.

After a very short climb we reached the Waihohonu hut where, after a snack, we headed up to a ridge that would take us to Tama peak. Again with unbeatable scenery we made our way through the rock and gravel landscape, with two stops to do battle with unsuspecting *Pinus contorta* (good effort Peter!). Upon reaching the final steep climb we lost a member of the party who decided to head back to the hut. After an hour or so's walk she spent a relaxing afternoon chatting to foreign tourists. The rest of us tramped on up for superb views of the Upper Tama Lake. The Chateau sat in the distance and, beyond that, Mt Taranaki floated upon a ring of clouds.

Our intrepid leader then suggested an alternative route for the return journey and so we followed him off the south end of the hill, with those smart enough to remember their gaiters revelling in the great scree slopes. We then hit a pocket of bush whose beauty and appeal seemed to diminish the longer we floundered around in it! However it did provide an opportunity for our leader to share some of his wealth of knowledge with us as he commented "You should always get your compass out *before* entering this sort of stuff!"

With only a few battle wounds we finally emerged into a biting evening breeze and made our way cross-country and down a stream to the hut before heading for the cars and warmth. As we headed off into the sunset we could all reflect on a day of outstanding beauty and recreation in what must truly be one of the most beautiful areas on earth.

We were: Peter, Martin, Margaret, Allan and Maree.

MANAWATU GORGE WALKWAY by Margaret Riordan June 2

There were only two of us listed down for this walk, and as the Queen's Birthday Big Freeze held us firmly in her grasp on the Saturday, I was half hoping, (as the intrepid leader), that my companion would decide that a Sunday morning sleep-in held greater appeal! A phone call revealed that there was to be no such luck: my companion must be either a lunatic, or somebody who had been tramping often before.

Sunday dawned with sunshine in Palmerston North and revealed some heavy snow falls on the nearby ranges. A beautiful sight. At 9am we left Foodtown with both cars, and travelled through the Gorge to leave a vehicle at the other end. Back to the beginning of the Gorge, and an ominous dying of a car engine in the car-park, and we were ready to set off by 9.30am. The initial bit of track from the car park has been upgraded since I was last here, and we crossed safely underneath the road. (A good safe start for families.)

A lot of work has been done on this track in recent years to make it more accessible for the population at large in Palmerston North, and it was great to briefly share the start of the track with a couple and their two young children, (suitably clad in lots of woollens!)

We set off at a steady pace up through a stream bed, and uphill. It was chilly in the bush, but we soon warmed up with some gentle climbing. The rain of the past few days had left behind some very muddy patches: the leader sat down in it twice, while the follower managed to stay more upright! We enjoyed the view down to the Gorge and onto the surrounding countryside at the three lookouts, and caught sight of a few native birds. Along the way we met several small groups of people coming along the track in the opposite direction.

Three hours later we emerged onto the road at the end of the Gorge, having enjoyed our stretch of the legs in the Gorge environment. This track would be a very useful one for those who want to get a bit of fresh air and exercise in the bush, but who are short of time for an expedition further afield. (Give me a ring if you want a companion!)

We were: Neil Campbell and Margaret Riordan
(P.S. Fortunately that vehicle started again in the car-park!)

THE MIDWINTER CELEBRATION AT KAWHATAU DOC BASE 22-23 June

Those participating: Terry, Warren, Derek, Blair, Maree, Tai, Mick, Marion, Llew, Jenny, Rose, Richard, Laurence, Heather, Dave, Kath, Alistair, Monica and Pauline.

We met, as usual, at Foodtown car park and after a minimal wrangle over which cars to take and who would be in which car set off to the flying tearooms at Mangaweka 'where refreshments were taken'. Here we met up with more people coming independently or via Ashhurst etc. etc. The weather at this point was breezy but pretty good and suitably refreshed we drove on to the DOC base. The views as we came up the valley were pretty spectacular, both of the river gorge and of the hills ahead which had a goodly sprinkling of snow. The base turned out to be mega-comfortable on the hut scale; carpets, hot water, inside toilet, bath and a bedroom complete with double bed!! Apparently five people spent the night in there, or so I was told, the rest of us split between the bunkroom and the kitchen.

While the three walking wounded were left to put up the decorations, and most importantly make the mulled wine, six of us went out for the advertised tramp. Monica and Pauline went off on their own and Terry, Warren, Maree, Tai (her dog) and me set off together to climb to the Colenso Highpoint (or so the DOC sign said). The weather was now distinctly breezy and the wind gained power with altitude but was no problem in the bush. As we approached the bushline we found more and more snow and more and more wind and though it was not clear we got occasional views of the river valley and the surrounding land. We had a bit of lunch behind the last decent bush on the ridge about 150 meters short of the top. Monica and Pauline who we had passed on the way up turned back about 200 meters short of this while we put on gloves and overtrousers for those without gaiters. The snow was about six inches to a foot deep on average but covered the alpine scrub as well as the path so there were some deep patches to sink into. This should have made progress difficult

but we hardly noticed as now we were out of the bush and exposed on the ridge the wind was enough to blow you over and did frequently for me at any rate.

We pushed on to the first high point and past to the two small tarns in the dip beyond. These had been covered with drifted snow which had frozen and though the surface was a tad rough we managed some ice skating (to Maree's delight); meanwhile Warren iceaxed out a chunk to take back with him for the whiskeys later. The ice was about four inches thick near the edge where he had chosen and full of air bubbles which saved on weight a little I suppose. The trig point was a little further on but the wind was strong enough and, I for one, was cold enough to not regret us turning back there. The descent was slippery and the light rain which had started up while we were on top slowly increased as we descended.

We arrived back to find the place filling up with people and food, warm with the fires lit and cheery once the generator was started and we had electric light. The rest of the afternoon and evening was dedicated to the serious business of cooking, eating and drinking with the odd chess challenge and party game thrown in for good (?) measure. The deteriorating weather outside failed to put a dampener on our mood and, despite the sporadic creaking of the springs on Dave's bed, I at least got a good night's sleep once the open window had got rid of the excess heat from the bunkroom fire.

In the morning we breakfasted on the remnants from last night and Warren's chocolate fondue which we were all too stuffed for him even to melt up before. People then started to leave while the rest of us went down to the river to check out the swimming. The merry tinkle (?) of boulders rolling below the brown and roaring waters suggested that this club tradition was tantamount to suicide this year. So we trolled off down stream to look at the cable way. Not something I'd like to have to cross on my own as they have removed the winder from the cage and left you with this device for grabbing the cable, OK to hold yourself still but no way to move uphill. We then locked up and set off back to PN via a look at the old dam and powerhouse at Mangaweka then a look at one of the old railway tunnels. Finally I was introduced to the best ice cream shop in Feilding and their apricot flavour finished off a weekend of serious eating.

Laurence Gatehouse

DAPHNE HUT

by Neil Campbell

June 30

The forecast for June 30 was rain and wind. Naturally we hoped the forecast would be wrong as we set off from Palmerston North at 8am. We were bound for Daphne Hut on the eastern side of the Ruahine Range. We left the car at 9.30am and set out across rolling green farmland. At this stage it was not raining and it looked like that we may have been denied the opportunity to test out our wet weather gear. However the rain soon came on and mostly persisted for the rest of the walk. After crossing the farmland we started along the track to Daphne Hut. The track is in good condition and the surrounding forest is very attractive. To reach the hut it is necessary to make several crossings of the Tukituki River. By noon we had reached the comfort of the hut. A hot cup of tea was very welcome after the cold river. On our return the river had risen and it was a case of joining walking sticks and linking arms to make our way across. Altogether it was a very enjoyable winter walk. Thanks go to Tony for leading it.

The party consisted of Tony, Warren, Merv and Neil.