

PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217
PALMERSTON NORTH

NEWSLETTER

November 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 FERGUSON 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.

Club meetings are held for all club members and visitors on the second and last Thursday of each month. 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.

Deadline for notices and trip reports for inclusion in newsletter: LAST THURSDAY of each month.
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NOTE TO TRIP LEADERS: PLEASE DISCUSS WITH THE TRIPS CONVENOR (TERRY 356-3588), AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, IF THERE IS ANY DOUBT THAT YOU WILL BE UNABLE TO RUN YOUR TRIP AS SCHEDULED. THIS IS SO THAT ALTERNATIVES CAN BE ARRANGED, PUT IN THE NEWSLETTER, OR PASSED ON AT CLUB NIGHT.

NOV 13 Midweek Tramping Monica 326-9691 or Judy 357-0192

NOV 14 Midweek Tramping Russ Johnson 358-7777

NOV 14 Club night: **THE GRAND AUCTION**

Starts 8 pm. This is your chance to come along armed with cash and cheque books to pick up that great bargain! Tents, billies, primuses, tow ropes (ex-climbing ropes!), and any relevant collectables or antiques. The club is re-organising its gear stocks so a clean-out of unwanted gear, such as older to-be-retired ex-hire gear, is in order. Also, if you want to put your own tramping/climbing related stuff up for auction, bring it along, the more stuff the better. Our very own auctioneer, Mr Warren "Wheeler-dealer", will get a good price for it, with a small commission going to club gear funds. So roll up. [No pre-auction buying thankyou! Phone-bidding allowed if someone has a cellphone.]

NOV 16-17 Toka-Leon Kinvig M Judy & Peter Stockdale 355-5277

The upper Pohangina Valley is a gorgeous spot, with pleasant river flats and beech forest, and luxuriously appointed huts. Leon Kinvig is one of them, now recently renovated. Best access is from the Apiti end, over Knights Track, on the Ngamoko Range. Opportunity for some route deviations. Depart Saturday morning.

NOV 17 Waipawa Saddle M/F Patrick Janssen 356-3116

Tramp up the Waipawa river from the carpark (near the carpark to Sunrise). The wide open gravel river bed is the result of severe erosion, which can be seen towering above you. However, it is a pleasant tramp taking you onto the tussock tops overlooking the central Ruahines.

NOV 21 Midweek Tramping Vina Cottam 354-5045

NOV 23-24 Ngauruhoe summit camp M Alan Bee 354-9180

Alan was there when it all happened last year (the eruption that is) so this year he will be back, hopefully not to see another eruption! The route climbs up from the Mangetepopo car park up to South Crater, then sweats up the northern slopes of Ngaruaoho to the summit crags. The snow (if there is any left) gets pretty soft during the day, but can freeze over during the night, so be prepared for crampons and ice axe. A sheltered campsight and/or snowcave will be chosen either at South Crater, or if you are lucky, in the summit crater. Bivybags and warm stuff is required. Great sunset views. A fantastic bum slide/glissade back down the next day. Full moon. Depart PN after breakky Saturday.

NOV 23 Iron Gates Hut E/M Malcolm Parker 357-5203

A Saturday tramp from Apiti up the Oroua Valley to Iron Gates Hut. A good track for all of the way, but if the river permits, it is much quicker tramping up it at least for part of the way.

NOV 27 Midweek Tramping Monica 326-9691 or Judy 357-0192

DEC 12 Club night: End of year BBQ at Brian Lawrence's well appointed property at Penny's Road, Mt Stewart. Plenty of food and drink guaranteed, and the usual club awards for general activities.

DEC 14-15 Climbing Whangaehu F, T Peter Wiles 358-6894
A handy spot for Snowcraft "graduates" to practice, with good access to most of Ruapehu's peaks and Glaciers, and a good choice of both snow and ice climbs. A good, high altitude hut. Depart reasonably early.

DEC 14 Oruakeretaki E Tony Gates 357-7439
The southern Ruahines may look unattractive from the farmland, but they have their hidden jems, and Keretaki Hut is one of them. There are a few tracks in the area, and some stream beds that provide good travel. Tony knows the area well, and will show you why people always return to their local haunts. A not too difficult day trip. Depart at a reasonable time.

DEC 19 Midweek tramping Carolyn Brodie 358-6576

DEC 21-22 Suggestions for a pre-Christmas one? Let Terry Know 356-3588

DEC 27-30 Matemateaonga Walkway M Malcolm Parker 357-5203
The first of the club's extended trips this summer. Follows an historic road route through the depths of the vast forests of the Whanganui National Park. A relaxing trip is anticipated along the fairly level ridge of the Matemateaonga Range, with well-appointed huts.

Transport: Pre-arranged from Wanganui to beginning of walk at Kohi Saddle (western Stratford end) and back to Wanganui from Ramanui (eastern end) via jetboat Ramanui-Pipiriki and road Pipiriki-Wanganui (arrive Wanganui about 4-30pm on Monday Dec 30th). The jetboat trip will include a deviation up the Whanganui River to see the "Bridge to Nowhere". Cost of this transport is \$152 per person, and does not include extra costs for hut tickets, food, and transport PN-Wanganui (Dec 27th) and Wanganui-PN (Dec 30th).

Bookings: Definite numbers req'd by December 6th, together with \$30 deposit, with the balance of \$122 payable prior to departure.

JAN 2-11 Kahurangi NP M/F Warren Wheeler 356-1998
Planning for this trip is very preliminary at this stage, with various options being considered. The Park offers long and short trips to points of interest and through different types of country - wide river valleys, rugged ridges, plateaux, karst and sink-hole landscapes. To gain the most enjoyment from this trip a combination of long and short trips could work out well, for example 6 days Cobb Valley to Boulder Lake via the Drunken Sailors, 2-3 days in the Mt Arthur Tablelands and 1-2 days to Mt Owen. For those with limited time, it may be possible to join only one section of the trip. If you are interested in joining this trip or have a trip preference in mind, then contact Warren.

JAN 17 - FEB 2 Arthur's Pass F/T Terry Crippen 356-3588
A two week combination alpine tramping/climbing trip to the Arthur's Pass area along similar lines to the trips the last two summers; a 9-day trans-alpine tramp in the Waimakariri / Wilberforce / Taipo areas, climbing the odd peak, hopefully Mt Davie and Carrington Peak, from high camps. This will require crampons, ice-axe (plus a light rope). Followed by a rest day or two, then a few days climbing (using full climbing gear) based in Arthur's Pass township. Must be capable of doing an extended trip (carrying a 9-day pack), generally about 6-8 hours tramping per day but with the odd 13 hour day, and at least Snowcraft III ability pref. with some rock climbing experience.

Cost: Very approximately \$250-300 (depending on how we travel) which includes ferry & transport, party food (breakfasts & dinners), NZAC accommodation.

Bookings: Closing date for names: Club Night on Nov 28th with \$150 deposit. Places limited due to transport and tentage limitations.

SPRINGTIME EDITORIAL

Tony Gates

Longer, warmer days are back, and with them some great springtime tramping. After a fairly wet winter, then an exceptionally lean snow year, we have enjoyed good sunny weather. That means that river tramping is a lot easier, there is less mud on the tracks, camping is much more pleasant, and there should be less route finding problems on the tops.

I recall some wet and miserable springs of past years. During the middle of October 1992, there was enough snow around Apiti to ski on the farmland! You needed crampons or skis up on the Ruahine tops almost till Christmas, and some snow lasted right through till January. October/November 1993 and November 1994 seemed to have continual floods, forcing several trips to be cancelled. I went to the Southern Alps during Spring a couple of years ago on a trip after two weeks of the worst weather ever, thinking that the weather MUST clear in the a week we were there. It did on the last day, after we had endured a further week of mega storms! Then we went for a drive up Takapari Road (Southern Ruahines) the weekend before Christmas and got snowed on!

We have had some excellent club evenings recently. During October, some club members talked and showed slides and maps of several popular South Island areas. Several future trips were planned. It was standing room only down the back of the hall! They certainly proved that New Zealand tramping and mountaineering areas are equal to the best in the world. The other October club evening was held by Peter Stockdale, talking about the Rocky Mountains. An excellent show too. Plenty more of similar to come.

I spoke to Colin Giddy, the new DOC Field Centre Manager at Pohangina the other day. He is new to the area, and keen to get to know our beloved Ruahines. We buy our annual hut passes from that office, so our money is channelled right back into the huts, tracks, and bridges of the Ruahines. Next on their agenda is repair to the track to Rangī, thinking mainly of the big slip at the top. We may hear from Colin at a Club Night next year.

LETTERS TO THE CLUB

To Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club
c/- Peter Darragh, Zoe, Keith, Warren and Magda

A note of appreciation from our school for the tremendous effort you made in saving the lives of three of our boys. All have returned to school albeit a little battered - one severe body bruising and lacerations, one lacerations and severely bruised ribs and one no lacerations but bruised ego from informing all that the west side of the mountain was not actually off limits. These boys have used up 8 1/2 of their lives in this experience. A fleece jacket is with this note and I am at the mountain again this Sunday where I will chase up any further loan gear.

Again our sincere appreciation. Kind regards, Chris Hamilton (Hamilton Boys' High School).

PS. I have enclosed a wee green note for you to buy the gang some chocolates.

[Now I hope you've been good, Peter, and shared them with everyone else! - Ed.]

Dear Peter,

Please find enclosed your clothing from the accident on Sunday (bivvy bag, fleece hat, balaclava, 1 jacket). I note from the details you gave me on Sunday it was a purple fleece jacket. The jacket enclosed was the only jacket returned from the hospital.

Please thank Zoe and your other friend for their assistance on Sunday on our behalf. Thank you also for your help.

With thanks, Will MacQueen. Ski Patrol, Ruapehu Alpine Lifts.

NOTICES

TRIP REPORTS AND OTHER NEWSLETTER ARTICLES A note from the Editor

To all of you who would like to contribute articles to this newsletter, 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.GOV.NZ. 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.

MIDWEEK TRAMPING - EXTRA, EXTRA

We are now running trips every 2nd Wednesday as well as our popular Thursdays. Trips leave 8am from the Terrace End carpark. This will suit people who would like not so long a tramp & a slower pace. Ring Monica 326-9691 or Judy 357-0192 for more information, or just turn up 8am Wednesdays fortnightly.

Our Thursday group have been very active, visiting North Range Rd, Burn Hut, Iron Gates, Kelly Knight, & Atene Walkway.

TUESDAY NIGHTS AT CITY ROCK

From now on, the club's casual climbing night each Tuesday night (formerly at the Massey Wall) will move to City Rock at the later time of 7-30pm (or whenever you make it). Anyone is welcome to come along but ringing Andy Backhouse on 353-0774 is recommended as we may have some evening outdoors in the summer on real rock. These evenings will provide an excellent opportunity to get fit & ready for club climbing trips to North Island rock & South Island mountains. The new location is closer for most people, and an excellent venue as shown by its use for the National Sport Climbing Championships recently. It is one of the best venues in NZ and is still being expanded. Its worth checking out so come along!

Rockshoes, harnesses and other equipment are all available for hire. Andy will not be there any Tuesdays this month, but don't let that stop you getting down there. The people running the place are also very helpful.

NEW MEMBERS

The club has one new member this month:

Keith Charlton

26 Mazengarb Road

PARAPARAUMU

Phone (04) 298-2560

Welcome to the club, Keith.

FIRST AID COURSES

Sheryl Wright has confirmed the next MSC courses on Outdoor First Aid. The Palmerston North courses will be on NOVEMBER 9-10 and DECEMBER 7-8. A course originally planned for October has been cancelled. Cost will be \$80 which is good value, because it includes all food. The location is Camp Kilsby at Linton. Contact Sheryl on 358-3300 or 025-416 585 for details, or to register your interest.

THE NEXT SIX MONTHLY EVENTS CARD

The new trip card for January to July 1997 is now being finalised, and comes out in the next Newsletter (December). So contact Terry or Liz for those trips you have volunteered to lead, or Tony for those club night suggestions, as soon as possible.

, so that gives just a couple of months for all your suggestions as to where you want club trips to go to, and your offers to lead them. Also your suggestions/offers for club night speakers/events. Be in early by contacting the Trips convenor Terry Crippen 356-3588, or Liz Flint 356-7654 and, for the club evenings, the Social convenor Tony Gates 357-7439 before we contact you!

TARARUA TRAMPING MUSEUM TRUST

The Trust would like memorabilia to add to the museum collection, and is asking if there is anyone who might be interested in either being a Trustee, or assisting them, eg. cataloguing or preparing items for display. Contact Mrs Pat Tristram, Secretary, PO Box 5110, Wellington.

BOOK REVIEWS by Terry Crippen

The following are very brief reviews of three books useful for tramping and climbing information in the Arthurs Pass region.

"Tramping in the Southern Alps, Arthur's Pass to Mt Cook" Sven Brabyn & Elise Bryant. Bryant & Brabyn, Christchurch 1994 (buy through FMC book orders)

As the name suggests covers more than the Arthur's Pass area. It is concerned with tramping as against climbing, but gives details of many standard alpine passes (eg Whitehorn Pass of the Three Pass Trip) and infrequently used alpine routes eg White Col and Popes Pass. It covers easy and moderate trips in detail with stage by stage route info and times. For hard trips less detail and no times are given since it assumes the party is far more experienced to handle the difficult terrain and times are always subject to current conditions. By mixing and matching sections on various routes and trips, extended trips (8 days plus) can be planned. I've used various sections of the Arthur's Pass chapters, in conjunction with other information, to plan (and use on the way) the last two Club summer trips and we found the information very suitable. Note, as may be expected, some information is out of date, eg the info on the route up the White Valley - recent avalanches and

earthquake damage has made the track not worth the effort to use in part. So as always you still need your own skills and experience.

"The Southern Alps, from the Kaikouras to the Rangitata" John Pascoe. The Pegasus Press, Christchurch 1956

A classic guide on access to, and routes in, most of the valleys, and the climbs from these valleys, in the top half of the SI. John Pascoe was a very active and experienced tramping climber and explorer in the 1930's to 50's. The information on any particular route or climb is brief but still useful, bearing in mind conditions may have changed over the last 40 years. I have used the book on many occasions in conjunction with other material, most recently for the climbing side of the last two Arthur's Pass trips.

"Arthur's Pass National Park mountaineering guide" Graeme Kates. Graeme Kates Arthur's Pass, 1996

This is a detailed guide for climbing. It is a low budget booklet written by a climber who lives in Arthur's Pass. It covers only that area within the National Park, as against the Arthur's Pass area in a wider sense, so routes/peaks, such as White Col or Mt Rosamond which lead out of, or are outside of, the National Park are not covered. It uses the same grading system of climbs as Hugh Logan's Mt Cook guide book. I found some material a bit confusing to follow, but elsewhere it is more up to date than Brabyn & Bryant. I suggest this book would be valuable for the climbing details and grades for anybody going to the area to climb. But as the booklet mentions a guide book is only that; a whole range of other factors come into a particular climb and half the fun is working out the route for yourself.

(and, by the way, don't forget the series of pamphlets put out by DOC at Arthur's Pass on various trips.)

TRIP REPORTS

WHAKAPAPA CLIMBING - PART I 28-30 September by Terry Crippen

Seven of us headed up to Ruapehu on Friday night to reach the NZ Alpine Club hut high above the ski field sometime before midnight. Plans were set for a not-so-early start the following morning. But with no visibility come 6am, an even later start took place. Over to the Pinnacle Ridge and selecting a route or two in the white-out. Derek and Kristin took a route to the 'left' while John, Terry, Maree, Tony and Lyn went more to the 'right'. Full use was made of all the jingle-jangle and techniques learnt on Snowcraft courses. Communication was by voice through the mist. Kristin and Derek discovered they had climbed the Grand Pinnacle via the Gorilla, while the others, the ridge between the Grand and 2nd Pinnacle. A descent with a couple of abseils for K & D and navigation back to the hut - with the danger of mad skiers in the white-out - found Warren and Wayne settled in the pit after arriving that morning.

Sunday dawned even less inspiring - whiteout and strong winds. But we got out and attacked the bluffs and slopes around Delta Corner with vigour. After lunch most of the others left leaving Terry, Lyn and Kristin to plan the afternoon and Monday extension (see Part II).

We were: Tony Gates, Maree Limpus, Kristin Stokes, Derek Sharp, John Phillips, Lyn Murphy, Terry Crippen, Warren Soufflot & Wayne Bennett.

WHAKAPAPA CLIMBING - PART II by Kristin Stokes

After two days of enjoyable climbing (although I can't say the same for the weather) most of our party was heading back to Palmerston North and the joys of the working week. Terry, Lyn and myself, however, shunned work in the hope of fine weather on Monday.

On Sunday afternoon, once the rest of the party had left, we decided to go over to the cafe on the ski-field for a coffee. Lyn and I received a lesson in navigation with a compass and then we donned parkas and crampons and ventured out into the wind and snow. Having successfully reached the cafe in thick mist we were most disappointed to discover that the cafe had already closed. So after looking round the building we headed back to the Alpine Club hut in hope of a hot drink there.

Next morning at 5am I listened to the howling wind that had been blowing strongly all night and heaved a sigh of relief when Terry decided to flag an early start. An Auckland Alpine Club member was more game and headed up to the summit plateau on his own. A few hours later I opened my eyes to see the sun shining through the windows and a clear view of the mountain, although the wind was still blowing. We had breakfast and decided to head over to Pinnacle Ridge. After a few attempts at reaching the top of the saddle between 1st and 2nd Pinnacles we had to go back to retrieve the ice hammer I dropped - which happened to be Derek's! Maybe its not him its just his gear that has a tendency to slide down mountains. Fortunately it didn't go far and we decided to climb up to the 2nd Pinnacle then on up to Te Heuheu. We had lunch partway up and enjoyed the views of Ngauruhoe and the Kaimanawa Range, and even Mt Taranaki in the distance. Our trip back to the carpark was made more enjoyable by a ride on the ski-lift, allowing us to sit back and enjoy the views. All in all it was definitely worth skipping a few lectures or a day at work for. Many thanks to Terry for his leadership.

HOWLETTS HUT

12/13 October

by Nick Pringle

With an overcast morning the weather did not look to promising for the trip to the Eastern Ruahines. With Llew picking two of us up in Palmerston North, and some decisions about whether he should stay behind and drop us off for the tramp. We met another two in Woodville, and then it was on to Moorcock Base at around 9am, with howling wind and drizzle for the beginning of our tramp on the longer of the two tracks up toward the foothills to Daphne Hut, for our first stop. The river was an easily manageable crossing on the way to Daphne Hut and we stopped and had some lunch and a reassessment of the situation. It was already blowing a gale and there was some discussion as to whether to stay at Daphne or venture on up to Howletts.

After the brief debate it was straight up the Daphne Spur and onto the tops. The track was well formed however it was quite muddy on the way. Although the rain and wind had abated, it was quite warm in the bush. It wasn't until we reached the exposed tops did it show how much the wind had picked up. We all continued to follow the track through the leatherwood and snowgrass to see the welcoming site of Howletts Hut. With enough time to catch partial views before the mist covered the surrounding hills.

The hut rattled throughout the night as the wind continued blowing. In the morning there was a run down of what everyone would do if the hut blew away.

The next morning there was no rush to get up. The planned course for the morning was to take us along the tops toward Otumore trig and then along the Pohangina Saddle and down to Longview Hut, and then back out. But with the weather showing little chance of letting up it was decided to return back to Kasmir Road before the river levels increased too much. With a quick venture back down the track, sidling down a gentler spur than before, we waded upstream to the track that lead back up to the Road. The rain did not let up throughout the return trip back and the Moorcock stream had certainly increased in height and speed as we made a suitable approach from which to

cross. We were back at the cars at around midday. It was not until we were back in Dannevirke where we stopped for lunch did we realise that the whole region had been battered by torrential wind and gale force winds.

It was a worthwhile trip and thanks to Llew for leading it. Trip party consisted of: Llew, Mick, Steve and Jenny, and myself.

MT HIKURANGI OR BUST (DUNDAS RIDGE PART I)

Labour w/end by

Alan Bee

Bust we did, Hikurangi we left for another day.

Without the numbers to do East Cape in a weekend John organised a small three day jaunt over Labour weekend into the Tararuas. The team of John Pillips, Barry Scott and Buzz (Alan Bee) were chauffer driven by (my) luxury Cortina into Dam No1 in the Mangahao - thanks Ramon for the dropoff - and it is a nice car and the brakes work just fine and don't give it a hard time! This was Friday night around 7.30ish.

With tent in pack and gear for three days we figured a little jaunt up the first ridge would knock a little off the next days wander on the top. So with that in mind and burgers and fish & chips from Shannon in stomach (by the way the burgers take some time longer than the fish 'n chips to cook - just thought this could be a handy tip for those who have time on the mind instead of more important matters) we headed off around the east side of the No1 dam lake to find, beyond the mud and debris that there was nice bush and even a nice stream - all we needed was a nice track. Well, what do you know, just as it was getting dark and the map hard to see we found it just where it was supposed to be. Maps, even black 'n white tiny photocopies of 'em wrapped up in little plastic bags, can be wonderful things - even useful, and with three compasses we couldn't go wrong. Don't get all excited here and read on in anticipation of lost trampers returning to the point of departure 'cause they couldn't find the way on, or trampers getting totally lost and getting airlifted out - that's all in some future trip - this one went like clockwork, more or less.

Anyway onward and upward. The track up the ridge from the dam was steep, dark, narrow, damp and, you know, one of those tracks that doesn't look well used and makes you think you're somewhere special or going somewhere most other people don't choose to go. Probably the latter but we thought it was special. With head lamps bobbing Tracker Scott, later to be known as Barry "Derek" Scott - and no he didn't lose anything - blazed a trail for the mighty leaders following (sounds good, could get better!). The golden globe of a near full moon rose silently over a sharp ridge left in darkness with the setting of the sun. The dark, repressing bush teamed with the single hoot of an obviously lonely owl - maybe we disturbed it. We carried on. No more cries in the night, just John and Barry crunching through the litter (natural like leaf litter 'n stuff - not your every day junk left around rubbish bins outside the supermarket on a windy Friday night - this was the real stuff y'know that smells musty and can get up your nose if you let it). So they were crunching through it except of course when there was mud - y' tend not to crunch through that when it's wet - it's more a sploge as your foot goes in and a russle of bushes and breaking twigs as you grab something to balance by and then a fairly long sucking squelch as your foot rolls out. So they were crunching through it, or splogging and squelching tho' there wasn't a lot of that, and of course it was onward and upward.

Well, after a couple of hours or so we started to come out of the bush and decided that, with the gentle zephyr that was cold and kind of bending the upper branches in the trees, a good idea would be to camp in the bush - so we did. Each to his own - John got the large expansive Royal Suite, I got the servants quarters out the back and somewhat dingy and cramped, while Barry was left out on the road so to speak. Out came the tent for the only time that weekend - it didn't make too bad a pillow in the servants quarters but the big problem was the light - you couldn't turn the moon off and there it was full of glory right overhead. The gentle rustling of the trees and the soft, filtered

moonglow was really nice and I loved it for a while, but by three am it sort of wore thin. Anyway, I did get some sleep and next morning it was eat, pack 'n go by eight.

A short jaunt up out of the bush, on up over several tiers or changes in slope with each one looking to end in the ridge top, before we got there to look back towards the dam and on across to Massey Knob. The track here is a route according to the map and as such not much of a track but even so there was usually something to follow through tussock and waste high scrub or should that be mid-altitude vegetation. Sorry Botany Barry, I fear to name any wonderful species in case ignorance rears its inevitable head - but there were some interesting bits such as in the sheltered spots where stunted and rather old looking cedar had eked out a niche (technical term for home - he's improving). Sitting on Massey Knob out of the wind we could see some of what the day had in store - the rest of it was behind West Peak and considering how far away it was I guess in some ways it was good not to be able to see it from this point! The ridge line to the east leading eventually to East Peak after innumerable ups 'n downs was enough and the beautiful symmetry of the saddle between East and West Peaks was great. The day was obviously going to be a tester. A tarn on the backside of Massey Knob gave opportunity to fill water bottles and don polyprops. The wind, coming from the west was chilly and strong, some might say typical of the Tararuas. For most of the day as much effort went in to counter the wind as it did to climb the hills. I don't know what we'd have been like if it hadn't been a wonderfully clear day. We probably aren't the fittest group in the club, or at least not that day, and it was a welcome time when someone would say "I'm stopping for a break". To be able to lie in the sun, out of the wind, was a great reward for stopping. The incentive to move on was something less and by lunch time we realised that the target of Dundas Hut was more than half a day away at current rate of travel - we weren't going to be early. Lunch was spent looking down into the headwaters of the Ruamahanga and Mangatainoka Rivers and very nice it was. If you wanted to you could have sat up, faced into the wind and looked out towards Kapiti and the Mainland to the south-west - if you wanted to! Lunch over we foraged on, the going generally easy due to the dominance of tussock but the ridge still went up and down and mostly up towards East Peak. That finally attained West Peak, just over there like almost within leaping distance (well maybe not but it looked like it) was the next target. It only took a 200 metre drop followed by a similar climb to get there. I hate going down just so that I can go back up. There is something different about climbing up to a peak and then going down - it's as if the climbing up is rewarded with good views and a downhill to follow, but when you're already up there and there is this almighty drop only to have exactly the same rise on the otherside - what's the reward - I guess it's just getting that bit of the tramp out of the way. Anyway with it done we were treated to a wonderous 100, maybe even 200, metre flat slightly downhill section with two more peaks to scale just down the track. By this stage we were a tired little group almost out of water. The next couple of hours were testing but we slogged them out to arrive at Dundas Hut well after 6. Tea that night was a Barry speciality - strips of freshly slaughtered beef fried in a mushroom sauce with onions and fresh vegies on the side. Actually anything would have tasted great but this was again a special little moment to savour.