
PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217, PALMERSTON NORTH

Newsletter - December-January 1997-98

*****THIS ISSUE*****

NEWS:

Harley on 'Weather and the Internet'
Andy on 'Alpine Instructor's Course'
Terry's tasty tips (recipes if you're game)

TRIP REPORTS:

Seaward Kaikouras, Tama Lakes, Lake Colenso
Roaring Stag, River Safety & Navigation

CLUB NIGHTS

DECEMBER 11	CLUB END OF YEAR BBQ	at Brian Lawrence's place
JANUARY 29	NEW YEAR BBQ	Horseshoe Bend
FEBRUARY 5	Committee Meeting	Liz Flint's
FEBRUARY 12	"Aconcagua Climbing"	John Berends
FEBRUARY 26	"A Night on the Wall"	Massey Rock Wall

Club nights are held for all club members and visitors on the second and last Thursday of each month at the **Society of Friends Hall, 227 College Street, Palmerston North**. Club nights commence 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.

At the club night: Please sign your name in the visitors book. There is a door fee of 50c which includes supper.

UP AND COMING TRIPS & EVENTS

Trip Grades

Grades of trips can depend on many factors, most especially the weather and state of the track. As a guide, a reasonably proficient trapper would be expected to cover the graded trips in about the following times:

Easy (E): 3-4 hrs

Medium (M): 5-6 hrs

Fit (F): about 8 hrs

Fitness Essential (FE): >8 hrs

(T) refers to technical trips requiring special skills and/or gear.

Beginners should start with Easy Grade trips.

Dec 11 Thursday trampers
Carolyn Brodie 358-6576

Dec 11 Club night: End of year BBQ

6-30pm on at Brian Lawrence's. BYO food & liquid refreshments, and \$5-00 to cover prizes & pud. DIRECTIONS: Take the main road in the direction of Sanson/Bulls. Turn left into Penny Road about 200 metres before the Mt Stewart lookout/memorial; Brian's place is about 1 km down on the right hand side. See you there.

Depart Sat 7:30 am This follows on from the Snowcraft instruction. Safe glacier travel is an essential skill for most climbing and trans-alpine tramping in the High Alps of the South Island. This will be a day or weekend trip, depending on demand. (In the past we have held this activity in Feb but have moved it into Dec to allow practice before the summer South Island trips).

Dec 13-14 Avalanche Flats E/M
Richard Lockett 323-0948

Depart 8.00 am Saturday. You will enjoy a drive on a dinkum back country road behind Shannon to the top Mangahao dam then wander up the forested Mangahao river valley to the well appointed Mangahao hut for the night. Lunch on the way at Harris creek hut. Back out the same way on Sunday.

Dec 18 Thursday trampers
Rosemary & Ken Hall 356-8538

Dec 27-30 Mataemateonga Walkway M
Malcolm Parker 357-5203

One of the club's extended summer trips - a pleasant 4 day tramp along the forested ridgetops of the Whanganui National Park. Bookings closed on December 6th.

Jan 10-24 Arthur's Pass F, T
Terry Crippen 356-3588

Another of the club's extended trips for this summer - a 9-day trans-alpine tramp followed by a short spell of some technical climbing. Bookings for this trip now closed.

Jan 15-16 Thursday Trampers 2 days
Judy Callesen 357-0192

Anniversary weekend

Jan 17-19 Tukituki - Oroua Loop M/F
Derek Sharp 326-8178

Depart Sat morning. For those that are keen: a bivvy out, and exploring both the valleys and tops of the central Ruahines. A walk up the Tukituki River, onto Tiraha to camp in the Orohua headwaters. Next day down to Triangle and then the southern slopes of Te Hekenga. The third day: a fairly "fit" day up and over onto Sawtooth Ridge to Black Ridge and back to the road end.

Depart 8am Monday. Into Otaki forks and the Western Tararuas, to investigate historic relics of the saw milling industry, as well as bush and river. A chance for a swim if you want to cool off. A popular trip this (over 10 went on it last year), so come along.

Jan 22 Thursday Trampers
Bev Akers 325-8879

Jan 24-25 (or -26) Wakarara-Waipawa All
Liz & Arthur Todd 323-6246

Departure times to suit. Staying at the school lodge close to the Waipawa and Makaroro Valleys of the Eastern Ruahines, and the Wakarara Range. Lots of possibilities for tramps, walks or just relax in fine Hawkes Bay weather. (A combined PNTMC / Forest & Bird trip).

Jan 24 Day Southern Crossing FE
Peter Burgess 354-3533

Depart Friday night. This is a Tararua classic. Peter plans to make it more of a challenge by doing it all in one go! The trip should take about

14 hours at a moderate tramping pace (note the record is less than 5). We'll need two cars and will probably drop one off at Otaki Forks on the way up to Kaitoke on Friday night. We'll camp there and get off to an early start on Saturday. The route includes the Marchant Ridge, Alpha and Hector and finishes with a long down hill on the Field Track (which is now a motorway) to Otaki Forks.

Jan 25 Gorge Walkway E/M
 John Phillips 358-1874

Depart at 8am, unless there is violent objection to the contrary (some of us have to get home to mow the lawns, you know). This is a lovely spot of broadleaf/podocarp bush on PN's doorstep. A 4-hour walk with occasional viewpoints across the gorge.

Jan 29 Thursday Trampers Neville Gray 357-2768

Jan 29 **Club Night: BBQ Horseshoe Bend**
 Warren Wheeler 356-1998

This is the first club night for the year and takes the form of a traditional BBQ at Horseshoe Bend. Its a good chance to catch up on friends and to compare tramping notes, have a swim in the river, and a feed. Bring all your goodies to eat and share, togs and towel. From about 6:30 pm. Directions: head to Tokomaru past Massey and Linton, turn left at main crossroad in Tokomaru (just after school) and follow the signs to Horseshoe Bend reserve a few km inland. For further info contact Warren 356-1998

Jan 31- Feb 1 Tama Lakes, TNP M
 Peter Wiles 358-6894

Depart 6 am Nestled between Ruapehu and Ngauruhoe in the centre of the Tongariro National Park, the Tama Lakes area provides interesting country to explore over a weekend trip: lakes, tussock, rock and pumice slopes, and some beech forest. Camping at the upper lake on Saturday night.

Feb 1 Titahi Bay rock All/T
 Peter Darragh 323-4498

Depart 7:30 am. Another chance to head down to the cliffs at Titahi Bay, which are great to begin your rock climbing. Easy climbs in a nice setting. The area lends itself to top-roping for that extra help. So everyone is welcome. And remember, for those among us who are budding mountaineers, rock climbing skills are just as important as snowcraft skills.

Feb 3 (Tuesday!) Committee Meeting
At Liz Flint's. Note this meeting is on a Tuesday, rather than the normal first Thurs of the month which adjoins Waitangi w/end this month.

Feb 5 Thursday Trampers Neil Gutry 354-0284

Waitangi Weekend

Feb 6-8 Full Otaki River M/F
 Peter Burgess 354-3533

Depart 7:30am. Dropping a car at Otaki Forks, we blatt back up to the start of the Waiopahu track and to Waiopahu Hut for the night. Saturday: into the upper Otaki. We wander down the upper Otaki (wet feet are compulsory) to one of two ideal camp sites for some lazing in the sun, swimming, watching trout, etc. Sunday: continue down river to either Waitewaewae, or Penn Creek. This will likely require some pack floating and will depend on the state of the river/keenness of the party. Then out to Otaki Forks.

Feb 8 Fields Hut/Kime F
 Dave Grant 357-8269

Depart 6:30 am and head to Otaki forks. Head up to Field Hut for "smoko" then onto Kime on the tussock tops of the Tararuas for lunch. If weather and time permit we will take a look for the top of Mt Hector and then follow our footsteps back, or maybe a alternative via Vossler and down Penn Creek.

Feb 12 Thursday Trampers Liz Flint 3567654

Feb 12 **Club Night "Aconcagua Climbing"**
 John Berends

Club member John, and others, went off to Chile and Argentina in Jan 1997 to climb Aconcagua at 6969m, the highest mountain in the world outside central Asia. Come along to see and hear John's presentation of the travels in South America and the successful climb.

Feb 14-15 Tongariro Xing & Ruapehu
 M/F Warren Wheeler 356-1998

Depart Friday night 6.00pm to stay at Eivins Lodge, Tongariro. Saturday, we will do the Best One Day Walk in New Zealand, crossing over Mount Tongariro through spectacular volcanic

landscape with great views of the central North Island all around. Side trip up Ngauruhoe is optional. Sunday will be a lighter day, with a 2-3 hour walk up from Top of the Bruce to see the crater lake steaming away and see where we were on Saturday - chairlift to the cafe optional!

Feb 15 Rangi Loop, Ruahines M
 Heather Gatehouse 356-5805

Depart 7am. Revisit (or visit for the first time) that old favourite, Rangi hut, but this time go the other way. Instead of taking the usual track, we will climb the ridge behind the roadend and follow this up to emerge onto tussock then ridge and, weather permitting, some excellent views to the south. The path peters out and after negotiating a couple of pools and a small saddle, there is a stiffish climb to the top of the Whanahuia Range. The return is a simple walk down the track to Rangi hut and back down the main trail.

Feb 19 Thursday Trampers Vina Cottam 354-5045

Feb 21-22 Taranaki Rock M/T
 Andy Backhouse 353-0774

Depart early Sat morning. After an enjoyable visit to Hongis valley, just to the north of Warwick Castle on Mt Egmont last year, Andy is keen to visit the same area again, which offers easy to moderate single pitch climbs on natural protection. We may visit the same spot again

(who can resist the Snotgobbler!) or venture to other good spots such as the Eiger Wall (& it almost faces north). An easy hour's walk to keep the seething hordes of crag rats & rockjocks away, staying at Tahurangi Lodge where those with energy left to burn can try the hut traverse."

Feb 22 Harris Creek E/M
 Liz Flint 356-7654

Depart 7:30 am (from the PN Police station). An easy stroll into the western Tararuas, behind Shannon. Up the Mangahao Valley either by the track or river flats. Lunch and swims, good bush & good company. Combined PNTMC/MTSC trip.

Feb 26 Thursday Trampers Monica Cantwell 326-9691

Feb 26 **Club Night “A Night at the Wall”**
 Bruce van Brunt 328-4761

7:45pm at the Massey University Climbing Wall (in the Massey University Recreational Centre), instead of our normal venue. The night is dedicated primarily to playing on the climbing wall so dress for some moderate physical exertion, and bring along any gear you might wish to try out (leave the ice screws and pitons at home!). This is a free night for PNTMC to try out / revisit the wall so let's take advantage of it. Perhaps we can persuade Andy to give us a few tips.

Trip leaders:

Please discuss with the trips convenor (Dave Grant 357-8269, or Liz Flint 356-7654), 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.

Trip participants:

If you are interested in going on a trip, please advise the leader **at least three days** in advance.

Trips often leave from the Foodtown carpark in Fergusson Street unless the leader arranges otherwise.

A charge for transport will be collected on the day of the trip, the amount depending on the distance travelled and vehicles used. Leaders should be able to give an estimate in advance.

For general information on the scheduled or alternative tramps please contact one of the trip co-ordinators Dave Grant (357-8269) or Liz Flint (356-7654).

***** OVERDUE TRIPS *****

Enquiries to: Mick Leyland (358-3183), Liz Flint (356-7654), or Sue & Lawson Pither (357-3033)

NOTICES

TRIP REPORTS AND OTHER NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

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 my 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.TZ.

I use Microsoft Word Version 7.0. 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. If in doubt, try sending any files as an ".RTF" (Rich Text Format) file, which can sometimes be easily converted from one software format to another, or the safest bet is to just cut-and-paste your text directly into your e-mail message.

I can also scan photos for inclusion in the newsletter, but very few report writers have taken up this offer so far. If you get photos printed off soon after your trip, please consider submitting them as they add a great deal to the newsletter's interest and appeal.

Please note the deadline for anything to go in each month's issue is the FIRST THURSDAY of the month.

EVENTS CARD FOR JANUARY-JUNE 1998

Hot off the Press is the Events card for the next six months. A couple of trips or more each weekend: with grades ranging from Easy to Fitness essential: flat ones, vertical ones, wet ones, dry ones, soft ones, hard ones (possibilities for a new grading system?). We have included a number of rock-climbing trips, while it is still summer, so that members can build up expertise in hopefully fine conditions. This will also help their rope work which is essential for all but the basic snowcraft. Also a good range of Thursday night speakers and events.

A lot of hard work was undertaken by Liz Flint and Dave Grant in getting this schedule together, so please make it a success by coming on as many of these trips as possible.

Please read the comments regarding grading of trips and participating on these trips: printed

on this Events Card and at the start and finish of the Listings in the Newsletter.

For further information contact Terry (3563-588), Dave (357-8269) or Liz (356-7654)

GUIDE FOR TRIP LEADERS

Leaders don't forget your responsibilities when planning and taking trips: make use of the Guide for Trip leaders/tick box form. (this form can also be of use to non leaders - useful material for thinking about). And Leaders: don't forget to let me, Liz or Dave know if you change your intentions or postpone a trip or can't lead it: This helps all concerned, and is often important from a safety - risk management point of view.

PINK SAR FORMS

Trip leaders, make use of these or use them as a guide, as part of your safety -risk management planning.

TRIP FEEDBACK FORMS

These forms are designed to enable the club to improve the running of club trips and as a result enhance your outdoor experience. All trip participants are encouraged to fill them in. There are always copies at club night or ask your trip leader. Put them in the box at the back of the room at club night (no name required). So far all the feedback forms returned have all been positive - even about the "wet windy cold but really enjoyable weather".

CLUB GEAR

A big thank you to Andy & Bruce for their efforts in procuring a wide range of new gear for the club this year. Much of this gear was purchased with funds from the Hillary Commission and the Trust Bank. Andy & Bruce secured some good deals on helmets from Mountain Equipment, who supplied them at a special price because the gear was to be used primarily for club instruction courses.

The committee has revised hire charges for club gear, they are as follows:

Ice Axe.....	\$1-00
Snow Stake.....	\$0-50
Crampons.....	\$3-00
Rope (Not available to non-members)....	\$5-00
Ice Hammers.....	\$3-00
Carabainer.....	\$0-50
Tent Fly.....	\$2-00
Packs.....	\$2-00

Harness.....	\$1-00
Helmets.....	\$1-00
Snow Shovel.....	\$1-00

Terms & Conditions:

1. The above prices are double for non-club members.
2. For non-club members a bond is required if the person is unknown to the custodian.
3. The Hirer is responsible to ensure that the hired equipment is returned in a satisfactory condition. If the equipment is in an unsatisfactory condition then the hirer is to cover the replacement cost.

RECIPES blame Terry

(a) TARARUA/IVAN'S BISCUITS

These are excellent biscuits to take on extended or otherwise trips, as they are quite robust, keep very well and are very tasty. Eat them on their own or use them instead of bread or crackers for your butter/jam/cheese etc spreads. This recipe makes about 45 biscuits. You use about 3 to 5 biscuits per lunch. You will end up testing them each day before your tramps so make more than you think you'll need. Make two batches.

1¹/₄ lb oatmeal
3/₄ lb flour
1/₂ lb sugar
1/₂ lb butter
1/₂ heaped teaspoon salt
1 heaped Tablespoon malt extract, or
golden syrup slightly warmed

Melt butter and rub into flour, oatmeal, sugar and salt. Mix in warm malt extract or golden syrup. Add enough water to make softish dough. Roll out till about 6mm thick and cut into rounds using an upside-down cup or glass. Bake in a moderate oven 30-40 mins until pale brown and hardish. Finely chopped raisin can be added to dough if you want.

PS Don't over cook them otherwise they will be harder than some of the best rock in the Tararuas!

PPS While these biscuits are known locally and in Wellington as Tararua Biscuits, in the clubs further north (eg AUTC), they are known as *Ivan's Biscuits*, named after Ivan Pickins, a northern tramer. And depending

where your loyalty is, it can be argued as to whom introduced the biscuits to whom

(b) GOVANS

A favourite recipe of AUTC fame, named after another keen northern tramer; Govan Wilson, initially "developed" to cope with flatting, but excellent for breakfasts on hard extended trips:

1. Take Rice, chopped bacon/salami, dehydrated peas (a few)
2. Add water, salt, and boil until cooked. If too wet drain
3. Before serving add grated cheese
4. Eat.

P.S. Don't overcook.

D-I-Y WEATHER FORECASTING WITH THE INTERNET by Harley Betts

With ready access to the Internet at home and work, I have been able to find and use a number of very useful sites on the web to help with planning outdoors trips, browsing for equipment, building up contact with those in the know, and a whole lot more. Detailed here is a selection of weather-related sites which I have found really useful for forward planning of trips away. There are bound to be plenty more out there as the Net continues to grow, but these will provide most of what's needed to get a pretty good idea of what's brewing out there. And, at the time of writing, all of these sites are free of charge!

The New Zealand Met. Service can be found at <http://met.co.nz> and provide a comprehensive range of short forecasts. (I understand they also have a recently-developed java-powered site, run jointly with Telecom's Xtra, called WeatherNow! which is apparently very informative - but it isn't free by any means). Of particular use are the brief mountain forecasts (<http://www.met.co.nz/wxbn/mountain?BRIMON>) and severe weather warnings (http://www.met.co.nz/wxbn/swb?SWB_PLAIN), the latter being updated regularly prior to and during each severe weather event. Good to know these if you're not readily put off by bad weather!

In addition, there are coastal marine forecasts for each of the NZ coastal regions. For example, to get the latest marine forecast for the Cook marine region, go to <http://www.met.co.nz/wxbn/>

coastal?COOK. Or if you just want a short general forecast, go to <http://www.met.co.nz/wxbin/short?SHORT> for today's & tomorrow's forecast, or http://www.met.co.nz/wxbin/short?SHORT_EXT for a five-day forecast.

The Christchurch Press can also be accessed by Internet, and they have a very well-presented weather forecast page at <http://www.press.co.nz/weather/weather.htm>. It's not of much use to planning North Island trips, but has excellent information on what to expect for the South Island.

Weather charts prepared for NZ generally don't extend too far "upstream" (ie west), but you can get an up-to-date mean sea level pressure chart covering all of NZ and Australia at gopher://gilgamesh.ho.BoM.GOV.AU:70/I9/Australia%20Weather%20Information/Weather%20Charts/msl_anal (yep, you need to type it all in as you see it!). This is a "current situation" chart and is updated several times per day. This site also provides a forecast chart, located at gopher://gilgamesh.ho.BoM.GOV.AU:70/I9/Australia%20Weather%20Information/Weather%20Charts/msl_prog which looks 12 hours ahead. Both are quite useful, especially for getting an idea of what may be lurking several days away.

To get information on current weather conditions around NZ, have a look at <http://www.rses.vuw.ac.nz/meteorology/current/synops/> for the latest temperature, wind, pressure and precipitation information. This site, operated by the Victoria University Research School of Earth Sciences, is updated eight times per day with data downloaded from a selection of automatic weather stations all around the country.

Finally, a satellite picture of the whole kaboodle may be all you need. There are several sites available, but a good one that is easy to access and is regularly updated comes from the geostationary GMS satellite. Go to <ftp://ftp.ece.jcu.edu.au/JCUMetSat/sector-d.gif> for the latest satellite image, which will normally be no older than an hour or two.

Some of these sites may or may not be a bit slow to load, especially if you are working from home. Most workplaces with Net access have pretty quick systems and I haven't had any real

problems with the sites I've listed above. Good luck!

REPORT FOR HILLARY COMMISSION by Andy Backhouse

On Queen's Birthday weekend 1997, I was fortunate to attend the North Island's FMC Alpine Instructors Course. I had been involved in the Palmerston North Tramping & Mountaineering Club (PNTMC) Snowcraft Courses for a couple of years, & it seemed appropriate that I should go on the course my fellow instructors had enthused about. Our club committee approved my attendance along with another who had to pull out shortly before the dates.

We travelled up on the Friday evening walking in to the TTC hut at Mt Ruapehu in the dark. Like others arriving late, we did little more than find a place to sleep that night, & I found that it was not worth moving as there was little room anywhere else. The next morning we were all sorted into groups according to instruction experience & I found myself with Chief Instructor & Alpine guide, Charlie Hobbs, & an assortment of other climbers. The weather that day was awful & there was no snow within easy reach so we opted to do indoor work on instruction methods & optimising group learning. Charlie kept us all amused & whilst we concentrated on keeping up with the technical side of what was said we also had a lot of fun.

That evening, Course Organiser Hugh Barr had arranged for several of the instructors to talk about their latest trips for inspiration.

On Sunday the weather was a little better allowing us to do some instruction on the rock outside. Practical instruction on Navigation, & then Anchors was followed by us demonstrating how we would teach each subject, which reminded us of how well we needed to know our subject before talking about it. Late that day it began to snow & we all had high hopes of the next day.

Unfortunately it was too windy to do much outside on Monday. We continued with indoor topics & various closing talks till a message came through that the road was about to be closed & we should leave now if we could. As we were not expecting this at all, we were not as quick as we needed to be & like most others on the course were marooned at the Top o' the Bruce. We

sought refuge in the MTSC hut, closer to the roadend, enjoying the company of others & finding out how they ran their courses to get ideas of how we might run ours better.

Finally at 9am on Tuesday am we were on our way home, enriched by the experience.

I was very grateful for the assistance received to allow me to go on this course, and I have already put the knowledge gained to use on this winter's Snowcraft courses, & I have many more ideas for next year.

TRIP REPORTS

SEAWARD KAIKOURAS 25-27th October by Peter Burgess

The 10:30pm ferry crossing was not as crowded as we might have expected for Friday of Labour weekend, so we managed to find some suitable spots for a bit of kip. After arriving in Picton at 1:30am, it was another 2 hours drive to our bivvy site under a bridge on the main road. Lulled by the gentle roar of trucks every few minutes, we managed a few hours sleep before driving on for a few km to the road leading to the start of the track.

It was about 9am on a fine morning as we made our way up the Hapuku river, trying to avoid getting our boots and feet too wet. Fortunately this river does not need to be crossed quite as many times as the Hodder. At one point one of the locals (a hawk) gave us a bit of a hard time, but otherwise the route to Hapuku hut was uneventful and took just 2 ½ hours instead of the signposted 4. A sign ½ hour before the hut saying 2 hours was particularly silly.

After a lazy lunch by the river and a swim by Nigel, we started on the real work for the day. The track climbed steadily away from the main river and eventually met a tributary, which Dave's "friend" Don French had apparently recommended as a route onto the main ridge. After proceeding up this for some time, we became trapped in a gorge with cliffs on all sides and a waterfall ahead. After some considerable bush bashing, Dave directed us around this obstacle (though with considerable effort required). Unfortunately we soon found ourselves in an identical situation, requiring the same escape. After struggling around this one, we finally found ourselves at the foot of a scree gut leading upwards. At this point, I was feeling fairly knackered and had to be relieved of some weight, including the rope.

We climbed the gut with difficulty, as the scree was steep and unstable and the rock on either side was rotten and came away in your hands. Finally we emerged on a narrow scrub covered ridge. This led to a steep grovel upwards through

the alpine scrub until we finally hit a shoulder at about 1500m where we made camp at about 6pm. Keas soon put in an appearance, but fortunately did not get up to too much mischief.

That night the wind got up, causing Dave to have to go out and tie the tent down with his boot laces! By morning it was calm but overcast, and we could see some bad weather approaching from the South. Consequently Dave decided that it was not worth attempting the traverse from Uwerau to Manakau (the high point of the Seaward Kaikouras at 2600m) and so we settled for a quick ascent of Uwerau (2200m) with light gear. This was reached without too much bother, though some snow began to fall and we had no view from the top. On the way down the snow turned to rain which became heavy as we reached our packs, so we quickly continued on down.

We opted for a different spur to descend and, after some trial and error, this lead us to some good scree running (well at the top anyway). Lower down this became a gentle stream and a track which joined the main track above the Hapuku. We arrived at the hut at around 1pm and had lunch before going to bed and sleeping solidly till 6pm. Not long after tea we crashed again and didn't get up until 8am the next morning!

Next morning was again perfectly fine, with great views of the snowy tops. After a fairly casual start we made our way back to the car (getting dive bombed by the hawk again), before heading into Kaikoura for a lazy afternoon. We cruised back to Picton in plenty of time for the 6:30pm sailing. On the ferry back we met Hugh Barr, back from his annual TTC Hodder trip and Don French, who had had his car broken into at Lewis Pass. There is justice after all!

The party were: Dave Henwood, Warren Soufflot, Nigel Hough, Richard Lovell and Peter Burgess.

TAMA LAKES November 14-15 by Margaret Easton

The group met at the usual meeting place (Foodtown carpark) but as it was 6pm on a Friday night there was a bit of confusion caused by the shoppers using the carpark. Soon sorted out, piled into cars ready to head for the mountain, not wanting to think too much about the forecast of bad weather.

A tea-time stop at Taihape, excellent take-away food, eaten outdoors in Taihape's little park. On to National Park, arriving about 10pm, to stay at Eiven's Motor Camp, great little cabins, quick communal cuppa then bedtime, ready for a 7am wake-up call.

Next morning dawned windy, cloudy but fine, most of the group had a hearty breakfast, then into cars again, heading for Mt Ruapehu, the tramp begins near the Chateau. The tramp to Tama Lakes is very picturesque and uplifting, firstly through some bush, then into the open with Mt Ruapehu on one side and Mt Ngauruhoe on the other, the area is magnificent. Both the mountains had cloud wisping across, the weather stayed fine but very windy, gusts in exposed areas being testing at times. Warren's trick of telling us it will be raining in 10 minutes, just as we start eating our lunch and get our billy boiling, stops us from taking too long a lunch break.

The tramp is meant to take 5 hours. Sarah, our splendid camp leader, took us on an alternate route on the return from Upper Tama, which took us around the 'other' side of Lower Tama, giving us a chance for even more great views. We arrived back at 4pm, the tramp having taken 7 hours, enjoyed very much by the group. Thank you Sarah Todd for organising it.

A hot drink and snack in the cafe was enjoyed by all. Among our group was Stefan, a student from Germany, who has been in NZ for 3 months and this was his first trip out of PN. What a fabulous spot for his first NZ picnic.

We were: Sarah, David Simcock, Marian, Marlene, Gina, Stefan, David Sekker, Laurence & Heather Gatehouse, Warren, Neil, Harley, Kate & Margaret (scribe).

LAKE COLENZO

November 14-16 by John Phillips

Barry Scott had his eye on this little spot in the northern Ruahines for some time now and, with a Friday off from work & looking for a 3-day tramp to somewhere new, I was keen to go. Barry rang the Mokai Station owner for permission to use the more direct route across the Mokai Patea Range rather than the strange legal access route that winds to the south.

We set off from the Mokai carpark just after 10am in good weather and, despite the more direct route, I still managed to make hard going of it by not keeping high above the gullies as advised by Barry - we soon got into a bit of scrambling in and out of creeks & scrubby manuka. But relief soon, as we reached the beech forest at the saddle & on down to Ironbark Hut for lunch.

A knee-deep wade across Maropea River and a steep grunt 400m-up led to a lovely ridge top forest walk on the direct track to the lake. Limestone outcrops began to appear among the forest and after sidling under one outcrop that supported a complete forest on top of it, we dropped down towards the Mangatera River, following an elevated track above it. Beech soon gave way to podocarp, broadleaf & swamp as we neared the lake. We dropped packs for the short side-track to view the focal point of our tramp.

Well this is one beautiful lake, and the weather was turning on a pretty good show for it too. Lake Colenso has a pretty stunning setting, ringed by impressive podocarp forest right to the lake edge and with a background of towering vertical limestone cliffs across the valley. After an extended photographic session we ventured on to Colenso Hut which actually sits on a terrace above a stream about ½km east of the lake. A quick wash in the stream & then an early-ish dinner where I was, as on previous occasions, blown away by Barry's culinary choice for these occasions - beautiful tender steak pan-fried with vegies and a thick sauce. At this stage I chimed in with my contribution to the evening's entertainment by prizing my new and complete set of 14 Fiordland topomaps out of my pack. With Barry being a seasoned Fiordland trumper from previous years, I thought he might be particularly impressed with this. So naturally I felt pretty destroyed when he said "Where's D40?" Damn - that was the one map I *had* already bought some years ago & therefore left it at home with my other maps. However, I think I bought enough maps to do the trick, as Barry proceeded to relay accounts of a number of adventurous tramps he'd done in that part of the country.

Saturday dawned with more great weather, and we spent a leisurely morning exploring the immediate Lake Colenso area. The lake was like a mirror this morning, so more photo sessions. We then spent an hour or so wandering right around the lake through the undergrowth, viewing the matai & kahikatea giants, and emerging occasionally at the lake shore for more views across the lake. Superb. Back to the hut for

morning tea, then a quick stroll down the stream to check out the confluence with the Mangatera.

Back for lunch and, with the forecast rain still holding off, we packed & left for the south exit route from the Colenso basin. This was a pretty spectacular route, as the track climbed steeply around to the top of one of the limestone cliffs for breathtaking views back to the lake, set like a small liquid gem in the middle of the Ruahine forest.

With rain forecast for today, we originally had difficulty planning a dry-weather route out to the car, with the strange track layout. The only footbridge across the Maropea was neither on the track we'd come in, nor the legal access route to the south, but on another less-used track in between. Fortunately, with the rain holding off for today, we planned a route down Unknown Stream back to Ironbark Hut so we wouldn't face any river crossing for the final day.

Unknown Stream is a lovely river walk but the map warned of an impassable waterfall where we needed to pick up a side-track to bypass it. We kept our eyes peeled, as even the hut books were full of damning accounts of 'the side-track that couldn't be found'. But sure enough we missed it & soon found ourselves staring down a gaping chasm where the whole stream disappeared from sight. It took an hour of bush-bashing, scrambling up ridiculously steep slopes & grappling with vegetation, before we found the end of the track to lead us back down to the river. Ironbark Hut was only a kilometre further on and we settled in there for the night.

Rain set in overnight & it was awfully hot in the hut. We made our way back out Sunday morning in light drizzle but, fortunately, little wind, which made for a reasonably pleasant walk. We naturally followed Barry's advice on the way out & followed much higher up the slope to avoid the scrubby gullies, emerging at the car just after midday.

This lake is really worth a look for those who haven't seen it and, for those who have, its a good reason to go back some time. You need to plan access well in the event of wet weather though. We were: Barry Scott and John Phillips (scribe). Photos by Barry Scott.

ROARING STAG

November 23

by Neil Campbell

We left Palmerston North at 8.10 and were on the track to Roaring Stag by 9.45. The day was particularly warm and pleasant. It took about 3

hours to get to Roaring Stag hut. The track is in good condition although a little muddy. There were signs that the track had been recently worked on.

At the Ruamahanga River, beside the hut, we caught-up with a party from the Manawatu club. A third party had spent the night at the hut. Lunch by the river was very pleasant although the sun was quite intense. A good thing about this walk is that walkers get good shade from the trees for the whole of the walk. We finished with an ice-cream stop at Eketahuna.

We were: Neil Campbell, Monica Cantwell, Steffen Tansert, Val and Ashley Mitchell, Duncan Hedderly, Dave Larsen, John and Bev Simmonds, Richard Lockett and Pauline Coy.

NAVIGATION #1 AND RIVER SAFETY

Saturday, 29 November Terry Crippen

This Saturday saw the annual activities at Ashhurst Domain and in the river. In the morning with some pleasant light drizzle, we had a basic introduction to compass work, and estimating distance and travel time. The need for accurate setting and reading off of compass bearings soon became apparent as pairs of budding navigators set out to find certain trees. A degree or two makes a difference even over the short distances at the domain. So you can imagine the result over 500m or a km or two. And beware of metal objects close to hand.

After a spot of lunch, and some swapping of peoples, Noel Bigwood, and others of the NZ Mountain Safety Council Manawatu Branch, arrived to give instruction and a practical session on River Safety (note: not river crossing - there is a difference). It was decided that the Manawatu River was not safe to cross as it was running high and discoloured. So the practical session of crossing and escaping the waters if swept away was done in the warm clear Pohangina. The Pohangina had not been effected by the rain like the Manawatu was.

Everybody of this very multinational lot kept going back in for more. The range of items used to fill packs to simulate a "normal" weekend pack was interesting; the usual rocks and full water bottles for weight, this weeks unwashed washing (free prewash soak) and the ?best lounge cushions for bulk

The multinational group (UK, Holland, Germany, Canada, Singapore, Africa, NZ) was, in various combinations: Harley, Val, Trudy, Steffen, Duncan, Richard Lo, Peter B, Hashimah, Pauline.

Fransica, Terry: and Noel, Joe, Dianne, and Michael from the NZMSC.

PS For those who want to read up more on River Safety see the latest edition of the Bushcraft Manual put out by the NZMSC.

TARARUA NAVIGATION COURSE

Sunday, November 30 By Harley Betts

An opportunity to brush up on rusty or non-existent map and compass skills, led by the dashing and very capable Terry Crippen and Peter Darragh. We left the Foodtown carpark shortly after 7am, minus a few stragglers who didn't show up, and headed off to Eketahuna in fine but deteriorating conditions.

The scenario was that one of the two swingbridges on the Mangatainoka Valley track was washed out, requiring us to decide on, and navigate our way along, an alternative route to our destination, Ruapae Falls. One of our group, Hashimah, had the expectation that this trip was to be spent on good tracks with huge views in all directions, but unfortunately for her this was not the case!

With maps and compasses handy (or, in my case, tucked into my nether regions thanks to a lack of pockets), we threaded our way through the bush up a few hundred metres onto a broad ridge, where we changed bearing and made our way over to the upper Mangatainoka River for lunch. On the way, Terry and Peter showed us how to look for any signs of a track, be it "blazes" on tree trunks, snapped twigs, or a faint trail in the undergrowth - all good stuff to know for anyone planning to go off-track in the bush.

With the end of lunch came the rain - a few spots at first, but quickly turning into a deluge, accompanied by a rising gale tearing over the ridge tops above. Most impressive! The air was so full of rain that the wind gusts could be "seen", blasting down into the valley and swirling in all directions at once. Undeterred, we continued upwards towards Ruapae Falls, along a steadily narrowing and deepening gorge, until we found ourselves waist-deep in a narrow slot, the only way being up. Leaving our packs behind, we scrambled up the wall and on a short distance to the falls, returning soon after as the weather continued to "do a Tararua" on us.

Our return was via our "original" route, requiring us to use the maps and landmarks to locate a track marker near a tributary to the Mangatainoka, and follow this track up to the next ridge line near Herepai Hut. The rain continued unabated,

although it was pleasantly warm and we were in good, if not seriously diluted, spirits. It was a relatively late return to the carpark, and the drive back to PN was something of a mission in the terrific northwest gale blasting down off the hills. Some trees were down, and we were amazed to see a freshly-ploughed paddock being stripped of soil by the wind, the cloud of dust looking like a massive smoke plume on the skyline. Not surprisingly, the Masterton-Pahiatua road was closed soon after we had passed through.

Still, the storm made the course that much better - showing us just what it would be like to navigate through bush in less than ideal conditions, and the importance of keeping the maps dry - try reading something that resembles wet toilet paper, let alone get a compass bearing off it! Finally, thanks to Terry and Peter, who showed admirable patience with us while we tried our best to get totally lost. We were: Terry Crippen, Peter Darragh, Christine Scott, Hashimah Omar and Harley Betts.

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