



PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217, PALMERSTON NORTH

Newsletter - August 1999

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

NEWS:

**Mt Cook & K2 by lunchtime, Rangi Track closure,
and new 'Easy' tramps for Wednesdays**

TRIP REPORTS:

**South Face of K2, Thursday trampers,
Mt Holdsworth & the burnt-down Powell Hut,
Snowcraft 1, Takapari 4WD,
Cramponing on Ruapehu**

CLUB NIGHTS

AUG 12	Action eating: Tramping and Nutrition	Gaye Philpott
AUG 26	"Mount Cook"	Bruce van Brunt
SEPT 2	Committee meeting	@ Rose & Crown pub
SEPT 9	"Iceland"	Andy Backhouse
SEPT 30	"Climbing & Trekking in the Andes"	Tony Gates

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**. All club nights commence at 7:45 pm **sharp**, winter or summer (see Notices). 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 trumper 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.

Aug 10 (Tuesday) Snow Craft 2 evening for all participants. Introduction to rope work, Climbing Wall, Rec Centre, Massey University.

Aug 12 Thursday trampers
Graham Pritchard 357-1393

Aug 12 Club night "Action eating: Tramping and Nutrition" with Gaye Philpott
Gail is a nutritionist by profession who is going to talk about foods for maximising energy and such for taking into the hills. Questions such as the often debated and all important B and E (bacon and eggs) or museli dilemma should be answered. Bring along your questions and maybe your favourite "hills" recipes to see what she thinks. In fact, why not bring a bit for us all to sample!

Aug 14-15 Snow Craft 2 (Must have S.C.1) I,M/F
MTSC Ruapehu Lodge, Whakapapa
Terry Crippen 356-3588
or Warren Wheeler 356-1998

Aug 15 Rangihut E
Alan Bee 323-4582
Depart 8am. Gentle stroll up to Rangiwahia Hut in the western Ruahines. We'll do it the way the group decides - slow and gentle, or a little faster if you want. We can be up and back by lunch time or we can spend time on the hills. Consensus reigns, but you will know what the intentions are before we leave. There could be a chance of snow at the hut so be prepared.

Aug 19 Thursday trampers

Pam Wilson 357-6247

Aug 20 Applications close for Snowcraft 3.

Aug 21-22 Waterfall crossing M/F
John Phillips 358-1874

Depart 7am. A Ruahine crossing setting out from the west side on Saturday, via Purity and Iron Peg over to Waterfall Hut in the heart of the Ruahines. Continue over Rangihut and Waipawa Saddles on Sunday & down the steep eroding Waipawa Valley to join up with the Sunrise daytrippers near Triplex carpark.

[Note: changed from Top Maropea w/end on the Trip Card.]

Aug 22 Sunrise E
Heather Gatehouse 356-5805

Depart 8am. We'll head up into the eastern Ruahines. The path is well maintained and an easy gradient, so it will be a gentle walk up to Sunrise Hut, just above the bush line. This is an excellent trip for a first tramp in the bush, or for a gentle escape from town, with a good track, pleasant bush and great views.

Aug 26 Thursday trampers
Sue & Lawson Pither 357-3033

Aug 26 Club night: "Mount Cook" with Bruce van Brunt

Club mountaineer Bruce will give us a rundown on his Mount Cook attempts from last summer, plus maybe talk about some of his other Mainland peaks such as Aspiring.

Aug 28-29 Snow Craft 3 (Must have S.C. 2)
I,M/F Terry Crippen 356-3588
Or Warren Wheeler 356-1998

Aug 29 Ohau area E/M
Kathryn Lauchland-Farquhar 356-8295

Depart 7-30am. An easy ramble up the scenic river side track to Ohau Shelter, with options to extend the walk from there, depending on the desires and fitness of the group.

Sept 2 Thursday trampers
Neville Gray 357-2768

Sept 2 Committee meeting

@ the Rose & Crown Pub (Terrace End)

Sept 3-5 Ruahine Classic F/T
Tony Gates 357-7439

This is a classic tops trip, to the snow and ice of the Ruahines. On previous years, we have cramponed and snow-plugged to famous Ruahine places such as Sawtooth Ridge, Waterfall Hut, and Howletts Hut.

On this trip, Tony plans to start the tramp Friday evening after dinner, heading into Rangī Hut. Saturday will then see us crunching over the tops to Te Hekenga then Howletts Hut. If you are lucky, you might even camp out. With reasonable weather and snow conditions, he hopes to continue south along Daphne spur, to Otumore, Tunupo, and possibly Toka, then descend to the farmland at Apiti. You will need crampons & ice axe, good foot wear, warm clothes, and some fitness.

Sept 5 Waipawa River E/M
Arthur Todd 323-6246

Depart 7-30am. Something different in the Sunrise area of the eastern Ruahines. Maybe a chance to explore one of the delightful streams in the Waipawa Valley, depending on the weather & what people would like to do on the day.

Sept 9 Thursday trampers
John Rockell 04 298-1440 Wgtn

**Sept 9 Club Night: "Iceland"
with Andy Backhouse**

Once upon a time a long time ago, there were 4 students, who thought it would be nice to go for a long walk. So they planned a walk across Iceland. Would they survive the duststorms, blisters, petrol leaking out of containers & rockflour in the food, & would the washing up bowl make it. Find out from one who struggled with the repressed memory.

Sept 11-12 Maree's mystery trip F
Maree Limpus 025 395883

Depart 6am. What has Maree got in store for us? Something early, and something requiring a bit of fitness is all we're being told so far. But going by Maree's past trips, you're guaranteed it will be interesting. Maybe more details in September newsletter!

Sept 12 Kahuterawa Loop Bike E,MTB
Stuart Hubbard 356-8782

Depart 9-30am. This is an interesting but not-so-long mountain biking excursion beyond the end of Kahuterawa Rd. Although short (2 hrs incl. breaks), it requires moderate experience (ie. not for the complete novice). The route is mostly along forest tracks with a downhill run back to the starting point. There are some stream crossings, and conditions could be muddy. Come along for some fun!

Sept 16 Thursday trampers
June Sowerby 355-2690

Sept 18-19-20 Climbing Whakapapa F, T
Terry Crippen 356-3588

Depart 6pm Friday (17th) night and walk up to the NZ Alpine Club hut above the Whakapapa ski field on Mt Ruapehu. This is the opportunity for you to put into practice all those skills you have learnt on the Club's Snowcraft instruction programme. Lots of good climbing to be done on the Pinnacles as well as the various faces, gullies and ridges further up. Bring (borrow) lots of climbing gear, team up with a climbing buddy, and have a go. We have places booked for three days, returning Sunday or Monday nights. Hut Fees per night \$8 NZAC members, \$18 non NZAC members.

(I need to confirm actual numbers of us going in advance, so please give hut fees to me the previous club night ie Thurs 9)

Sept 19 Raparapawai Valley E/M
Merve Matthews 357-2858

Depart 8am. A trip in the Southeast Ruahines exploring some tracks not marked on the maps (but they're there!). Up a ridge track that heads to Keretaki Hut, but turning south before the hut to follow an old hunters track down another spur back to the cars. There is some quite nice bush on this route, with rimu & miro, plus a number of interesting shrubs for the botanists among you. Merv has some botanist's notes written by Graham Pritchard that he may distribute to participants at the beginning of the walk.

Sept 23 Thursday trampers
Sandra Wilson 359-1245

Sept 25-26 Kaweka Range M
Patrick Janssen 350-4600 ext 7175 (wk)
or 021 705 422 (after hours)

Depart 7am. More details in Sept newsletter.

Sept 26 Harris Creek E
 Dave Larsen 329-8054

More details in Sept newsletter.

Sept 30 Thursday trampers
 Russell Johnson 358-7777

**Sept 30 Club Night: "Climbing & trekking
 in the Andes" with Tony Gates**

Tony Gates traveled to Argentina early this year, and got to the summit of two good Andes peaks. He tramped about the place, botanised (deciduous Nothofagus, with red leaves!), and planned several future trips. This is your chance to hear some tales of travelling in South America, and see the pickies.

Trip leaders:

Please discuss with the trip co-ordinators (Terry Crippen 356-3588, Laurence Gatehouse 356-5805, or Peter Burgess 354-3533), 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 Terry Crippen (356-3588), Laurence Gatehouse (356-5805), or Peter Burgess (354-3533).

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

Enquiries to: Mick Leyland (358-3183), Liz Flint (356-7654), or Laurence Gatehouse (356-5805)

NOTICES

ARTICLES FOR THE NEWSLETTER

All kinds of articles, whether trip reports, interesting information & anecdotes, book reviews, or even a product review, are welcome for inclusion in this newsletter. If it is a small article, hand-written is okay (deliver to John Phillips at home address: 87 Victoria Avenue) but if handwriting is all you can do, don't let it put you off even large articles.

If you *do* have access to a computer, by far the most convenient way is to e-mail it to me, at my work address:

john.phillips@horizons.govt.nz

If you are e-mailing scanned photos, send your scan files to:

postmaster@horizons.govt.nz

where all incoming scan files are automatically quarantined by a software package. It helps to give me notice before sending a scan via e-mail, then I can arrange to have it forwarded to me from

quarantine. Any photo scan files e-mailed directly to me will be automatically rejected by the system, so make sure you send them to the 'postmaster' address at my work.

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.

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

NOTICE FROM THE EDITOR

I have work commitments in Wellington from 6th September to 15th October, but will continue to be able to receive material for the newsletter under current arrangements. I will arrange to have e-mails forwarded automatically, as well as hard-copy material forwarded from my letterbox.

Things just might take a little longer that's all! I will also publish my contact phone numbers in next month's newsletter.

Thanks for all your trip reports & articles – keep them rolling in!

John Phillips

STOP PRESS! STOP PRESS! STOP PRESS!
CLUB NIGHTS START 7-45pm

Our club night talks have been starting somewhat later than 7-45pm of late & we have heard some concerns that this makes the evenings finish too late & discourages some people from coming along. As a result, from now on we will be ensuring that the evening talk gets underway at 7-45pm *sharp*, so be there at the time!!

RANGI TRACK CLOSURE

The track up to Rangi Hut is closed until further notice due to dangerous slip(s). Access to the top of the Whanahuia Range and Rangi Hut can be gained by an alternative track (Deadmans) and route across the tops. However this alternative is for experienced parties only due to winter conditions.

INTERCLUB QUIZ NIGHT

The annual interclub quiz between PNTMC, Massey Alpine Club (MUAC), Manawatu Tramping Club (MTSC) and Mountain Equipment will be held at Massey University on Monday 23rd August at 8pm. Venue is Ag Hort Lecture Theatre 1. Come along and support PNTMC & give lots of abuse to the other teams.

PRESS RELEASE “K2-Mt Cook Success”

Flushed with success the Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club End-of-

Millennium Expedition to K2 and Mt Cook returned to Palmerston North at 1.00 pm on Sunday 11 July 1999. Expedition Leader and Club President Warren Wheeler said the ascent of the south face of K2, altitude 32,000 mm, had been less icy than expected with only two 50m rope pitches required. The dawn assault by the 7 member team left Base Camp under a cloudy threatening sky in unusually calm conditions but despite light flurries the sun broke through on reaching the summit. The team all descended safely with the help of the fixed ropes and were rewarded with a special champagne breakfast of bacon and eggs, knot buns with strawberry jam and cream cheese, and filter coffee.

After breaking camp the expedition had driven north without incident and after a short trek had arrived at the base of Mt Cook, altitude 58,000 mm, the highest point between Palmerston North and Foxton. Mr Wheeler said that the ice axes were employed on the steep south-east face but conditions were such that neither crampons or ropes were necessary. The party reached the summit just before noon and enjoyed expansive views although low cloud obscured the distant ranges. With a freshening breeze at their backs the expedition returned via the undulating East Ridge. Mr Wheeler said that after months of planning it was a dream come true: K2 before breakfast and Mt Cook by noon.

WEDNESDAY FORTNIGHTLY TRAMPS

Anyone wishing to do easy tramps, we now run these on the second and last Wednesdays of each month. Ring Judy (357-0192), Bev (325-8879), or Monica (326-9691).

TRIP REPORTS

THURSDAY TRAMPERS

compiled by Bev Akers

[Reproduced from the MTSC newsletter]

April Fools Day

In spite of going somewhere EVERY Thursday (and often on the weekend as well) the Thursday group found a new track that none had been on before! We went up the Wakaroro river then at the junction of Gold Creek turned sharp left and scrambled up a steep spur then along an easy, bush-covered ridge to a point above the Gold Creek Hut. A bit of a bush bash took us further

along to a trig in a tiny clearing. A lovely spot for lunch before returning back along the ridge then down river to the van. An easy and enjoyable ramble.

8.4.99 Mt. Bruce Hill (leader Monica Cantwell)

10 Keen trampers headed out to climb Mt. Bruce Hill in the rain and even sleet. They got to the lookout then up the trig track for 2 hrs. It was wet so they scampered back to the bus to change. They said the coffee shop at Mt. Bruce was a treat.

15.4.99 Rangi Hut (leader Carolyn Brodie)

15 on board headed to Rangi hut including 4 newcomers. One of the fittest was 82. Weather conditions were atrocious with hail and sleet. 2nd week in a row for bad weather.

22.4.99 Kiritaki Ridge (leader Merv Matthews)

Trip leader was a bit tinny this week by getting the weather right – perfect day. Merv got permission from Grant Trotter - the farmer at the end of Fairbrothers Road - which gave us easier access. 16 of us climbed up the ridge through bush on a well-maintained deer-stalkers track. Looking up towards Kiritaki Hut we were on the left-hand ridge. Instead of turning right to Kiritaki Hu, we turned left to go down another ridge. Lunch on the highest peak, looking down on the Wind Farm. Great views. Then a steady drop down through bush and back over farm land to the Club Bus. Round trip 5hrs

29.4.99 Maharahara – Matanginui Crossing (leaders Chris & Harry Allardice)

5 left from Opawe Road End, 5 left from Kumeti Road End, switching keys halfway across. (5¼hrs). Another 3 did the return trip from Opawe Roadside to Maharahara. Chris wanted to complete the crossing without the aid of a chopper (as last time she ended up slipping on a tree root and breaking a leg - she had had to be airlifted out to hospital). Her face went pale when a chopper appeared for the 2nd time but this time we think they were hunters.

6.5.99 Ballance- Windfarm (leader Dave Warnock)

11 brave soldiers left the Ballance carpark in extremely cold conditions - 10°C in PN with snow on Wharite. They headed up Centre Road stopping off at the farm sheds for a snack stop. Made it along to the wind farm under 3hrs for lunch. Back to the car park in 1½ hrs (all downhill). An exercise was to try to calculate the speed of the tips of the blades...250kph!. The blades are 23.5m long, and complete 28-30 revs per minute.

13.5 Waiopahu Hut (leader Keith Domett)

9 trampers got to the Hut in 3½ hrs while another 4 relaxed on the way. Had some great views. It's a long gradual climb with an easy track to walk on. Back to the club bus by 4pm. Very tired people by the end of the trip and the next day. Medium Grade.

20.5 Headwaters of Manawatu River. Leader Ann Green

17 of us headed off beyond the Manawatu River Road, up over farm tracks till we reached the boundary fence dividing Conservation land from farm land. Pushed our way up through scrub getting us up onto the tops of the reserve with a wonderful view of the Ruahines. (Toka, Tunupo etc) Fast descent and back to the bus in 4½ hrs. Stopping off at the Norsewood Café for refreshments. Then on to "Oringi Protection Wear" where one just had to get herself a new rain coat. Great casual day out. Easy Grade.

26.5 Herepai Hut: Wednesday Wanderers

There is a demand for another day tramping but this day is very relaxed and laid back. 7 of us cruised up to Herepai Hut for lunch, just under 3 hrs. Lots of laughs, thanks June for the entertainment.

27.5 Herepai Hut Leader Jill Spenser

This trip was a little faster than the Wednesday group. Up to the hut in 2¼ hrs. 6 keen ones went on up to the tops but the weather got a little too rough; while the other 6 relaxed at the hut. It's a great easy grade tramp.

3.6 Branch Road Track, Pohangina. Leader Vina Cottam

13 of us walked up over farm land then back down the road in 4½ hrs. Very easy grade.

17.6 Waitewaewae track leader Ellie Kidd

12 trampers took a cruisy hike in as far as the Plateau for lunch (3hrs). Very pretty track, good easy medium hike (6½hrs total).

24.6 Rangi Hut – midwinter feast

15 trampers went to Rangi Hut for the mid-winter feast. Some went on up to the far ridge in the deep snow but very cold conditions. Back to the hut for a nosh-up. (Easy)

01.7 Awatere Hut leader Bev Akers

There was no way the group would walk up the road from Base. So we took the bus + one car. The wind was fierce so we all bundled up to climb the small ridge and along which wasn't as bad as expected. It's a great side trip up to the top of the scree slope on the left before going down to Awatere Hut for lunch. I took them along to see the old derelict Black Stag Hut just up round the corner.

Decided to give them an adventure up a sidestream which goes back up to the top ridge which Longview Track comes down onto not far from the carpark.

Bit of a scramble leaving the stream getting us up onto the track. I set out with 15 and eventually found the 15 back at the bus 4hrs later. Good easy grade with views and adventure.

08.7 Mt Bruce Hill

leaders Ken & Rosemary Hall

It's a good 2hr grunt up to the top. So far so good with the weather. 4 went on over and down towards the farmland while the other 7 took it easy. Then the Southerly arrived, so it was lunch then back to the bus in the rain. Track is in good order with markers making it a good 4hrs easy tramp. Don't forget to stop off at the coffee shop

15.7 Kapakapanui

leader Judy Callesen (Binty)

Walked up to the hut for early lunch. Then out onto the top with no view. Because of the cloud, they continued on down. It's a good steep and long hike. 7 hrs all up [Editor – I think this means a 7hr trip, not 7 hours ALL UPHILL!!]

10.6 Kaihinu Trig – Past Horseshoe Bend

by Liz Flint

When Neville announced he was taking Wendy's tramp, the stalwart bunch of Thursday trampers smiled – others stayed away. We set off with Neville pointing out where we were headed. When Neville said "Over there", others said "No. Here". When Neville said "Down", others said "Up". Finally when Neville said "no track here"-some weren't there to hear, they'd waited uphill to eliminate any further backtracking.

Eventually when Neville said "this looks familiar", there was only one Thursday trumper left. "Not bad" he said. "I've got rid of 90%" or I reckon that's what I heard. Yes, it was the way and lovely it was too. Down to the stream, up the ridge and into the sun, where we spied other Thursday trampers on the opposite ridge looking a bit puzzled to see how quickly we had climbed to where Neville had originally set his sights.

A quick yell across the valley got Merv and Judy to desert the pack and head for us via an old forestry road.

Yes the 4 of us arrived at the trig for a lovely sunny lunch. About half an hour later along came a sight we will seldom forget. Two gleefully intrepid explorers led by Carolyn, who had decided not to give up; dripping wet from a toitoi

bash and bleeding everywhere from the same. Their smiles soon vanished when Neville found a route very similar to their upward trip, for us to descend.

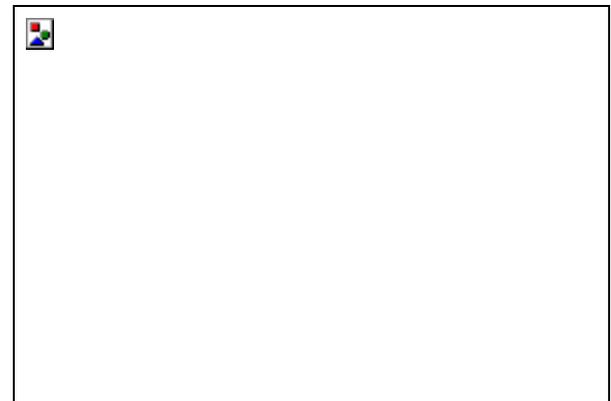
"Well I'm not going first this time", said Carolyn. Lots of laughs followed by a further venture back into the bush to make further corrections to our downward return. Looking down from the telephone tower we could see Peter's van disappearing into the distance indicating the weekend trip must have been hard because he usually likes a good bash. We could see small figures of others lazing by the van. On a scale of 1 to 10 I rated it 10 just for the laughs alone. Price \$3.00. Thanks to Malcolm Squires, property owner who allowed us access.

MT HOLDSWORTH IS IN THE TARARUAS

23 May by Tony Gates

T'was an utterly perfect day everywhere. Neil Campbell, Tony Gates, and Summer Batisti (visiting from the U S of A) cruised south for a lovely day tramp up to the ever popular Mt Holdsworth. Dark, damp shadows in the forest soon gave way to pleasant, sunny beech forest, as we followed the well-constructed track to Mountain House, then the Powell Hut site.

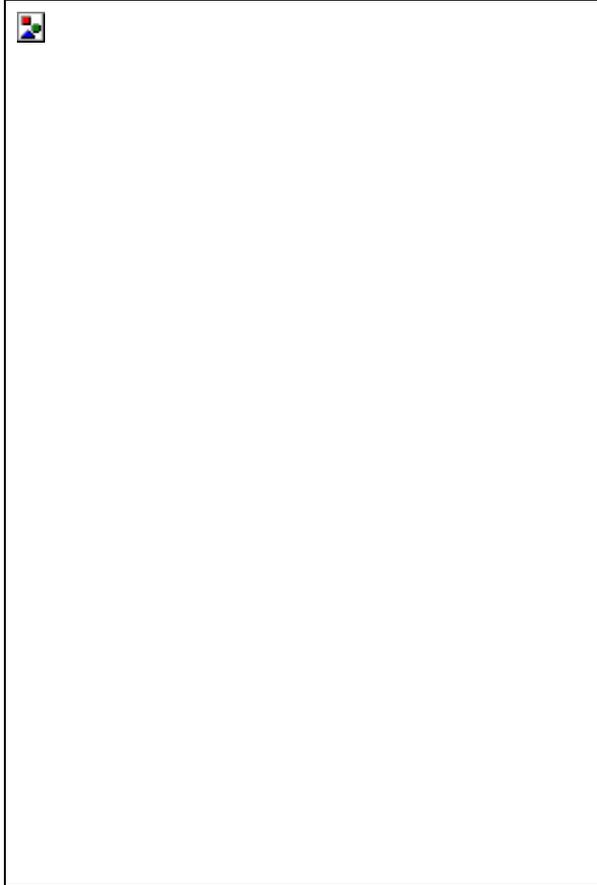
As expected, utterly gorgeous views down to Totara Flats, and the vast, heavily forested southern Tararuas. Powell Hut had burnt down a few days prior to our visit, and there were quite a few curious trampers visiting the burnt stain on the hillside. All that remained was the toilet! DoC had been there the previous day to remove tin, but they had left some rather interesting globules of melted zinc-aluminium flashings for my souvenir collection.



Powell Hut site [Photo: Tony Gates]

We cruised on up to chat to the crowds on Mt Holdsworth, and snap several prize-winning

photos. Great scenery! The central Tararuas offers much rugged, beautiful country. We followed the main ridge north, to the first knob, then descended the steep, well marked track to the Atiwhakatu River. We had decided to bypass the track to Jumbo, and take the quicker, somewhat more interesting route home.



It was certainly lovely to lounge about in the tussock in the sun, enjoy the views, and not have to rush around to Jumbo with the risk of finishing the tramp in the dark. Back on the main track, the daylight was rapidly receding, so someone ran back to the car park just to catch the last of the sun! Well, it's an easy track.

SOUTH FACE OF K2

July 11 by Laurence Gatehouse

We met up in the local food market car park at 6.30am. An early start is essential to avoid the slushy snow conditions of the afternoon on the ascent. We then went on an exciting drive round the kasbah and winding back streets of the little himalayan town of Palmi to pick up the final

member of the expedition. How our local driver Terry managed all those turns I shall never know!

With Angela collected our party was complete so we then set off to navigate the narrow and steep (about none in one) mountain roads to our chosen base camp. The dawn sun rose over the mountains to the east as we drove and our spirits rose as it looked like the weather was deciding to be kind.

The road access, which we were able to use thanks to the climbing permits arranged with the locals by our leader Warren W., crosses a pass over an extension of the western ridge and from there allows access to the southern cwm (which is Welsh for corrie or cirque in case you wondered). Here we met our first problem one of the vehicles was unable to make the final approach and two of us, Heather and Laurence were left to walk in while the others pitched the tent, made a brew and surveyed the imposing wall of the South face to find a likely route.

The choice of route is often the crucial difference between a successful ascent and failure and we debated long and hard while we fulfilled the scientific part of the expedition with a survey of the alpine plants of the region. We found an oddity our botanist Heather identified as an alpine lupin species in an otherwise typical herb field. An important find as this genus was not previously known to grow in such high altitude conditions. The plant survey took us onto the lower parts of the face and helped to confirm our choice of route. We would do the direct route up the middle of the massive wall.

We donned crampons, gloves, and goggles, picked up our ice axes and crossed the glacier to the bottom of the south face. Warren S. set out leading and laying out the fixed rope route, climbing first right then diagonally left across the face aiming for the slight ledge which we had named The Ramp. Here we could high altitude camp if conditions turned and we were caught.

The gullies feeding in from further up the face were thankfully dropping very little snow and debris, another pay off for our early start. Warren belayed on the Ramp and was followed by Angela and Jörg, then the rest of the expedition. The Ramp turned out to be narrow and exposed - a night out on it would have been pretty uncomfortable even in perfect conditions. However, it ran diagonally right across the face to

above the gullies which menaced the lower slopes. This hadn't been visible from base camp and was a real stroke of luck saving many hours and conserving our energy for the final assault on the summit.

The indefatigable Warren S. again lead off climbing to the right up the Ramp then back left from its top to the centre of the face below the summit. The final slope was fairly easy apart from the altitude and we climbed it using our crampons pied a plat, a welcome relief from front pointing. The view from the summit was indescribable, a combination of the beauty and majesty of nature and the physical and psychological highs of the ascent. The cameras were still working and we took the obligatory summit photos as the jetstream whistled by, thankfully not too strongly. The other routes from the north, west and east were layed out before us; almost strolls by comparison with what lay behind us.

The moment of achievement and clarity of thought you experience sitting on a summit seems like it will last for ever as you gaze out from your vantage point but the weather was showing signs of turning and we turned our backs and headed back the way we had come. Terry and Laurence came last, disassembling the ropes and belays. The amount of junk and abandoned gear left by some expeditions can be quite amazing. As always the descent was achieved in a fraction of the time the ascent took and as we sat back at base camp eating breakfast and looking up it was difficult to believe we had really been up there 34,000 millimetres above sea level with no oxygen.

Still we had the rest of the day left so we drove round and climbed Mt Cook for lunch. K2 and Mount Cook are in fact sand dunes named on the map and near Foxton. While this expedition was (indeed) a bit of fun it also served a useful purpose allowing us to practice our snowcraft skills without the keeping warm problem. Grassed over sand dunes are ideal for setting snowstakes and pretty good (if a bit messy) for practicing all your crampon skills except front pointing.

We were Angela Herbert, Jörg Henning, Warren Wheeler, Warren Soufflot, Terry Crippen, and Heather and Laurence Gatehouse.

4WD TAKAPARI

Saturday, 17th July by Liz Morrison

A glorious sunrise heralded a fine day. We were incredibly fortunate to have a "window in the weather" as Friday and Sunday the rain persisted down. Wise move Tony!

After meeting Liz and Arthur in Ashhurst we headed up the Pohangina valley to the bush edge and squeezed into Terry's splendid 4WD armed to the teeth with enough equipment to tackle anything from a windthrow to a snow storm. The weather was brilliant. We stopped several times on the way to view Centre Creek, Takapari, the distant Ruapehu and the pylon and rain gauge at the top. One of the stops was for morning tea – coffee and cream doughnuts – this is a great way to have a tramping trip!

The whole range was clear from the snowy Te Hekenga to Wharite with the Wairarapa full of low fluffy-white cloud. The A-frame Hut has had a recent exterior paint but is still somewhat damp and dismal inside. Choosing the steeper track further on a water hazard made for a swift exciting plunge in spite of the fact that our "engineers" had adjusted the depth. Back on the flat our bow-wave caused a mini "flash-flood" from "Lake Crippen".

Progress was finally halted by the Big Bog. Bonnie and I investigated the local vegetation and sat in the sun while the others walked further on. We investigated a couple of "Tony Tracks" into Centre Creek on the way down before stopping at the "Pilgrim's Rest" for an ice-cream. A great day, thanks Tony.

We were . . . Tony Gates, Terry Crippen, Liz & Arthur Todd, and Liz & "Bonnie" Morrison.

CRAMPONING ON RUAPEHU

July 24 by Derek Sharp & Tony Gates

Well, so much for the listed trip of "Iglooming in the Ruahines" - no snow! Tony was keen for action, and had just purchased a new pair of climbing boots and crampons, so off the two of us went for a day climb on Mt Ruapehu. It was a perfect clear day, and we knew the place well from previous trips. We travelled light, and soloed all the way, spending a total of 8 hours climbing the mountain and 1 hour descending. PNTMC has a key to the gate at Tukino. Much

easier, and certainly more fun, four-wheel-driving up to the road end.

Crampons, sunscreen, and the usual paraphernalia were required, as we stomped our way up the Tukino skifield to Whangaehu hut for a brew. A bitter southerly wind kept us cool, making the hut very welcome. The logbook provides some interesting reading, with PNTMC names frequently featured. Refreshed, we headed for the Whangaehu Glacier, and the north ridge of Mitre, passing by some good looking ice bluffs under the rather aptly named "Clock Tower". Derek was keen on the obvious gully up to the narrow notch behind the north buttress, but Tony overruled such folly on the grounds of wimping out and taking an easier route to the right. Easier the gully might have been, but that is only a relative term, 'cos it was fair steep, icy, and sustained.

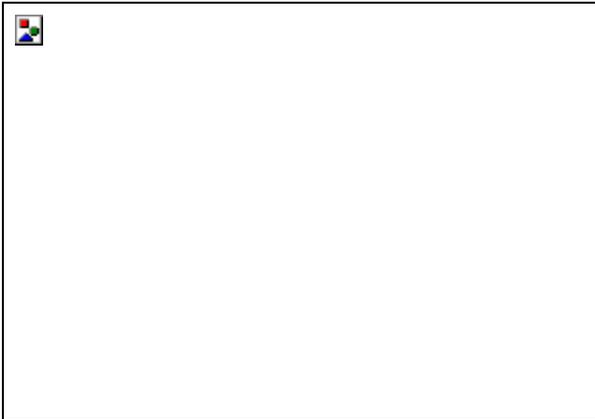


Photo: Tony Gates

There were some interesting ice and rock sections making it a very memorable climb. And, to make it sound even more rugged, the bitterly cold wind battered us, and someone mentioned altitude sickness - we were by then at over 2500 metres. We staggered onto the summit of Mitre Peak for a late lunch, paused for a few prize winning photos, then grunted over the shoulder of Tauharangi to the Crater.

A steep sidle-descent brought us down to the summit plateau, where we could finally warm up. A good stroll over to Pare saddle (gorgeous views of Taranaki etc), past some humungous sustrugi ice formations, then a rapid plod back to the Waikato Glacier. Crampons make such a delicious noise when crunching on good Ruapehu ice. At the plateau rim, we finally had a chance to rest, photograph each other, guzzle our drink, and make a few cellphone calls. Concern for the rapidly diminishing daylight was not necessary, as

we still had two hours of daylight left, and there was a good slither of a moon high over the Kaimanawas. One hour of giant strides on good, steep, soft snow, then a bit of cramponing, saw us back at the car by 5pm - stuffed but happy.

SNOWCRAFT 1

July 31-August 1

by Pete McGregor.

Snowcraft 1 began with a Tuesday evening meeting to finalise logistics, fit an eclectic assortment of crampons to an equally eclectic array of boots, introduce us to the paraphernalia of climbing and the idiosyncracies of instructors, arrange us into three teams, and finally, to extract a surprisingly small amount of money from us. As agreed, we met that Friday in the Foodtown car park; roughly 6 hours later I finally collapsed into my sleeping bag at the Manawatu Tramping and Skiing Club Lodge on Ruapehu. Five hours later I crawled out and began cooking breakfast. Lesson 1 - don't fall asleep while leaning over a vat of hot porridge.

Andy took the Whiteouts; Peter the Middles (or was that Mid-elles?), and Terry... well Terry got us, the Riff-Raff. He directed us to a moderate slope, taught us the basics of self-arresting without an ice axe, then showed us how to cut steps. Grabbing his axe in both hands, he carved a line of steps across the slope, a shower of sparkling snow-crystals mingling with his explanations about wrist angles and direction of cut and how step-cutting was not gardening. I think he had some sort of misapprehension about gardening being a gentle form of cultured fancy involving blue-rinse ladies, cups of tea and carefully-considered rose-pruning. Terry, I believe, has never gardened in New Zealand.

"Now you lot have a go," he said. "Pretend it's steeper than it is." So we pretended that we were on the Hillary step as we cut energetic steps towards an imaginary summit.

"I hear gardening!" Terry said. "I don't want to hear any gardening!" So we put away the thoughts of cucumber sandwiches and cut harder. Double lines, single lines, up, down and sideways; and now, two days later, every time I straighten my arms my triceps yell "NO GARDENING!" in a voice that sounds remarkably like Terry's.

Next, we kicked, cut and plodded to a longer, steeper slope, where Terry constructed a long chute by bum-sliding the sludgy surface snow to the bottom of the basin. He stood at the top of the

slide and watched as we attempted to self-arrest. “Nope - I can see your adze,” he’d say, and we’d trudge back up to the top so we could listen to him say “Nope - can see your adze” again. Occasionally he’d vary the comment. “I want you to be bruised in that hollow there,” he’d say, tapping the top of his chest near his shoulder. “If you’re not bruised there, you’re not doing it properly.” I tapped where he was indicating and winced. I must have been doing it at least roughly right.

“OK, now change hands and do it the other way,” Terry said, and we repeated the exercise, listening to Terry saying, “Nope - can see your adze” over and over. At last, when we were bruised on both sides to Terry’s satisfaction, he said, “Now I want you to do it with your packs on.” So we did it with our packs on. We did it facing forwards; we did it backwards; we did it headfirst; we did it with packs and without packs; we did it without crampons and with crampons; we did it until Terry had exhausted the permutations of doing it and we’d exhausted the capacity of our bodies for further bruising.

After an introduction to the 1001 ways to damage you, your gear or your partner with crampons, we cramponed over to a flattish area on a ridge and settled against two car-sized boulders to eat lunch. Far below, sunlight winked from a procession of windscreens along the Whakapapa road. A faint mist drifted up from a busy snow-groomer and heat shimmered from dark scoria. There were no birds. Terry lay on his back on his sleeping mat, floppy hat over his eyes as he munched an impossible sandwich and told us about the time he’d left a banana on the dashboard of his car at the car park. “When we got back it was black and hot. It was delicious,” he said, then added, “The others didn’t think much of it.” He seemed puzzled about why anyone would think a black, fermenting banana was anything less than nectar of the gods. After lunch we met Peter’s team and continued self-arrest practice on a steeper slope, then took it in turns to locate a buried avalanche transceiver. They work, but not quite the way you might expect. Once Terry had explained the principle we understood why some of the trackers were apparently heading in the wrong direction. This was an important lesson, and if you’re heading for the snow, try to practise with these beforehand. Apparently, however, trained dogs are faster at finding buried people after the first minute, when the scent has risen through the snow. On hearing this, someone mused out loud

about taking one of the transceivers home, burying it, and getting the dog to find it. “On second thoughts,” he said, “given how useful my dog is, maybe I’ll do it the other way round.” By late afternoon a cold wind had arrived and some of us had begun to think that now would be a good time to return to the lodge. So we did, capably led in a masterly display of route-finding by an intelligent and handsome man with excellent writing skills and an inflated perception of his IQ and physical attributes.

Dinner that evening was an event. As I spooned custard over a plateful of pear crumble I remarked to Janice about the wonderful meal she’d had a part in producing. “It’s mostly my husband’s doing,” she said. “He’s in his element - he has all these women obeying him.” But she was laughing as she made the comment. At least I think she was. I returned to my corner. Comments on the deliciousness and variety of the meal rippled around the room, mingling with animated conversations and vigorous eating. Christine was complimenting Mike on his role in producing the meal.

“Actually I had very little to do with it,” he said. “I just followed instructions and peeled things.” So we complimented him on the quality of his carrot-peeling. He smiled graciously and muttered something about having been a beetroot-skinner in a previous life.

I was just beginning to relax after the meal when Terry strode in and shooed us out into the adjoining room. Apparently we were to be lectured at. “But it’s warm in here!” I whined. My grizzling bounced off Terry like rocks off a climber’s head. Exhausted and defeated, I dragged my distended stomach and the similarly-distended bags under my eyes into the next room and hinted overtly at the quality of Sue’s down jacket. “I got it mainly for travelling,” she explained. “OK,” I thought to myself, “you’re not travelling now, so you could offer it to one of the weak and uninsulated - me, for example.” But the urge to appear polite outweighed the urge to avoid frostbite so I sat cold and resentful on the floor and silently coveted her jacket.

Terry began the session by explaining weather systems, illustrating his talk with quickly-sketched blackboard maps of NZ that looked like octopus chromosomes or pancakes made by someone with *delirium tremens* and no arms. When he under-emphasised Te Wai Pounamu /

the South Island, his *faux pas* prompted an outburst of protest. He hastily redrew the map but in so doing, forever lost his reputation as the unfazable man of stone. Unfortunately for us he tried desperately to regain it later by announcing that breakfast would be at the same ungodly hour we'd already endured a mere 23 hours ago.

The next lecture was Andy's now-famous exposition of the effects of the mountain environment on human physiology, perhaps better known by its subtitle: *How your body tries to save your arse*. As he explained what happens when you get cold and exhausted, we sat there experiencing the symptoms. But the talk was indeed interesting, and if you get the chance, sit in on it. Some of it was straightforward, some was esoteric, but Andy made all of it easy to understand. We learnt how the body produces heat. Yes, we shiver, but there's another mechanism that not many of us knew about. Andy asked "What else?" and waited expectantly. A few half-hearted (and only half-right) answers were offered. Then, from Richard's corner came the clearly-enunciated words "BROWN FAT."

"Yes, brown fat," Andy said, and wrote it up on the blackboard.

"I think that was mostly what was in the sausage I ate at Taihape last night," someone said. Another half-right answer. We carried on, learning about oxygen and why there's not enough of it in your blood at the tops of mountains. "Does anyone know what it is about Sherpas that enables them to climb so well at high altitudes?" Andy asked. We sat there blankly, waiting for someone else to answer. Andy gazed around the room and finally stared pointedly at Richard.

"2,3-DPG," Richard said. "Yes!" said Andy, scribbling it gleefully on the board. The rest of us looked at each other and wondered whether 2,3-DPG was related to C3PO or maybe R2D2, or whether it was a new kind of herbicide similar to 2,4-D but with beneficial rather than harmful side effects - rather like the recent discovery that viagra stops cut flowers (as well as other things) from wilting. Fascinating stuff. Eventually, heads reeling from our new knowledge of the best types of food for climbers, we staggered to bed, an exhausted bunch of mitochondriacs (people afflicted with a morbid anxiety about their ability to burn fat).

As usual, we were treated the next morning to the practical application of Terry's theory: "A bladder of tea beats a big stick," as he and Peter proffered

cups of tea and biscuits to malingerers many hours before sunrise. As usual, no-one managed to falsify his theory, and the lodge was soon filled with the sounds of toilet doors banging and queues forming, against a background of coughing, wheezing and feigned good humour. As usual we were on the mountain close to Terry's target time, and it all happened with no more than a little gentle guidance. The man's a marvel.

We were still in sight of the car park when James, having breakfasted on a large meal of baked beans and the remains of the previous night's chicken curry, began field-testing his new Gore-Tex salopettes. Mostly he seemed determined to find out just which sorts of vapours would pass from the inside to the outside world, and in a conscientious application of one of the main principles of the scientific method, he repeated the testing until he was sufficiently satisfied that the results hadn't been obtained by chance.

"Right," Andy said, "this'll do. Let's see what you're like at self-arresting." Obediently we chucked ourselves down the slope, rebruising the Crippen-damage and demonstrating to Andy that we did indeed have some inkling of how to do it. Andy then showed us the sensible way to cut steps, and we finished the morning with more cramponing practice: French technique, American technique and mixed climbing. "Head up the slope," Andy said, "but instead of going around the obstacles, climb over them." He pointed to a large, featureless, overhanging rock face, and soon the pure, clean air was filled with the sounds of scrabbling crampons, clattering axes and impure, unclean mutterings.

At lunch we perched on warm rocks on a flat snowfield and talked about an eclectic range of topics: bivvy bags; the processes that led to the formation of those fluffy clouds over the King Country; the quickest way in to Kokopunui (Lake Colenso); and how to get your money's worth from a trip to the doctor. Nyree told us how she tries to save 6 months' worth of ailments to quiz her GP about, including what she can do about the 'flu she had 4 months ago. Not to be outdone, James grinned sheepishly and revealed his doctor's usual comment; *viz.*: "Well, we'll have this cleaned up in no time and no-one need ever know." We edged slightly away from him and began discussing the afternoon's programme.

We, the riff-raff, spent the rest of afternoon practising the proper ways to glissade, then building a snow-mound shelter. We erected the latter in three-quarters of an hour - a superbly-constructed dome large enough to accommodate all five of us. James had clearly found his vocation: while we built up the exterior and constructed a sheltering wall for the entrance, he burrowed into the mound, extricating the buried packs and enlarging the cavity with almost unseemly energy. Eventually we could see only his boots, the vermilion cuffs of his salopettes and a fountain of excavated snow erupting from the entrance. The sight reminded me of a meerkat digging in the Kalahari sand for a tasty beetle - "I know you're down there and by god I'm gonna get you!" Eventually he emerged, wild-eyed and licking his lips. He says it was just because they were dry, but I don't believe him. We sent Chris inside instead, but the beetles were gone.

Blue light lit the interior as we sat inside, planning how we might enlarge it, connect it to other shelters, construct windows, chimneys, dunnies... well, let's just say we were pleased with our accomplishment and felt we'd earned the right to get carried away. We christened it by testing it to destruction, ending up buried to our waists in the ruins and delighted with the effort it had taken to destroy our hard work.

There are many more things to be said, and neither the words nor the space to relate them. By the end of the weekend I was tired, happy, bruised, distended with new knowledge, goodwill and chicken curry, and amazed that a group who had been mostly strangers a few days ago were all now friends (or should that be *still* friends?). Even the trip home has its memories: at Taihape we stood outside the Brown Fat takeaways as Jens

quietly cracked us up by recounting the antics of medical students. Chris, in a sudden flash of delayed realisation, exclaimed, "What? You a doctor? A real one?"

"Whaddya mean, a '*real*' one," Nyree chided him. "Well, as opposed to one of those mad ones with maniacal grins that want to take over the world," Chris replied, grimacing maniacally. That's Chris - he may speak seven languages, but sometimes I wonder whether he thinks in any of them.

And that's how it was, or at least it resembles how it was the way a climber resembles a real person - some of the important bits are there, some bits are missing; sometimes it tells the truth, sometimes it embellishes the truth; but mostly I hope it gives you a feel for what it was like. T.S. Eliot got it right when he referred to "...the intolerable wrestle with words and meanings...", so I won't mention Chris's ice axe, which we presume he inherited from John Pascoe's grandfather, nor Richard's attempt to drain his sinuses with his ice axe, nor his crampon bag, which conferred on him the appearance of a lawyer making a house call to a trapped climber. I won't try to describe the impish delight with which Peter enlightened us about the turpitude of climbers; nor attempt to convey Andy's ability to baffle, enlighten and entertain us all simultaneously. Those things can't be adequately described. You really had to be there.

Instructors: Terry Crippen, Peter Darragh, Andy Backhouse; *Instructees:* Chris Brausch, Christine Cheyne, Damon Kostidis, Heather Bewick, James Gordon, Janice Lloyd, Richard Squires, Jens Andreas, Jörg Henning, Mike Whitton, Nyree Fea, Sue Bull, and Pete McGregor (*who wrestled intolerably with these words*).

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