



PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217, PALMERSTON NORTH

Newsletter - March 2000

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

TRIP REPORTS:

**Thursday Trampers in 1999, Ohau Loop, Franz-Fox,
Waiokotere, Mangetepopo Rock, Kime Hut,
and an 11-y-o at Sunrise Hut**

CLUB NIGHTS

MAR 9	Wildlife in Alaska	Yvonne van Leeuwen & Scott Bowater
MAR 30	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING	plus David Round (FMC)
APRIL 6	Committee Meeting	
APRIL 13	Outer Hebrides	Russell Lake
APRIL 27	(to be announced)	

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

At the club night: Please sign your name in the visitors book. A 50c door fee 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.

Mar 9 Club Night: "Wildlife in Alaska"
with Yvonne van Leeuwen & Scott Bowater

Scott & Yvonne went on a 3-month trip in March-April-May last year up to Alaska. They'll have some interesting photos & tales of the wildlife & countryside they experienced there.

[Note: The Climbing in South America talk from Scott (City Rock) was moved forward to Feb 10]

Mar 11-12 Mitre Flats M
 Peter Darragh 323-4498

Depart 7am. This weekend tramp involves a walk up the Waingawa riverbed from 'The Pines' roadend to the luxurious Mitre Flats Hut, so we can camp next to it! (plenty of room on the adjacent flats). There is a range of sidetrips possible from the Flats camp base.

Mar 12 Waingawa – Mitre Flats Loop M/F
 Laurence Gatehouse 356-5805

Depart 7am. A one-day version of Peter's weekend trip (see above) for the fitter ones amongst us (but not *too* hard). Laurence will take us in from 'The Pines' up the Barra Track and, after lunching at the Flats, wander down the Waingawa riverbed back to the cars.

Mar 16 Thursday trampers
 Liz Flint 356-7654

Mar 18-19 SAREX M
 Mick Leyland 358-3183

The annual District Search and Rescue Exercise is based at the DoC Field Centre, Pohangina. Operation Tomo, a clue for what will be involved in the overnight search exercise. Training includes

helicopter awareness, Outdoor First Aid Revision, Track and Clue Awareness, Radio Use, Search Technique and Management. We will be putting in at least one team of 4, so contact Mick if you wish to be included.

Mar 19 Glaciercraft M/F, I
 Leader: Bruce van Brunt

NOTE: names and enquiries to Terry Crippen 356-3588

Depart early sun morning. The glaciercraft course will take place on the Turoa side of Ruapehu. The course will be a one day introduction to glacier travel and is essential for those contemplating heading into the glacier country of the Southern Alps. The departure time will be early to get the most out of the day. The course is open to those who have the requisite alpine skills such as those taught on Snowcraft II. (The course will be cancelled if the glaciers on Ruapehu are not in suitable condition.) Please contact Terry who is taking names and organizing things at this end since Bruce will be down in the BIG Mountains immediately prior to the day.

Mar 23 Thursday trampers
 John Rochell 04 902-4415

Mar 25-26 Golden Crown, Ruahine Corner F
 Tony Gates 357-7439

Depart Friday evening, return Sunday evening. The forests of Hawkes Bay contain some good native trees, and some remnant Kiwi populations. Makarora-Golden Crown is a known kiwi area, and the trip leader can confirm hearing a kiwi screech very close to Masters Shelter, at the farmland- bush edge, approximately six months ago. If you want to share in this wonderful opportunity, then you can join Tony, who plans to camp at the shelter on Friday evening, and further investigate these kiwi. Saturday will then be spent sweating up to the Ruahine Ranges, and cruising along beech forest and open tops, past Aranga (Ruin) Hut, towards Ruahine Corner. It will probably be a bit too ambitious to reach Ruahine Corner, so we will probably camp in the shelter of the alpine beech. We would then have more time to explore this lovely section of the northern Ruahines, and possibly even listen for more kiwi.

Mar 26 Manawatu Gorge E
 Janet Wilson 329-4722

Depart 8am. Up bright & early-ish for this easy tramp (so we've got time to mow the lawns when we get home!). A one-way 4-hour tramp along this track, which is a little gem on PN's doorstep – wide track with fairly easy grades, through superb forest and birdlife.

Mar 30 Thursday trampers
 Don MacLaine 357-0745

**Mar 30 Club Night: AGM
 + David Round (FMC)**

Arrive 7-30pm, meeting starts 7-45pm sharp. This is the club's Annual General Meeting, which will be combined with a talk by David Round, president of Federated Mountain Clubs. FMC is our nationwide umbrella organisation, and David will be talking about national issues concerning outdoor recreation & other relevant FMC matters – should be very informative.

Remember that nominations for Patron, President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and general Committee members really need to be given in writing to our Secretary (Sarah Todd) at the beginning of the AGM; nomination forms will be available on the night. Include the position, name of person you are nominating, your name as proposer, and name of a seconder on the form.

So come along for an interesting talk from David, grab some nomination forms, and have your say on who & how your club is run. See you all there.

April 1-2 Lake Colenso M/F
 Warren Wheeler 356-1998

Depart 7am. This trip takes us eastwards over the Mokai Range and into Lake Colenso Hut, about a six hour trip with one river crossing at lunch time. If you like dinosaurs you will love Lake Colenso, located below limestone cliffs in pristine forest, their ghosts still walk.... we have an option to return via Unknown Stream depending on party preference.

April 2 Rangi Loop M/F
 Sarah Todd 326-9265

Depart 8am, heading up Deadmans track onto the tussock tops, and round to Rangi Hut. Will be having lunch on the tops if its nice, otherwise at the hut, before heading back down to the carpark via the main Rangi Track. A good mixed walk.

April 6 Thursday trampers
 Phil Pearce 354-6687

April 6 Committee meeting

April 8-9 Cattle Creek – Mid-Pohangina M
 Terry Crippen 356-3588

Depart 7am This is going to be a crossing of the southern Ruahines from east to west. Up the west Tamaki, past Stanfield hut, into Cattle Creek, down to the Pohangina River and out to near the DoC's Pohangina Base. Good track and stream travel, staying at either Cattle Creek or Mid Pohangina Hut for the Sat night.

April 9 Cattle Creek M/F
 Mick Leyland 358-3183

Depart 7-30am. This walk is up the Tamaki valley in the Southeast Ruahines. A choice of trekking up the ridge track or the riverbed, returning via t'other, after lunching over the saddle at Cattle Creek Hut.

April 13 Thursday trampers
 Neville Gray 357-2768

**April 13 Club Night: "Outer Hebrides"
 with Russell Lake**

During Aug/Sept 1999, Russell Lake, of Mountain Equipment, toured some of the Scottish Islands by car. His slide show and talk features a few easy walks and some wildlife of the Orkney, Shetland, and Outer Hebrides Islands. Good country.

April 15-16 Mangaohane – Ruahine Cnr (4WD)
 M Dennis Moore 357-5651

Cancelled, due to access via Mangaohane which is now denied by the station owners. Dennis is enquiring about an alternative tramp up nearby Aorangi, which sounds very inviting. More details next newsletter.

April 16 Atene Skyline M/F
 Liz Flint 356-7654

Depart 7-30am. This is an interesting 6-7 hour walk along a loop track off the River Road north of Wanganui. Of fairly easy grade, the track follows a forested ridge around an old meander loop of the Whanganui River. Nice forest & views.

April 20 Thursday trampers
 Peter Carver 354-4479

EASTER – ANZAC WEEKEND

April 21-22 Te Matawai M
Richard Lockett 323-0948

Depart 7-30am. In the northwestern Tararuas, in from Levin, this walk follows up the western ridge via Waiopahu Hut to Te Matawai hut for the night. Return via Gable End Ridge or down the Ohau River bed.

April 21-25 Nelson Lakes M
Terry Crippen 356-3588

Departing after lunch Thursday 20th. Making use of the Water Taxis for up and down Lake Rotoroa, the plan is to head up the Sabine to Blue Lake, check out Lake Constance and/or scramble up Mt Franklin, cross over Moss Pass and come down the D'Urville to the lake again. Its excellent beech forest with high open tops, and good tracks and huts. This year ANZAC day is on the Tuesday following on from Easter Monday so 5 days this time for tramping. We are catching the 5:30 pm ferry on the Thursday evening hence leaving Palmerston North after lunch on the Thursday - reward yourself by taking half a day off work. Returning on the 9:30pm ferry on Tuesday night, ie PN about 3am Wednesday morning!.

Let me know by the Club night 30th March (AGM) with a deposit, due to ferry booking arrangements.

April 22 or 23 Easter Egmont F
Warren Wheeler 356-1998

Depart 5.30pm on Saturday or other day, weather depending. On this moon-light ascent of East Ridge we will leave camp at alpine-start-time of 3.00am in time for sunrise on the summit of Sharks Tooth, and to see the dawn pyramid shadow from the main Mt Egmont/Taranaki summit. Return the same way with a massive scree run. Bring togs for a swim at the beach on the way home. Depending on interest we may go as a day trip instead, so let Warren know if you're interested one way or another, and he will try to arrange the trip to suit.

April 27 Thursday trampers
David Warnock 357-4140

April 27 Club Night: To be announced

Trip participants:

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

Trips usually leave from the Foodtown carpark in Fergusson Street with transport provided by car-pooling. 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 or any suggestions for future tramps please contact one of the trip co-ordinators Terry Crippen (356-3588), Laurence Gatehouse (356-5805), or Peter Burgess (354-3533).

Trip leaders:

Please discuss with the trip co-ordinators, 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.

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

Enquiries to: Mick Leyland (358-3183), Terry Crippen (356-3588), or Laurence Gatehouse (356-5805)

NOTICES

ARTICLES FOR THE NEWSLETTER

All kinds of articles (trip reports, interesting information & anecdotes, book reviews, product reviews, etc etc) are welcome for inclusion in this newsletter. Articles may be hand-written or sent by e-mail to the newsletter editor John Phillips (see address on end page).

It is preferable to include your article as an attachment (please use Microsoft Word Version 7.0 or Rich Text Format), unless it is quite a small article, in which case it is fine to cut-&-paste into the e-mail.

Note that scanned **photos** must be sent with a covering e-mail (or phone call to John) to:

postmaster@horizons.govt.nz.

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

Wishing you all a great Xmas & New Millenium, and happy summer tramping!

PACKS FOR SALE

85 litre Bivouac (with crampon pad & ice axe loops): \$50

35 litre Blacks day pack (has full harness & ice axe loop): \$25

Phone Peter Burgess 354-3533

WANTED

Slide Projector for Club Nights. The one we have now works but has a faulty auto-focus which will cost more than it is worth to repair. If you have a good quality auto-focus slide projector to sell or donate to the Club please contact Mick Leyland, 358-3183.

TRAMPING WITH DINOSAURS

by Tony Gates

On a recent TV show, the popular, and very realistic BBC documentary on Dinosaurs featured familiar territory to some of us. It sure was Punakaiki Rocks, and the Paparoa Ranges, also, I reckon, lovely scenery of Bruce Bay, with Rimu-Fern forests south of Franz Joseph. The 25 tonne herbivores just loved our fern forests, you'd probably need half of the ferns in the Diggers valley to feed one for a morning snack. Those Raptors, wow, they could really teach our modern day hunters a thing or two.!

TRIP REPORTS
THURSDAY TRAMPERS (compiled by Bev Akers)

[The Thursday Trampers and Wednesday Wanderers are interclub weekday groups that take impromptu walks to a range of destinations. We will be including regular reports of their whereabouts, starting with these accounts from mid-1999. These accounts are from the Manawatu Tramping and Skiing Club newsletter.

- Ed.]

June 17, 1999 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) Fuel \$11

June 24, 1999 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. Bacvk to the hut for a nosh-up. (Easy) Fuel \$10

July 1, 1999 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. Fuel \$14

July 8, 1999 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

July 15, 1999 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!!]

June 10, 1999 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 trampler 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.

OHAU LOOP

16 Jan 2000

by June Norris

Seven happy trampers (and Shaun) set off from Foodtown carpark at 8am on this beautiful Sunday morning. Before we could start our walk we had to negotiate the single lane bridge that doesn't look big enough (or strong enough) to take a car. Of course it is, and we all made it safely to the starting point and proceeded to get into our walking kit. At this point Shaun decided that he'd rather be carried around on Heather's back all day.

The sun was shining, not a breath of wind, a good day for a leisurely stroll and that is what we did. We climbed up the track towards Waiopehu Hut before turning off onto the loop track that takes you back down to the river, close to the bridge over to where the Ohau Shelter used to be.



Admiring the Ohau (with Shaun Sheep)

The bush in this area is beautiful with some amazingly huge trees. On this loop track there is supposed to be an area that is not at all well marked and needs to be navigated. We had very little trouble with our two blood hounds Heather and Barbara leading the way. Their keen nose and sense of direction saved Laurence from having to use his map and compass. Actually, even though you may have to search around a bit for the markers, they are there [thanks to someone's recent efforts with some red tape! HG.].

We spent a leisurely lunch hour or so sat by the river, with Monica braving a quick dip and Shaun soaking up the rays, before slowly (for some)

following the track along the river back to the car. A great day was had by all.

We were: Heather and Laurence Gatehouse, June Norris, Gina Fermor, Monica Cantwell, Barbara Cottrell, Duncan Hedderley, and Shaun



FRANZ – FOX

17th January, 2000

by Terry Crippen

After the Arrowsmith trip we had the pleasure of Nigel G's Mother's hospitality in Christchurch – hot showers, scones, washing and drying of clothes and plenty of bed space. Richard had arrived from Wellington and Peter was to depart for Palmy in the morning. A night on the town at the Irish Pub prepared us for the next 10 day trip – climbing from the Franz and Fox Glaciers.

Off in the red Pajero, dropping Peter off at the airport we headed west, calling in at Arthur's Pass – catching up with Wayne Begg (now with Department of Conversation there), and learning that Derek and Maree had successfully climbed Cook. Off down the new Otira Viaduct and to Hokitika for lunch.

On arrival at Fox the mountains were covered with cloud and the weather forecast was not A1, so we were keeping our fingers crossed for flying in on the 17th. Come the morning of the 17th, again low cloud so waiting and hanging around town. Late afternoon the odd hole in the clouds appeared and the chopper pilot was prepared to give it a go – to either Pioneer Hut on the Fox Neve, or Centennial Hut on the Franz Neve. We were hoping for Centennial since the climbs thereabouts are 'easier' than the big ones from Pioneer. All of a sudden we had landed on the expansive Davis Snowfield at 2300m, with Centennial Hut about a km away up in the cloud. Heavy packs and very soft snow made the glacier

plod hard work arriving at the hut puffing and panting. We had the place to ourselves – everybody had left from the preceding 10 days of fine weather. After tea we scrambled up the ridge behind the hut for one of NZ's best panoramas. Snowfields in all directions, high peaks to the east and the Westland Coastline below us.

Day 2

At 6:30am departure for Mt Jervois (2630m) via the mixed snow and rock NW ridge with two interesting gendarmes to negotiate. Lots of rope work, and an excellent lunch break on the summit looking directly across the Tasman Glacier to Malte. A scramble down the main divide to the north and a slow plod through soft snow returned us to the hut.

Amongst the many choppers flying about one dropped a couple of climbers at the hut, now making 6 of us in total for the 12 bunk hut – an excellent people to space ratio for the "interesting" weather to come. (The other hut - Pioneer - was to have 17 people in a 12 bunk hut for the same spell of weather).

Day 3

Another early departure, all fired up for an easy traverse of Mt Rudolf overlooking Graham Saddle. But once we had got onto the south ridge and done a few pitches of easy but loose rock we discovered a series of rock spires and vertical accumulations of soft snow with steep drop offs on either side. So a quick decision to retreat and a climb of Aigrette (2665m) instead – a much more pleasant rock and snow scramble with equally good views satisfied us for the day.

Days (and nights) 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8

The "interesting" weather arrived – complete whiteout, strong winds, rain, hail, sleet, wet snow, and lightning - repeated in various combinations for the next 5 days and nights. The barometer kept going up and down, then wind direction kept changing from NW to N to NW. That's life in the mountains – lots of sleeping, tea drinking, reading and card games, some rope work. Some epic visits to the bog – this kept us alive and well for the long haul. Some interesting traffic on the radio between the huts and Fox Base – people hopefully jacking up flights on the first clearance = not to come for days; and some entertainment across the airwaves. Pioneer's rendition of "We all live in a Real Pioneer Hut" (to the tune of the Beatles "Yellow Submarine") and our "Summer

Climb” (to the tune of “Summer Wine”). (see following).

Day 9

At last a fine, still, clear morning, cloudless and a good freeze. The peaks looked wonderful with the new light coating of snow. But alas it was time to head out to Chancellor Hut, at about 1200 m above the Fox Glacier icefalls. Conditions were excellent cramponing across to West Hoe Pass between the Franz and the Fox Neves. From the Pass the big peaks Douglas, Haast, Lendenfeld, ... looked inviting. But they will be there next time. Easy travel on the glacier and moraine saw us sunbathing at Chancellor Hut for the afternoon.

Day 10

Out down the Lower Fox Glacier – following the standard route from trough to trough on each side of the glacier to avoid the icefalls and then it was Fox Village and the busy tourist industry. An excellent trip.

We were: Nigel Scott, Terry Crippen, Nigel Green and Richard Lovell

“SUMMER CLIMB” – (To the tune of Summer Wine).

Based on “Winter Climb” from A.U.T.C. days.

*When we were young and bold and so much in our prime,
We had a strong desire to do a summer climb.
Saved all our money till the rents were in arrears,
West down to A.G.L. to buy us all the gears.*

Oh Oh Summer Climb

*Chouard axe, some snargs, a 50 metre rope,
A Stubi hammer for to bomb the steepest slope.
A light weight parker and a pair of shinny boots,
Are just the gears for climbing warm summer routes.*

Oh Oh Summer Climb

*Flew into Pioneer west of the main divide
And there you festered 30 days and 30 nights
The hut was full, with people sleeping on the floor,
The wind and rain kept on knocking at the door.*

Oh Oh Summer Climb

Over here Centennial had plenty room to spare,

*And of course our food was better fare.
We'd done some climbs in weather really not so bad,
While over there, Pioneer People were going made.*

Oh Oh Summer Climb

[Written in desperation of 5 days of being hut bound in Centennial Hut. Sung to the bods in Pioneer Hut – some of whom got no climbs done due to the weather.]

A SOUTH ISLAND RIVER IN THE NORTH ISLAND

Feb 11th – 13th, 2000

by Tony Gates

Friday evening was beautiful. It was a fair sprint and sweat up the farmland at the northern end of the Mokai Patea Range, with good views of Ruapehu, and much of the Northern Ruahines. I stumbled down through the bush and nettle to the very pleasant Iron Bark Hut and the Maropea River. The last five minutes was by torchlight. A refreshing swim in the river, and a glass of good red wine provided by the residents, and a good nights sleep on the porch.

Saturday dawned with high overcast that looked as if it would soon burn off to be a real scorcher. It did, but by then, I was well into the shadows of the mighty Waiokotore River, a place that reminded me somewhat of a South Island West Coast River. One hour to travel up the Mangatera River to the confluence, four hours to tramp about the same distance to the biv. Lotsa limestone boulders and bluffs, some pleasant grassy flats, and a bit of grovelling. You'd love it Derek.

The biv, otherwise known as “the Fridge” receives two or three visitors per year, and is probably the most remote biv in the entire Ruahines. I dived past some whio into a bottomless pool next to the biv to wash off all that bush bashing sweat and grime, then dried instantly in the sunshine. I had to crawl into the bushes for shade and siesta, and must admit, was tempted to stay all day! However, I set off mid afternoon for Potae, then Lake Colenso. Potae is a fascinating, prominent limestone crag with good views of much of the Ruahine Ranges. Off track travel looked decidedly difficult, with limestone bluffs, lawyer, and unknown obstacles, so I stuck to the track. A good 2 hours of sweat saw me on Potae, then 1.5 hours later I staggered into Lake Colenso Hut to

meet Dave and Dave. T'was a hell ov a long way down. Very glad to yarn, rest, eat, drink, and sleep.

Sunday brought more of the same weather, as we sweated over to the Unknown River, and back down to Iron Bark Hut. Plenty of swimming holes. I recalled a Mick-Llew trip of 1994, when we encountered flooded rivers and disgusting grovells. A sunny day makes a remarkable difference. More sweating over the Mokai Patea Range took us back to the vehicle ase we formulated many plans for more trips in the area.

MANGATEPOPO ROCK

13th February

by Andy Backhouse

I picked up Peter & Nigel for a day trip, with the plan of meeting Pete, & Chris & one other who were staying up at the MTSC hut overnight after climbing at Ruapehu crag on Saturday. In the end we never saw the other, but Pete & Chris were climbing "Between the lines"(14) when we arrived & went on to do "Ta Lo" & a few others. I think Pete will write more about that.

We started with the terribly named "Death Wall" which in fact is Gr 13 & described as a fun first lead. Peter led this pretty comfortably with my critical eyes following as he had not led too much before. Nigel joined Pete & Chris to follow up "Between the lines", then I tried my hand at "Complan" & almost immediately placed my No 4 Friend in too small a crack & couldn't get it out again. To get at it more easily I ended up hanging off two other Friends & further compounded my misery by breaking my expensive sunglasses as I yanked on a wire loosely hooked around the Friend. Expletives started to be heard in a manner normally reserved for moments immediately before & after succumbing to gravity while climbing.

Eventually I got it free & had another go at the crux above before retiring to the ground & giving Nigel the lead. The awkward step left that I failed on took a while & a few different approaches but he succeeded in good style. The rest of the climb was easier though one small pocket harboured a large spider that bit his hand. This seemed an excellent lead considering it was his first ever. I teased him that one piece of protection fell out but that was detail, really. I followed managing the awkward roof & step left in the manner that Nigel had showed, but Peter struggled falling off the

crux & taking a swing. A second go saw him make it past the crux only to run out of strength for the remainder of the climb & to pass the rest of the climb.

After a pause for lunch we headed off to the classic of the Mangatepopo valley, "Bomb Arete" which is 3 pitches, first two about 30 metres & graded 14 & 16 respectively, then a long & loose 60m Grade 8 pitch to the top. Felix Collins had turned up earlier & was soothing our hurt pride with comments about the Valley generally being undergraded, certainly compared with City Rock, & to a lesser extent with elsewhere. he also gave advice on the ways to approach the crux of "Bomb arete" a short overhang on the second pitch that he thought was more like 19 than 16.

Unsure how to greet this news we went to give it a try anyway. After a short walk we were at the bottom of the route & I volunteered myself to lead the first pitch. I think I hoped that I would make up for my earlier failed lead, but I quickly realised that though I wasn't about to fall off, I was making heavy going of the route & lacking recent climbing practice. 2 days on rock this summer, both 3 months ago was not good preparation psychologically or physically even for a "mere 14".

So I came down from about halfway & let Nigel take over again. He cruised where I had floundered & then Peter followed taking the gear out. I tied on to the other end of the rope & feeling much more comfortable now seconding, copied Nigel's good style with good speed. Now looking at the second pitch I didn't even think of trying to lead, but deferred to the man on form. Nigel lead up to the overhang left of the arete but after placing two solid wires below the crux, found he had lost the strength to make the move. From below we suggested the alternative, a less strenous but hard to protect move right of the arete, which he succeeded on despite the lack of holds around the corner. After some difficulty removing the bombproof wires, Peter seconded followed by me. I was very aware that on current form I would have not had the nerve to lead the move around the corner. After that the route is fairly straightforward again & then we unroped the final pitch & walked off around to the east to pick up our gear. And then back to the car & home.

We were: Peter Burgess, Nigel "Spiderman" Hough, Pete McGregor, Chris & Andy Backhouse

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE – TUBING THE OTAKI GORGE

February 2000 by Julia Robinson

Ring ring..

"Hi there, I'm 'phoning about the tramping club -

"Well, you've come to the right place -"

"I see you're running a trip this Sunday – tubing down Otaki gorge – I'm intrigued"

"Have you done much tramping before?"

"Well yes, but I'm recovering from a knee operation, so nothing too hard"

"Can you manage a 3 hour walk along a track"

"Oh yes, as long as it is a track. No boulder hopping or scree running. I don't think my knee would cope with that"

It sounded great. To good to be true. A short walk up the river then inflate your lorry inner-tube, sit in it and cruise on down. After spending Christmas on crutches and the last few weeks gradually building up my left leg again, this seemed like a nice way of easing myself back into tramping. At least that was the theory.

So we set off. Tony, my guide to the mysterious art of tubing, seemed to know the area pretty well so I was looking forward to being a passenger for a change. Nothing hard, nothing scary, leave the decisions to someone else.

We left the car at Otaki Forks and set off, following signs for the Penn creek sidle track. The track began just fine but soon we were pushing our way through some exuberant foliage; perhaps a warning of things to come. The track obviously was in need of a spot of gentle maintenance....

The track opened out a bit and suddenly, Bam! we were staring at a large slip. Opps. Undeterred we tiptoed tentatively across, sending a few tonnes of rubble skittering into the gorge below.

Phew. Maybe we should try and cut down to the river a little sooner. We came to another, steeper, slip. Perhaps we could get down to the water here. My knee wasn't at all happy at this idea but Tony led off confidently, balancing on blades of grass and the odd tussock I wobbled uncertainly after him.

Bugger grace and elegance. I took a deep breath and began a controlled descent on my butt.

"You're mad" yelled Tony, but I was past the point of no return. Eventually I slithered to a halt just before some big rocks and Tony stopped wondering how long it would take to get my battered remains helicoptered out.

And so it continued. The way down from here looked decidedly nasty, so we figured that it was a real mission impossible to tramp the Penn Creek sidle track, so back up we climbed, backtracked and finally made it to the river an hour or so later.

Mission accomplished.

And finally the fun part. First inflate your tube (this may take some time) don your wetsuit – if you have one (this may also take some time); plonk yourself in the tube and you're off.

"How do you steer these things?" I shouted as we approached the first rapids.

"eer ... you can't really. You have to trust the river gods.."

Once I'd got the knack, which seemed to be relinquishing all control and heading straight for the middle of the rapids, I began to enjoy myself – it's certainly an ace way to travel. The river water was warm (for the first hour at least), and there was plenty of it to float us over the rapids. Occasionally we would get stranded between pools, or the gods of the river would for some strange reason, push us away from the desired rapids. The speed of our journey was therefore somewhat spasmodic! Many of the rapids did provide great excitement and we both were determined to float another mighty Tararua gorge soon. Although perhaps prospective members should be warned about going on 'easy' tramps with Tony....

SUNRISE HUT

Sunday 20th February

by 11 year old Libby Barnett

7.00am, half asleep we left the deserted carpark. 9.00am all of us assembled at the bottom of the hill ready to tramp. 9.15am and we're off going at a steady pace which finally got us to the top at 12.00pm. After lunch and a long rest, in other words one hour and twenty minutes later, we set off down.

Three quarters of the way down my nine year old sister and I decided to take what looked like a well-used short cut. After about three minutes tumbling down in flax bushes we turned back. Another three minutes we were lost. Luckily Dad came and we were found. We were actually not far from the track. A good lesson is what we thought.

By 3.00pm we were at the hut carpark. On the way back we had two icecream stops which were definitely the highlight of the tramp. We were John, Libby and Stephanie Barnett, Duncan Hedderley, June Norris, Pauline Hall and Monica Cantwell.

KIME HUT

by June Norris

We left Foodtown carpark 6.30 Saturday. There were 4 willing trampers on this warmish morning: Laurence Gatehouse, Warren Wheeler, Dave and myself. Laurence had the daft idea that we could get the farm bit of the tramp over and done with before it got too hot. (It was a good idea, but we won't tell him that). We arrived at Otaki forks in good time to start walking nice and early. Ladies if ever you get the chance to go on a weekend trip and be the only female; take it. Its loads of fun.

Up to Field Hut was done at a leisurely pace (for the guys). It was all stop and start at the beginning until I got a few tramping tips from Warren. (After all what are presidents for if not to give you advice). We stopped at Field Hut for a leisurely lunch before heading off to Kime in a light drizzle. Laurence and Dave shot up to Tabletop to get a look at the view. It wasn't much as there was low cloud around, but what you did see through the clouds was breathtaking. (I'm looking forward to doing this tramp again on a clear day)

About an hour from the hut the rain increased slightly and the wind came up causing the temperature to drop. By the time we got to the top of Field peak I was convinced that there

wasn't a hut. Laurence tried telling me it was in front of us but because of the cloud I couldn't see it.

On reaching the hut the billy was boiled and tea made before the guys went up to Mount Hector (Someone was too tired to go with them, but we won't mention any names). The clouds were still down low but they were lucky to get a window of a few seconds so they got to see the view. The trip to Hector was worth it as many of the alpine plants were in flower.

Dinner was cooked about 6.30-7.00. For desert Warren made peanut brownie biscuit sandwiches. He raved about them so much the mice heard. When Dave pulled the bread and biscuits out of his pack the next morning the bags both had holes in them.

We were to go down via the Penn Creek track and (maybe) pack float out, but it had rained heavily all night. The trip down to Field Hut was done in heavy rain. We lost the president for much of this trip. His version is that he was making run-offs to clear the track of water; our version is there were 2 fair maidens who had also spent the night at Kime. Warren saw this as a perfect opportunity to polish up his Robin Hood image (or is it Knight in shining armour?). Anyway we didn't see much of him until just before Field Hut where we stopped for lunch.

After lunch we headed back down to the car. The rain had stopped and the sun was trying to shine. The bush looked fresh and green from the raindrops and was beautiful to walk through so getting drenched did have an up side. As we were coming down the farmland we could see the Otaki river. I'm glad we didn't come out that way. The river was fast, up and dirty. A big difference from the low, slow fresh running water we saw going up.

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