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# PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

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P.O. BOX 1217, PALMERSTON NORTH

**Newsletter - May 2000**

## **\*\*\*THIS ISSUE\*\*\***

**Snowcraft 2000, Annual Photo Competition in June,  
and SUBS DUE !!!**

### **TRIP REPORTS:**

**Waingawa – Mitre Flats, Sarex 2000, Manawatu Gorge,  
new Kahuterawa loop walk, Easter @ Nelson Lakes**

## **CLUB NIGHTS**

<b>MAY 11</b>	<b>Wine and Cheese Gear Evening</b>	<b>Mountain Equipment</b>
<b>MAY 25</b>	<b>Indoor Rock Climbing</b>	<b>Massey Rock Wall</b>
<b>JUNE 1</b>	<b>Committee meeting</b>	
<b>JUNE 8</b>	<b>“High Adventure in Ecuador &amp; Peru” Nicole Keat</b>	
<b>JUNE 29</b>	<b>ANNUAL PHOTO COMPETITION</b>	<b>Murray Woodcock</b>

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.

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## 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.

11 May              Thursday trampers  
                         Carolyn Brodie              358-6576

**11 May              Club night: Wine and Cheese  
                         @ Mountain Equipment, The Square**

Come along to see the new season's gear. Feel the Quality, try the fit. Bring your VISA card or cash!

13-14 May        Haurangi Range              M/F  
                         Graham Peters              329-4722

Depart Friday night. After camping near the Pinnacles Graham intends to tramp North-South to come out near Cape Palliser, probably staying at Pararaki Hut on Saturday night. This is your chance to experience a range of hills, not often visited by the club, with quite a different feel to the Tararuas and Ruahines. The route boasts such delights as the spectacular Putangarua Pinnacles and the famous "nettling sidle".

14 May              Rimutaka Incline              E  
                         Richard Lockett              323-0948

Depart 7:30am. The Rimutaka Incline follows the route of the old railway line between Wellington and the Wairarapa and is an ideal outing for both young and old. Richard will be checking out the old railway yard at Cross Creek and will finish at the Fell Engine museum in Featherston.

18 May              Thursday trampers  
                         Harry and Chris Allardice      323-4390

20-21 May        Leon Kinvig                      M  
                         Peter McGregor      home: 021-256-9001  
                                                      work: 356-7154

*Note: moved from May 27-28.*

Depart 7:30 am. An overnight trip to a lovely Ruahine hut with that magical remote feeling; to hear whio (blue duck) whistling at dawn from the rushing Pohangina, the rattle of toetoe and mountain cabbage trees in the breeze as the first sun illuminates the Ngamoko tops, frost sparkling on the little terrace around the hut, the smell of morning woodsmoke and singed socks... well, we can't promise it'll be all delightful, but this is a Ruahine gem.

We have two options, depending on the weather and your preferences: if the weather's looking good we can start behind Sixtus Lodge, climb over the Ngamoko Range and cross the Pohangina immediately by the hut. If the river's likely to be up we'll avoid it by going in from behind Norsewood; this is a comfortable walk on a good track through lowland scrub, into beech forest then a climb onto the main Ruahine Range before the final descent directly to the hut. Both routes 4-6 hours, returning the same way.

21 May              Stanfield Hut                      E  
                         Liz Morrison                      357-6532

Depart 8am. A nice easy wander in to a well-maintained hut with a mix of bush and stream travel. The bridge on the lower river is out so if the stream is high, we'll do something entirely different such as the Hemi Matenga track down near Waikanae.

25 May              Thursday trampers  
                         June Sowerby                      355-2690

**25 May              Club night: Massey Rock Wall**  
Come along to the Massey Recreation Centre and try your hand at rock-climbing. Practise your belaying & abseiling for both rock & the coming winter snow conditions. We will have club gear available and club instructors to get you started or refine techniques. There may be a minor charge (~\$5) Contact Terry Crippen 356-3588.

27-28 May        Southern Tararua Range      FE  
                         Dave Henwood                      326-8892

*Note: moved from May 20-21.*

Depart Friday 6.30pm, up to Field Hut for the night. Early start for a big tops day, up to Tararua Peaks, past Maungahuka Hut and on to Andersons Hut in a patch of goblin forest. Drop down into

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the bush again, past Waitewaewae Hut and out to the start at Otaki Forks.

28 May           Aorangi Peak           M/F  
                  Dennis Moore           357-5651

Depart 6.30am. Drive via Taihape to the Rangitikei River. Cross on a 3-wire bridge and up the papa cliff zig-zags, through virgin bush with views to Mangaohane Plateau to the north. Great birdlife. option to stay on Saturday Night at the River Valley Adventure Lodge.

28 May           Mt Hector               F  
                  Pat Janssen           021-705-

422

**Cancelled.**

1 June           Thursday trampers  
                  Anne Green           06 374-5208

1 June           Committee meeting

#### QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY WEEKEND

3-5 June       Kawekas (tenting)   M  
                  Mick Leyland       358-3183

Depart 6am. We will make base camp at the hot springs in the northern Kawekas, a few hours' walk from the roadend, in past Te Puia Lodge. (The latter will be an attractive alternative if the weather is not kind to tenting!). The plan is to go for a day tramp on the Sunday, of course with the added bonus of a return to camp for a hot dip!! Masochist members who revile at this idea may wish to do a more extended 2-3 day loop further into the Kawekas.

4 June           Rangi Hut               E  
                  Duncan Hedderley   355-1078

Depart 8-30am. Celebrate Queen's Birthday with a pleasant walk in the south-western Ruahines. The track to Rangiwahia is well-made and passes through a selection of native and introduced forest and over tussock before reaching a well-appointed hut. I plan to admire the views and then return the same way.

8 June           Thursday trampers  
                  Vina Cottam         354-5045

#### **8 June       Club Night: "High Adventure in Ecuador and Peru"   Nicole Keat**

Nicole recently went trekking & mountain biking in the mountains of Ecuador and Peru. Her slide presentation will provide a fresh insight into this fascinating part of the world.

10-11 June     Kime Hut – Penn Creek   F  
                  Dave Grant           357-8269

Depart 6am from Foodtown for the Otaki Gorge road end and then head up Fields track through the bush and onto the tussock tops to Kime hut. Weather permitting we will backtrack slightly and head north along the tops to Maungahuka hut for the night. On Sunday we will come out via Penn Creek hut and the Penn Creek track along the Otaki River. A primo chance to stretch your legs for the weekend. Total distance about 28km (or less if we don't go to Maungahuka!!)

11 June         Beehive Creek Walkway   E  
                  Terry Crippen       356-3588

Depart 9am heading up through Pohangina township to Beehive Creek Walkway. A relaxing stroll up a small stream with regenerating bush and onto farmland hills. A walk back along the country road or perhaps we can drop a vehicle off to return in. After the walk, plenty of scope for a civilized lunch or afternoon tea at one of the local Pohangina eating houses.

15 June         Thursday trampers  
                  Donna Hayes         328-2878

17-18 June     McKinnon Hut           M  
                  Tony Gates           357-7439

Yes yes yes, back to one of the club's traditional favourite places, back to the tussock tops of the Hikurangi Range- a lovely spot. This time, Tony wants to experience Winter up there, with every chance of some snow, ice, and frost, so come prepared. Depart Saturday 8am for Kawhatau Base, then we should arrive at McKinnon Hut by late afternoon. We will return late-ish Sunday.

18 June         Blue Range               M  
                  Warren Wheeler      356-1998

Depart 8.00am. This trip will make an anti-clockwise loop trip to the Blue Range Hut and takes us through a variety of forest types up into the alpine scrub. The route follows the first stage of the Mid-fold Traverse. We will follow an old logging track upstream and climb up through the beech forest and along a ridge to the beauty little hut in time for lunch. Return via the track.

22 June         Thursday trampers  
                  Monica Cantwell     326-9291

#### MIDWINTER CELEBRATIONS - Rangataua

24-25 June     Social Activities & Tramping  
                  All           Mick Leyland       358-3183

A weekend at Sue and Lawson's cottage up at Rangataua, a superb location for choice of activities. Roll up at Sue & Lawson's Friday night or Saturday (early if you're in on a daytramp). BYO food, drink, plus best party games. Mick is very open to suggestions about which of the many tramping opportunities to explore in the area, so give him a ring if you have a preference. He can also coordinate transport from PN to Rangataua.

29 June Thursday trampers

John Stantiall

354-5521

29 June

### **Club Night: ANNUAL PHOTO & SLIDE COMPETITION**

A club highlight of the year, with plenty of different categories & awards. Murray Woodcock will be our judge for the second year, with John Cleland retiring last year from his longstanding role with the club

*See article below under "Notices" for details.*

#### **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), Janet Wilson (329-4722) or David Grant (357-8269).

**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 David Grant (357-8269)

### 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](mailto:postmaster@horizons.govt.nz).

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

## **SNOWCRAFT INSTRUCTION 2000**

### *SNOW GLORIOUS SNOW*

Each year the club runs a snowcraft instruction programme to equip people with the skills to safely get out and about into the white stuff on winter trips and down south over the summer holidays: basic skills for straight forward travel in snow on easy terrain, simple snow climbing, to aspects of technical snow and ice climbing and mountaineering.

The instruction programme is in three parts; SC 1 (basic), SC 2 (intermediate) and SC 3 (advanced). It involves three weekends away up Mt Ruapehu and/or Mt Egmont and two Tuesday night evenings preceding SC1 and SC2. A progressive approach is used: SC 1 assumes nil or only minor experience with snow, SC 2 develops skills learnt on SC 2, and SC 3 on those of SC 2.



Costs: SC1 \$120, SC2 \$130, SC3 \$100, or a one off payment of \$335

Registration: Places on each weekend are limited. Confirmation of places on the complete or part programme requires registration form accompanied by the fee, to be accepted by the organisers.

Programme Dates:

27 July (Club night) *Applications close for SC1*  
 1 August (Tues evening) *SC1 Intro and briefing*  
 5 -6 August *SC1 Weekend Mt Ruapehu*  
 (depart Friday night)

10 August (Club night) *Application close for SC2*  
 15 August (Tues evening) *SC2 Intro to rope work*  
 19-20 August SC2 Mt Ruapehu (dep Friday night)

24 August *Applications close for SC3*  
 2-3 Sept *SC3 Mt Egmont (depart Sat morning)*

Open to both club members and non club members. Pass the word round to any friends you know who are keen to get into snow activities.

For further information & registration forms contact Terry Crippen 3563-588, Warren Wheeler 356-1998, or Bruce van Brunt 328-4761

**SUBS NOW DUE!!!**

Please send your cheque to PNTMC at PO Box 1217, or pay Peter Wiles, our Treasurer, at club night. Subs are unchanged at the bargain price of \$30 ordinary and \$35 family.

**NEW MEMBER**

Chris Underwood joins the club this month. His contact details are:

66A Rongopai St  
 Palmerston North  
 Phone: 359-4274

Welcome to the club Chris.

**ANNUAL PHOTO COMPETITION**

Yes its that time of year again! We've seen glimpses of some real winner photos & slides from club members over the past year, so come along and enjoy them, and bring your own!

The club's annual photo competition will be held at the club night on Thursday, June 24. The usual rules for the competition apply:

- Slides/prints must not have been entered previously
- All entries must be related to tramping, skiing or climbing
- All slides must have a cross on the bottom left-hand corner of the mount for normal viewing (ie. top right-hand corner when loaded into the carousel)
- All slides and photos must be labelled (on back for photos!) with author's name, and entry category chosen from list below. NOTE: Slides and prints not marked prior to judging in the manner outlined here WILL BE REJECTED (sorry but this is essential to facilitate smooth running of the event).
- Limit of 3 slides per person per category, but no limit on prints.

Categories:

1. *Alpine (NZ)*. Predominantly alpine scenery in NZ (ie. above bushline)
2. *Scenic (NZ)*. Scenes of natural pictorial interest in NZ hills, coasts, etc. (ie. predominantly below the bushline)
3. *Natural History (NZ)*. NZ flora & fauna, or detail of interest eg. geology, ice formations, etc.
4. *Topical (NZ)*. People in tramping, climbing, or skiing related activities in NZ.
5. *Overseas Alpine or Scenic*. Related to tramping, etc. overseas or Scenic
6. *Overseas People*. Climbers or people met while tramping, climbing overseas.

Formats: Slides, black-and-white prints, colour prints. Prints do not need to be mounted. Prints may be judged as one group or separated at the judge's discretion, depending on numbers.

The system for judging winners is a democratic one – a show of hands, after the guiding advice of our guest photographic expert, Murray Woodcock. Some of you may know Murray from Bell's Photographic shop on Broadway. Murray is an avid and talented young local photographer who combines his passion with ours – tramping.

**TRIP REPORTS**

WAINGAWA - MITRE FLATS LOOP

Sunday March 12

by Robin Garnett

Early on we set off to drive through Masterton to the Kaituna Road End in the Tararuas. It was a lovely, partly cloudy day - where were all the rest of you?? We had a relatively easy walk up the track beside the Waingawa River: first through farmland then through native bush, with nothing harder than tree roots to negotiate. We reached Mitre Flats Hut after 2¾ hours where we met a party from the Tararua Tramping Club. They had tried to climb Mitre Peak (1571m) that morning but had found the wind to be too strong once they had left the bush line.

After lunch Laurence and I had an adventurous three hour walk back to our car along the river itself. As the river curved to and fro, so we crossed and re-crossed it trying to avoid the deepest parts. Laurence, stick in hand, showed his acrobatic skills in balancing on slippery boulders that were hidden by fast flowing water. I took several fruitless detours over bluffs, attempting to skirt round deep stretches. In the end I decided that it took less energy to put my pack on my head and wade through. At its deepest the water came just above our waists. There is beautiful scenery along the river - thick bush and waterfalls, green pools with big red taniwha, high bluffs and fast rapids. It was a great Sunday outing and I recommend it to people who haven't been there.

We were Robin Garnett (your writer) and Laurence Gatehouse.

SAREX 2000 - the unabridged edition  
18-19 March by Pete McGregor

All I can say is thank heavens for lurgs - if I hadn't picked up some sort of bug from my wee nephews in Christchurch, I'd have ended up in a search team trying to keep up with Mick and Llew. Fortunately, I felt the onset of disease in time to persuade Warren to swap his role as search advisor for my position in the team. He needed little encouragement to join Mick and Llew, but then most of you know what Warren's like. When I met up with him at the conclusion of the SAREX he seemed remarkably unaffected by his experience, although in deference to the feelings of Mick and Llew, I should point out that they also seemed remarkably unaffected by *their* experience of having Warren in the team.

With several spare people milling about, a quick negotiation saw James, Peter B. and Simon-from-somewhere-down-south make up an extra team, giving us a total of seven teams for the

exercise. The PNTMC was well represented. We contributed Mick, Llew, Warren, James and Peter; also John, who rounded out the MUAC team; the ubiquitous Terry, who had helped organise the search scenario; Graham and Janet, who comprised one of the "lost" parties; and me.

I'd never been on a SAREX, although I had helped during a real operation in late '97, and I'd had no SAR training, although Terry had confused me on Snowcraft I with arcane instructions about radios and I have an outdoor first aid certificate which was taught entirely indoors and has nearly expired (the probable fate of anyone I treat). But "search advisor", I was told, was easy - it meant hanging around peering over the controller's shoulder and helping with details of whether such-and-such a gorge was negotiable or how difficult a bush-bash down that ridge would be ("extremely" was my usual answer, whereon the controller would decide to send a team down there anyway). Despite my apprehension I thought I could probably offer some assistance, as the Pohangina is one of my favourite stomping grounds, and in hindsight I think my contribution was, on balance, positive. The task was certainly fun.

After a brief introduction by tall, efficient, policeman Rob, we completed the inevitable form-filling, then split into three groups to learn about outdoor first aid, radios, and "track and clue awareness" (TCA). My group briefly revised first aid, then progressed to radios. We gathered around the whiteboard and stared at the scrawl. Written large on the board were the words "condom" and "durex". Embarrassed, I shuffled and examined my fingernails and pretended not to notice the luminous words. Everyone else was either happily chatting or studiously examining the board without the slightest trace of embarrassment. I flashed a quick glance at the words, and heaved a sigh of relief. I'd misread them - they said "condor" and "duplex".

At that point the instructor began explaining about the ionosphere and I was just beginning to get lost when I saw the search controller (Dave Barker, from the MTSC) beckon to me. He wanted to discuss the plan of action. That, therefore, was the end of my formal training, although I suspect I learned at least as much by listening to and observing what went on at the search HQ during the next day and a half. Still, I'd have liked to have learned more about TCA, particularly after being impressed by Peter B.'s proficiency. His precise and detailed observations received very positive comments

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back at the HQ (read his article in the November '99 newsletter).

When I heard the helicopter arriving I decided that enough was enough, and excused myself to join the others to learn about helicopter safety. Guy, the pilot, explained clearly and effectively various aspects of safety around helicopters, and how we should treat it. That lump of flimsy-looking fibreglass that passed for a door could easily be ripped off by careless clambering, resulting in an inoperative machine and a huge repair bill - a replacement door would cost thousands of dollars. With the machine quiet and stationary, we filed through, practising transferring our weight smoothly and slowly from the ground to the machine, closing that platinum-plated door, then exiting from the other side. Straight-forward enough. Then Guy started the machine and hovered low at the edge of the bank. This was an entirely different experience. Buffeted by the wind and pummelling roar of the near-invisible blades, with the machine in a continuous, spongy motion, we repeated the procedure of climbing aboard, then exiting. It was like trying to step onto a floating raft of polystyrene, except that polystyrene has much less potential for turning you into uncanned cat food.

We all made it through safely, however, and if anyone had been less than gentle during the procedure then Guy's skill more than adequately compensated. And that concluded the formal part of the training. We filed back, to laze around eating the huge pre-packed lunches provided by the police - jeez, those guys can eat! I managed to struggle through about a third of mine and could probably have hibernated on that alone. While we ate and tried to dodge the persistent, irritating wasps that infested the field centre, Dave called together the team leaders and explained an interesting process that I've forgotten the name of. The search area is divided into blocks based on topography, logic and probably some gut feeling and guesswork, then each person involved in the process estimates for each block the probability that the lost party is in that block. We did this independently, then Dave wrote the results on the white board. Warren led the way.

"5%, 30%, 25%, 30%, 15%, 10%," he called out. We spent the next 10 minutes adjusting his figures so that we were no longer 130% sure that they were somewhere on the planet, but were in fact only 100% sure that they were either inside the search area or outside it.

That exercise was interesting, and it disclosed some good lessons. Ostensibly it's

designed to help the controller and his team decide where to concentrate efforts, but one of its major advantages is that it forces people to think hard about where the lost party might be. Major discrepancies in the probabilities usually mean that someone has thought of something that's escaped the other people, and that's a valuable asset. That same type of process - thinking of and discussing alternatives, questioning, speculating and so on - occurred constantly and frequently in less formal ways during the entire exercise. It was one of the things I most enjoyed; I became engrossed in the problem-solving process - caught up in it, constantly challenging myself to identify and question assumptions (my own in particular), explore "what-if" scenarios, think laterally... If you enjoy a good mental challenge - a complex problem with a needle-sharp focus - then get involved in Search and Rescue.

After lunch, three parties were whisked to the road ends to attempt to locate the car or cars. Having achieved that, the remaining teams were assigned tasks, and the search began in earnest. That period, from my perspective in the controller's caravan, was the most intense of the whole search. We had seven teams, all itching to be out there doing something, but there were only four access points to the search area. Trying to task several teams so they didn't destroy or confuse signs was difficult, particularly when teams were radioing in simultaneously. At times the caravan was close to bedlam, with two radios crackling, several unrelated discussions taking place and a social party in progress outside under the awning. It's the only time I've ever leaned out a window and told a group of police to shut up (they did).

Late in the afternoon Peter, James and Simon radioed in. Looking down from the mid-Pohangina sidle track, they'd seen two people and a dog in the riverbed, and had managed to attract their attention. They were beyond shouting distance, so we told the search team to make their way down at least until they could confirm the identity of the people in the riverbed. Although we weren't certain that we'd found a lost party, it was good enough for Rob, who promptly reached into the refrigerator and began distributing celebratory beers. In fact his optimism wasn't misguided. By the time our searchers had made their way to the riverbed, a second team had also reached the lost party. With seven searchers on the scene, some indecision ensued, which provided another important lesson: if you're in

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that situation, make sure someone takes charge. But once again it was good to hear very positive comments about another PNTMC person - James apparently did an excellent job of attending to the person with the "badly sprained ankle" (part of the scenario).

Having located one lost party, the problem arose of how to get them out. The "sprained ankle" had incapacitated that person, and a radio discussion confirmed that there was nowhere suitable for an hypothetical helicopter to set down within any reasonable proximity. We conferred. Finally, Dave, wearing an impish and slightly sadistic expression, wrote a message and passed it to the radio operator, who read it to the field teams. "For the purposes of this exercise," he read, "carry her up the riverbed for 20 minutes." There was a long delay, during which I thought I heard animated responses echoing down the Pohangina. Eventually the reply came through on the radio: a terse "OK". I don't think we were popular, but Dave just laughed and laughed.

An interrogation of the lost party confirmed that two other parties were missing. We speculated about their whereabouts and actions, and all the while Terry milled about, constantly readjusting the fit of his track pants, fidgeting with the sleeves of his jersey, trying to look impassive and failing hopelessly. On learning that one of the parties comprised "Charles" and "Dianne", the whole caravan burst out laughing and "Dianne" thenceforth became known as "Dianna". Perhaps it was bad taste, or perhaps just healthy irreverence, but there was no malice, and it provided plenty of opportunity for subsequent quips that were undeniably in bad taste and therefore can't be repeated in print.

We re-tasked some of the teams, sending Team 1 - Mick, Llew and Warren - along the track to Mid-Pohangina Hut. I knew that the track had recently been cleared of ongaonga but was still overgrown in places, and with a future trip in mind thought that the high-velocity passage of the Exocet Team might burn off some of the encroaching vegetation. However, it wasn't all self-serving - they had probably the most comfortable night of any of the teams in the field. Two teams stayed at Centre Creek bivvy, sharing it, as we discovered late the following morning, with a hunter; while the other civilian teams camped out. The police team radioed their intention to return to the Field Centre for the night, whereon those police who were there already burst into a frenzy of activity, hiding or

locking away as much of the remaining food and beer as possible. "It's no good," Michelle said about one of her fellow officers. "If he finds there's no beer here he'll drive into town to collect a ute-load."

Being in the preliminary stages of my illness, I opted to drive the 20 minutes or so back home to get as much sleep as possible. I returned early the next morning, only to find that our main activity comprised waiting around for the field teams to radio in at the scheduled time. Llew called up to report that they'd arrived at Mid-Pohangina Hut just on dark, finding no-one there. I pointed out that there was a high-level flood route between the swingbridge and the hut, so we asked them to search that, with someone re-checking the riverbed route in daylight, and then to continue to the Cattle Creek confluence to look for any indication that a lost party had mistakenly gone up there. Ten minutes later they radioed back. "Done that. Nothing here," Llew said. Hell's teeth! How could we possibly keep these guys occupied?

"Send them down the river," I suggested. "There's a gorge there that'll keep them busy for a while." We gave them 20 minutes to check down towards the gorge before calling in. 20 minutes later, on the dot, they called back.

"We're at grid reference 677234," Llew said. I checked it - they were well past the gorge. A shiver ran up my spine as I realised that, had I not already been crook, I'd have been slumped in the riverbed, delirious and twitching with fatigue. I had a sudden vision of Mick sprinting through the river leaving a wake worse than the Lynx, with Warren, tall and lean, stepping quick and crane-like from boulder-top to boulder-top in three-metre strides while Llew buzzed up, down and around everything like a blowfly homing in on the sound of an unbuckling trouser-belt. Dave and I looked at each other. He shrugged. "Send 'em on down the river," he said. There was nothing else to do. At least we'd have another 20 minutes before they reached Ashhurst.

Meanwhile Team 7 was searching up the river from Centre Creek. The previous evening another team had investigated that section of river, but, in the failing light, had decided that it was too risky to cross. I'd been surprised, because I knew the river was very low, and I'd carried a ridiculously heavy pack along that section a year ago. I suggested getting Team 7 to have another look. "It's MUAC and PNTMC," I said confidently, knowing that Sherman and Ruth (both MUAC) were highly experienced and



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capable, and having great faith in our own John. "Send them up. They'll manage it." Sure enough, they called back to say that it was a bit awkward, but possible.

Ruth fell in. Later, she told me about it, and about how in other places she'd had to crawl along logs and balance on slimy boulders.

"You know how possums hyperventilate when you're holding them by their tails and trying to measure them?" she said.

"Yep. I'd hyperventilate too if someone grabbed me by the tail."

"Well," she said, ignoring me, "that's how I felt a lot of the time."

Further up the river they met the typhoon trio - momentarily. "When I looked up a few seconds later, they were disappearing around a bend miles downriver," she said.

We were now sure that one of the parties must be up Centre Creek having somehow mistaken it for the main Pohangina. I studied the map, trying to think topologically rather than topographically. Then it clicked. The three parties had arrived at Centre Creek bivvy together, before separating, with one intending to go to "the next hut up the river". But there are two tracks to the bivvy. One climbs from the Pohangina, from the downriver side, and that was presumably the way they'd arrived at the bivvy. The other approaches from the opposite direction, but instead of joining the Pohangina, it descends first to Centre Creek. The map shows the track system both inadequately and incorrectly, and an inexperienced party leaving the bivvy by the upriver track could easily have mistaken Centre Creek for the Pohangina.

We needed teams up there, and we were also concerned because we'd just found out that the hunter had gone up Centre Creek that morning. One of the teams had radioed in to tell us about him, and that they'd heard three shots fired. Three shots? Three shots evenly spaced in a minute is a recognised distress signal. We asked how far apart the shots were. Over roughly a quarter of an hour, we were told. Several teams later met the hunter, and asked what he'd shot. "Bambi's mother," he replied. He'd seen no sign of anyone up Centre Creek, and we began to question our logic. However, when we later spoke to Graham and Janet, the lost party, they told us how on their way out they'd seen the hunter's bootprints less than a foot away from one of their own perfectly-formed, obvious prints. I guess that what you see depends on what you're looking for.

In the event, we simply ran out of time to find Graham and Janet. Not even Mick, Llew and Warren would have had time to have searched properly up the creek, and although I guessed where they were - probably stymied by the waterfall about an hour upstream - it would have been contrary to the objectives of the exercise to have told them to sprint up there ignoring a proper search for sign. Instead, we left them low down in the Creek with instructions to wait until the last minute in the hope of intercepting the lost party on the way out. And that was exactly what happened.... well, not quite. We got a radio call soon after one o'clock. "This is Lost Party Two," said the voice. "We have found Search Team One."

The other lost party was more difficult, but ironically, after failing to find Graham and Janet despite being sure of their whereabouts, we succeeded in finding this party. We knew only that they'd gone up the track from Centre Creek bivvy to Takapari Road and had intended to "loop back to the car". The breakthrough came when the Police Team searching Takapari Road found bootprints, an apple core and a half-eaten marmite sandwich (with marmite in it, no wonder it was only half eaten). They followed the prints into the bush and down a spur. Shortly after, we received a radio call. After giving their grid reference, the caller said, "We have news for you. We have with us a "Charles" and a "Dianna", but have yet to locate Camilla." We roared with laughter, and someone from one of the teams listening in responded with an unrepeatable quip that had us roaring all over again.

To conclude, the SAREX was a superb social event combined with an intense learning exercise. Many lessons were specific to Search and Rescue; many were invaluable for tramping; and many were applicable in any circumstance. As an example of the last, I really enjoyed occasional positive comments - a simple statement like "That's a good point", or just being asked for an opinion is wonderfully encouraging, and it was an excellent lesson for me to realise how powerful they are.

Big thanks to everyone for making it such a success. To all the PNTMC people for flying the club flag so well; in particular to Terry for organising the scenario and Warren for saving me from a nightmare of exhaustion; to those wild, energetic and super-efficient police; to all the people from other clubs throughout the lower

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North Island; to the DoC for the Field Centre... lists like this always carry the risk of offending someone inadvertently omitted so apologies for any inadvertent omissions (and there are no deliberate omissions). Finally, a recommendation: when you next have an opportunity to take part in a SAREX, go for it!

*We were:* John Barnett, Peter Burgess, Terry Crippen, James Gordon, Mick Leyland, Graham Peters, Llew Pritchard, Warren Wheeler, Janet Wilson, and Pete McGregor

#### GORGE WALK

26th March by Duncan Hedderley

Five of us (Leader Janet Wilson, Monica Cantwell, Pete McGregor, Kerry Brown and this reporter) had a pleasant morning walking the Manawatu Gorge Track at the end of March. Janet wanted to make an early start, so we gathered in the carpark at the western end of the Gorge at 8:15. The weather was cool and overcast but, as Monica pointed out, 'good for tramping'. Most of the way we had the track to ourselves; a few runners passed us (including Mick Leyland, who first came from the Palmerston direction, and then about half an hour later from the Woodville end – that man is depressingly fit) but we only encountered one family group who were coming up the long gentle climb from the eastern end as we were coming down. Then into Janet's station wagon, back to the western carpark, and home in time for the long-range weather forecast. I'm not sure the FMC would approve (no terror, death or character-forming adversity), but not a bad way to spend a Sunday morning

#### KAHUTERAWA LOOP

16 April by Terry Crippen

This was a variation of the trip that was scheduled for March. It took us into the edge of the PN water reserve - the Kahuterawa part that doesn't collect water - an area that has a lot of recreation potential, but PNCC has in the past kept quiet about it. Its called Hardings Park, its very close to town, its a large area of regenerating native bush, with stream and ridge travel of various difficulty, joins the Tararua Forest Park and has potential for east - west crossings.

Starting from Black Bridge we headed up though the Pine plantation with its foam-rubber padded

trees - for mad mountain bikers! Once up on the ridge we skirted round the edge of the farm land (don't forget to get permission from the farmer) and headed down a steep bush covered ridge called Jacob's Ladder into the Kahuterawa Stream. The stream gives good travel. Once past Ross Creek there is the odd little waterfall and bluff that needs scrambling around. About a km and a half before Black Bridge there is a newly cut rough track on the true right. This can be used as an alternative to continuing the whole way down the stream. The loop took us about four hours.

The track is being cut by Ian Argyle (a local Council Ward committee member) with a bit of help last year by T.C. It follows a paper road (which goes all the way to the water reserve), the lower section of which was formed into a six foot wide road in the 1890's. The plan is to make this formed section into a walkway for access up river for easier walks. For the rest, the plan is to make it a tramping track for access into the Kahuterawa part of the water reserve.

The three of us who went were Pete McGregor, Ross Fletcher and me.

#### NELSON LAKES EASTER - ANZAC W/END

20 -25 April by Terry Crippen

Having sprained my ankle on an earlier PNTMC trip over Mole Tops, I had never got to Blue Lake (the rest of that party did). So I have been wanting to get there for years. This time seven of us were heading there.

Nigel, Christine, Barry, Chris and I headed down for a 5:30 Ferry crossing, while Nigel (yes there are 2 of them) and Jo travelled independently via Owen River. The following morning an 8am water taxi saved a long walk up Lake Rotoroa. After much discussion, we decided to go the whole way up to Blue Lake the first day seeing the weather was great and it would give us an extra day up our sleeve to attempt Mt Franklin (the highest peak in the area). Lots of people in the area, but we still managed a bunk each in the hut - except for Nigel who stuck his tent up by the lake to avoid the snores at night.

The second day, fine and clear (the weather forecast as it turned out was bang on each day), so

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off to climb Franklin. Its a straight forward route: 10 minutes back down the main track, cross the river into open forest, to the foot of the stream draining the basin, up the scree gut next to the falls and into the scree basin, up to the start of the SW shoulder via the obvious curving scree gully, thus avoiding all the spikes on the ridge, and on to the summit.

Easter Eggs on top. The summit tin can contained may years of ascent names dating back to the 1950's - included John Barkla, Julian Darfield, Carol Cullen and other PNTMC members at the time who were on the sprained ankle trip. The descent was less enjoyable than the ascent with the painful partially-mobile in-between size scree rubble: too big to move freely on but too small to use as stepping stones.

More Easter eggs, lots of food (both ours and others in the hut who had excess self-saucing steam puds etc), and more Easter eggs.

The weather had deteriorated overnight, and glimpses of fresh snow could be seen on the peaks through the murk in the morning. This day was our rest day (and our rain day): more eating of Easter eggs, a gentle walk up to Lake Constance, lots of talk, and lots of planning of future trips. Nigel made a solo exit back down the Sabine to get out a day earlier as he had the back ends of a herd of cows to inspect at a mate's farm at Owen River.

The next day the rest of us were the first lot up and away (most of the other trampers were very late starters by PNTMC standards) [*or is that TC standards Terry?* - Ed.], so that we would be the first into the narrow scree gut of Moss Pass. A pleasant sun shower of snow greeted us on our way up, before the long steep decent into the

D'Urville. We decided to do most of the length down valley (to Morgans Hut), to make the last day a short walk down to the lake. Although the D'Urville looks long and dreary on the map its actually nicer than the Sabine with quite a few open clearings. Above us snow had continued to fall to just below the bush line - but we only needed parkas on for about an hour. We had Morgans Hut to ourselves that night - an excellent fine and clear evening.

The last day was a relaxed late start and wander down to D'Urville Hut on the lake shore to await the water taxi. The walk should have been relaxed, but we had wasps! The little shitters were quite aggressive this time of the year. We disturbed a couple of nests and there were a few lone stingers elsewhere. We got 9 stings total - the boys that is (Nigel, Barry, Chris, Terry), while the girls (Christine and Jo) were left untouched? Good use was made of antihistamine cream which we applied straight away after each sting.

Off in the water taxi and back to the seaside resort of Rotoroa. Six of us squeezed into the vehicle and headed off to Owen River to see if Nigel had done his vet work and to drop of Jo.

The return trip to PN was in the usual style; a stop off at the first pub for a drink and a wee feed, a call into Nigel's Dad in Blenheim, more eating in Picton, the 9:30pm ferry (one hour late), a snooze on the boat (with some solid pitching due to the southerly swell - in which one of us lost some of their dinner?), then the early morning drive north, getting home about 4am.

The seven of us were: Barry Scott, Nigel Scott, Nigel Hough, Christine Cheyne, Chris Underwood, Jo Cuthbert, Terry Crippen.

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