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# PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

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P.O. BOX 1217, PALMERSTON NORTH

## Bumper Spring Newsletter - November 2000

### TRIP REPORTS

An historic, mythical story from the Tukituki  
Tukino and Tama  
Night SAREX, Tokomaru, and Blue Range  
Kelly Knight Hut

Labour Weekend at;- Kauharangi National Park

- Whanganui Bay

- Taranaki

- *Two Southern Crossings of the Tararua Ranges*  
(with map).

### COLOUR SUPPLEMENT!

### CLUB NIGHTS

NOVEMBER 9	“BYO slides and photos”	Whoever wants to
NOVEMBER 30	“Alaskan Wildlife”	Yvonne van Leeuwen
DECEMBER 7	Committee meeting	(and BBQ) Janet Wilson’s house, Pohangina
DECEMBER 14	End of year Barbeque” (with awards)	By the Committee

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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*Ruapae Lake, Island, & forest.* [Tony Gates]

2-3 Dec Ruapae Lake E  
Tony Gates 357-7439

This is probably one of the nicest spots in the southern North Island for podocarp forest and native bird life. It's about 3 hours tramping to the lake, where we camp for the night in a choice spot, and explore the Ruamahanga and river. The lake is not far from Roaring Stag Lodge.

3 Dec (Sun) Pines- Mitre Flats M  
(new leader) Peter Darrah 358-8744

Depart 7.30am. We will go up the sidle track to the Mitre Flats for lunch and return with a rock hop down the Waingawa River, with the odd pool to cross. Come along for an early summer swim on what is planned to be a lovely sunny day.

9 Dec (Sun) Outdoor first aid revalidation  
Diane Siegenthaler 357-7237

A follow up course for the training weekend up the Pohangina Valley last month, requiring a current MSC outdoor certificate (less than 2 years old) Contact Dianne. Good value.

7 Dec Thursday trampers  
John Stantial 354-5521

## 7 Dec Committee Meeting.

9- 10 Dec Ruapehu Climb M, T  
Terry Crippen 356-3588

Depart Fri night to stay at Ohakune. Climbing on Ruapehu to compliment Glaciercraft. "Do your own thing" on the Turoa side of the mountain. Then camp (weather permitting) on the slopes adjacent to the Mangaehuehu glacier to join Sundays glacier craft. Equipment required.

10 Dec (Sun) Glaciercraft M, T  
Bruce Van Brunt 328-4761

The Glaciercraft course will take place on the Mangaehuehu Glacier, on the high southern slopes of Mt Ruapehu. It will join up with Terry's trip. It is a one day introduction to glacier travel, and is essential for those contemplating heading into the glacier country of the Southern Alps. This is open to those who have the requisite alpine skills, such as those taught on Snowcraft 2 and 3. Ice and rope equipment essential. The departure time will be early



*Glacier travel, Tasman Glacier, 1910. It's probably Freda du Faur, with Peter Graham.* [courtesy of Guy Mannering, from "The peaks and passes of JRD", 1999]

10 Dec Beehive Creek E  
Duncan Hedderly 356 1078, or 350 4351 (w)

Depart PN 8.30 for a pleasant walk along the creek, through secluded farmland, then either return via the road, or we retrace our steps. A nice break from pre Christmas chaos. Attendance at River Safety not compulsory.

14 Dec Thursday Trampers  
Xmas, Castlepoint

14 Dec Club Night, BBQ, Ashhurst  
Domain. 6.00pm till dark. Yes, its the end of year

BBQ time again. A great chance to relax and rave over coming summer trips and share tall stories arising from past Club trips and other activities throughout the year. BYO food and drink, as well as a small gift (about \$2) for a pre-Christmas treat. Mr Snow will also appear. Those with a gas BBQ please bring them. Awards for doing "Interesting" things will issued. Suggestions for there to the committee please. To arrange transport or other details contact Warren 356 1998 or Terry 356 3588.

16 Dec (Sat) Titahi Bay Rock All  
Laurence Gatehouse 356-5805

Near Wellington, on seacliffs of fairly sound rock. Depart 9.00 from Foodtown, do a bit of climbing, and burn out those finger muscles, before a possible swim and a search for an icecream shop. The trip is aimed at beginners. All the routes are bolted and we will be top roping (ie safety first). We will be supplying gear (at reasonable rates). Anyone with more experience is welcome to come along.

#### EXTENDED SUMMER TRIPS

**Important: Please let trip leaders know of your wish to join up well in advance.**

Late Dec- Jan Matemateonga or Egmont M  
Malcolm Parker 357-5203

4 day tramp along the Matemateonga Range, following the surveyed road. A good track, with some great views from Mt Humphrey.

Jan 2001 Godley- Sibald- D'Archiac F,T  
Peter Wiles 358-6894

A party of four is planning to head into the Godley Valley on January 20<sup>th</sup>, for about 10 days climbing. Possible peaks of interest are; Sibbald,

D'Archiac, McClure, and peaks on the divide south of Sealy Pass.

12- 26 Jan 2001. Wanganui- Whitcombe F  
Tony Gates 357 7439

A trans alpine West Coast trip, helicoptering in, climbing, then tramping out.

13- 14 Jan PNTMC 2001 M  
Warren Wheeler 356 1998

14 Jan Centre Ck, bush bash .M/F  
Janet Wilson 329 4722

**25 Jan Club Night, BBQ, Horseshoe Bend**

#### Trip participants:

If you are interested in 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 carpooling. A charge for transport will be collected on the day of the trip, the amount depending on the distance travelled. 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 coordinators Terry Crippen (356-3588), Janet Wilson (329-4722) or David Grant (357-8269).

**Trip leaders:** Please discuss with the trip coordinators, as soon as possible if there is any doubt that you will be unable to run your trip. 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

STAND-IN EDITOR OCTOBER/NOVEMBER...

**Tony Gates, ably assisted by Warren Wheeler, has looked after the November edition of the newsletter while I am away. So please note the following temporary arrangements:**

#### NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

Until John returns on 7<sup>th</sup> November, please send articles to Tony Gates at horizons.mw, at 15 Victoria Ave. This is the same street address as John's work, but e-mailed stuff should be sent to Tony's e-mail address, *not* John's:

tony.gates@horizons.govt.nz

We'd prefer you 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 type it directly into the e-mail.

#### NEW MEMBER

Welcome to Vivienne Nicholls, of 7 Moheke Ave, P.N. Ph 359 4326. Happy tramping.

#### WANTED TO BUY

- Ladies leather boots, size 7- 7.5. Must be new condition. Phone Monica, 326 9691

- Kiddies backpack (for younger than one year). Payment negotiable. Phone Tony, 357 7439, or 025 246 1901.

#### WEDNESDAY WANDERERS

Would you like to come and join our easy and friendly group of trampers? We go out for day walks on the second and fourth Wednesdays each month, departing PN at 8.00 AM. For further information, you can phone; Judy 357 0192  
Jennifer 323 3914  
June 355 2690

#### NEXT TRIP CARD

Terry, Janet, and Dave have worked hard on our next Trip Card, and appreciate the assistance from trip leaders and speakers at club nights. They say that we have some excellent trips coming up next summer. The January- June 2001 Trip Card will be issued with the December Newsletter.

#### RUAHINE USER GROUP MEETING, 18 Oct

Some club members recently attended the DOC user groups meeting, to discuss issues related to the Ruahine Ranges. The meeting was successful, ending with a positive atmosphere, and DOC stressing that they do care, and do listen to users concerns. All of their recreational facilities came up to scratch, but work is required on Crow and McKinnon Huts. Some huts will have their "Corker Cookers" repaired. The Kawhatau cage is of concern, due to the problems when operating it solo. DOC considered its operation to be quite hazardous sometimes. Tracks are to be maintained as previously, with windfalls etc tidied up during summer. Still, DOC appreciate any feedback from facility users.

#### EDITORIAL By Tony Gates

Another reasonably sizeable Newsletter, which is a credit to the contributors and PNTMC. Email and digital images make things much easier for the Editor. The colour supplement is enclosed because the weather, scenery, and trips were so wonderful, as you can see. It is a pity that the snow on "Needle" pixollated, but the final result is never really known. Colour won't be a permanent feature.

Thanks heaps to John, for assisting with training me, all of the contributors, and Peter for distribution. Keep up the good work of recording your exploits. Enjoy this edition.

#### BOOK REVIEW

BY TONY GATES

S-K. Accounts of weekend, two day, and 24 hour Schormann- Kaitoke (or Putara Kaitoke) traverses of the Tararuas, via the Main Range, Tarn Ridge, the rivers, and in reverse!

Compiled from Tramping Club Publications by Lindsay Cuthbertson, Wellington Tramping and Mountaineering Club/ Cuthbertson Enterprises, (2000), third edition

In our December 1997 Newsletter, I reviewed the first edition of this lovely little book. Now, the third edition, with a few updates, is available. It is in the same, user friendly format, with a soft cover, half A4 paper stapled, and unfortunately, no photographs. There is however a delightful "line profile" of the entire main range route, dramatically showing the climbs and descents that one must do to complete the route.

There are numerous articles, by a wide variety of authors, of tramping (or attempting to) tramp the length of the Tararua Ranges. Many articles have the same sort of theme, starting with a brief introduction to this famous tramp, then writing about the problems encountered en route. Many place names familiar to us are mentioned, and many familiar weather patterns. I particularly enjoyed reading about how people felt, as they covered vast distances, and entered various states of exhaustion. I thought that the variety of authors really helped to make it a special book, representing a vital piece of tramping, and Tararua, history. Compelling reading.

Trevor Bissell, Kevin Pearce, Peter. Darragh (plus) did the route in 1977. They recorded the trip (reprinted Aug 2000 in this Newsletter). I am pleased to see that their story has finally made it into the book.

#### TRIP REPORTS

"THE WIZARDS' APPRENTICE'S"- Tukituki-Hinerua, 25 May 1980 Anon

Once upon a time, a wizard sent his six apprentices into the lofty ranges so that they might demonstrate their magic powers.

He watched them from afar in his crystal ball as they walked up a wide river valley, the floor of which was strewn with stones of all sizes. A

small stream rushed happily from side to side of the valley, and cooled the legs of the apprentices as they crossed.

Soon, they were climbing up a great ridge covered in bush. They began to sweat, as their toil was great. Apprentice Terry conjured up a wind, which cooled the small band, refreshing them. But alas, when they left the shelter of the bush, the wind grew stronger, and they shivered with cold. Terry lost 2 marks.

The mists descended, and they feared they might lose their way. Apprentice Trevor took a piece of clear plastic, and fashioned a magic device with a red needle that always pointed to the north. They climbed on with confidence. But alas, the mists thickened, and the red needle pointed in all sorts of strange directions. Trevor lost 2 marks.

Apprentice Don spoke forth: "I have fashioned a device which tells us how high we are. We can go on without fear, and when we reach the top of mighty Ohuinga, this device will read 1690 metres, and we will then know to turn right and follow the path which will lead down". But alas, the device read 1800 metres when they were still climbing steeply with no path to their right. Don lost 2 marks.

A clearing in the mist showed them the way, and they strode on for, covering a great distance. The leaders paused on a grassy hill, so that they might allow the others to catch up. To their surprise, they spied Carol far ahead. This cunning apprentice had conjured up a track around the hill, and had sneaked around unobserved. 2 marks off for using magic for personal gain.

Apprentice Kevin worried that he had not yet demonstrated his powers. "I will create infallibility" he thought, 'I will make myself infallible, will not make mistakes, then all our problems shall be solved". However, the burden of infallibility fell heavily on his shoulders, and they bowed under the strain. He sought to share this burden, but in doing so, became guilty of "passing the buck". He lost 2 marks.

Apprentice Peter became tired, and conjured up a hut where they could rest under shelter and make tea. But alas, when the tea was brewed, there were not enough cups for all to partake in this energy restoring nectar. Peter lost 2 marks.

Score- 2 all

The Apprentices were: Terry Crippen, Trevor Bissell, Don French, Carol Cullen, Kevin Pearce, and Peter Wiles.

Now, some more recent PNTMC excursions.....

DEREK'S DEEDS. 26- 28 Sept 2000

The Kaimanawa Ranges recently gained considerable media attention when a father and son nearly succumbed to hypothermia, then were rescued. It was an impressive blizzard, and equally impressive work to save them. They weren't the only ones in the storm. Derek Sharp, and his young mate Morgan, attempted to reach Whangaehu Hut, and failed. They spent two days and nights stuck in their tiny car. The road, trail, and Whangaehu Hut were all. Derek arrived back home without his car!

Terry and Tony tried to rescue the car a few days later, to find one rear wheel brake hub frozen by rust. The car remained there!

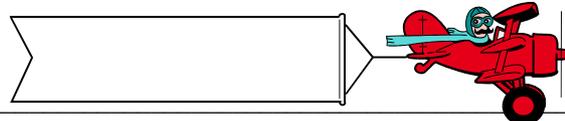
Derek then tried to recover his car. He needed to hitch hike the Desert Road, then bash the brake drum with a sledge hammer.

When Derek takes his car next time.....

TONYS TRIALS. 16 Sept, Terry Crippen

The weather had been awful, was going to be awful, and actually was awful. From Waiouru, we followed the Tukino road past Derek's abandoned car till we encountered a humungous snow drift. We kitted out the 4WD with two pairs of chains, ploughed in, and promptly got stuck in deep, wet snow! What a job to dig ourselves out. A passing Barry Crump type Toyota 4WD enjoyed being given the opportunity to tow us out.

No climbing that weekend!



*Tony got the car properly stuck in a snow drift!  
That's Terry with the snow shovel.*

[anonymous Barry Crump type person]

LAND SAR NIGHT NAVIGATION EXERCISE,  
4 Oct By Janet Wilson

After a short delay at the PN Police Station while they hunted for a suitable vehicle, we drove out in the back of a prison van- a less than comfy metal box. Five of us were from PNTMC, and five from MTSC, doing the land SAR night navigation exercise in Gordon Kear Forest, Tokomaru.

We were divided into a PNTMC team of; Mick, Llew, and Graham, a MTSC team, and a mixed one of Terry, Jean, Royce, and Janet. There were other teams from the Levin area, and a Police team. We were supplied with a good orienteering map of the area. The idea was to locate a series of ten check points, each with a compass bearing leading to the next one. We were also given a description of each checkpoint, eg fence junction. We headed off at intervals of approximately 5 minutes, Terry and the girls being the first away. An enthusiastic team, we were determined not to be caught by the following teams, and aided somewhat (quite a lot really) by Royce's orienteering skills. We wasted no time. Plenty of swamps, hills, and fallen trees to negotiate- heaps of fun. We completed the course in about 2.5 hours, with the next team about half an hour behind us. The exercise was finished by 11.00 PM A great opportunity to learn new skills, and for some to brush up on old ones. Thanks to the Police for organising this exercise.

By Mary Crow

After days (in fact weeks) of miserable wet windy weather capped off by a cold southerly blast, the forecast for the weekend seemed to good to be

true. Unconvinced it could really be that kind of trip, and with the possibility of thigh deep snow at McKinnon Hut, leader Mick altered the venue to a gentle amble up the Poroungaki River to have a "party at Kelly Knight Hut". Having not carried a weekend pack for longer than I care to remember, or ventured into the Ruahines recently, I wasn't arguing with the easier option.

The guys had decided to take their rifles, while I hauled in a bottle of fine vino and the daily newspaper. Jenny brought some lovely biscuits and cheese, as well as a good book.

We drove up the Kawhatau Valley to gorgeous views of the snow covered tops, and dropped Tony and his toys (rifle, GPS, etc) off at the track to Purity hut. The rest of us crossed the farmland, and set off on the bush track to Kelly Knight Hut. Llew soon peeled off down to the river to check out the wildlife, while Jenny and I enjoyed a leisurely pace up the track. We noted the side creeks were in full flow, and there was good bird life, and some delightful flowers in the damp hollows- *anisotome sp.* I think. Mick damaged his pride somewhat with his first party trick, by trying to protect his dry feet, jumping a creek, and ending up face first in the drink! Later, he headed up the ridge to Iron Peg for a hunt, possibly to rendezvous with Tony. Jenny and I boiled the billy at the hut and soaked up some sun on the hut deck. C'est la vie!!

The weather was too good to let pass, so we headed up the ridge towards Poroungaki Trig for two hours. It was a pleasant climb, with views over to Mt Ruapehu, Iron and Wooden Pegs, and up to the jagged, snow covered profile of Sawtooth Ridge at the head of the valley. Above the bush, the snow was much thicker, and just right for walking on. We turned back just short of the trig, rolling on down to the hut to meet the others. No venison for dinner, but nobody complained, with the good wine and port, plus the usual interesting combinations of tramping dinners. Also, many tales were spun, truthful or otherwise, of huts, tracks, trips, designer outdoor stuff, and hut snorers. This usual hut talk progressed under a starry sky to the mumble of the still swollen Poroungaki River. Someone even had a selection of fine Dutch cigars for those game enough to sample. A very pleasant evening, thus christened "party at Kelly Knights"

Keen hunters Llew and Tony were up with the birds and off, while the rest of us slumbered in to a more respectable hour. When they returned, coffee, porridge, muesli, the remainder of yesterday's "Dom" and port were enjoyed for breakfast (not, I might add, by all the trip members). We then cleaned up, and made our

way back to the cars after a few photo stops. We were back home in time for a few weekend jobs.

Party goes; Tony Gates, Mick Leyland, Jenny Pritchard, Llew Pritchard, and Mary Craw.



*"The Gang of Three" relaxing outside Kelly Knight Hut Poroungaki Valley. Mick Leyland, Jenny Pritchard, Llew Pritchard.*

[Tony Gates]

BLUE RANGE Oct 16 By Duncan Hedderly

As we drove out to the Kiriwhakapapa road end (Just south of Ekatahuna), we saw plenty of sign of the recent flooding. Water was lying in the fields, muddy bits of vegetation hung from the fence wires, and the bridge south of Pahiatua was shut where the flood had disturbed one of the piers. Fortunately, there wasn't much damage in the area of Blue Range and Reef Creek itself, where we were going tramping.

Richard had decided to follow the first part of Warren's famous (notorious?) Mid Fold Traverse. The first part of the route left the Blue Range track, then followed Reef Creek for a way. There were occasional crossings when there was no longer any clear space on the stream bank. We

then headed up a spur, which was good revision of the navigation skills from Terry's instruction-day last year.

Alot of stuff up the spur must have been blown down in storms over the years. It was in various stages of brittle decay, and almost everyone had a couple of incidents where trees they were holding onto for support or leverage gave way. At the top of the spur we turned left and headed for the hut through a good example of wind-blown Tararua 'goblin forest'.

The hut is owned by Masterton Tramping Club. It is adorned with notices from Masterton hospital including "Tow Away Zone" "Psychiatric Clinic" and "Only two visitors per bed".

It was quite windy up there, and my wet feet were getting cold. I was glad the decent was along a more formal track, through an interesting succession of vegetation. It descends through goblin forest, then with several impressive ratas, some with mistletoe, then mature redwoods.

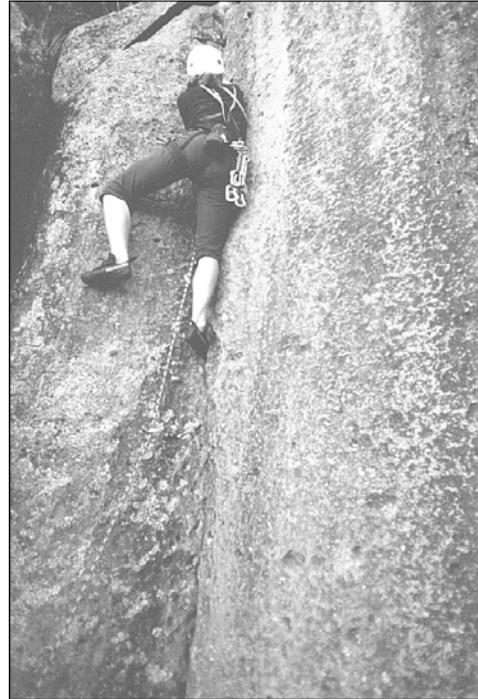
Richard Lockett (leader), Warren Wheeler, Monica Cantwell, and Duncan Hedderley.

WHANGANUI BAY ROCK CLIMB, 21/ 22 Oct  
by Pete McGregor

I'd never been to Whanganui Bay before, but knew it by its reputation, so when C suggested the trip I never hesitated. We arrived late on Saturday and set up camp in the warm evening: too late to do a climb, but we were first on the cliffs the next morning.

Our first climb was *Helen* (16). C led, I seconded and had to resort to resting on the rope to clean her wires from the crack. After S came up, we moved to the foot of *Ego Trip* (18) and I led my first climb at the Bay; a beautiful, angled 11 metre crack with a mixture of face moves, jamming and a mantle, with superb placements for wires. We finished the morning with *Moss Corner* (17), then retired to camp. Later in the afternoon we did three bolted climbs on the Plateau, all pockets and features, all around grade 16-18. I found the grades soft compared to Mangatepopo; the Whanganui climbs, particularly the bolted routes, seemed distinctly easier.

On Monday we played on a couple of climbs on the main wall (Whekenui), but our fingertips were tender and I felt mostly climbed-out. Out of curiosity we fiddled around near the crux on the lower part of *Lepton man* (24). I managed the first few moves, but at the time I felt that anything more was well beyond my level of motivation. Nearby, two young guys with acne and acute testosterone poisoning were working a bolted arete. I had to admire their persistence - the way they worked the climb and made steady progress, gradually developing the right sequences. I think they eventually succeeded.



“C” on “Helen”, Whanganui Bay [Pete McGregor]

We pushed on to a little inlet, where I was shamed into diving into the water. It felt like liquid nitrogen. I immediately swam to shore and clambered out, my blood turning to ice both literally and figuratively as I watched C swim and dive and float and S turn graceful somersaults. If I hadn't already been chilled to the bone, the sight of people deliberately staying in that water would have done it. I was nearly numb after just a few seconds' immersion, and it took several minutes before I finally began to warm up. Utter lunacy.

Just before we left we visited the waterfall. Mid-afternoon, an amphitheatre of bush, the falls in shade, roaring, awesome, sending a spray-mist curling and drifting into the sun. Freezing, bone-aching water. On the beach in the sun, S sat cross-legged and straight-backed, eyes closed. I slouched, and C lay face down. No one spoke. A piwakawaka chattered in shrubs behind us. Higher up, the long-drawn haunting call of pipiwharauoa, the unmistakable sound of October. Spray curled out over the water like a veil, as if the darkness behind was filled with kehua. I wanted to write something profound in the damp sand just beyond the water's edge, but everything was too immediate and the words wouldn't form. Eventually I wrote something - five words scratched in black sand, and perhaps no-one will ever read them. It doesn't matter - what was important was that it seemed the right

thing to do, the best gift I could offer to the land and its people.

The drive back up the road was easier than I'd been expecting. The Corolla powered up the deeply rutted, pot-holed track, bouncing and banging, with C and S whooping and yelling, partly from excitement, and partly, I think, from relief that we were going to make it. Never mind the dust; never mind the dents in the muffler; we'd get home that day after all.

Now I realise why Whanganui Bay is so special to so many climbers. I'm haunted by moments I can't get out of my head - that I don't ever *want* out of my head. Seeing those famous climbs for the first time; wondering how it might be possible to make it up *Black Scorpion*. Relaxing in the shade during the middle of the day and watching crazy climbers frying in the heat on *Tibia* and *James Stirling Direct*. Eating freshly-smoked trout in the evening - a gift from Mere's neice, who had seen us returning empty-plated and forlorn from the eaten-out hangi. On Sunday morning, shortly after dawn, I walked back to the car to collect some extra gear. No one else had risen; the air was warm, and running ahead of me on the dusty track I saw four Californian quail; beautiful, neat, fast little birds, their top-knots bobbing as they stopped and looked back at the quiet stranger. They burst into the air in a brief roar of wings before dropping into the scrub, leaving only footprints and a sense that I'd been gifted a glimpse of my past - quail were common where I grew up. More moments...

I think back to something C had asked me when we'd first arrived at the Bay and were walking down to the campsite. I'd just heard a quail calling; the evening lake lapped at the bush; great ignimbrite cliffs hung silent in the warm evening. She looked at me and said, "Do you feel blessed?" At the time I didn't know if it was the right description of how I felt; now I know I couldn't find better words.

[piwakawaka – fantail; pipiwharaua – shining cuckoo; kehua – ghosts]

THE THOUSAND ACRES. PLATEAU, Oct 19-24 2000  
By all the trip members.  
(refer colour page)

For those of you who are into rocks and geology, Kahurangi National Park is a great place to tramp



*Terry admiring the spectacular view of "The Devils Dining Table" from Haystack Peak. Larrikans Creek flows left.* [Tony Gates]

The flat elevated Thousand and Hundred Acre Plateaux ("The Devils Dining Table"), together with the Needle and Haystack, are relatively young, about 30 million years old - (ie, much younger than the 140 to 220 million year old greywacke rocks that make up the Ruahines and the Southern Alps). They are Tertiary age mudstones and limestones about the same age as the "papa" mudstones in the Taranaki and Taihape areas. While the limestones have plenty of sink holes in them they probably don't lead into useful caves since the limestone layer is thin and it is a muddy limestone (that's why it gave us slippery muddy surfaces to walk on). In contrast, the Mt Owen area nearby is a huge thick body of marble (metamorphosed limestone) and has very deep and long caves. The rocks on which the plateaux sit are very old. They are about 300 million years old; Paleozoic granite-like rocks that erode to give the characteristic course grained pink-white boulders and sand found in the Matiri valley. In other parts of Kahurangi National park there are even older rocks - some of the oldest rocks in New Zealand - 500 million or more years old, including the Trilobite fossil rocks of the Cobb Valley.

By comparison, the glaciations that moulded much of the South Island began about 2 million years ago and finished about 10,000 years ago

As for recreation in Kahurangi National Park, there are tremendous possibilities. The terrain is vast and beautiful, with some of the best native bird life and flora in NZ. The popular Heaphy, Wangapeka, Cobb, and Mt Arthur/ Karamea tracks absorb most of Kahurangi's visitors, but

there are numerous seldom visited corners like the Thousand Acres Plateau.

On day one, we sweated and cruised our way past Lake Matiri and Poor Petes Hut. Gorgeous country, views, and weather.



*Limestone bluffs of "The Devils Dining Table", Mohikinui Catchment.* [Martin Lawrence]

Day two saw us crossing the Thousand Acres Plateau, resting at Larrikins Creek Hut, then camping out on a most delightful tussock ledge beneath "The Needle". We needed to cringe from the fierce sunshine for much of the day. An evening climb of "The Needle" gave us all a lasting impression of the vast and rugged National Park named Kauharangi, -"The Jewell"

Day three gave us another dose of "mainland sunshine". At least we had morning shade as we grunted up "The Haystack". Awesome, the views of Kauharangi go on forever. A very stylish morning brew was had in the snow as we lazed around the summit. The descent to the north was not easy- steep tussock, bluffs, and Spaniard

grasses. There were even some large crevasses in the land, as nature showed us how mountainsides can move to start landslides.

The heat was fair blasting down as we cruised over the easy tussock tops. Several times, I felt my body was going to expire. Fortunately, there were patches of snow under our sun hats and into our water bottles. At one point, we erected the fly for shade, and sat on a patch of snow guzzling cool drinks. While Terry and Stephen continued on to a low col in the cool of the beech forest, Tony and Martin took a fast, sweaty side trip down to Haystack Hut. Somewhere along the ridge, we dropped down toward Lake Jeanette & the Matiri River, a bush bash that was to prove both exciting and frustrating. After encountering bluffs, we navigated our way with some difficulty to eventually gain the valley floor. Boy was I knackered! From the bottom, it appeared that a person would have a 50% chance of getting bluffed on the descent, so we didn't do too badly. We established a very comfy camp on a Matiri tributary river flat, and restored our energy with a "Crippen special"- triple portions of pasta and numerous brews.

The map showed us that our retreat down the Matiri Valley was quite a long way. It was! We firstly tramped up valley to visit the very attractive Lake Jeanette, and Hurricaine Hut, noting several familiar names in the log book. Back to camp, lunch was a lazy, drawn out affair. Some stiflingly hot tussock hollows, then lovely *Dracophyllum* forest, before the rather long, frustrating river sidle track to McChonachies Hut. The Matiri River featured some massive earthquake dams and lakes.

On our last day, despite being a little footsore, we tramped rapidly down valley to Lake Matiri, then the car. We paused frequently for even more photography of this lovely place.

Terry Crippen, Martin Lawrence, Stephen Liddall, and Tony Gates

QUOTE, from Harlety Betts, Henry Peak, Pouakai Range, Oct. 2000. Refer colour page.

*"I got up at 4.30 AM to see and photograph the first light of the new day, with the dark outline reflected beautifully in the tarn. All the colours of the rainbow were visible in the twilight sky, from red on the horizon, through to yellow, pale green,*

*blue, then dark bluish- indigo through to black overhead, all studded with twinkling still visible stars. I wish I could get up at this time every morning... it's the most wonderful part of any day I reckon.*

TARARUA SOUTHERN CROSSING, EAST-WEST, 21- 23 Oct. Yuka Nakatsuka

We, two Kiwis, one German, and one Japanese, walked the Tararua Southern Crossing, from a wire bridge on Waiohine Gorge to Otaki Forks. The 3-day tramping was full of interesting natural environment, native bush, alpine plants, a clear river, a huge moth, and patchy snow on tops of mountains. The first day was a "relax day". We walked about 3 hours. After about one and a half hours "reasonably" steep climbing, there were "reasonably" steep down-hills. When we arrived at Cone Hut, "our knees were laughing (please just imagine that your knees are shaking)". Cone Hut is situated beside the Tauherenikau River, and is old and small. As we arrived at the hut about 3 o'clock, we had plenty of time to enjoy rest of the day at the riverside. We jumped into the river and had 2 cups of tea.

The second day was a bit hard. The day started crossing the Tauherenikau River. Fortunately, the river was not flooding. We, four of us, tighten together and cross the clear water. For tall Warren, the water level was about knee-height, and for rest of us, it was that "our shorts got wet a bit". Then, we took Bull Mound Track. With encouragement (?) from Kaka, we climbed about 700 meters and arrived at the top of Bull Mound. I could say it was one of peak moments of the tramping. We saw the steep track that we had already walked behind, and, tops of mountains with snow, which we would be in several hours later in front of us. After we passed Alpha Hut, the landscape became an alpine one. Bush disappeared. Instead, there was alpine plants like "mountain cabbage", "mountain carrot", "mountain cauliflower", and "mountain sheep". The track, Dress Circle, has many (more than 10) ups and downs. After about 8 hours walk, we finally arrived at Kime Hut. Though it was a lovely sunset, nobody in our group had energy to climb a hill again to enjoy it.

The third day was easy compared to the second.

Yuka Nakatsuka, Anneli Baehr, Christine Taylor and esteemed leader Warren Wheeler.

TARARUA SOUTHERN CROSSING, WEST-EAST 21-23 Oct. Laurence Gatehouse

We met up along with the East-West party in FoodTown carpark at 7.30am to distribute the gear, compare notes and swap keys etc. A theme for the weekend, for our party at least, was established by one car arriving just a little late (no names). Introductions were made and after a grunty session of getting rucsacs into boots and arranging little bags of clean clothes in the other end cars we set off at about eightish. We drove down to Otaki forks, five of us in Warren's ageing Renault, and a very nice car it is to drive too, while the other four set off in Gina's car for Wall's Whare (Wall's where? No no it is pronounced Far-ray. I have a real blind spot with that one) in behind Greytown.

At Otaki Forks we parked the car, got booted up, shouldered rucsacs and, after a brief visit to the last flush toilets we would see for a few days, set off over the bridge and up the first (and steepest I will swear) of the many climbs on the route to Kime hut. The party took about 10 yards to sort into the pattern which it took for most of the rest of the crossing namely Carol and Ann off at the front and Gina and me either up with them or at the back with June.

A little philosophical discussion on tramping, stopping, time and speed is needed here. There is a school of tramping (no names), fortunately little represented in PNTMC, which basically says; read the guide book to get the estimated time and then go out and beat it. In this school of tramping, unplanned stops are NOT ACCEPTABLE and woe betide those who cannot keep up, though surprisingly they do not seem to favour drink bladders over water bottles. I am of a more relaxed school which views each hour of tramping to consist of at least 10 minutes of stop and thinks nothing of beating the estimated times in the other sense (think about it). Extra stops (was that a Grey Warbler? I'll just get my binoculars out etc etc) are welcomed. June would be the first to admit she is not the fastest of trampers but (blush here June) she will not give in and as she later showed will get there in the end, which is what counts after all. Anyway what do you do with all that time you have left having beaten the time to the hut by whatever? Sit around and eat all that extra food you had to carry or play cards or something I expect.

Thus it was that we made steady progress under the hot sun of the first of a series of brilliant days, up to the little seat cut from a fallen tree short of Field hut where we broke for lunch. We had been passed by a steady stream of people apparently all heading for Kime and a report from someone coming down had us thinking of a night in a packed hut or even in the flysheet somewhere outside. Perhaps that was the explanation or is it the curse of Field hut? but as always seems to happen when we arrived there we were hot tired and an emergency brew up was called for. Ah tea. What more need I say? After Field, altitude was gained steadily, water was drunk in large amounts and the view steadily opened up. I'd wax lyrical about it if the view the next day hadn't been so outstanding. A surprising number of people were camping around about Kime but the hut was only half full which was a pleasant surprise. The campers had certainly chosen their day for it, beautiful weather, fairly still and a cracking sunset into the bargain. We settled into Kime hut and combined our resources to cook a massive meal topped off with a chocolate cream cake thing. We listened to Wellington beating Canterbury on a hunters light radio gadget and then passed a restful night (at least I did).



*Show me the way...*

[Laurence Gatehouse]

The next day was a ditto day on the weather front. We left about half eight, and toddled on up to the top of Mount Hector. The view was stunning. Wellington and the Hutt valley had a little low cloud, which soon burned off, and Kapiti was clear. The distance views were outstanding, with Ruapehu, Egmont, the Kaikouras, the Marlborough Sounds, the Nelson ranges and even Golden Bay. I could have stayed there for hours.

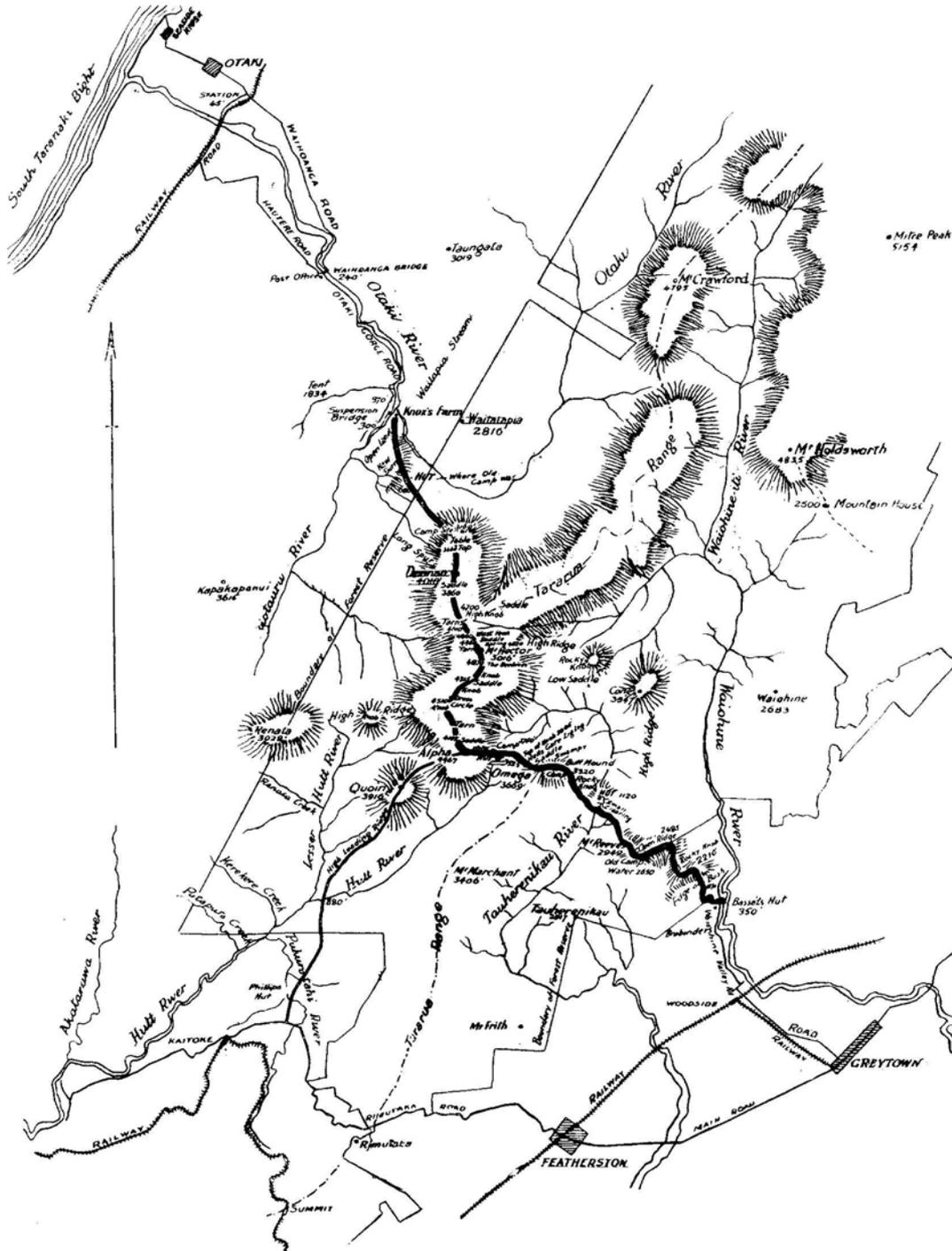
There were small patches of snow lying about. These had been nicely frozen when we set out, but they soon softened. A few plunges through the

hard surface into the mud underneath was enough for me. I avoided the snow after that. We made steady progress around the dress circle stopping for lunch at Alpha. Descending the far side, June and I well behind the other three, we met a man in a nylon shirt carrying nothing but a water bottle coming the other way. He was a friend of Tony Gates, to whom he sent greetings, one D'arcy Smytherone. We later found that he had made a great impression on Gina, Ann and Carol when he had passed them earlier, but the dashing D'arcy had carried on back up to the ridge to collect his pack leaving their romantic musings disappearing into the distance.

We met Warrens party just about at the bushline as we were descending, swapped keys and chatted a while then carried on, arriving at the very plush Alpha hut at about 3.00pm. Here tea was taken and a little planning undertook. We were running quite a lot later that I had planned. With dogs being picked up from kennels and people returning to work in Auckland for Tuesday morning, taking an extra day or having a long walk out on Monday was not a favourite option. After a little patching work on feet and refreshed by the tea we decided to push on to Cone hut as we had originally planned. We left Alpha hut at about 4.00pm and made quite good progress down the ridge and through Hells Gate, a vicious saddle of the down up variety, then turned left and made our way across Bull Mound. The descent on the far side of Bull Mound, of about 750 vertical meters was where things came a little unstuck. I split the party letting the faster ones go on ahead and stayed at the back keeping things going. Although we slowed nearly to a crawl we kept moving and ended doing the final hour by torchlight. The knee high fording of the river by torchlight was a new experience for me and the last bit to the hut was the only part where I was not confident of where I was going. We arrived at 9.30pm, a thirteen hour day, waaaaay too long for a medium trip. My fault, I had underestimated the time involved. Maybe it is a medium four day trip. The others had arrived about an hour earlier and there was another group of four at the hut which left nine of us in a hut built for six. Carol and Ann (the smallest) slept on some planks jammed into the roof beams and one of the other party had already staked out the space in front of the fire. People were too tired to cook and we drank water and ate biscuits etc before turning in to a great nights sleep.

The next day, apart from taping up blisters at the breakfast table, was a delight. The bush there is in pretty good nick (and is being used for a Weka release scheme which I hope prospers) and was

truly beautiful. We ended up making a late start (no names again) and took about three hours to



*The Southern Crossing of the Tararua Ranges- 1920's style!*

[Frank Penn, 1922]

get to the swing bridge over to Wall's Whare. Here we found Gina's car all OK and the toilets out of order with no water. We had been looking forward to a wash and were too stiff to want to make it down to the river, though I reckon I would have got back up again OK. The change of clothes

and an ice cream on the way back to Palmy were more than good enough though.

We were June, Gina, Carol, Ann and your scribe Laurence. Also many thanks to Warren for

agreeing to lead the East-West trip at short notice and thus making the transport plans so easy.



*Cone Hut, Tauherinakau Valley built 1946, renovated 1989* [Laurence Gatehouse]

PIRIPIRI CAVES, 29 Oct By Chris Taylor  
Graham promised us a day of dark, confined spaces, wetas and wriggling round on rocks and in mud and water and he was right. Just the combination of factors for an excellent day out.

Three cave-beginners (me, Yuka and Yoko), a cave-intermediate (Warren) and our experts Janet and Graham met at the Piripiri Caves. We limbered up in Bridge Cave, not much of a cave, but interesting all the same. Onto Sump Cave for the glow worm experience. We all crawled to the end of the cave, turned out lights and watched the glow worms. Although recent water had probably washed many of them away, there was still a respectable imitation of the stars in the sky.

Waterfall Cave is strictly for the thin, yoga-types not inclined to claustrophobia. A very narrow, contorted cave, we spent most of our time wriggling round on our elbows. The intrepid Yuka and Yoko followed Janet to the Fox Squeeze, and judging from the grunting and squeezing sounds coming down the passage there was more than one squeeze.

The last cave was the best. Pine Tree Cave is more of a gymnast/ rock climbing cave and long legs were a distinct advantage. Near the end was a large freshwater crayfish. And for the complete NZ experience, we got to smell the dead lamb and possum, which had fallen into the cave and were

gently decomposing. I hope Yuka and Yoko appreciated that Kiwi touch.

To round off the day, we retired to the Waterford for some drink and cake.

TAMA. Saturday 28 October 2000 by Peter Wiles  
There was a brisk chilly breeze from the north sweeping down the Desert Road as we approached the Waihohonu carpark. Cloud to the north and west swathed the NW portion of Ngauruhoe in cloud including the summit. Tama however, was in the lee and clear.

We were off at 8.30, and made fast work to Waihohonu hut. There were few people there, but we met an Australian couple about to cross over to the Chateau. We headed up the Oturere track to the ridge above the hut then began the traverse along it, NW towards Tama. While having smoko shortly after 10 am, we spotted a solo trumper on the track below who seemed to have a problem crossing the stream. The person stopped and took off their boots before crossing. We decided he/she was probably from overseas.

The last 100 m scramble up Tama puts on a bit of pressure, but we arrived for an early lunch. The wind was keen and shelter behind a handy rock was a comfortable spot for lunch. Through the binoculars, we could see a stream of walkers struggling in the wind crossing over the exposed section of Red Crater on the Great Walk track. After taking in the view, and once refueled, we headed down the south ridge before plunging down the lower scree to the flats below. After wandering along a dry creek bed for several hundred metres we came to the main stream and managed to cross with dry feet. It was warm out of the breeze and with the wind at our backs we continued rapid progress along the Round the Mountain Track.

We were back at the car shortly after 2.30.

Simon Blackwell and Peter Wiles

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