



PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217, PALMERSTON NORTH

Newsletter - January- February 2002

"The going was pretty good, but for the exception of a bad stretch of what was commonly known there as leather jacket, and halting one's progress. It had almost complete merit as a barbed wire entanglement." Alf Strenberg (1938)

from "Reminiscences of pioneering days in the Ruahine Ranges. The Ruahine Rambler (No. 4), Ruahine Tramping Club.

NEWS:

**Trip Reports from:
Coppermine Creek, Herepai, Standfield, Tongariro
Accident at Waipawa
and
Craigieburn, then Mt Hooker (West Coast)**

CLUB NIGHTS

FEBRUARY 14

Navigation, Warren Wheeler

FEBRUARY 28

City Rock, Terry Crippen

MARCH 14

BYO Slides and stories

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

Trip grades can depend on many factors, especially the weather. As a guide, a reasonably proficient trapper can be expected to cover the graded trips in 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.

Feb 14 Club Night: Navigation with Warren Wheeler

A fun and informative evening with maps and compasses and hidden treasure to find.

Feb 17 Oroua - Iron Gates E/M
Peter Darragh 358-8744

Depart 8.30am. Up the Oroua River track for a swim, return down the river to the Iron Gates Gorge. A fun trip. expect more than wet feet.

Feb 21 Thursday trappers
Sue & Lawson Pither 357-3033

Feb 23-24 Full Pohangina M/F
Terry Crippen 356-3588

Leaving Friday night or early Sat morning; into the head of the Pohangina near Longview Hut, on the east of the Ruahines, following the river SE out to the western side. This time of the year it should be pleasant river travel: some river flats, some boulder sections and good huts. Meet up with the day trip for transport home. Let Terry know in plenty of time so transport to the start can be arranged.

Feb 23- 24 Kaweka Challenge F
The highest Endurance Race for teams and individuals. Contact Mick Leyland, 358-3183 or Janet Wilson 329-4722 for tips.

Feb 24 Centre Creek E
Pete McGregor (bus) 356-7154

Depart 8.30am. An easy introduction to the Pohangina River area with a visit to Centre Creek Biv and return down the river to cool off.

Feb 28 Thursday trappers
Peter Carver 354-4479

Feb 28 Club Night: Indoor Rock Climbing with Terry Crippen

This will be at City Rock in town here. Climbing gear (ropes, harnesses etc) and instruction will be supplied, just wear/bring suitable gear/footwear for scrambling about on the wall. 7:30pm. City Rock is in the process of moving (again). The new place is in Featherston St about 100 yards from the intersection with Rangitiki St. (It not far from the 55 Taonui St place). Check with Terry in case, ph 356-3588. Cost \$7 per person.

March 2- 3 Ruahine Fly camp E/ M
Mick Leyland 358 3183

March 3 Titahi Bay Rock Climbing I
Laurence Gatehouse 356 5805

March 7 Committee Meeting, David Grant's house, 124 Buick Crescent.

March 9-10 Annual SAREX:Iron Gates M/F
Terry 356-3588

This years search and rescue exercise will be in the SW Ruahines. Saturday morning will be short sessions on various aspects of SAR operations; radio use, first aid, track and clue etc. About midday the teams will head off on the search tasks, probably camping as required to continue with the search and rescue on the Sunday. Always good value for the clubs SAR list members and essential for those other experienced trappers who want to get involved in SAR. Our club will put in two 4 person teams.

March 10 Mikimiki E
Fiona Donald 356 1095

March 10 Tararuas (TBA) M/ F
Andrew Lynch 325 8779

March 14 Club Night BYO slides, photographs, and stories of your recent exploits (not too many please). Always a popular show.

March 16- 17 Hawkes Bay Ridge F
Dave Henwood 326 8892

This is a Ruahine classic, visiting tussock basins and rocky, eroded crags of the upper Kawhatau-Poroungaki catchments. Excellent views.

March 17 Ruapae Falls E
Warren Wheeler 356 1998

March 17, 22- 24 Basic Bushcraft
Mountain Safety Council
Run by Noel Bigwood, who can be contacted at
06 351 3600 (bus), or 06 357 0116 (h). The cost
is \$40.00. There are more similar courses later.

March 23- 24 Risk Management
Mountain Safety Council
Contact Cheryl Wright, 06 358 3300

March 24 Copper Mine Creek E
Terry Crippen 356-3588
Depart 9 am. Coppermine Creek is near
Woodville in the SE Ruahines. This is a short
interesting tramp with historic mining activity still
to be seen; the old explosives magazine and tram
line rails. If we want, we can complete a longer

circuit via the ridge and Billygoat track for some
good viewpoints.

March 29 - April 7 (Easter Week).
Lewis Pass –NLNP, climbing F,T
Terry Crippen 356-3588

An 8 day trip plus a day each way for travel. The
Spencer Mountains form the boundary between
NLNP and the Lewis Pass-St James Walkway
areas. Gloriana, Faerie Queene and Una are the
three main peaks. We will attempt them from the
East and West branches of the Matakītaki Valley.
Access will be either in and out via the main
Matakītaki Valley; or as part of a Lake Rotoroa to
Lewis Pass route. We will take a vehicle across,
catching the 9:30 am ferry on Fri 29th and
returning on the 6pm ferry on Sun 7th. Transport
costs will be about \$140 plus passenger ferry
tickets - which you will have to book. Places
limited - contact Terry well in advance.

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 Stephen Liddall (357-59).

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 Janet Wilson (329 4722)

NOTICES

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES can be Emailed to
tony.gates@horizons.govt.nz, or stuff can be
delivered to him at home or work.

c/- horizons.mw

11-15 Victoria Ave, PN

If you're e-mailing, 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, which
can be typed it directly into the e-mail.

Note that e-mails with certain attachments
(particularly scanned photos) will be filtered by a

"quarantine" system. you will get an e-mail reply
from the horizons 'postmaster', confirming this.
Don't worry about this, all material gets through to
us once it is checked for viruses etc. by horizons'
staff.

**The deadline for anything for the Newsletter is the
FIRST THURSDAY of the month.**

WHOS BEEN DOING WHAT LIST:

What have you been up to in the way of
longer and/or South Isand trips.? Terry is
compiling a list for the year April 2001 to
March 2002, in the same format as done for

last year. It will come out in the April newsletter, and is a good reference list on palaces to go and who has been there lately for up to date info. Club or private trips, with month, name of the area, what club members or ex-club members were on it, any peaks climbed. eg Dec 2001, Dart - Rees, Urewera National Park, Derek Sharp, Andy Backhouse, Mts Evans and Edwards.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PC

I hope you all had a Merry Christmas and have been out and about enjoying some summer tramping and mountaineering.

After 3 weeks X-country skiing amongst the fir trees in Sweden I was amazed to be looking through foreign eyes at the wild "jungle" we have here – it is so easy to become complacent and forget how lucky we are to live in New Zealand. And sure enough, before the end of our Anniversary Weekend trip into the Otaki and YTTY Stream my eyes were pretty much back to "normal" and I had almost forgotten all about Sweden – good thing I took a few photos to remind me I had even been away.

But come next Christmas I am sure that I will recall all the X-factors we usually miss out on here: a white Xmas with powder snow, dry cold (-25 degrees some days), trains running late because the points have frozen up, icicles dropping off tall buildings and killing people, Stockholm in chaos because the snow was windrowed off the road rather than carted away (too bad if your car was parked on the side), Xmas lunch with pickled herring and jellied ham, presents opened on Xmas Eve and a particularly nice tradition of placing candles in lanterns on graves so that through the long night (sunset at 3pm) the churchyards are afflicker with light in remembrance of missing family members. Yes, X-mas will never be the same, I am really glad I went and very grateful for the hospitality of our friend Kristina Mattsson (and her wonderful cook of a mum!).

It's been good to hear that the trips down south were blessed with much better weather than elsewhere over the Christmas-New Year period. However Mt Cook remained elusive for many, although Andrew Lynch made a bold fist of it in one of the few gaps in the weather.

Summer trips mean tropical cyclones, heavy rain, flooded rivers, long days (not like the 3 hour days on X-country skiing day trips in Sweden!), soft snow, crevasses, sunburn, dehydration, and blisters – so why not go to Sweden (or Canada, or...) for X-mas next year and have a really relaxing holiday?(!).

Just kidding.

Yes, it's all too easy for trip leaders (like me!) to become complacent and "forget" to let someone know where you are going and to give them a call to let them know you made it back safely. (Gosh, am I the only one? Oh dear....). Yes, no excuse for something so basic, quite right...especially when we have the collective hindsight of the Club on one sheet of Guidelines for Trip Leaders.

It's also easy to be complacent about one's fitness and experience when compared with other members on the trip – what is easy for me may not be so easy for you...scree is a good example – it can be huge fun hooning off down the loose rocky slope, but if you strike an unexpectedly hard spot it can all go horribly wrong very quickly. I am sure that the picture of Neil running out of control and tripping head over heels and landing in the tussock (thank goodness) will remain etched on my memory for at least as long as the scars on his head [see his trip report in this newsletter]. My Accident Report has been handed to Terry as Trip Coordinator to ensure that a record is kept and that any lessons to be learned are properly digested.

Accidents will happen, but.

Sound familiar? Then you too might like to consider going on the Risk Management Weekend at the end of March – details from Mountain Safety Council, Manawatu and elsewhere in this newsletter.

A group of us went on a similar course about 5-6 years ago and found it interesting, informative, and applicable. Perhaps it's time for a refresher?

Keep safe, happy tramping

Warren Wheeler

TRIP REPORTS

COPPERMINE- BILLYGOAT CREEKS, Dec 2. By Duncan Hedderley

It was hot the first weekend of December. In town, the malls were packed with people drinking in the air conditioning, but in the hills behind Woodville, there were clouds and cooling breeze.

We started slowly, with boots, stories of how high the creek comes up in heavy rain, and Hilda trying out her digital camera. Then upstream to the old mine, where we sheltered under the trees from an unexpected patch of drizzle. There might have been blue duck calling. Warren found a large moth pupa.

Back to the start of the loop track, across the stream (Forgetting delicately stepping across with dry feet- don't worry, the water's not cold) and scramble up the ridge. Pushing through verdant pampas and ferns, Chris said he was glad New Zealand doesn't have leeches, or redback spiders, or snakes. Everyone with breath to spare agreed.

We reached the junction with the Billygoat Creek track around lunchtime, almost like it was planned. Chris and Cindy swapped sandwiches, Warren and Fiona traded recipes; and Warren turned up a possum skull.

The track back to the fence line was muddy as ever. Warren and Monica heard a deer in the undergrowth. Graham reckoned he could see windmills at one point. I wasn't so sure, but I wasn't standing on a log at the time.

And so down to the stream, the cars, the washing of boots, and the fifteen flavours of scoop icecream in Woodville's dairy.

We were: Neil Campbell, Elaine whose-surname-I-still-don't-know, Fiona Donald, Graham and Hilda Heap, Monica Cantwell, Cindy Derber, Chris Harman (from Toowoomba, Queensland), Warren Wheeler, and Duncan Hedderley.

PNTMC 2002- AN ELECTRIFYING EXPERIENCE. Jan 12- 13. By Janet Wilson.

Our task- to climb 2002m and visit places beginning with the letter PNTMC (in the correct order of course).

Despite a very discouraging weather forecast (following a week of very thundery weather), we drove on Saturday morning to the Mangatepopo road end. The weather was calm with some patchy cloud around Ruapehu. Our first mission, to climb Pukekaikiore, was achieved by lunchtime. As we climbed Ngauruhoe's steep slopes, thunder storms could be heard in the distance to the east. Hoping they weren't coming any closer, we headed on up to the top. When nearly there, my balaclava clad head started to feel rather "buzzy", and Yvette commented that her raincoat was making strange noises! Then we noticed that everyone's hair was standing on end. As Graham passed Steve, a camera to record this strange phenomenon, an audible and visible spark passed between them. The power of static electricity in the atmosphere! As none of us had experienced this before, it was extremely interesting- it didn't make you feel like staying for too long on the top though. After a quick look at the crater, we ran off down the scree, then back to the car via the main track. Got there just before the rain.

Back at our lodging at the Discovery Lodge, the very obliging new owners had stored our gear, since we booked in on our way through in the morning. That saved us a possible car break in. We had two en suite rooms with linen, towels etc for \$18.00 each per night- a bargain considering full price at the Mangatepopo Hut is \$18.00. We finished the day with a good feed at the restaurant there. Rather decadent tramping.

Sunday didn't dawn so bright. First stop was Mt Tongariro. We left the main route at the soda springs, and scrambled up from there. Strong winds and no visibility meant we didn't linger on the top. Next stop 'Merald Lakes, where we enjoyed sitting on the warm rocks. Then Central Crater, to complete the PNTMC. We had lunc at Blue Lake (extra point, Warren?), and then returned via the busy main Tongariro Crossing Track to the cars. We had climbed over 2002 m, and had a great time doing it. Thanks Warren, for convincing me to lead the trip. Back to discovery to pick up our gear, dinner at the Chelsea in Taihape, and home.

We were; Steven Liddall, Yvette Cottam, Graham Peters, and Janet Wilson.

HEREPAI HUT, Jan 13. By Neil Campbell.

We left Palmerston North at 8am. The drive to the start of this walk in the Tararuas involves leaving State Highway 2 at Eketahuna and then proceeding to the end of Putara Road. This road is unsealed but in good condition. We left the cars at 9.25am.

The day was overcast with light showers. The track to Herepai Hut is in good condition although it is little muddy in places. It crosses two swing bridges before a steep climb up to a ridge. The walk along the ridge to the hut is very pleasant. We reached the hut a bit before midday and had lunch. Because of the conditions we did not go any further than the hut. On fine days it is certainly worth going a bit further because the views can be excellent. After lunch we returned to the cars, changed into some clean dry clothing, and drove home.

The party was: Neil Campbell (leader), Fiona Donald, Martin, Anne and Hannah Lawrence.

TAMAKI- STANDFIELD HUT, Jan 21. By Duncan Hedderley.

January's weather was mixed, alternating between hot and thundery, and grey and miserable, but it came right for Wellington Anniversary.

Two cars from Palmerston North got to the end of Tamaki West Road about 9.15, expecting to meet up with someone from Dannevirke (Who I had told we would be there at 9.00. Maggie, if you turned up on time, then thought we weren't coming, I'm really sorry).

Once we had changed and put boots on, it was 9.30, and we set off, back down the road, intending to sneak over the farm bridge and up their switchback track to the edge of the park. Almost immediately we stopped - someone thought they could hear a car coming. Except it wasn't the sound of a car on a gravel road - it was noise from the water in the creek.

We slogged up to Holmes Ridge, and admired the view of Takapari Road ("The alternative plan was that we went up there" "Pant. What? Pant"), and the Tamaki valley. Even from that height, the creek was obviously flowing faster than on previous visits.

We dropped back down to the creek without getting anyone totally covered in mud, and then trekked up stream to the hut, where we got our next surprise. Someone was there. His name was Jeff, he was from Melbourne, and he had been travelling around the huts in the area, getting rained on, for the last week. This was the first summer-like day that he had had.

After lunch and photos, I suggested we head back along the ridge rather than down the creek, which was colder and flowing more strongly than befitted a pleasant afternoon stroll. Jane and Liz made good time up the ridge, even though they had said they couldn't face an more up-hill (They did then collapse in the first patch of sunny grass). We stopped for a drink, and swapped stories of rainy, muddy, snowy tramps.

I felt a bit self-conscious about going back down over the farmland, but the map showed a track from Holmes Ridge to the carpark within the park boundaries. The ridge end took some finding ("Is that the start of the track, or just a gap in the trees?"), but other than that it is well-defined. It is steep in parts, but not excessively so.

So, not quite the trip I had had in mind, but a good day out nevertheless. Thanks to; Neil Campbell, Fiona Donald, Pauline Knuckey, Jacqueline Aust, Jane and Liz.

TE ATU O PARAPARA. Feb 3. By Neil Campbell.

We left Palmerston North at 7am. We were a small party consisting of only myself and the leader Warren Wheeler. We left the car at about 9am and reached Sunrise Hut at about 11am. We stayed in the hut for a while because it had started raining. When the rain had more-or-less finished we left the hut and continued on. As we walked along the tops the rain had stopped but cloud obscured most of the view. Consequently we decided to make it a shorter trip and head down a scree slope and then walk down a creek which leads into the Waipawa River. This scree slope is located a bit beyond the turnoff to Top Maropea Hut. Unfortunately my technique on scree proved to be somewhat wanting and I found myself running out-of-control down a steep slope with very little scree on it. The run-out area was a stony area of tussock. I had almost reached this area when I lost my footing, rolled a couple of times and found myself bruised, bleeding and battered lying on the ground. My wrists were giving me pain, particularly my right wrist, and I had few good cuts to my head. Warren bandaged-up my head. I took some pain killers and a barley sugar type sweet. The latter certainly stopped me from feeling faint. We started heading downhill, but it soon became clear that if we continued to do

this I was in danger of another fall. So we headed up the hill so as to get back on the track that runs along the tops. With my left hand I held on to the strap of Warren's pack so as to steady myself. We took frequent short rests. The route we chose was on the tussock part of the hillside. Once we had reached the tops it was easy-going all the way back to the car. Warren drove me to A and E and waited while they fixed me up. The nurse was impressed by Warren's first-aid skills when she took off his field-dressing on my head. They X-rayed my wrists and found that they were not broken (although they are still sore). When they were all finished Warren drove my home. The time was somewhere around 11pm.

Thanks goes to Warren for all his help following my accident.

CRAIGIEBURN RANGE, Dec 31- Jan 2. By Terry Crippen.

The plan was for a five day Arthur's Pass trip with the usual start from Klondyke Corner.

After spending a night in the NZAC hut, with Don French and family, Christine and I headed up the slightly high Waimakariri river. In front of us three of the people in another party got swept downstream for a couple of hundred metres on what would be one of many river crossings. They got to the bank OK but completely soaked. This sight, coupled with the black rain clouds oozing over the divide from Westland and the heavy rain warnings for the Arthur's Pass area caused us to have a quick change of plans: head east into the Craigieburn Forest Park to escape most of the heavy rain.

We decided on a 2-3 day moderate to easy circuit; Cass River, Cass Saddle, Hamilton and Harper rivers and Lagoon Saddle - smaller rivers, lower saddles and hopefully missing the heaviest of the approaching rain. After changing our intentions with DoC, we caught the bus to Cass bridge, and headed across the wide flats to where the Cass river becomes more confined. Easy travel up river before a good, steep track up past a gorgy section, soon had us in the upper Cass, pleasant beech forest and the small Cass Saddle hut built in 1953. Doing some of DoC's work we deposited the new hut book and picked up the old one, before heading up to Cass Saddle. This year has been a bumper year for spaniards (the plant variety) and Cass Saddle basin was in full bloom. The Cass

and Hamilton valleys follow a major fault line - the Harper fault so there is lots of crushed white-grey greywacke in the valley bottom. Above the beech forest are the extensive scree slopes (some red and quite stable now) so typical of the Craigieburns.

Dropping into the Hamilton it doesn't take long to reach the large Hamilton Hut, well worth the visit. It was New Years Eve and we shared the hut with some mates of Tony. There was some mistletoe out in bloom about twenty metres from the hut. In the North Island mistletoe is very rare, so we thought we were onto a good find, but soon discovered over the next few days that mistletoe is relatively common in the Craigieburns adding a dash of bright red to the beech forest green.

Heading up the Harper the following morning we amused ourselves crossing on the three wire bridge - not that we needed to since the rain hadn't arrived yet. But by the time we had got to the old, dirt floor, West Harper hut (built 1957) it had arrived. The upper Harper valley, mainly stream travel, has some quite bluffy sections but a good track to avoid them. Cass Saddle Shelter was a welcome refuge from the heavy rain. A small A-frame 2 person affair, it was cosy with its Little Dorritt stove which soon produced plenty of heat to dry our gear out. Thunder and lightning and the heavy rain soon had us sleeping soundly. About 50 metres away on the other side of the stream, is Cass Saddle hut, also 2 person but without a stove and windows. The shelter is the best bet, especially with all the rain overnight as the stream had become a torrent, and would have made crossing back to the track a bit tricky.

From the shelter the track emerges onto the open cleared slopes of Mt Bruce. All the minor watercourses were by this stage big streams, and thick cloud and rain blocked views down into the Waimakariri valley. The track comes out at Cora Lynn, past the well kept Bealey hut. Then its a short road bash to the Bealey Tavern for a feed and drinks. We ran into Harley and all his photo gear, then caught the bus back to Arthur's Pass, to even heavier rain, thunder and lightning.

The Craigieburns are well worth the visit, especially if its hosing down in Arthur's Pass. Also adjacent to the Craigieburns there is Castle Hill Basin with its excellent rock climbing and

bouldering. Plus plenty of camping and walks, with abundant mistletoe in the adjacent valleys. Close to the main road there is also Cave Stream with its underground channel.

Christine Cheyne and Terry Crippen

MOUNTS HOOKER AND McCULLAUGH, Jan 7- 14 2002. By Terry Crippen.

Mt Hooker, at 2650m, is the dominant peak you see when heading over Haast Pass looking up the Landsborough. It lies within the Landsborough - Hooker Wilderness Area and is the main objective of many climbing parties heading into the area. Peter and I and failed on previous attempts. The usual problem, on a 10 day trip into this area is 3 days to tramp in, then the weather packs in for 4 or 5 days and then its time to head out, without on some trips doing any more than pitbashing in the Marks Flat bivvy.

So this time we decided to chopper in, with 10 days of food, to give us plenty of time to climb it, even allowing for the usual Westland weather. Morgan of Heliventures at Haast managed to squeeze Heather and Jonathan and 4 packs into the back of the chopper while Peter and I had the comfort of seats up front. The flight into the Solution Range, just outside the Wilderness area was worth it just for the views, skirting up the sides of the Haast, Landsborough and Clarke Rivers. The easiest day was this first day; from the drop off point along a short section on the range then down a spur to Marks flat and across to the large Airport bivvy rock to settle in.

Day two was a reconnaissance up the spur to the base of the Hooker glacier, checking out a camp site for later and an initial venture onto the snow and ice. Cloud and wind had us turning back, but at least we knew that the glacier part of the climb would be straight forward.

We spent two more nights and the intervening day in the bivvy as the rain settled in. Time was spent reading (Marks Flat Library books), attempting to stop drips off the ceiling above Peter and my sleeping area, (with toothpaste and zinc cream spread - unsuccessful), enlarging Jonathan's and Heather's sleeping area (vegetation removal and quarrying) so Peter and I could move in, admiring

the latest fashion jandals, eating, drinking and doing radio scheds.

By day 4 the weather improved where we were, but we could see the rain clouds still oozing over the Main Divide with the nor-easterly conditions that were to prevail, fortunately for us for the rest of the trip. So we wondered how Malcolm and others were getting on in the Cook area. We paid a quick visit to one of the other bivvies, near the bottom of Marks flat, which while giving a view of Hooker's summit, was far less roomy and light as the Airport bivvy. Towards evening we broke camp and headed up the spur to the camp site (at approx 1500m just below the start of the glacier) that we had checked out earlier on. This reduced by about 500m the height gain if and when we would climb Hooker. One or two kea paid a short visit to us and a couple of tahr or chamois wandered about on the bluffs.

A 4:30 am start on the fifth day had us heading up the Hooker glacier to the western ridge the overlooks the Otoko valley, 1600m directly below us. Dave Henwood and Don French who had climbed Hooker last summer, had clued us up on the route; to find and use the ledge-like feature that connects the ridge with the steepish snow slope on the north side of the two summits, cross on the ledge over to this snow slope and thus avoid climbing too high onto the west but lower summit. However we did go a bit high and ended up having to drop off a bit from the ridge onto this northern snow slope. Unbeknown to us, this variation was to be quite useful on our decent. From the northern snow slope there was a short section of rock necessitating the rope for one pitch before the snow and rock nob of the summit. Excellent hot sunny weather was enjoyed by us, as the cloud continued to flow over the main divide to the east. A first class summit, for Peter and I after previous attempts; and for Heather and Jonathan, their first SI summit.

On our decent, the sun had began to soften up the northern slope. As we headed across, well spread out, to where the connecting ledge should be, Jonathan out in front, set off a suitably large soft but still slabby avalanche. So it was a quick back-track then up and over the ridge the way we had ascended before. The rest of the decent was uneventful so we were soon back at our camp for a bit of a rest.

We were not going to have a relaxing afternoon and evening in the sun however, as we were to move camp towards our next objective, Mt McCullaugh (2266m), about 5 km due west of Hooker, but separated from us by the upper Murdock Valley. A relatively steep but easy 400m descent down rock, snowgrass and tussock soon had us down into the stream. Or at least Jonathan, with us other three sometime later. We had viewed, from our camp sight, various possibilities for climbing out of this part of the Murdock Valley and decided that a leftwards climbing bush-bash onto a rocky stairway was better than a oversteepened slabby right hand gully. So the first arduous bush bash of the trip. It wasn't too bad, and got us onto the large basin at about 1250m under McCullaugh. In the basin a hidden bluff line held us up for a bit, so we only just got to our camp site in time for the radio sched. At least this time we were camping on snowgrass so didn't have to do major excavation of rock as at our Hooker camp site.

The route for the following days attempt on McCullaugh was up a steep rotten rock gully to reach the snow from the right hand side of the basin. While this was not a useful descent route it took us quickly onto the glacier. It was straight forward up the glacier past a small nunatak and towards the rocky summit ridge. By this time the wind was extremely strong, still nor-easterly or easterly, so we had to cross over to the lee side before scrambling to the summit. This time the summit photo stop was very brief before descending to the snow again where we put on all our gears and roped up for glacier travel on the way down, as we had decided to head down a different route, to the southern ridge, less steep and less windy. Further down this ridge we got good views of the upper McCullaugh valley which was where we would be moving to later. We were planing a high sidle, on a series of ledges just above the bushline from our camp site, to avoid all the height loss if we were to use the standard way of dropping down to Munro Flat. We checked out some of these ledges as we headed back to out camp.

No resting this afternoon either, so after breaking camp it was onto the first of the ledges, losing and gaining minor amounts of height. Generally reasonable travel mostly on snowgrass and

tussock with sections of scrub, but getting steeper as we approached the spur before the McCullaugh. Once round the corner it was easy going though the top of the beech forest, but then some grotty bush-bashing down through the last of the bush in the valley. A short but painful bush-bash grovel along the true left of the creek eventually had us out in the upper McCullaugh Valley, and some open flats for setting up the tent. Again just in time for the radio sched. Plenty of kea round here.

The next day from this camp site, it was a easy scramble up the head of the stream and snowgrass slopes to the unnamed saddle with the Paringa Valley. While this is the normal crossing route, there is one narrow exposed section which you have to traverse on some narrow ledges to get over to the Paringa side. Then it was an easy descent down a tussock gully, along the bouldery upper Paringa river bed and then a sidle across to the Tunnel Creek bivvy rock nestled in a beech tree clearing. After lunch we got onto the marked overgrown route down the spur to the Paringa. A descent of about 1100m, a bit hard on the knees since some of it was extremely steep.

Tunnel Creek hut was a welcome sight, our first and only hut on the trip, but it hadn't seen any paint since NZFS days. It also needed a clean out before we moved in since the rats had been shitting everywhere and had thrown stuff off the shelves (they must be big ones). The temperature was HOT - (Tony, too hot to get the fire going).

Outside the small sandfly population (by West Coast standards) was still enough to annoy us so we kept inside. Later that evening, within a second of us climbing into our pits and turning out the last headlamp the rats started up a loud racket. However some vigorous kicking on the tin wall shut them up for the night (and fortunately didn't damage my foot).

To finish the trip we had planned to cross over into the Moeraki, the next valley south, via a high saddle. However we had a change of plans; due to one slightly sore knee, some weather coming in and the idea that we could do with some extra days for the next objective, Mt Brewster, after a rest in the sprawling metropolis of Haast. So it was down the Paringa. Along the overgrown track down the Paringa, running parallel to the crystal clear river, we sighted a few blue ducks, a couple of deer and large amounts of deer sign. The grassy flats farmed by Mr Condon, and a couple of crossings of the now bigger river, bought us to the West Coast road. While the others had lunch hiding behind the Brunner monument, I hitched back to Haast to pick up the vehicle and returned for the others. We then spent a couple of nights and day investigating the pleasures and upmarket developments of Haast and Jacksons Bay, before heading off to Brewster.

The four of us; Jonathan Astin, Heather Bewick, Peter Wiles and Terry Crippen

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