

# PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217, PALMERSTON NORTH

**Newsletter - September 2003**

## CLUB NIGHTS

Club nights are on the second and last Thursday of each month at the Society of Friends Hall, 227 College Street, at 7:45pm **sharp**. All welcome!

At the club night: Please sign the visitor's book. A 50c door fee includes supper.

Aug 28 Mt Cook. (See Aug. newsletter)

### Sept 2 (Tues) Inter-club Quiz

The quiz will be held on Tues, Sept. 2nd, 7:30pm, at the MTSC club night venue at the Manawatu Aero Club on Airport Drive. Come along and support your club. Teams compete for the Trevor Bissell Memorial Billy, which is on display at Mountain Equipment.

### Sept 11 Landsborough Tramping Shaun Barnett

Shaun Barnett discovered that raincoats are merely ballast to lie redundant in your pack on a recent tramp down South Westland's Landsborough valley. He and companions experienced 13 days of good weather on a 14-day trip, where they journeyed up the Karangarua River, over The Gladiator, down the Landsborough, into the Hunter Valley and out over Wilson Pass and the Wills Valleys.

### Sept 25 Interclub Photo Competition Murray Woodcock

This annual event between MTSC, MUAC and PNTMC is always competitive. Come along and help Murray Woodcock be the judge. See Notices for details.

E-mail articles to [doug.strachan@xtra.co.nz](mailto:doug.strachan@xtra.co.nz)  
or post to 1 Worsfold Lane, Palm. North  
(by 20<sup>th</sup> of month)

## TRIPS

Please contact the leader at least three days in advance. Trips leave from Foodtown carpark. A reasonably proficient trumper can be expected to do the trips in the following times:

Easy (E): 3-4 hrs                      Technical skills reqd (T)  
Medium (M): 5-6 hrs                Instructional (I)  
Fit (F): about 8 hrs  
Fitness Essential (FE): >8 hrs

Aug 30/31 SC 3. Aug 30/31 Taranaki. (See Aug. issue)

### Sept 6-7 Howletts Circuit                      M/F Tony Gates                                      357 7439

Come and enjoy this trip into a classic Ruahine Hut. In from Cashmore road end via Daphne. On Sunday troop along the tussock and leatherwood of Daphne spur to Longview Hut. Snow conditions may require an ice axe and crampons.

### Sept 6-7 Egmont Climbing                      M/T Derek Sharp                                      326 8178

On Sat. we'll ascend East Ridge and camp on the top. The next day, we'll come down Curtis Ridge. For those with technical climbing experience.

### Sept 7 Longview Hut                                      E/M Duncan Hedderley                              355 1820

7.30 start for an explore in the eastern Ruahines. On Sunday, chances are we will run into the bods on Dave's trip.

### Sept 12-15 Tapuaenuku Climbing                      F/T Alisdair Noble                                      356 1094

You need at least Snowcraft 2 level of experience to come on this trip to Marlborough. A classic.

For lots more photos & trips, check out  
[www.pntmc.org.nz](http://www.pntmc.org.nz)

**Sept 13-14 Kaweka Hot Springs E/M**  
**Mick Leyland 358 3183**

Possibly the most scenic easy-grade tramp in the North Island. Leave 7am for the northern Kawekas. The track sidles along the Mohaka River for a couple of hours. The hot springs are fibre-glass pools at the river's edge. Their temperature is adjustable. Like the hot water, the accommodation is free and has many stars (i.e. visible from the door of our tent or fly). You might want to bring togs/shorts along on this "spring" tramp.

**Sept 20-21 Mitre, Tararuas M/F**  
**Warren Wheeler 356 1998**

Depart 8.00am. From the Pines carpark it is an easy 3-4 hour walk up the Waingawa River valley to Mitre Flats Hut and some local exploring or relaxing in the sun. Next day we will start early for the 3 hour walk up through the bush to the snow and Mitre, highest point in the Tararua Ranges. We return the same way.

**Sept 21 Ruahine Skiing M**  
**Tony Gates 357 7439**

Rangi Hut has been a traditional spot for generations of Ruahine visitors. It still is. On this medium day tramp, we will amble up to the hut, which will be our base camp, then venture beyond, onto the vast tussock slopes of the Whanmahuia Range. The leader will have some cross country skis for the adventurous to try out. Snow not guaranteed.

**Sept 28 Waiopahu Hut M/F**  
**Richard Lockett 323 0948**

Leavin' for Levin at 7:30am. About an hour's drive from Palmy to the road end. Walk through bush up the I-o-n-g ridge to the new hut, just above the bush line. Good views on good days.

**Oct 2 Committee Meets at Waterford.**

**Oct 4-5 Tongariro-Ngaruahoe M/F,T**  
**Warren Wheeler 356 1998**

Depart 6.00pm Friday night to stay at Mangatepopo Hut, 20 minutes from the carpark. This trip will include a climb up to Tongariro and across North Crater to frozen Blue Lake and steamy Red Crater, and an anniversary ascent of the west side of Ngauruhoe (crampons and ice axe required) to the Grandstand View where a club group saw Ruapehu erupt in 1996. An early departure from PN on Saturday morning is an option and daytrippers are welcome.

## TRIPS contd

**Oct 5 Top Gorge Hut M/F**  
**Nigel Gregory 354 8124**

Go past Scandinavia (Norsewood) and through India (Kashmir Rd) to get to this hut in the eastern Ruahines. We'll pop into Longview Hut, then drop into the Pohangina River. Down the river to Top Gorge Hut for lunch before returning along the same route. The terrain is reasonably easy going. Highlights include a couple of pretty waterfalls.

**Labour Week(end) 23-28 (Thurs-Tues) October Preliminary notice**

**Kahurangi National Park M/F**  
**Terry Crippen 356 3588**

A 5-6 day tramp in the Mt Arthur area of Kahurangi National Park. A number of possibilities; along the marble and karst landscapes of the Mt Arthur Range, and/or the forests of the Leslie and Baton Rivers. Will fly direct to Nelson from PN (currently \$202 return) and shuttle van to and from the road ends (approx \$60 return pp). Need to book both early, so contact Terry NOW if interested.

Trip participants:

Contact the leader at least 3 days in advance. Trips leave from Foodtown carpark. A charge for transport will be collected on the day. Leaders should be able to give an estimate in advance. For general info, or any suggestions for future tramps, please contact Terry Crippen (356-3588), Janet Wilson (329-4722) or Andrew Lynch (325-8779).

Trip leaders:

Please advise a trip coordinator, as soon as possible, if 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)

“Everywhere is walking distance  
if you have the time”

Stephen Wright

## NOTICES

### Presi. gets Pressie, Inter-club Photo Competition, Maps/Booklet For Sale.

#### FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PC

Not extinct, just dormant...yes it is well past time to let off a smoke signal to let you all know we are still active.

Money first. I can confirm that subscriptions are now all in (after a little arm-twisting) and we currently have 65 members.

Farewell to the 13 people who have moved on, especially to Yuko Watanabe whose absence will be missed at least until she returns in the New Year. I was somewhat humbled to be on the receiving end of the Japanese tradition of giving parting gifts, and would like anyone else leaving to know that I am a gracious recipient who will not embarrass you by turning down any gifts on offer.

You will have noticed changes to the Newsletter under the editorship of Doug Strachan and I hope you agree that it makes for a fun and interesting read. We can always do better so any feedback on format, or suggestions for content, is welcomed by Doug or any Committee member.

Likewise for our website, which is improving all the time thanks to webmaster Peter Wiles. Peter is currently completing the section on Huts in the Tararua and Ruahine Ranges so if you want a photo and basic info, check it out. There is also a portfolio of photos, mostly related to recent trips, so if you have any to add let him know.

Coming up we have the Interclub Quiz and the Interclub Photo Competition. These provide an opportunity to manifest our supremacy and annihilate the opposition...oops, I mean to foster good relations with our fellow outdoor recreationalists, so I look forward to seeing you there. Refer to the Notices elsewhere in this Newsletter for details of these events.

Snow melts as surely as summer follows spring,  
So head for the mountains and go climbing,  
With crampons and ice axe and camera too,  
May the wind be fair and the sky be blue.

Your ever humble Poet Lorikeet,

Warren Wheeler  
President PNTMC

**NEWSLETTER ARTICLES** can be e-mailed to [doug.strachan@xtra.co.nz](mailto:doug.strachan@xtra.co.nz) or delivered to 1 Worsfold Lane, PN

#### INTERCLUB PHOTO COMPETITION

At our club night on Sept. 25, we will host the inter-club photo-competition. We will view the best slides that each club has to offer, so this is a must-see event.

- Entries must not have been previously entered in an inter-club competition. If your slide was a place-getter in our recent PNTMC club competition, **DO** enter it in the inter-club event. In principle, only these previous place-getters will be entered.
- All entries must be related to tramping, climbing, or the natural environment.
- All slides must have a cross on the bottom left-hand corner of the mount (ie. top right-hand corner when loaded into the carousel).
- Slides and photos labelled with photographers name and entry category.
- Limit of 3 slides per person per category.

#### Categories:

1. Alpine (NZ). Predominantly alpine scenery in NZ (ie. Above the bushline)
2. Scenic (NZ). Pictorial interest in NZ hills etc. (ie. predominantly below the bushline)
3. Natural History (NZ). NZ flora & fauna or detail, 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.

**TOPOMAPS & GUIDE BOOKS FOR SALE**

Unused or hardly used NZMS 260 1:50,000 topomaps: North Island: S28 Palliser. South Island: N26 Cobb, N29 St Arnaud, N31 Acheron, K33 Otira, K34 Wilberforce, H35 Franz Joseph, E39 Aspiring, F39 Matukituki. \$5 each (normally \$12.50 retail, or about \$9 with FMC discount).

Also: NZ Mountaineering guide (AGL), Wellington Rock, Arthurs Pass climbing guide. \$6 each. Selling on behalf of Richard Lovell - ex club member. Contact Terry 3563-588 or see me at club night.

**WEDNESDAY TRAMPING GROUP**

We go out every second Wednesday on easy tramps. Come and join us. For more information, please phone Judy 357 0192, Jennifer, 323 3914, or June 355 2690.

**THURSDAY TRAMPERS**

We go for a tramp every Thursday. If you wish to join us, contact Merv Matthews 357 2858, or Liz Flint 356 7654.

**GARAGE SALE**

To raise funds for the PNTMC, a garage sale will be held in the spring. Unwanted books, kitchenware, toys, tools, CD's, clothes, etc will be collected during the winter. If you have any items you want to get rid of, call Doug on 353 6526.

**Portal to the Past**

SAR. An extract from **newsletter No.10, Nov., 1966**: "Guest speaker will be Graham Alltree who will talk on Search and Rescue. Graham has first hand knowledge of his subject as he has been lost for a week in the Tararuas."

*"I used to climb mountains to get to the top. I used to do it to test my courage, or tell people I climbed mountains. Then one day I fell 35 feet and landed on my head. Now I climb to enjoy the rock, snow, the flowers and other climbers."*  
Steve Taylor.

**The solution for last month's crossword:**

**Across**

- 1. Meeting with Helen Clark on the mountain top. (Summit)
- 3. Everest was the \_\_\_\_\_ of Hillary's career. (pinnacle)
- 4. Egmont, for example. (eg)

**Down**

- 2. Maths on the mountain top. (trig)
- 3. Glimpse the mountain top. (peak or peek)

**CROSSWORD #5**

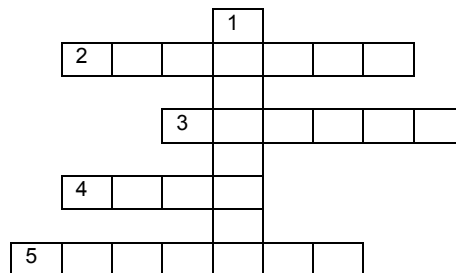
The answers to this month's crossword clues are all names of huts in the Tararuas or Ruahines.

**Down**

- 1. This shapely hut has the name of a musical instrument.

**Across**

- 2.&4. Had a wild party here the night before his wedding (2 words)
- 3. Has the name of a fragrant plant.
- 5. Australians stay in this hut.



## TRIP REPORTS

### Pouaki Range Night Photography, Rangī, Night SAR Training, Snowcraft 1, Iron Gates, Field Hut, Snowcraft 2.

#### Pouakai Range sleep-out and night photography, July 20-23 By Harley Betts

This trip is basically a repeat of a similar solo trip I did a few years ago, although this time I wanted to do a midwinter version and experiment a bit more with some night photography. And find some peace and quiet of course! ☺

Sunday 20 July 2003. Drove up to Mangorei Road end, about 3½ hours from PN, arriving later than originally planned at about 3.30 pm thanks to inadvertently sleeping in that morning after a midnight drive up from Wgtn the night before. Unloaded gear, disabled car engine and started off. Between the camping gear, food and camera gear I had about 30 kg to carry – took a bit to get used to. The track is in very good nick which helps, although it is a pretty steady, unrelenting climb nonetheless from about 500 metres to the hut at about 1200 metres. Sun set by half way and clouds gathered from the south as I entered the subalpine forest zone. Weather deteriorating quickly as I went, started snowing about half an hour from the hut. At that point I realised I'd stupidly packed my jacket right at the bottom of my pack (!) so I decided to just keep going in my shorts and short sleeves rather than stop to empty my pack out in the worsening weather.

Quite unpleasant by the time I reached the hut – dark, snowing, blowing strongly. Nobody else there. Fired up the potbelly stove inside, warm in no time. Prepared bed on a bench beside the stove overnight to keep warm. Turned fire down low and crashed out. Had a minor carbon monoxide scare when I woke soon after falling asleep to find the hut full of smoke. My unusually groggy state and a resting pulse of almost 120 suggested I wasn't quite getting the oxygen I needed. Opened chimney flue & a couple of windows to let some snow and oxygen in and went back to sleep. Quite windy & still snowing by the time I conked out for the night (about 7.30 pm).

Monday 21 July. Woke at 5.30 am to the faint sounds of the last of the overnight storm blowing itself out. It was completely clear outside, with a half moon, lots of stars and the colours of dawn just beginning to light up the eastern horizon. Left

the hut at 6 am for some small lakes about 15 minutes' walk away to photograph the sunrise. – 2C outside with light dusting of snow on ground. As soon as the wind died though the temp plunged – it was –7C just a short time later when I reached the lakes, and as I took a few photos beside them I could see the largest one freezing over right before my eyes! It was an odd sight – great sheets of thin ice, spreading across the lake and joining up with each other into one continuous covering. Fantastic sunrise, the nearby snowy volcanic cone of *Mt Egmont towering above me, coloured salmon pink in the sunlight*. Lots of photos. Had to pull up several snow poles which the Dept of Conservation had placed along the track right in the middle of the view. Also had to shift out of the way a 1000 kg bag of wooden stakes that had been dropped by helicopter for the track maintenance people – lucky it wasn't a full one, probably only about 60 kg of stakes in it.

Back to the hut when the light became too harsh for photos, and discovered then that I had forgotten my gas bottle. Just as well I could cook on the potbelly stove. Had large meal of rice & noodles followed by a few hours of dozing in sun on the verandah overlooking views right out to the coast. Lovely. Read hut book and noticed many entries in quite distinctive uppercase handwriting by one Baz Preston from Stratford – obviously a keen local. His name seemed to appear about once a week. Not long later, a retired guy turned up – he was pretty fit, going by how quickly he covered the last stretch of track visible from the hut. We talked for a bit and then he introduced himself – Baz Preston (honestly).

Left hut at about 2 pm, and headed for Henry Peak about an hour to the east. Henry Peak is exactly north of Egmont, and I was planning to get some more long-exposure star photos from here similar to some shots done previously from there. Track has been upgraded – much to my relief. Last time (3 years ago) it was so bad it had taken me an hour to cover the last half kilometre, swearing and cursing in frustration. Discovered a new viewing platform on the peak, which made for an ideal photo vantage point while the boardwalked track nearby was perfect for rolling out my bedroll and sleeping bag on. Temp fell below zero by about 4 pm, still cloudless and

sunny. Amazing grandstand views of Egmont, seemingly so close I could almost reach out and touch it. -3C by dark. Phoned Katherine just after dark, nice to speak with her but was limited to only a short time as I needed to keep the battery fresh since the phone was there with me as an alarm clock. Spent the night taking long exposure photos, up to 3 hours long each, grabbing bits of sleep in between times. Cold took its toll on the batteries in one of the cameras – and I had forgotten spares! Bought a little extra time by keeping one spare battery warm under my arm before use. Savoured a velvet black sky packed with millions of stars, saw several satellites and shooting stars.

Tuesday 22 July. Woke at 6 am after sleeping through two alarms – lucky to wake up at all. Glorious morning twilight over the central North Island volcanoes, all silhouetted black against the horizon. Beautiful sunrise, -4C and a moderate breeze made the going a bit cool though. Lots of frost on my sleeping bag. Very heavy frost could be seen on the Ahukawakawa Swamp not far down below – trees white, etc. Met young Dutch couple who had stayed in Pouakai Hut overnight and were heading for North Egmont via Kaiuau Hut. I was thinking out loud to myself when they arrived without me noticing – wonder what they thought. Enjoyed the morning light, took photos, then packed up and headed back to the hut for a hot meal a la potbelly and another long doze in the sun while the light was too harsh for photography. Pulled mattress out of hut and had a proper sleep in the sun on the verandah for about an hour. Wondered what was happening at work today?

Left hut at about 3 pm, back to the lakes for some sunset/night photography there. The whole area is swampy so *for sleeping purposes I 'borrowed' a short section of the boardwalked track* (the wooden sections are about 6 ft long and easily lifted). Took it to the far side of the lake and used it as my bed for the night – perfect. Mt Egmont blotted out by low cloud in the late afternoon, but this all melted away towards sunset revealing the mountain in its entirety, gleaming orange-yellow and reflected in the frozen lake. I was blown away by how beautiful this was, especially towards sunset. Temp -7C by 5.30 pm, which got me thinking I was in for a very cold night sleeping out. Fortunately I was saved by a persistent SE breeze that sprung up soon after and blew through the night which kept the temp at a more reasonable – 2C or so. Magically clear night, took several long-exposure photos using empty tent with single lit candle in it to add to the scene. Had a gap of

about 7 hours between dusk and photography due to no moon, so a chance to sleep a bit. Big trouble again with cold batteries – I put one down the front of my undies to warm it, and stuffed the 6x7 camera up my polypropylenes and against my chest – christ they were cold to start with. Both quite warm however by the time I woke up at about 1.45 am. Lovely moonrise at about 2 am, just less than a half moon by now but still quite bright. Started photos, but the warm camera and battery soon cooled again and battery power ran out. Smaller (35 mm) camera still working though as a consolation prize. Saw some more shooting stars & made a few wishes.

Wednesday 23 July. Dawn twilight at 6.30 am, lots of colour and a few scraps of high cloud which lit up like red neon as the sun came up. Beautiful sunrise, again! Now up to 12 rolls of film and counting. Much milder this morning at +1C (well, it felt warmer). Largest tarn only partly frozen overnight thanks to the milder temp and moderate breeze. Stunning reflections of Egmont in morning sunlight, and clear views over to snow-covered central NI volcanoes in distance. Heavy swell still visible down off the coast, wonder where it was coming from? Soft peaty ground had frozen absolutely solid to cement-like by morning – very difficult to retrieve the tripods, the legs of which I had pushed into the peat to stabilise them the previous evening. Might have bent the legs of the smaller one trying to pull it out of the ground, not sure. Hope not, as it's not mine.

Final pack-up and back to the hut by late morning for a strong coffee. Met a local guy who said he'd got to the hut from the road end in an hour and a half, not bad for a track that is signposted as taking 2 and a half hours. AND he was 73! He shook his head slowly as he watched me struggle with the weight of my own gear, then wished me well as I headed off. Did a ~half hour side trip to a nearby peak on way out, then retraced my path back to the hut to collect a small leatherwood tree that I'd brought with me from the tops (it had been dug up and left exposed by a track clearing party) – I'd souvenired it but left it behind at the hut. Finally started the trek downwards at about 1 pm. Missed a crucial intersection and ended up on wrong track, which I finally realised after descending quite a long way – had to turn around and crawl all the way back up again to meet the main track. Feeling a bit buggered by this stage. One more hour back down to the car, out of food and feeling the effects of low blood sugar quite strongly by the time I got there. Put down the leatherwood tree, loaded my gear into the car and drove off with the windows down, savouring the sun and the refreshing cool breeze. Went to the family beach house at Oakura for a late lunch

(which I demolished like I had never seen food before), had a freezing cold swim in heavy surf, then remembered my little tree which was still sitting at the road end waiting for me – bugger. Went into New Plymouth to send my 14 rolls of film to processors in Wellington, then drove the 30 km back to the Mangorei Road end to retrieve the forgotten tree before heading back to Palmerston North. Home by 8.30 pm.

## Rangi-Mangahua-Deadmans, 27 July By Peter Wiles

Team: Ian, Duncan, Warren, Stan & Peter (leader)

Five briskly headed up the Rangi track at about 9.00 am on Sunday morning in cool, frosty but overcast weather. DOC has put considerable effort into forming a track across the upper section of the slip about 20 minutes up the track. Unfortunately, when viewed from further up the valley, it is evident that the present solution is only temporary as a substantial active slump section has yet to come sliding down into the creek bed.

At Helen's bridge, we dropped down to the creek bed for a general inspection. Worth a visit. Above the upper stream, the track was mostly ice or snow.

The hut was reached in time for morning tea and a rest to enjoy the calm sunny conditions amongst patches of well-frozen snow. We contemplated investigating the "bulldozer" track for the return, however such was the excellence of the conditions we wanted more. So we took off for Mangahua, which we reached for lunch. Again very still conditions.

Duncan had the urge to continue and complete a round trip by returning by Deadmans track. We concurred and reached the carpark shortly before 3 p.m.

After nearly being cleaned up by a logging truck just back on the sealed road, we had afternoon coffee at the Kimbolton Café.



## Previous Photo: Not Kimbolton Cafe



Above: Wiling away time at Rangi

## SAREX at Night using a GPS, July 29 By Doug Strachan

Terry Crippen, Peter Darragh, Jenny McCarthy, Derek Sharp, Doug Strachan, Janet Wilson, Heather Bewick.

SAR = Search and Rescue

GPS = Global Positioning System

Wpt = Way Point = a point along the way

We met at the cop shop in Cuba St at 2pm for the theory part of the exercise. People from other clubs and organisations also took part. We were late starting because the people from Levin had trouble finding their way, proving the need for a course on navigation.

Dave Adamson gave us the low down on GPSs. Your GPS can tell you where you are on a map, how fast you are moving and in what direction, and even point you in the direction of map coordinates you want to go to. I don't think current models are smart enough to find your misplaced glasses or car keys, or to tell the difference between a military headquarters and a Chinese embassy. However, if you put the GPS on your car's dash, it will tell you your speed with 10X more accuracy than the car's speedo. It could pay for itself in saved speeding fines. Even smarter models, with silly prices, tell you the best hunting and fishing times at any Wpt.

Anyway, GPS devices were dished out, and we were led through the 4 screens. On the 1<sup>st</sup> screen we could see it was searching for available satellite signals, which it couldn't find. Then a question popped up on the screen: "Are you indoors?" I tell you, there was no fooling the

clever little buggers. Before taking them outside, we put in some Wpts; that is, map coordinates.

Once outside, we selected “go to Wpt1” and lo and behold an arrow appeared on the screen. We followed the arrow, mesmerised by it and the ever-decreasing “distance to Wpt1” number. How no one absent-mindedly stepped out in front of a car still amazes me.

Back inside, we were given dinner: pizza. I had already had pizza the night before, and the left over slices for lunch. Still, I politely showed my appreciation by helping myself to 3 big pieces.

After din dins, it was time to practice in the field. We drove out to the Massey ring road, where we punched 9 Wpts into our GPSs, and then tried to walk to them. Essential equipment was GPS, torch, jacket. Peter and I formed a team and took turns using the GPS. Following an arrow isn't too difficult at all. Of course, *smart people go around electric fences, and go over bridges, rather than take a direct route.*

Finding the stakes that were planted at each Wpt wasn't always quite so easy, due to GPS inaccuracies. As soon as you get under a canopy, the GPS loses contact with the satellites, or gets a signal that has been reflected. In the open, you can generally get within 15m of your target. That should be close enough to find a hut or mountain top. Apparently the Americans used to play tricks like sneaking satellites slightly off course so only the US military would be able to use the precision technology for things like missile guidance. Those days are over.

GPSs suffer the same problem as all computers: you have to put the right data in to them in order to get correct info out. Apparently there are different standards in use, including an Irish one, which we are best to avoid. There's an international standard called WGS84, which boaties use. Sometimes boaties will take their GPS tramping and run into trouble because on land in NZ we should use a standard called “NZMG 49.”

A GPS is a piece of cake to use after a bit of practice, even if plugging in map coordinates as Wpts is a bit time-consuming. You can always forget about using it for Wpts and just follow Janet's tip: “Wherever you are just hold down ‘enter’ and it'll tell you where you are.”

## Snowcraft 1 Mt Ruapehu, Aug 2-3 By Craig Allerby

We were instructors: Terry Crippen and Bruce van Brunt. Participants: Penny Abercrombie, Craig Allerby, Anastasia van Brunt, Ashik Dahya, Judith Kidd, Edith Leary and Wara Teeranitamkul.

At our briefing for Snowcraft 1 on the Tuesday night, we were formed into 2 groups. We named ourselves the “Keas” and were Penny, Edith, Craig, and Anastasia, with instructor Bruce van Brunt. The other group named themselves the “Huskies” and were Ashok, Wara, and Judith, with instructor Terry Crippen.

We left for the mountain 6:30pm Friday evening, stopping at Taihape for fish and chips. Next stop was at the shelter at Whakapapa Village to put on more clothing, then on to the carpark at the Iwikau Village. We threw on our packs, grabbed our ice axes, turned on our headlamps and slipped and slid toward the MTSC lodge. Terry briefed us on the hut etiquette and assigned breakfast duties. Up at 6:30am for a good, wholesome breakfast thanks to the Huskies. We did the dishes, threw on our gear, and headed for some snow-covered slopes. Bruce showed us how to walk on snowy terrain and cut steps with our ice axes. He then got us to put on our crampons and demonstrated how to walk in them. Wow, what grip! We were off up and down the slopes. We took a lunch break and ate our sammies. Bruce suggested we go to another area, the Amphitheatre, to practice self-arresting. Penny was pleased with this as she had tried to get there a couple of times before. With copy-book demonstrations from Bruce, and the odd demo from Anastasia, we proceeded to plough up the slopes. We headed back to the lodge in the late afternoon. The Huskies cooked us up a delicious meal of lasagne and pear crumble pudding. After dinner Terry and Bruce gave us a talk on the dangers of avalanches. We then retired for some well-needed sleep.

Bruce woke us at 6am for breakfast duty. We ate up large, made our lunch, and headed of up the mountain under a clear sky. Got to a good valley. The snow was firm. Oh no! – time for more self-arresting. Our bodies felt those bumps. Must get it right, stop quicker. Hurry up sun! We stopped for lunch, then Bruce showed us how to use avalanche tracers. Bruce and Anastasia then hid one in the snow, and Penny, Edith and I proceeded to home in on it, with Edith winning the race. We carried on with more self-arrests, with a couple of glissades. Good fun! Terry and the Huskies appeared; time to head back to the lodge. A quick cupper, clean-up and pack. Headed home



around 4pm, stopping at Ohakune for a kebab – good choice Bruce! Thanks to Terry and Bruce for an excellent weekend had by everyone.

Read the “Huskies” version of the trip report in the October newsletter.

### **Iron Gates Hut, Aug 3. By Neil Campbell.**

The party consisted of: Martin Lawrence, Neil Campbell and Barbara Mare.

Iron Gates Hut is located on the western side of the Ruahine Range. We left Palmerston North at 7.30am passing through Feilding, Kimbolton and Apiti on the way to the road end. There was very little driving on unsealed roads and the small amount of unsealed road was in good condition. We reached the road end at 8.50am. The track to Iron Gates Hut follows the picturesque Oroua River. It is nice mountain forest country with occasional views of snow-covered peaks. It is a well-maintained track. There are plenty of ups-and-downs and some creeks to cross. In a few places there is some deep mud and slippery tree roots. We reached the hut at 11.50am. We found it to be neat and tidy. After lunch we headed back to the car. We had the traditional ice cream at Kimbolton and were back in Palmerston North by 5pm. Thanks go to Martin for leading a most enjoyable walk.

### **Field Hut, Aug 10. By Neil Campbell.**

The party consisted of: Neil Campbell (leader), Duncan Hedderly, Ian Harding, Carol Brungar, Tim Swale, Wara Teeranititankul, Richard Lockett, Dave and Clare Houlbrooke.

Field Hut is located in the Tararua Range. It has historic status having been built in 1924. The drive to the start of our walk to this hut involves leaving State Highway 1, just after passing through Otaki, and then proceeding along the Otaki Gorge Road. Much of the Otaki Gorge Road is unsealed but it is mostly in good condition. We left Palmerston North at about 8.10am and were ready to start walking from Otaki Forks by about 9.40am. We were blessed with unseasonably fine weather. The well-made track first crosses open country and then enters very attractive Tararua forest. We reached the hut at lunchtime. The hut has recently been done-up and looks very nice. It now has a fire escape allowing the people sleeping in the loft to escape. We returned to the

cars and finished the day with some real fruit ice creams at the fruit shop on State Highway 1 just South of the Otaki Gorge Road turn-off.

### **Snowcraft 2 16th-17th August By Edith Leary**

Attending were Anastasia van Brunt, Ash Dohya, Craig Allerby, Edith Leary and Penny Abercrombie along with Malcolm Leary and tutors Bruce van Brunt and Terry Crippen.

Terry, Malcolm and Edith left earlier on Friday arriving at the lodge at 7 pm, the rest left Palmerston North at 5-30pm arriving later that evening. The weather was closed in with no sign of improving so no need for an early breakfast!

Saturday started in doors practising our knots and rope work. In pairs we learnt how to prepare the rope for glacier travel and this was how we headed out onto the snow. As it was still trying to snow we didn't venture far from the lodge and found a gully to practice simple belaying first without putting an anchor in. Next was learning to anchor ourselves to the mountain with a snow stake and more belaying each other up and down the slope. All found this clumsy work with gloves on. A few were starting to feel the cold, it was decided to head back to the lodge for lunch but before we did Terry showed us how to anchor to a rock using a sling.

During lunch visitors arrived, Penny's husband George and their two children Abby and Jeremy who were very excited to see Mum! That afternoon more anchoring and belaying was practised while George cooked a scrumptious tea for all.

Terry demonstrated the mountain radio to us with particular detail to the care of the aerial - makes the phone at home a simple device. The weather the next day was no better so again we started the day indoors. Bruce showed us how to lock someone on belay, sometimes its necessary to free your hands. He demonstrated how the Italian hitch can be used for belaying and we all practised this. The 3 different types of snow stakes were shown and explained. Conditions outdoors were no better than the day before but made of hardy stuff we headed out and had more practice anchoring in different ways with our tutors making us practice on slightly more difficult terrain - they we pleased to see an increase in the speed of our work. We all appreciated experiencing the mountain in what was not ideal conditions. Thank you Terry and Bruce for all your tuition, advice and patience, its now up to us to use it.

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