

31st – 1st April BUSHCRAFT INSTRUCTION COURSE

Being able to make oneself comfortable in the bush and the ability to find one's way are essential skills for the trampler. Topics to be covered on this course include clothing and equipment, food, leadership and trip preparation, bush travel and navigation, shelter, fires and firelighting, use of stoves, river crossing, loss of route, accidents and injury, first aid, search and rescue, maps, and the minimum impact code. Courses are to be run both for elementary and advanced trampers. (Map NZMS 1 N 152).

Leader: Kevin Pearce, ph. 80-217
Grading: Easy and Fit.
Cost: \$1.50
Depart: 6.00 a.m. Saturday.

3rd April ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, P.N. LAND S.A.R. ADVISORY COMMITTEE (INC.) 7.30 p.m. Tuesday at the Police Station.

5th April COMMITTEE MEETING

6th – 8th April SOUTHERN CROSSING

One of the Great Classics, this trip will take you across the Tararuas from the Otaki to Woodside. Bring a good torch, full storm gear and be prepared for a late return home on the railcar, Sunday night. (Map NZMS 1 N 157).

Names to: Kevin Pearce, ph. 80-217
Grading: Fit
Cost: \$7.00 approx. depending upon transport arrangements
Depart: 6.30 p.m. Friday.

6th – 8th April WINCHCOMBE – NEILL CROSSING

A harder variation of the southern crossing and grade F.E. Other details as for the Southern (given above).

7th – 8th April WAIOTARU

The Waioataru is a tributary to the Otaki. A medium trip camping out Saturday night. Map NZMS 1 N 157.

Names to: Kevin Pearce, ph. 80-217
Grading: Medium
Cost: \$2.50
Depart: 6.00 a.m. Saturday.

EASTER – 12th – 16th (or 17th) April UREWERA NATIONAL PARK

A great area and rather different from our local ranges. In view of the petrol crisis only full cars will run so names must be in early. Food will be arranged on a communal basis. Map NZMS 170.

Names to: Kevin Pearce, ph. 80-217
Grading: Easy and Fit (two trips).
Cost: \$11.00 approx.
Depart: 6.00 a.m. Saturday.

21st April PUKERUA BAY – KAREHANA BAY

A very easy coastal walk. Accommodation available Saturday night for those wanting to go on the Sunday trip as well. (Details below).

21st – 22nd April ROCK CLIMBING, TITAHU BAY

An ever popular activity under the care of the ever popular Philip. Bring city clothes for Saturday night. (Details below).

22nd April COLONIAL KNOB WALKWAY

An easy walk to a vantage point near Porirua.
Leader: Philip Budding, ph. 85-936
Grading: Easy
Cost: Transport \$4.00 plus accommodation.
Depart: 7.00 a.m. Saturday and Sunday.

28th DECEMBER, 1978:

Fortified by a macaroni cheese breakfast, we struggled up on to the Harman Pass in receding mist. Much rock hopping and snow plodding saw the mob straggle up on to the Whitehorn Pass at 5,730 feet, where a primus brew was produced under rather drafty conditions in record time (at least 35 minutes). The mists had cleared by this time and one could appreciate the country.

From the Pass the trip down river to the Wilberforce really dragged and a decision was made to re-distribute food and party gear to lighten the loads of the slower members. The tail end of the party arrived to find the camp erected, a brew waiting and the evening meal already under way. At this point we had our last contact with humanoid forms until the end of the trip.

29th DECEMBER, 1978:

Despite the light drizzle and low cloud, an attempt was made to traverse the Grave Col to the head of the Gifford Stream. The lower part of the Grave Creek provided some interesting boulder hopping, but this soon gave way to glacier travel. Conditions deteriorated as we ascended and wisdom prevailing, we returned for another night near Park Morpeth Hut.

30th DECEMBER, 1978:

As the morning was as bad as the previous day we went down the Wilberforce River and started boulder hopping up the Gifford Stream. Phillip had been suffering since the beginning of the trip from a numbness and loss of strength in the arms and he decided that he would not be able to use an ice axe effectively. A summit conference (please excuse the pun) was held, and Chris and Phillip agreed to go back to Park Morpeth Hut and make a leisurely trip to Hokitika via the Browning Pass and Styx Saddle.

A short distance upstream saw the start of glacier ice and the tents and flies were pitched to provide shelter for the afternoon and evening. Marty and Trevor made a recce up to the Griffith Col, but did not get a good look down the other side because of the inevitable mist. They were further disheartened on their return to camp at 6 p.m. to find that no one had begun to cook dinner.

31st DECEMBER, 1978:

We packed up in sunshine and made good time up the screes below the Griffith Col. A fine series of bucket steps were kicked up the relatively steep snow slopes to the Col itself, and half the party wandered up to Mount Griffiths at 6,750 feet on the Main Divide. All enjoyed good views of the mountains east of the Divide until the mists closed in.

A camp was set up on moraine at the base of the Griffiths Glacier to provide good access for a morning climb of the peaks on the Cabot Ridge. The Xmas Pud was consumed (to Don's great joy) in honour of the New Year's Eve, and certain people (unnamed) did not crawl off to their own tent until they had welcomed the New Year in, in person.

1st JANUARY, 1979:

Raining again, so, we continued on our route down the Griffiths Stream to its junction with the Unknown River. From here the Gibson Stream would provide us with access to the Mungo Pass. Nigel cut his knee on a boulder and required first aid, but fortunately he was still able to walk.

Between the Griffiths and the Unknown River we discovered our first bush for some days. Marty, unable to contain himself, led us straight into it. Seven people eventually emerged on the other side, but did not catch up with Stephen until quarter of an hour later.

Our best campsite of the trip was found on a terrace above the Gibson Stream, and we had a glimpse of Mungo Pass and a sunny evening.

2nd JANUARY, 1979:

The usual fine morning deteriorated during the walk up the Gibson and light rain had begun before we reached Pascoe's Bluff. The Gibson flows out of a hanging basin through

a small gorge and over a waterfall to its lower valley. We chose a bad route to by-pass these obstacles which resulted in 3½ hours of scrub sidling, ledge walking, scree and gully descending and ascending, crouching in gale force winds, etc., in order to reach the upper Stream. Lunch was eaten at the Hard Rock Cafe while some of the party searched up and down the grotty scree filled creek for a campsite.

Colin and Keith, both heroes, spent over an hour sewing a patch on one of the tent flies in heavy rain before seeking the comfort of their sleeping bags. We were reasonably comfortable despite the ensuing thunderstorm as we had gone to a lot of trouble to construct a rock wall around the tent. However, a violent flapping sound late in the evening announced that about one-third of the fly had ripped away. Colin went out and returned to announce that our little stream had grown and was within 6 feet of our home. The other tent had partially collapsed, but Colin repaired same, as the occupants were too lazy to get up. We amused ourselves for the rest of the night by carrying out half hourly checks on the river level and dozing.

3rd JANUARY, 1979:

In the morning the lower valley was clear, but the Main Divide was "poohed in." It was decided that Marty and Trevor would go for a recce and everyone else would pack up at a late hour and move down the valley for a dry-out. However a brief clearing in the weather coincided with the recce party's arrival on the pass and they raced back down to collect everyone else. The second ascent of the pass was conducted in falling snow under zero visibility until we dropped out of the mist in the scree basin of the Brunswick Creek.

The Brunswick Creek would be called a river if it flowed from the Tararua or Ruahine Ranges, and its valley is very large. It falls steadily as it approaches the Mungo Valley, but there is good rock hopping travel to the confluence. The Mungo Valley is much more rugged but the Forest Service have built numerous bridges over the river and its tributaries, although the presence of a bridge does not guarantee a track! We went upstream to the confluence of the Park Stream and the Mungo, and climbed a spur to the Top Mungo Hut.

The hut was a welcome sight after a long and satisfying day.

4th JANUARY, 1979:

This beautiful morning was spent down at the Park Mungo confluence with sleeping bags, tents, and the remaining fly spread out in the sun to dry.

The log book at the hut stated that the sidle track was non-existent for most of the walk down to Poet Hut, and so we set off down the true left of the Mungo itself in the afternoon. Having crossed to the true right too soon, we became bluffed. Marty did a fine crossing on a rope, thus enabling the rest of the party to cross on fixed belay, and the packs were roped across separately on a sort of flying-fox. After another tricky (not roped) crossing we were able to boulder hop down to the start of a difficult gorge. We picked up markers on a slip above a side stream and roared down to Poet Hut on a benched supertrack.

It was here that we encountered our first report of the cricket match between the Bluff Hut Trackcutters' team and the Top Toaroha Trackcutters. The first prize of a week in bed with Patty Maguire (bunny of the month) was reported to have been enjoyed by all. Further reports of the match were encountered at each hut subsequently visited.

5th JANUARY, 1979:

The Hokitika River is in fact smaller than the Mungo at the confluence and falls over 600 feet in a series of cascades from the gentle hanging valley. Bluff Hut is situated on a ridge overlooking the Hokitika cataract and the Mungo valley. The track up to the hut from the Mungo climbs 1,000 feet in 400 yards, and is equipped with two aluminium ladders and a couple of fixed wires for handrails. This forms part of a super-track round trip in the area. Many good views were to be had from the Bluff Hut and half of the party went for a walk to Frews Saddle. The Mathias Pass could be seen from Frews and this looked to be very easy

walking on the West Coast side.

6th JANUARY, 1979:

It was time to try another of Pascoe's routes and we crossed the Hokitika and climbed to the Homeward Ridge near Steadman Saddle. Needless to say the mists descended and Huey tried a little snow and a moderate wind to improve his reputation. The ridge top itself was initially a little too rocky so we sidled until the rock gave way to scree and grass.

A clearing gave tremendous views into the Sir Robert Creek, and we soon found cairns marking the route from the Mungo to Sir Robert Hut. The track through the bush to the Mungo had been remarked with permolat markers (venetian blind) but had not been recut. The combination of bush-pushing, and the inevitable rain and steep greasy slopes led to some fun and fall-overs. By the time we crossed the Mungo we had little choice but to go to Post Hut again.

7th JANUARY, 1979:

On this partial crud morning we did get some views of Mts. Balance and Harrison on the Main Divide above Sir Robert Creek as we climbed the Toaroha Saddle. The saddle was misted in and thus our farewell to the Mungo was an anticlimax.

We bashed down the waterfalls in Bannatyne Creek, having sleep-walked past the start of the sidle track. As a result of this exercise, we had lunch very late and continued down river with insufficient time to climb the Adventure Ridge on the Toaroha Range. The intention had been to include a little Tararua type tops travel on the last day and to drop into the Kokatahi River onto tracks known to one of the leaders. However, we lamented our misfortune in the huts at Cedar Flats.

8th JANUARY, 1979:

The rain really hosed down and we walked the 9,000 yards of Toaroha supertrack before lunch, which was eaten in the shelter of a friendly farmer's hay barn. Marty and Stephen walked out a couple of hours later in order to allow Marty time to recover from a bout of vomiting before breakfast. Mr. Bissell, Senior, provided transport to Hokitika, where we learned the tragic news of the deaths of Keith Margrain and John Williams. We were pleased to hear that Chris and Phillip had arrived out safely.

Those in the party were:

Don Scott, Colin Hoare, Stephen Moore, Keith Miller, Chris Saunders, Nigel Gingham, Sue and Philip Cade, Marty Robbins, and Trevor Bissell.
XX

ARTHUR'S PASS – HOKITIKA
THE LESSER ALTERNATIVE

Phillip and I left the others at about 12.15 p.m. on 30th January and despite some concern at the size of our party, we successfully crossed the Gifford Stream, and facing into the westerly, reached Park Morpeth Hut for a third night (!) about mid-afternoon. We soon had the fire blazing and were drying out, not envying our former companions at this stage. Unlike those we had left we had not forsaken other human company and by evening pleasant conversation flowed freely in a full hut. We were relieved when the rain cleared and Mt. Findlay, 'guardian' of the Wilberforce appeared. Next morning dawned fine, except for some westerly 'clag' coming over the main divide.

We set off for Browning Pass, having given up hope of a complete clearance in the weather. As we ascended the Pass good views of Grave Col, the site of our previous attempt, could be had. The last few hundred feet of Browning's Pass proved to be more difficult than the zig-zag had led us to believe. Phillip was involved in a tricky manoeuvre when one of his pack straps came undone as he was negotiating a chimney. He overcame the problem, receiving a knee injury in the process. Once at the lake we began our rather slow descent to the Arahura and Harman Hut once again in mist and drizzle. We were overtaken by two fellow trampers who had left Greenlaw early that morning.

The severe grazing received when one of them slipped and fell in the head of the Cronin Valley illustrated their folly in presuming ice axes to be unnecessary for a summer 'three passes'. New Year's Eve we enjoyed a dram of our companions' whisky and an early night.

Next morning we made good time to Grassy Flats in the Styx along the 'highway' maintained by the Forest Service. The weather cleared as we made our way down the river valley. The knee injury rather slowed our progress and so we eventually bivvied under the stars within sight of the road bridge.

A clear dawn saw us up and off. We trudged along the road to Kanieri township and were fortunate to get a lift to Hokitika where we enjoyed a day's hospitality with the Bissell family; thus we completed the traditional 'Three Passes' route to the West Coast.

Chris Saunders.

NOMINATION FORM – P.N.T.M.C.

I,..... hereby accept nomination for the position of PRESIDENT / VICE PRESIDENT / SECRETARY / TREASURER / COMMITTEE MEMBER (Delete those not applicable.)

Proposed by

Seconded by

Nominee, proposer and seconder must be full members of the Club.

PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING & MOUNTAINEERING CLUB (INC.)

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 1978-79

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in presenting the Club's thirteenth Annual Report. There has been much tramping activity over the past year with trips being run on almost every weekend. Both Club and private trips were run to the South Island and to more distant parts of the North Island such as Mount Tarawera and Urewera National Park. Travel expenses have continued to increase and the current petrol shortage is likely to cause difficulties. It is important that Club members play their part in conserving fuel. Our record in this respect is, I believe, good but we must continue to ensure that cars carry the maximum number of passengers. Bicycling has grown in popularity and I foresee more cycling / tramping trips being run in the future.

There has been considerable turn-over in membership over recent years, a reflection of the mobility of our population, while total membership has remained relatively constant. The average age of our membership has increased at a rate faster than that of the passing years and only 15 of our 72 members are juniors.

JOHN WILLIAMS AND KEITH MARGRAIN

The Club suffered a major blow at the beginning of the year with the loss of members John Williams and Keith Margrain in an avalanche on Mount Cook. The tragedy has caused great sorrow to those who knew John and Keith well. Both had served the Club in various capacities and will be sorely missed.

NEWSLETTER

The Club's newsletter continues to be of high quality and to be an essential part of the Club's activities. Special thanks are due to Gill Davies, our Editor and Heather Crabb, our typist, as well as to the various people who have assisted with printing and posting. In future I would like to see all trips and activities recorded in the newsletter either as a brief or full trip account or perhaps in tabular form with only essential details mentioned.

COMMITTEE

The Committee met on eleven occasions during the past year and dealt with a wide range of matters. Peter Darragh was co-opted during the year to boost Committee strength and to provide a Club Night organiser. Attendance at Committee meetings was as follows: Trevor Bissell 11/11, Heather Crabb 11/11, Janet Croad 4/11, Peter Croad 9/11, Peter Darragh 4/7, Gill Davies 7/11, Ian Hoare 8/11, Stephen Moore 9/11, Brad Owen 7/11, Kevin Pearce 10/11, Tim Short 7/11, John Williams 8/9.

NON ACTIVE MEMBERS

It is recognised that members have interests and responsibilities outside tramping. However, it remains a source of continuing disappointment that many members go on very few trips. We try to run trips to suit our members requirements but we depend on our members telling us what they want. I would ask all those who have not been out over the last three months to make a special effort over the next three and get out. If there are insufficient suitable trips being run please tell a member of the incoming Committee.

Kevin Pearce
President