



PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217
PALMERSTON NORTH
NEWSLETTER
February/March 1984

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ENQUIRES CONCERNING OVERDUE TRIPS

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ALL TRIPS LEAVE FROM THE SUPERSAVE CARPARK, FERGUSSON STREET. IF YOU WISH TO GO ON A TRIP, YOU MUST ADVISE THE LEADER AT LEAST THREE DAYS IN ADVANCE. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN AN ALTERNATIVE DAY OR WEEKEND TRIP, CONTACT THE PERSON RUNNING THE SCHEDULED TRIP.

COMING EVENTS:

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the A.G.M. of the P.N.T.M.C. will be held on Thursday 29 March 1984 commencing at 7.45 p. m. in the Society of Friends Meeting Rooms, 227 College Street, Palmerston North.

Nominations for the positions of Patron, President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, Auditor and not less than five committee members are required.

23 February – Club Night – Geoff Gabites on the Trango Towers

We are fortunate to have Geoff Gabites coming to talk to us about a recent trip to the Trango Towers area in the Karakorum Mountains. Geoff is associated with Macpac Wilderness and is in Palmerston North to open the Extension to Ski Scene.

7.45 p.m. Thursday
227 College Street, Society of Friends Meeting Rooms

25 - 26 February – N.E. Ruahines

Leader: Don French
Grading: Fit
Departs: 6 a.m. Saturday

3 March – Coppermine Creek, Ruahines

A nice spot not far from town.

Leader: Linda Russ, phone 87799

Grading: Easy
Departs: 7.30 a.m. Saturday,

3 – 4 March – Ruahine Crossing

The classic Rangī - Howletts with a difference. Hopefully the new Rangī Hut will be in place and Friday night will be spent there.

Leader: John Barkla, phone 73543
Grading: Fit
Departs: 6 p.m. Friday

8 March – Committee Meeting

To be held at Nanette and Peter Cloughs, 10 Union Street, Palmerston North.

10 March – Ohau Gorge, Tararua

A pleasant easy stroll to the Ohau Shelter and return down the Gorge. Ideal trip for a hot summer's day.

Leader: John Barkla, phone 73543
Grading: Easy
Departs: 8 a.m. Saturday

11 March – Mt Hector, Tararua

Another good day trip for those who want to keep their feet dry.

Leader: Michelle Hobday, phone 64104
Grading: Medium
Departs: 6.45 a.m. Sunday

There is also the possibility of a few places on a Kapiti Island trip on 11 March. Contact Peter Clough soon if interested.

15 March – Informal Club Night

Come along and hear what 3 Club members did for their Christmas trip: Catherine, John and Kevin on N.W. Nelson.

17 - 18 March – Waitewaewae – Otaki Forks

Two alternatives this weekend, an easy day trip to Waitewaewae Hut, or a fit tops trip along part of the Main Range.

Names to: Colin Hoare, phone 80363
Grading: Easy and Fit
Departs: 7 a.m. Saturday

24 - 25 March – Northern Tararua

Herepai, Ruapae Stream to Roaring Stag Hut or Cattle Ridge Hut.

Leader: Patricia Eder
Grading: Easy
Departs: 7 a.m. Saturday

29 March – A.G.M.

COMING TRIPS:

Easter: April 20 -25. At least one party is heading for the Seaward Kaikouras. If interested contact John Barkla, phone 73543 as ferry bookings must be made soon.

NOTICES:

1. **Congratulations** and very best wishes to Linda Herdman and Philip Budding following their recent engagement.

2. **Change of address**

Michelle Hobday
Tim Short

4 Victoria Avenue, P.N.
79 Churchill Avenue, P.N.

ph 64104

3. **F.M.C. Nominations**

Federated Mountain Clubs of N.Z. (Inc.) are calling for nominations from Clubs for election of the Executive of the Federation at the next A.G.M. to be held in Christchurch on Saturday 26 May 1984. Nominations, accompanied by the written consent of the nominee and a brief history of mountain club experience are to be forwarded not later than 31 March 1984.

Write to F.M.C., P.O. Box 1604, Wellington.

4. **For sale** Gaz cooker, phone John Barkla 73543

TRIP REPORTS

17 - 18 December – Neill Forks

Fading headlamps and a splattering of rain heralded Field Hut on the Friday night. The morning brought little improvement in the weather but by 10.00 a.m. our conscience won over and we wandered through wet tussock to Kime Hut (biding Linda farewell part way along.) We decided that effort deserved lunch before the final climb on the Hector. From here Winchcombe Ridge merged eerily into the mist but partial clearances gave the basins and ridges a dramatic appearance. Winchcombe biv gave an excuse for a rest before the somewhat tortuous bush track on to Neill. Just after here we chose the disused track leading directly to Neill Forks. At least we believe it does having made a slight error putting us in Neill Creek – still the walk down stream to the hut was pleasant.

The treat for Sunday was the 1000 metre plus climb on to Maungahuka in yuk weather. Lunch for Daryl felt like the last supper as the dreaded Tararua Peaks loomed up. Negotiating the wet ladder with numb hands and strong wind gusts was the highlight of the day or was it the spot on compass navigation on to Pakihore Ridge. A reasonable track exists on this broad ridge once in the bush and before long we had descended to Penn Creek Hut for afternoon tea. All that remained was the never ending sidle track back to Otaki Forks and the vehicles. We were: Linda Russ, Daryl Rowan, Perry Hicks, Don French and John Barkla.

27 December - 5 January – North West Nelson

Like all good trips things went wrong from the beginning. Eventually though we reached Nelson courtesy of an Avcorp flight and Takaka with the blessing of Newmans. After a quick feed of fish and chips the local taxi deposited Kevin Pearce, Catherine Farquhar and myself at the start of the Anatoki track. Although numerous stream beds were evident, water was very scarce and the eventual discovery of such also resulted in one twisted ankle which was to plague me for the rest of the trip.

Day one proper was a time to adjust to heavy packs and the fast benched track served as a gentle introduction. Anatoki Hut, a joint N.Z.F.S./N.Z.D.A. project was reached after six hours and we decided to call it a day. I took the opportunity to bathe my ankle in the freezing river but it was pleasant to gaze around at numerous rocky peaks towards Adelaide Tarn and the Needles Eye.

The following day we wet out on a track leading to Lake Stanley but soon left this and continued up the Anatoki River. We were unsure of the route on to the rugged Douglas Range but chose a steep cascading stream which flowed over very wide rock slabs. Small rock faces and scrubby ledges provided the key to the tussock zone but not without much sweat (and some cursing). Sidling 200 metres beneath the crenulated ridge crest brought us to a saddle over which leered the Drunken Sailors. We dropped down to the small two bunk hut nestled close to Lonely Lake but after a short rest continued towards Kakapo Peak. Two hours later fatigue overcame us and we camped beside a small tarn not far below the ridge.

Next morning we reached our high point for the trip – Kakapo Peak 5804' complete with scattered patches of snow. From here the route to Fenella Hut looked tricky in places but we were to find a lower level cairned route avoided most of the difficulties. Lunch over, we picked up a track leading to a tussock basin beneath Mt Gibbs. From the ridge top we could discern the jagged Dragons Teeth to the north and immediately to the west was Island Lake. The day ended with a sidle under Aorere peak on to the Domett Range and a tent site on a ledge beneath the range.

The view along the Domett Range had confirmed our suspicions about the time required to reach Lake Aorere, the heart of the proposed Tasman Wilderness Area. Reluctantly next morning we retraced our steps to Mt. Gibbs and continued along the Peel Range. This was very straight forward as far as Mt. Cobb at which point the ridge became very narrow in places with several exposed sections on steep but firm rock. By the time the summit of Mt. Prospect was reached, visibility was poor and we were wet and cold. We dropped into a deep saddle between mounts Prospect and Ranolf and decided to descent to the bushline at the head of Chaffey Stream (a tributary of the Cobb River) and camp.

The weather had improved for day five and again the range provided pleasant scrambling on firm rock including three prominent un-named rocky peaks. By midday we had reached the junction with Kakapo Spur. This spur was in marked contrast with what we had previously been over and gave very fast easy travel along broad open tops. We dropped 200 metres to camp in the last big basin towards the end of the spur. Thoughts that evening were directed towards the following days proposed return to the crowds expected in the Karames.

In the morning an uninterrupted layer of cloud lay beneath us giving those in the valley an overcast morning, while we basked in bright sunshine. Towards the Karamea the stark limestone cliffs of Garibaldi ridge dominated the skyline. We reached the bushline and for two hours struggled along a very dense tedious ridge before dropping through much more open bush to Karamea Bend. Sure enough the hut was infested with mobs of people so we idly spent a couple of hours swimming and sunbathing. Towards mid afternoon we wandered along the well formed track up the Karamea and camped a few minutes up river from Crow Hut.

On day seven it was easy tramping up the Karamea passing Venus and Thor huts before stopping at Luna Hut. The river is very picturesque with fierce rapids at one extreme and deathly still water of the earthquake lakes at the other.

The morning of day eight saw Kevin and I attempt a climb of Mt Kendall 5745'. However poor route choice and a lack of enthusiasm cancelled any chance of reaching the summit. For the afternoon's exercise we shouldered packs and climbed steeply on to Biggs Tops and thence to Wangapeka Saddle and track. From here it was a gentle downhill gradient to Stone Hut and the banks of the Wangapeka River.

The final day walk out was completed in drizzle and we met many parties coming in. Although 27 km we were at the road end by early afternoon and had cadged rides out. Certainly an area worth a visit with terrain to challenge no matter what your fitness.

John Barkla.

Don French was active in early January at Plateau Hut, Mt Cook. He made solo ascents of:

1. Plateau face of Haast, gaining the summits of Lendenfield and divide peak of Haast. A pleasant ice climb at its steepest being 60 – 70°.
2. East ridge of Mt Cook. A classic ice climb. The full ridge from Cinerama Col was ascended. Climb commenced at 10.30p.m. and was back at hut 13 hours later.
3. South Ridge Dixon. My third different route on this mountain. Crux being a grade 15 flaring chimney. Much soft snow was encountered on eastern aspects due to a 9.15 a.m. start.
4. East face of Mt Tasman. Probably the first ascent for about eight years? and most likely the first solo ascent. The summits of Graham and Silberhorn were also visited.

COMMENT from Don French

Was Sir Robert Right in removing the seven Japanese climbers from Plateau Hut (2200m) on the slopes of Mt Cook?

I would like to give you my version of the story. The legal and ethical debate I shall leave to someone else. I feel I'm fairly well positioned to make judgements, for I was at Plateau Hut with our silent friends.

I flew in on early Thursday morning. It was a perfect day. Over the past few days there had been a 700 mm fall of dry snow. My partner and I walked to the base of the east face of Cook to examine the possibilities of climbing it. We decided against it because of its loaded condition. As we sunbathed on the rocks outside the hut that evening our oriental friends arrived in one of the last flights for the day. They proved to be a rather highly organised party having an abundant supply of stores, cookers and technical equipment in their dwarfing packs.

Over the years one learns to judge other climbers by their gear, not by the quality or quantity, but by its battered look and the simplicity of the attire of its owners. These guys were hardened outdoorsmen, dressed in woollen jerseys and patched climbing trousers.

The following day at about 10.00 a.m. my colleague and I returned from our abortive attempt at climbing Tasman's intimidating east face to find the seven preparing themselves for a little familiarisation excursion.

We sat down on our favourite niche on the sun rocks, to watch, with drinks in our hands. The leader got his group in a circle around him and proceeded to put them through a light routine of warm up exercises. John and I discussed the merits of this activity and agreed to start the practice ourselves before any further climbs.

They then separated into groups and put their ropes on. First a few coils were placed over the shoulder, tied off, a prusik or two added, then half a dozen loops were taken up in a hand. Chionard would have been proud of them.

As the last moved off towards Glacier Dome I had a chance to observe their on-rope communication methods. The rope is held taut between them, a technique the average New Zealander has let slip. The rear climber drew the forwards attention by the slightest of tugs on the rope, the sort of thing I wouldn't even notice. Once visual contact was gained they could then converse in their sign language. It should be noted that they wore gloves as opposed to mitts on their hands so that finger movements can be seen.

Glacier Dome, being no more than a bump with a good view behind the hut was their first conquest, before they travelled over the crevassed Grand Plateau to examine the north of the Linda Glacier. As the party went, in typical Japanese style, they placed small red flags attached to bamboo poles with Japanese writing on them at key junctures on their route. The writing has some religious significance, I assumed.

I shall never forget the events of that evening. Early evening we received a request via the radio on wind conditions for an Iroquois landing. Soon after, the airforce helicopter touched down depositing three people, including a Japanese interpreter from the Hermitage. The poor deaf and mute Japanese climbers were duly informed of their destiny.

They packed.

As the remaining 26 occupants learnt of the indecision a silence slowly descended upon that lonely hut, a silence of bewilderment.

An hour later they had packed and carried their packs to outside the hut. There they formed a group for a final team photograph. Slowly, one by one, all the climbers in the hut coming from all corners of the world joined them until we were all clustered together. Somebody stepped out to take a photograph and soon found a dozen cameras around his neck, all people wanting to record this moment that we would rather not have written into history. The sun finally set, as in some form of irony, behind Mt Cook to split the group and send them sliding back into the warmth of the simple shelter.

One of them looked at me, he slowly raised his hand towards Mt Cook, at first giving a look of happiness, which slowly changed to one of sadness as he dropped his head and twisted, as if he was in some form of intense pain. He was just all so close to tears. I felt helpless, inadequate, humbled by this man's intensity of feeling and loss. All I could do was embrace him.

Back in the hut they passed around their Japanese sweets, as we took it, a gesture of comradeship, I felt ashamed of being a New Zealander. A countryman of the last corner of the earth where sport teams can travel in the name of freedom, where a man can grow up to be what he wants to be, do what he wants to, go where he wants. Yes, go to the places so patronisingly 'preserved for the people by the people'.

After the helicopter returned breaking the silence and departing with our saddened friends I had a chance to examine the log book. In a scribbled English they had written something like:

"Mt. Fyji deaf mute climber club"

They signed each of their names in traditional Japanese, then

"We come for climb Mt Cook

We go now

We sad".

These simple disjointed words kept on running through my mind as I lay basking in the sun alone on the summit of Mt Cook, a few days later, knowing that I could have been sharing those precious summit emotions with a group of handicapped climbers who had travelled thousands of miles to gain them.

"We sad, I sad"

Donald French.

