



PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217
PALMERSTON NORTH
NEWSLETTER

May/June 1984

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ENQUIRES CONCERNING OVERDUE TRIPS

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ALL TRIPS LEAVE FROM THE NO FRILLS 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 LEADER OF THE SCHEDULED TRIP.

COMING EVENTS:

31 May – Formal Club Night – Photo Competition

Come along and view the slides and prints. Better still, enter some yourself. See previous newsletter for rules and classes of competition.

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

2 - 3 June – Ruahines

Visit the Hikurangi Range, McKinnon Hut and the Kawhatau River. Could be some snow on the tops.

Leader: Peter Wiles, ph 86894
Grade: Medium
Departs: Saturday 6.30 a.m.

3 or 4 June – Queens Birthday Weekend

A day trip can be organised. Current options depending on snow conditions, are:

1. Mt Egmont (and Phantom's Peak). Fit/F.E.
2. Day Rangi-Howletts crossing. Fit/F.E.

Names to: Catherine Farquhar, ph 87799
(N.B. easier options can be organised.)

7 June – Committee Meeting

To be held at Damienne Eder's abode, 155 Heretaunga Street, 7.45 p.m. sharp.

9 June - Join Kevin for a 'Beach combers delight'

(Kevin planned this trip from his World Atlas, but don't let that deter you from exploring a section of coast line with him!)

Leader: Kevin Pearce, ph 70217
Grade: Easy/Medium
Departs: 7 a.m.

10 June - Tararuas – Ruamahanga Gorge and Blue Range

Scope for trying out your navigation skills on Blue Range. Also a chance to get into some bush/river photography. (The recent Photo competition club night will have provided inspiration!).

Leader: Damienne Eder, ph 71785
Grade: Medium
Departs: 7 a.m.

14 June - Club Night - "Intro to snow"

Some pre-snowcraft slides for those unfamiliar with the white stuff. (i.e. a must for intending snowcrafters.) For the 'old hands', a chance to see some of Daryl and Nigel's M.S.C. course pictures. (And no doubt some Mt Cook ones as well - see 'trip reports'.)

16 - 17 June - Purity Hut – Mangweka, (and beyond).

A chance to visit the southern end of the Hikurangi Range and the highest point of the Ruahine Ranges. Potentially a classic winter trip.

Leader: Daryl Rowan, ph 64655
Grade: Fit
Departs: 7 a.m. Saturday.

(A day trip could also be organised – phone Daryl if interested.)

23 - 24 June - Mid-winter at Rangī (in the new hut)

A social event not to be missed. (Hopefully this year the road won't be blocked with snow!) There are numerous ways of getting to Rangī, (some madder than others). Weekend and day trips. The main 'eat up' will be on Sunday, probably.

Names to: Nanette Clough, ph 61271
Grades: All

28 June - Formal Club Night. – A Kaikoura selection.

Slides from the two recent Seaward Kaikoura trips and two earlier (winter) Inland Kaikoura trips.

7.45 p.m. Thursday
227 College Street.

NOTICES:

Annual debate - M.U.A.C. will supply the topic this year but we need an enthusiastic team of three.

The Committee recently received Keith Miller's resignation. Keith and his family are moving to Whangarei. We wish Keith well in his new position.

TRIP REPORTS:

Mt. Cook

After the Mountain Safety Council course held at Beetham Hut, two days of bad weather, held Daryl and myself (Nigel) at Unwin Hut. Flying to Plateau Hut late Sunday afternoon we plodded to the hut for tea. Meeting Sherp and Al (two other M.S.C. course participants) at Plateau, conversation drifted onto the next day's activities and Cook via the Linda Glacier seemed the favourite idea. Rising at 1.00 a.m., boiled toasted muesli does not give any sort of start to a day. Finally away by 2.30 a.m. the walk across the Grand Plateau to the base of the Linda was distinctly marked by avalanche debris.

Starting up the Linda our advance was halted at the Bowie couloir area by a slot which appeared in the dark to stretch across the glacier. Due to an incomplete freeze avalanches had started falling early and after spending some time trying to get past this slot we returned to the hut in time to hear the 8.00 a.m. weather forecast.

A more dignified start was installed for Daryl and I at 5.00 a.m. to climb Mt. Dixon. We took a shallow gully onto the east ridge and up onto the summit. While we climbed Mt. Dixon, 2 Dunedin climbers Glen and Brian, spent some time back in the Linda finding a way through the Linda icefall.

After 3 hours sleep it was a repeat of Monday morning, with the exception of no meusli. A guided party of 5 were an hour and ½ ahead of us. The four of us (Glen, Brian, Daryl, myself), set off in good conditions. Travel up the Linda Glacier was straight forward, easy going on 40° snow ice.

With dawn breaking we arrived at the base of the summit rocks – the warmth did wonders to the body. With the guided party on the summit rocks we took a well earned break.

Taking the ice route through the summit rocks, it was a careful trudge up fine strastrugi ice. Our arrival on the summit brought the number there to 9. Standing room only! Checking the time at 10.30 a.m. it was a Moro, a drink, photos, and we were on our way down ahead of the crowd. Three abseils and one jammed rope took care of the summit rocks. Action on the Linda shelf had increased slightly with hard ice under treacherous sun softened surface snow. A long grind down the Linda and a haul across the Grand Plateau towards Plateau Hut which didn't seem to get any bigger. Arriving at the hut at 7.30 p.m. we took a welcome rest.

After a sleep in, Daryl and I walked out over Cinerama Col and we abseiled the schrund. I fell into a slot on Boys Col and Daryl stuffed his toes down onto the Tasman but we were lucky to get a lift from Husky Flat back to the Hermitage (in the rain).

Staying the night at Unwin, we then headed for Christchurch and Home.

Easter – Traverse of Seaward Kaikoura Range

"Yuk", said Kevin and David. Ahead lay the most difficult pitch yet. A narrow rotten rock arete. Fortunately we had one of the top Swiss mountaineers in our party. Urs led the way, sometimes balanced delicately on tip toe, sometimes on hands and knees, sometimes in full embrace at a tottering gendarme. Boldened by this daring example the rest of us followed nervously. Eventually, we were all safely across.

Only three days earlier we had boarded the ferry (strike delayed), naïve of the perils that lay ahead. The party consisted of David Barker, John Barkla, Kevin Pearce, Roger Redmayne and Urs Schupbach. Our objective was to traverse the Seaward Kaikoura Range from Snowflake in the south to George Spur in the north.

After a porridge breakfast we refuelled on Kaikoura pies before taking the taxi to the end of Postmans Road. Fast travel up the Kowhai River was followed by a tiring bush bash and growing despondency forced an early camp halfway up Homestead Spur. Our immediate problem of water shortage was fortuitously alleviated by persistent precipitation. (The apparent bad weather was later to prove a blessing as it deposited water in the form of ice on all the high peaks).

We set off the following morning in doubtful conditions and before long had donned almost full storm gear. Several hours later and with improving weather on Mount Saunders, we camped in a shallow basin a little to the north of the peak at near 7000'. From here the Inland Kaikoura Range was clearly visible. Immediately the sun left the campsite, water froze in billies and forced us inside sleeping bags.

Sunday dawned fine and clear although we were glad to be climbing up the icy south faces rather than down them. Closer to Mount Manakau (8562') a falling rock resulted in the temporary loss of one ice axe and the subsequent only use of our rope to recover it. The summit became a perfect lunch spot (and what better place to do a headstand!) We descended the normal route of approach to a low saddle (7000'). From here three of the more energetic descended 500' of sun baked scree slopes to refill water bottles using a small length of thin plastic tubing. Later in the day we camped in another basin (±7200') at the start of the long ridge leading to Te ao Whekere.

Monday dawned fine after another subzero night. However it was not long before we were enjoying a pleasant rock scramble on the ascent of Te ao Whekere (8516'). From here we could see through to the North Island, the Southern Alps, Kaikoura Peninsula but not the Chatham Islands. A vast shingle slope soon led us on to a somewhat narrower ridge with a horrible eroded 4000' drop on the eastern slope. Then that fearful stretch of ridge with which this account began. It was with great relief that we sat down for lunch and looked back the way we had come. The steep 1200' climb after lunch was the last of the major uphill drags and we took the opportunity, while still near 8000' altitude, to melt carefully collected ice crystals to replenish our water bottles. Plain sailing over the seldom climbed Tarahaka (7500') and George Spur (7583') led to the final long descent down George Spur itself.

This began innocently enough but we were soon again negotiating a shocking stretch of razorback ridge. Every move sent rock and gravel noisily down each side of the sheer ridge. Dave's gesture of embracing the firm ground immediately after this, summed up our feelings well. It was now late afternoon and we eagerly found two tent sites among large boulders a little further down George Spur. An incredible sunset which left the high peaks of the Inland Kaikoura Range silhouetted was watched as we used the last of our water in preparing the evening meal. The lights of Wellington and cars on the Kaikoura highway were clearly visible.

No water meant no breakfast and an early start for Tuesday. The rest of George Spur was comparatively easy, a delightful reintroduction to plant life and later a harsh toe crushing descent down farmland to George Stream. Once at the stream, each of us consumed close on 3 litres of water in the ensuing couple of hours and lazed in the sun (and cooked a sustaining lunch of macaroni cheese intended for breakfast). Mid afternoon we lazily wandered down to the Clarence River and camped on grassy flats near the road end. One look at the turbulent Clarence convinced us of a road bash rather than attempting to walk down the river which would have meant several crossings.

This was duly completed on Wednesday under an overcast sky, down to the main road Clarence bridge where we caught a Newmans bus back to Picton. Then on to the new ferry and back to Palmy via Dave's car.

19 25 April – Seaward Kaikouras. (The Alternative!)

After work and school on the Thursday before Easter we headed down to the Wellington ferry terminal and boarded to meet other P.N.T.M.C. members. After the crossing we left the ferry and drove south towards Kaikoura, stopping somewhere for the night in a pine forest.

Next morning we vacated the pines and drove to the road end. We set off up the Harpuku River and then up the West Branch of the Harpuku to a hut where we retired for the remainder of the day.

After a good night's sleep we left towards Kowhai Saddle. We crossed over the saddle and then dropped into the Kowhai River, to meet the only other person we were to see in the next 4 -5 days. After about an hour of solid bush bashing and 100 metres ascent, we headed up a spur towards the upper Kowhai River and dropped down the other side of the spur. As the weather cleared, we discovered we had descended by the only reasonable route. That night we camped on a terrace about four metres from the river.

Sunday, we started up a long scree slope to sidle around difficult areas. After many hours, and lots of effort, we dropped down to the very upper reaches of the Kowhai River. There we spent a good night with Keas and Easter eggs supplied by Peter.

Monday we set off up the valley towards a saddle a little to the south of Mt. Manakau. This involved traversing a long, steep, and in places icy, scree slope. After negotiating several sections of rather loose rock we had lunch on Manukau and enjoyed the view – which included both Mt. Egmont and Banks Peninsula. (We also spent time pondering where/how the other team would find water north of Manukau as everything looked very dry.)

Further north we descended an icy gully (i.e. icy scree), and proceeded to carve ourselves a small platform for an equally icy camp. Next morning – back up on to Surveyor's Ridge (more long, steep scree balancing acts), and down this ridge to the saddle north of Mt. Stace. From here we descended into the East branch of the Hapuku and made our way back towards the Hapuku Hut that we had stayed in on our first night. Early morning weather on Wednesday did not encourage a climb of Mt. Fyffe, so we ambled out and took a short diversion into Kaikoura township before heading home.

We were; Wayne MacPherson, Darren Scott, Catherine Farquhar, Peter Wiles.

13 -14 May – Tararuas

Saturday provided fine weather for our walk over Mitre, Girdlestone and the pinnacles on route to Dorset ridge Hut. Lots of low valley cloud but a clear view of Egmont and the Kaikouras. (Ahh - and the pinnacles seemed like solid concrete blocks after the Seaward Kaikouras!)

A rare, still and clear Tararua evening; but by morning cloud and wind had taken hold. It was navigation up and over Baldy then down to Pinnacle Ridge Saddle.

For anyone intending to take this route: the track from the saddle has been recently re-marked and drops you about half way down the Waingawa Gorge. Just a little up river from a long pool which is rather deep, and at this time of year, cold. (Slight understatement.) From here travel down the Waingawa is relatively fast.

We were: Pauline Macdonald, Daryl Rowan, Catherine Farquhar.

N .B. A Forest Service note in the Mitre Flats Hut book indicated that Mid-King bivvy has been removed.