



PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217

PALMERSTON NORTH

NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 1995 Edition

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ENQUIRES CONCERNING OVERDUE TRIPS

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TRIPS OFTEN LEAVE FROM THE FOODTOWN CAR PARK IN FERGUSSON STREET UNLESS THE LEADER ARRANGES OTHERWISE.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN GOING ON A TRIP, PLEASE 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.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN A DAY TRIP MID-WEEK SEE DETAILS BELOW, OR RING Lawson and Sue Pither (357-3033), or Monica (326-9691), John (358-3513).

Trip Grades

Grade of trips can depend on many factors, most especially the weather and state of the track. As a guide, a reasonably proficient trumper would be expected to cover the graded trips in about the following times: Easy (E) 3 – 4 hours, Medium (M) 5 – 6 hrs, Fit (F) about 8 hrs, Fitness Essential (FE) >8 hrs. (Tech) refers to trips graded technical requiring either special skills and / or gear.

Members are reminded that a charge for transport will be collected on the day of the trip, the amount depending on the distance traveled and vehicles used. Leaders should be able to give an estimate in advance.

THURSDAY EVENING PROGRAMME

Please sign your name in the visitors book. There is a door fee of 30c which includes supper.

Club meetings are held for all club members and visitors on the second and last Thursday of each month. The venue is the Society of Friends Hall, 227 College Street, Palmerston North, at 7:45 pm unless otherwise notified in the newsletter.

The PNTMC committee meets on the first Thursday of each month.

SCHEDULED EVENT LIST

DECEMBER 14

Thursday day trippers

Pam Wilson

357-6247

DECEMBER 14 Club night Christmas B-B-Q at Brian's place.
 This is the last club night for the year and will be a repeat of last years great turnout, with a B-B-Q, out in the country, at Brian Lawrence's place. From 6:30 pm on, bring all your goodies to BBQ and eat and share, and liquid refreshments. There should be a spot of venison. Don't forget to wear your new PNTMC hats, or buy one there. Any people keen to bicycle across? For other info contact Brian or Terry.

Directions: Take the main road to Sanson/Bulls. Turn left into Penny Rd, about 200 metres before the Mt Stewart lookout/memorial; Brian's place is about 1 km down on the right hand side. See you there.

DECEMBER 16-17+ Climbing Whangehu F T Peter Wiles 358-6894
 (I think we will have to abandon this trip.)

DECEMBER 16-17 Back Ridge Biv Brenton Sheppard
 This trip has been put off till the New Year.

DECEMBER 17 Richards Knob M Richard Lockett 323-0948
 Depart: 7 am Heading up the South Ohau, in the Western Tararuas, we will go up Gable End Ridge which takes us onto my namesake peak for a spot of lunch. We will return either the same way or complete the loop over Twin Peaks and the Waiopahu track. Come along.

DECEMBER 21 Thursday day trippers Monica Cantwell 354-3834
 Christmas New Year break: Happy tramping and mountaineering. For possibilities for trips during early January contact Chris Saunders (358-4899), or any club officer/committee member who may still be in town.

Scheduled Club trips start again mid January.

JANUARY 13 Putara-Arete loop FE Derek Sharp 326-8178
 Depart: Friday night to camp at the road-end for a 3 am start on Saturday morning to jog past Herepai Hut, over Dundas Ridge and past Arete and onto Bannister for lunch. Then motor over Cattle Ridge past Roaring Stag and out to the road end to recover (sleep). Come back to PN on the Sunday. A tramp for those who are keen to put their body and mind to the test. Another MacPac (or is it MadPac?) sponsored event?

JANUARY 14 Rangī loop M Judy Callesen 357-0192
 Depart: 7:30 am A different way to visit Rangī, a favourite part of the Western Ruahines. We will take the right-hand branch up the ridge to Mangahiua, where we will stop for lunch, views and photos. To complete the loop we walk back down via the hut and the main track.

Anniversary Weekend

JANUARY 19-2 Aotuhia, Matemateaonga All Liz & Arthur Todd 323-6246
 Depart: Friday night or Saturday morning. This is the annual combined PNTMC/Forest & Bird trip and is to part of the inland Taranaki hill country. Accommodation can be at the renovated shearers' quarters. There is regenerating forest and a lot of historical interest in the area. There is scope for a range of activities suitable for all fitnesses and/or families. For example: tramping on part of the Matemateaonga track; or a tramp from the "Bridge to Somewhere" to the Tangarakau River and then jet-boating to the "Bridge to Nowhere"; or mountain-bike riding along disused roads to the Whangamomona pub for the night.

JANUARY 20-22 Lake Colenso F Barry Scott 354-0510
 Depart: 6 am This is a delightful part of the Ruahine Ranges with the lake, excellent red beech forest and interesting limestone bluffs as well as the usual Ruahine tops and landscapes. Come along for a three day tramp. Barry will add further interest by giving you an introduction to the botany of the area.

JANUARY 25 Club Night B-B-Q Horseshoe Bend This is the first club night for the year and takes the form of a traditional BBQ at Horseshoe Bend. It's a good chance to catch up on friends and to compare tramping notes, have a swim in the river, and a feed. Bring all your goodies to eat and share, togs and towel. From about 6:30 pm. Directions: head to Tokomaru past Massey and Linton, turn left at Tokomaru and follow the signs to Horseshoe Bend reserve. For other info contact Warren 356-1998.

JANUARY 27-28 Mangahao-Ohau M Tony Gates 357-7439
 Departs: Sat morning. This is a delightful valley in the western Tararuas with beech forest and river flats most of the way, a couple of nice huts and lots of fun.

JANUARY 28 Sunrise loop M Warren Wheeler 356-1998

Depart: 8:30 am One of the best day walks in the Ruahines. Up through good forest on a excellent track to Sunrise hut, over Armstrong Saddle, with views all around, and along to a scree that runs down into the Waipawa River. Then it's rockhopping and river walk out to the road end.

FEBRUARY 1-2 Midweek tramping (Rangitaua) Sue & Lawson Pither 357-3033

FEBRUARY 1 Committee meeting 7:45 pm First one for the year. At Terry's place, 11 Pahiatua St. All club members, not just committee, welcome.

Waitangi "Weekend" an extended weekend.

FEBRUARY 3-6 Waikaremoana E+M Nigel Scott 326-8161

Depart: Friday night. There will be a number of possibilities, and it will be great to get into some excellent forest in the hottest part of the year and have the odd swim in a lake or two. Options may include; a section of round-the-lake track setting up base for side trips, or Lake Waikareiti and Kaipō Lagoon, or a longer loop over Mt Manuoha (the highest point in the ranges).

FEBRUARY 4 Chris's Special M/F Chris Saunders 358-4899

Depart: 7 am Sunday For those of you who can't take the Monday off to create an extended weekend, come along with Chris and visit one of his favourite haunts. Possibilities include an East Holdsworth loop in the Tararuas, or a Sunrise -Te Ataparapara loop in the Ruahines. Either of these give an excellent selection of river, forest and open tops travel. Or there may be another favourite one up his sleeve.

FEBRUARY 8 Midweek tramping Judy Callesen 357-0192

FEBRUARY 8 Club Night Massey Rock Wall climbing This evening we will converge on the Massey University Recreation Centre (top end of the loop road) around 7:45 pm to have another session on the climbing wall. This should be good fun and instructive and will help us when we head off to Wellington for some rock climbing the following weekend. Be prepared (in the words of B V B) to engage in some modest physical exertion. Bring suitable footwear and a harness, if you have one. There is no cost for us tonight. For further information or directions phone Bruce Van Brunt 328-4761.

EDITORIAL

Summer has arrived in full force with some stable, fine and hot weather which is excellent for tramping, but most of us still have a week or two of work and busy Christmas activities before we can fully enjoy summer tramping and climbing. Let's hope the good weather continues. Final plannings and preparations for the Club's two extended South Island trips are underway. One group is heading down to Arthur's Pass for another multi-pass variation, while another group is off to the Havelock and Garden of Eden area. No doubt there will be various other excursions into the Southern Alps as well as trips into the ranges of both islands. For those of you who can't get far afield I'm sure the Tararua and Ruahine ranges will be quite enjoyable.

The Events card for the next six months is out. A big thank you to all the members who have offered to lead trips. There was such a excellent response that in some cases I was unable to get back to you as slots got full. I'm sure everybody will contribute to the success of the trips and club nights by going on as many trips as possible and coming along to the wide range of evening activities.

You will notice that there is some emphasis on rock climbing activities in the next six months. This is a bit different to most recent years. I'm trying it this way as an attempt to introduce climbing skills and rope work earlier so, by the time Snowcraft Course arrives, new members (and others) will be quite familiar with essential skills. I hope also, that it will make up for the lack of climbing done in the later half of '95 due to Ruapehu's spectacular activities.

Trip leaders don't forget your responsibilities when you lead club and other trips. (Together with the Events Card there is a Guide for Trip leaders card - everybody should read and keep it.) Make sure your navigation and bushcraft skills are up to scratch. Practice and demonstrate them to party members all the time especially when conditions are good – it's much harder to show others how to use map and compass for the first time, in a storm!

Finally if you are wanting to put your feet up between Christmas dinner and your next tramp there are some good books around (Christmas present hints to family members or in the library I hope). Have you read: "The Social Climbers" by Chris Darwin and John Amy, "This Climbing Game" by Walt Unsworth, and a classic "The Ascent of Rumdoodle", by W.E. Bowman? These three are written in a humorous or satirical vein.

Have a great Christmas.
Terry Crippen

NOTICES

Other extended summer trips

For those of you who would like easier but still extended summer tramps, two possibilities are: Sue and Lawson Pither (357-3033) are looking for trampers to join them on an extended but relaxed Kaimanawa - Kaweka Forest Park trip, about 20 - 30 January. Stuart Hubbard (356-8782) would be a starter to combine with others for a relaxed trip in the Nelson Lakes National Park.

RECIPES blame Terry

(a) TARARUA/IVAN'S BISCUITS

These are excellent biscuits to take on extended or other trips, as they are quite robust, keep very well and are very tasty. Eat them on their own or use them instead of bread or crackers for your butter/jam/cheese etc spreads. This recipe makes about 45 biscuits. You use about 3 to 5 biscuits per lunch. You will end up testing them each day before your tramps so make more than you think you'll need. Make two batches.

1¼	lb	oatmeal
¾	lb	flour
½	lb	sugar
½	lb	butter
½	heaped Teaspoon	salt
1	heaped Tablespoon	malt extract, (or golden syrup slightly warmed)

Melt butter and rub into flour, oatmeal, sugar and salt. Mix in warm malt extract or golden syrup. Add enough water to make softish dough. Roll out till about 6mm thick and cut into rounds using an upside-down cup or glass. Bake in a moderate oven 30 - 40 mins until pale brown and hardish. Finely chopped raisin can be added to dough if you want.

PS Don't over cook them otherwise they will be harder than some of the best rock in the Tararuas!

PPS While these biscuits are known locally and in Wellington as Tararua Biscuits, in the clubs further north (e.g. AUTC), they are known as Ivan's Ivan's Biscuits, named after Ivan Pickins, a northern tramp. And depending where your loyalty is, it can be argued as to whom introduced the biscuits to whom.

(b) GOVANS

A favourite recipe of AUTC fame, named after another keen northern tramp; Govan Wilson, initially "developed" to cope with flatting, but excellent for breakfasts on hard extended trips:

1. Take rice, chopped bacon/salami, dehyd peas (a few)
2. Add water, salt, and boil until cooked.
3. If too wet drain before se1~ving and add grated cheese
4. Eat.

P.S. Don't overcook.

RIVER SAFETY

I forgot to mention the following points in the discussion in the previous (November) newsletter on the new methods of river safety/crossing:

- (1) If you know you are going to do a lot of river crossings or- pack floating on a particular day, it pays to pack some of the heavier items in the bottom of your pack,
- (2) When linking up to cross a river, arrange the people 'in such order so that each persons feet can touch the river floor (hence all people contribute to the strength of the line), i.e. the smallest person isn't left hanging between taller ones,
- (3) It's useful to have a lighter person upstream with a strong and competent person next. The strong/competent person can move the lighter person about as the "bow", to have the best cutting effect into the water flow. Don't forget to check all this in the latest edition of the MSC Bushcraft Manual which is due out about now. And then practice it.

NEW MEMBERS

Please welcome two new membe1~s to the club this month:

Mike Lane	Leal Jones
7 Perth Place	6 Waltham Court,
Palmerston North	Palmerston North
Phone 354-6487	354-3468

GORGE WALK

The Recreation and Community Development group of the City Council, as part of the summer holiday programme, are organizing an open day Gorge walk trip on 10 February 1996. The club has been asked to assist with taking groups through the Gorge. If interested, contact Nigel.

THURSDAY TRIPS

Overdue contacts: Sue and Lawson Pither (357-3033) and Trish Eder (357-0122).

SUNHATS

Yes. We are placing another order for club monogrammed caps (10). Obviously limited supplies so if you are looking for something unique for the New Year, these could be the ideal gift.

CLUB T-SHIRTS FOR SALE

The club still has, a number of T-shirts with the clubs modified logo on them. Colour and sizes are: SM blue, M red and fawn. This is your last chance to buy one of these as the club is about to change over to marketing Club sun hats. T-shirts are at the bargain price of \$5 – see Terry at club night or phone him on 3563-588.

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING November

If you are unable to make it or expect to be late, please ensure that your apology is forwarded to the secretary in advance. Next meeting at Terry's place. All members welcome.

TRIP REPORTS

Don't forget (leaders) please get your trip reports in or use your short lived powers to delegate to an unsuspecting team member. How about a letter to the editor, perhaps, or some good gossip, or a poem or what ever. Electronic copy is the most convenient. This newsletter is prepared using Wordperfect. So I can retrieve any material in Wordperfect format (version 5, 5.1,5.2 or 6, in either DOS or Wndows). If you use Microsoft Word or a MAC, then I need an ASCII (or DOS text file) version with a MAC, you will need a DOS formatted disc. I can only handle 3½ inch discs.

If you have DOS or Windows, and are not sure that you have saved it in ASCII format, then retrieve it into Notepad (Windows) or Edit (DOS) to check the copy. If it's OK, it's OK, if it's not, it's not!

TRIP DECISIONS?

If you decide you want to go on a trip, please ensure that you have contacted the leader by the Wednesday before, so that logistical decisions can be made. Recently, there have been some instances of people expressing an interest in a trip on the evening before - the leaders in some cases, having made other plans at that late stage.

EASIER SUMMER TRIP

Lawson and Sue Pither are planning a trip of about 8 days duration (inclusive of rest days) into the Kaimanawa - Kaweka region in the period 20-30th January. It is expected that there will be up to 6 h tramping per day. If interested contact Sue and Lawson.

TRIP REPORTS

EGMONT STUDY/CLIMBING TRIP, 3-6 November by Alistair Millward

Lots of University study to do? What better place than a quiet mountain hut to learn the in's and out's of physical geography with real examples just outside the door? Our intention was to spend Friday afternoon climbing the East Ridge, dig a snowcave on the summit and return to Waingongoro hut the next morning for three day's study. However, Friday's weather looked doubtful so we decided to make an afternoon dash for the summit returning the same evening. Camping out on Egmont in bad weather isn't the safest of ideas really. At about the 2100 metre mark the wind was rising, the mist was fairly thick and I decided it would be better to turn around. Derek disagreed but we gave up anyway. Much to our dismay there was a clearing just as we reached the bottom of our ten minute bum slide down the skifield. I don't think Derek will ever forgive me and the hard core mountaineering image is shattered forever. We vowed to try again on Monday.

The next two days were spent busily studying, eating, relaxing, cooking and doing hut gymnastics. The better part of a meal went onto the Waingongoro Hut fire on Sunday night thanks to the culinary expertise of Derek the master chef. The stodge was just too stodgy and as for the army rations his fast learning apprentice, me, brought with him, if an army marches on it's stomach the New Zealand army isn't going very far at all!

After a weekend of relaxing to the sound of bad weather Monday brought some relief although it was still cloudy. Because of work we didn't start on the ridge until 1:00pm. At the 2100 metre mark we broke through the cloud into glorious sunshine. Soon after we hit the hard Egmont ice the East Ridge is famous for. It was onto front points

almost straight away. We gave up on the ridge itself at this stage as we had forgone a rope for speed. An icy East Ridge is no place for people without a rope. We traversed out to the right onto easier ground but the sun was setting behind the summit and even the northern faces were icing up. After much discussion it was Derek who decided to turn back and leave the summit for another day. But we still had an afternoon of superb ice climbing so no regrets. Geographers, climbers and cooks on this trip were Derek Sharp and Alistair Millward.

OROUA RIVER LOOP November 19 by Ron and Terry

This was suppose to be a really hot day for compulsory swimming in the Oroua. However, the hot day was the day before! Anyhow Terry, Ron and Leal headed off for an easy stroll up past Heritage Lodge and down to Tunupo camp site on the river, keeping a look out for Judy's weekend party coming down from Iron Gates hut. Didn't see them, so headed off into the water, down river. At the first crossing we applied the new river crossing techniques with great success not that the current was likely to sweep us away, but it is always good to practise these things anyway. Good cold water though, making ankle joints very difficult to move. After about half a dozen crossings Terry (but not the rest of the party) was getting worried that we would not have to do a compulsory pack float swim. But he was not to be disappointed. For a minute of two later there it was. Over our heads and about 10 metres across. So with our packs well fastened in we went with high pitched verbal comments about the temperature (the polite brass monkeys) completely soaked now, a strong wind continued to cool us down. Donning parkas and some dry clothes, we continued criss-crossing down river, until the camp site below Heritage Lodge where we had lunch and a hot cuppa.

Heading off down river again, we had a nose at Iron Gates gorge before heading up the more interesting alternative track back to the car park. This heads steeply uphill from an arrow painted on the rock and follows yellow or orange plastic ear tags. At the car park we met some of the weekend trippers and exchanged progress about the two trips.

(Don't forget to ask permission from the farmer, at the last house on the left heading in, to use this track).

SMEDLEY MEDLEY Sunday, October 26 by John Phillips

Warren Wh8eler, Terry Crippen, Alistair Millward and I met at 6 am outside the Palmerston North Police Station; the local constabulary were offering transport, the event being an SAR-sponsored exercise. So, from PN to the back blocks of Onga Onga, we were treated to "day in the life of" the local police force. The lads being off-duty, unfortunately we were not treated to the adrenalin-rushing excitement of any high speed chases or the like (not for lack of any possible subjects, as I've come to notice with driver standards in this country). But we were momentarily diverted by an inspection of an abandoned car that had careered off the Pahiatua track and through one fence to end up wrapped in a deer fence, Hmmm...tales of excess the night before! Otherwise, a smooth trip to the Smedley Station, and we were sufficiently entertained on the way by the radio chat and wit of the boys in blue.

A good crowd was gathered at the southern entrance to the Smedley property in overcast conditions. The rain had not quite set in (yet). The mixture of people was a sight to see, in particular the equipment of the trampers versus the orienteering enthusiasts. The trampers were easily spotted with their huge packs (admittedly saggy, because their was little reason to fill them) and their cumbersome looking gaiters and mountaineering boots, while the REAL orienteers could be spotted a mile off: bumbags, "touch" shoes, back-hugging water bladders complete with quasi-intravenous drip lines wrapped around their necks, and all manner of other streamlined paraphernalia.

Three courses were designated: the A course covered all 14 control point, the B course 11, and the C course 9 points. The "A-team", bristling with above mentioned serious orienteers, took off *running* at 8:15am....very keen. (A notional public display, no doubt - to justify all the minimalistic garb....we never saw them running after this initial spurt!)

We set off on the B course at 8:30am. I paired up with Warren, and Terry paired up with Alistair. We headed in a northerly direction across open paddocks to the first control point, and generally following tracks to the 2nd and 3rd points. Drizzle had set in by points 4 and 8 (points 5, 6 and 7 were A-course only), where the tracks led through more bushy country up some reasonable grades. My knees were not appreciating the climb. From point 8 we turned back south for the remaining points, heading steadily downhill, something my knees disliked even more, I think.

We had a stand-up lunch at point 9. (It's very difficult to have a sit-down 'anything' on an orienteering trip!) . Beyond point 9 we headed through more park-like farmland, with rolling green hills and magnificent remnant totara trees dotting the landscape. I thought they were flowering, but on closer examination the "flowers" were fresh light-coloured growth tips. By point 12 my knees were really objecting, and more so than on previous tramps. They became so sore I couldn't walk up or down grade, so I headed reluctantly back to base camp along a more direct, level route. I left Warren to complete the last two points which lay in quite steep country, and rejoined him in perfect timing a few hundred metres from base, just before 3pm. Alistair and Terry had arrived back an hour earlier, and were in a somewhat chilly state because their change of clothes had been locked in the car.

I can't say that I would normally choose to tramp around cleared farmland, but orienteering gave it some purpose, and was an enjoyable exercise that tested important map-reading and compass skills (seeing as you can't rely on the sun in this country!) It was also a very social event where we got to meet people of all ages from other clubs and walks of life.

TRIANGLE - IRON GATE - OROUA RIVER Saturday 18th November Six of us plus Honey (the packdog) took off from the Rangī carpark to the 6 bed Triangle hut. Beautiful weather and the views magnificent along the Whanahua Range. We just made the hut in time to grab a bed as 8 more trampers arrived. David opted for trying out his new bivy bag. It was a chilly start on Sunday morning - straight into the Oroua River for half an hour, then a steep climb up an over a spur to Iron Gate Hut, followed by a toddle up and down the track to the Heritage carpark. Sorry we didn't find the Sunday swimmers. We had had enough water! Thanks Peter Stockdale for helping us find the way, to Liz Flint, David Grant, Merv Matthews, John Ayers for the company and to Honey for carrying my tent fly. Judy Callesen.

Mt ASPIRING by Bruce Van Brunt

This is the final instalment - the long road back to the normal world.

One recovers quickly from "summit fever" on a descent. Going up, one thinks only of the "final victory" of standing on the summit; going down, however, things become immediately a function of "when we arrive at the hut". We were no exceptions to this basic law of human behaviour. The icy slopes from the saddle to the summit now looked less like an alpine seductress and more like a gruelling challenge. We faced a couple hundred metres of horrid ice beneath us and steep snow and ice beneath that. It was clear that this would tax my remaining energy and we certainly would not be off the ramp before dark.

On the ascent, the ice had been such as to warrant the so-called French crampon technique, which consists of placing all the points of the crampons on the slope - this means that the ankle is twisted so that the foot is parallel to the slope. For a short duration, it is a very secure and not too uncomfortable technique; if one uses this technique continuously for over an hour, however, things become rather painful. Doubtless, the use of plastic climbing boots mitigates the stress on the ankles, but I had only leather boots and my ankles were already weary from the ascent.

The descent to the top of the ramp did little to help my limbs and progress was slow. I went down backwards using both ice tools the first hundred metres. The sastrugi had not softened one bit in the sun and progress was slow. Clive, in his plastic Asolo boots went down noticeably faster. We met Hep and Maree shortly after we started the descent. They were still roped up and heading to the summit in good form. We struggled down unroped at glacial speed.

Sometime before 5:00 pm Clive reached the saddle; I followed some 30 minutes later. Hep and Marie were nowhere in sight at this time; presumably they were just off the summit heading down. Clive located an obvious abseil point where we could drop to the Therma glacier and follow its slopes to the environs of Colin Todd hut. The old slings tempted us, but alas our rope was too short to make a safe abseil. We converged on the top of the ramp around 5:10pm. and began to discuss our options. We were faced with the decision of whether to try a night descent of the Ramp, join forces with Hep and Maree and make an abseil, or stay the night on the saddle. The idea of a night descent was not very appealing to us. We had one good head torch and one hand torch with old batteries (remember the torch crisis). The Ramp in its icy condition was by far the longest and most dangerous part of the descent which would require at least 10 rope pitches. An entry in the hut log book indicated that under favourable (i.e. less icy) conditions a night descent would take at least four hours. Rarely is it true that the alpine weather is an asset in these sorts of predicaments, but it was for us. The weather was still calm and pleasant. The long range forecast indicated that the situation was stable and (though I seldom put absolute faith in these forecasts) it certainly looked that way.

We decided not to attempt the ramp under these conditions. The option of abseiling down to the Therma was more attractive but it would require Hep and Maree to also want to take this route. Moreover, none of us were familiar with this glacier and we would be travelling on it at night. At least, I thought, it would get us down to a safer and warmer elevation should we have to bivy out. The third option was to simply bivy out on the saddle and tackle the ramp in the morning. This was a singularly unpleasant option as neither of us had a bivy bag or a sleeping bag. It would be a cold night (at an altitude of 2,500 m - ed.).

There was perhaps a half of an hour of daylight left. We decided to start digging some sort of snow hole for shelter and discuss the possibilities when Hep and Maree arrived. We searched around the saddle for some relatively soft snow. Most of the snow was hard but we found a soft spot in an old crevasse and began to dig. We did not have shovels; we used our helmets. We made fairly good progress given the equipment. Hep and Maree arrived just before dark. They did not want to abseil. They were going down the ramp. For a brief moment we mooted again a night descent down the ramp, but it was too dangerous given our physical state and the torch situation. We said farewell to them as they started the first pitch down. Hep lent me an extra set of polyprop and we asked that they tell Richard down at the hut what we were going to do.

Darkness was falling and we stepped up our digging efforts. The hole was deep enough now that one of us had to climb inside and dig. I was the smallest so the job fell upon me. Clive lent me his Goretex coat and I began to dig using my hands. The snow was still soft and thus progress was steady. Clive remained above using his helmet to ferry the snow I removed out of the hole. Soon I had fashioned an "L" shaped cavern in the snow large enough for us to both lie down in with our head facing up the entrance hole. It was by no means roomy, but we could both fit in it. Getting out of it was another matter. By the time I had finished digging I was completely wet. The exercise had kept me warm, but now I was starting to feel the cold.

We began to secure our equipment and get ready for the night ahead. Neither of us had proper bivy bags but we did have our pack liners. It was at this stage that I realized that my pack liner was rather short: it came up short just below my chest. We did not fancy sleeping directly on the snow so we slept on our packs which had foam backs to insulate against the snow. Every conceivable article we had which might keep us warm or insulate us from the snow was used. The rope became our pillow, gaiters were placed in strategic locations, and we wore every stitch of clothing in our packs. We brought plenty of warm clothes, but it was no substitute for a sleeping bag.

Some hour and a half after nightfall we settled down for what we knew would be a miserable night. The temperature dropped considerably during this period and our inactivity made it all the worse. Up to this stage I had used our night on the glacier (600 m below) as a benchmark for a miserable night: it was clear this was going to be far worse. I do not think I got any sleep the entire night. I was wet and shivering most of the time. What is worse, I was bored within the first fifteen minutes and had several hours of this situation to endure. In contrast, Clive, the master of sleep, managed to get a little. Unfortunately, his "room mate" kept asking the time about every 30 minutes until he realized that Clive was in fact capable of sleeping under these conditions. The night wore on. We were out of the wind which picked up slightly but we nonetheless suffered from its influence owing to a design flaw in our chalet. The hole was essentially at the bottom of a bowl of snow, and every little bit of snow blown in managed to find the entrance and hence our heads. Periodically, we were showered with small snow and ice fragments. Gradually we sheltered ourselves from these annoying snowfalls.

After what seemed eternity the morning light finally came. I was to say the least glad to be out of that wretched hole and I dare say Clive was also. The morning was beautiful. The weather was still good, but it was noticeably colder than the previous morning. We packed up our gear and had a quick snack before the descent. We had plenty of food but we were short of water. Clive had attempted the previous night to get more water by sleeping with a bottle of snow mixed with a little water (we did not have a stove), but it was cold enough that in the morning everything was ice.

The Ramp was certainly as icy as the day before, if not more, owing to the change in temperatures. The weather remained good, however, and the descent was slow but mostly uneventful. The only problem we had was near the bottom of the ramp. For some reason we went low too soon, and had to abseil down a section. Evidently, others had made the same mistake as there was a rock with slings still on it. (Standard summer route, ed.) We finally got down to the Bonar sometime in the afternoon. We were moving very slowly by now. We found some snowmelt and drank for several minutes. We then proceeded down the Bonar uneventfully, avoiding the crevasses. At last we were near Colin Todd, and the rocks which we danced down on our way to the summit, we now scrambled up with our last bolt of energy. It was a long climb.

Richard greeted us at the hut and cooked a meal. Hep and Maree were at the hut. They arrived sometime around 3:00am and were still resting. Richard had been expecting us back yesterday evening. It became clear to him that something had gone not as planned with the climb as night fell. Sometime during the night he contacted the hut warden at Aspiring hut and told him that we were very late. Apparently, DOC was preparing helicopters down in Wanaka should things get awkward for us. Nothing of course could be done then so they told Richard to see what happens with the weather tomorrow and watch the mountain for us. Fortunately, Hep and Maree passed on our plans to Richard and he spotted us early the next morning on the ramp. Doubtless everybody down below was relieved. Throughout the day my mind was focused on getting down, getting water, and getting some sleep. The beautiful scenery and glorious weather distracted me from these basic desires but they were always present. Now at the hut I found that I was not hungry. I was still rather thirsty. What amazed me was that though tired I could not sleep. Of all things I got insomnia and turned and twisted in my lower bunk most of the night.

Before attempting to sleep, we made some plans to evacuate Colin Todd the next morning. I made it clear that I was no starter for a 4:00 am departure. We got ourselves ready to travel that night and listened to the weather report on the wireless. The weather was packing up; we could expect a fairly miserable descent off the Bonar. The plan was to descend via Bevan Col. We figured the river was now low so that crossing would not be a major undertaking. In the back of my mind I remembered those "guns" down at Aspiring hut as they described their descent off Bevan Col. Their major problem was the high river level, but they mentioned that in the rain the boulders along the Col were slippery.

The next morning we ate a quick breakfast, packed up and left. Hep and Maree were still in their sleeping bags as we walked out the hut. It is awkward for four people to pack up in Colin Todd at the same time. We left sometime around 7:00 am. The weather was not particularly good though; it was not snowing or raining. The visibility across the Bonar was deteriorating quickly. Under no circumstances did we want to repeat our previous adventure on the glacier. Fortunately, Bevan Col is a short route almost directly across the glacier. We got our bearings and started across the glacier gingerly avoiding the crevassed areas. We crossed the glacier without incident and climbed onto the saddle. It was from this point onwards that everything went wrong. The weather was steadily deteriorating and it began to rain. There was little or no visibility. None of us had ever been on this route and we were thus depending on the map and guide book. We crossed steep snow tongues and found ourselves continuously putting on and taking off crampons. Here I really saw the value of the clip on crampons; mine were fastened by straps and I was always holding everybody up as a result. When we actually got on the slopes of the Col there was no obvious track in sight. We looked we looked down, but there were no signs. The guide book described the ascent of the Col but not the descent. It did mention a cairn, and we looked for this from the saddle onwards but alas it proved elusive. The rain had intensified considerably, but we were determined to try a route. The boulders proved diabolically slippery; every step had to be considered. With full packs this made "progress" very slow. At our rate, the Bonar would probably beat us down the mountain. We had lost track track and knew only approximately where we were on the Col. Clive was all for continuing, but I was haunted by the thought of spending another night in appalling weather in a tent. Richard and I voted for returning to the Bonar and, visibility permitting, heading towards the Quarterdeck; if the visibility was bad, then we would retreat to Colin Todd hut. We could always follow our footprints back and in our retreat perhaps see the cairn.

With heavy hearts we began our climb back to the saddle. Somewhere up a snow tongue we found Hep and Maree's footprints. We were tempted, but it was now too late, to make a descent to Aspiring hut even under good conditions. We were psychologically committed to going back to Colin Todd. Both Clive and I were weary from the previous days' efforts. We followed our path back to the hut and pondered over the weather. We were already late by at least one day. We contacted the warden at Aspiring Hut to let him know our plans. As it was ANZAC day he could not contact DOC in Wanaka and ask them to telephone Palmerston North. We had a long afternoon rest at Colin Todd. This gave us plenty of time to assess our situation. We were low on food and fuel. There was quite a lot of fuel at the hut, but none of the right kind for our stove - we needed white spirits. After some rest Clive, while on the top bunk discovered, an enormous cache of food hidden in the ceiling. Some people had apparently had a large quantity flown in several months ago. Lots of tinned salmon, instant soups etc. Food would certainly not be a problem. In the end we never really used any of the supplies (to my knowledge they are still there) but it felt good to know that they were there. As darkness once again fell over the Bonar, Clive and I engaged in a lengthy conversation about partial differential equations in mathematical physics. The conversation had a soporific effect on Richard.

We awoke early the next morning and at first light began our long trip up the Bonar. Earlier we mooted the possibility of trying the Bevan Col route again, but we just wanted to get out and knew that the French Ridge route was the safe option. Contrary to our expectations the weather had actually improved and the visibility on the glacier was fairly good. We could see the summit of Mt Aspiring and our route up the ramp. Fearing some change in weather, however, we moved quickly up the glacier to ensure that we would get to the Quarterdeck without any complications. Our fears, as it turned out, were unnecessary. The weather kept improving though the wind was coming up.

We reached the top of the Quarterdeck and began the steep descent down the first part of it. We were familiar with the route but things were different. The warm weather down here had melted some of the snow and the cold nights had iced up the slopes. From the top of the Quarterdeck we roped up for the descent. It would be three pitches before we could travel unroped. I started down the slopes and set up a belay. Richard then followed and finally Clive. The modest wind had turned to a chilling breeze and I was getting cold on belay. Clive took the lead on the next pitch. This was by far the worst as it required a traverse on a steep icy slope above a large deep crevasse. Clive began to set up his belay. As frequently happens the rope ended on an ice slope. Clive in his eternal optimism had packed his ice screws in the bottom of his pack. Now he was obliged to unpack everything there on the slopes and find them. Richard and I waited freezing on the slopes for what seemed hours before Clive put in enough ice screws to form a secure belay. I must confess that I murmured a few unrepeatable words as I realised how long this was going to take. Richard went next. Just before this trip he had completed his first snowcraft course and was not thrilled at the prospect of "starting at the deep end". The traverse was quite dramatic for him. At several points he experienced the sensation of holding on to the slopes using only the front points of his crampons and the two picks of his ice tools. Just to make sure nothing could happen I continued to belay him from the top as a belay from the bottom would not stop him from the unpleasant experience of dangling in a deep crevasse and having to prussik out of it. Finally, I went down. I was quite happy to be moving again as I was quite chilled by the wind. About ten metres down the slope the wind dropped and things were once again pleasant. I led the next pitch. It was a short pitch but it entailed trying to cross the crevasse at the point where we crossed it earlier on a snowbridge. The steep slopes obscured the crevasse at this point and it was clear whether the bridge was still in tact. As I lowered myself down backwards I could not help thinking about the options should the bridge be destroyed. As I reached the crevasse I still

could not get a clear view of the situation. Being top roped, I felt fairly secure so I decided to find out the hard way if there was any of the bridge left. The bridge had gone leaving a deep crevasse below. Fortunately, it was narrow at this point and I managed to twist myself around and bridge the crevasse with a crampon on each wall. I was not too far in the crevasse so I could easily use my ice tools to get a grip on the other side and pull myself up. I thought to myself "Richard is going to love this!" I guided Richard down. The basic problem was that the climber could not see the crevasse until virtually entering it. I found a slightly easier point for crossing and guided him to this spot. I then moved down the slope and set up a belay for Clive. He followed our route down but the snow collapsed on one of the walls and he went into the crevasse. Not very far, but it was a bit unnerving. Soon we were all across the crevasse and onto much gentler slopes. There was one last crevasse to cross, but it was small and required only a good jump. It seemed as if Mt. Aspiring was trying all its tricks to keep us there.

In a few minutes we were off the snow and heading towards French Ridge hut. After several days of rock and snow it felt good to see plants and be on soil. At the hut I contacted DOC at Wanaka and asked them to tell my airline that I would not make the flight. (It was scheduled to leave in an hour.) We then began the 1000 metre descent to the Matukituki River. My feet were blistered quite badly as were Richard's. I took the descent very slowly. The scenery was gorgeous and the weather remarkably good.

We got down to the flats about 2 hours before sunset and crossed the river. It was low now and a far cry from the raging river we saw a week ago. My feet were sore and I was moving very slowly. Eventually darkness fell and we tramped the last half hour or so by torch light to Aspiring hut. There was talk earlier in the day of walking to the road and driving through the night to Christchurch, but nobody was up to it: We were greeted by the warden who was relieved (it was his last night there). Before we said much he remarked "you guys must have had one hell of a trip". We nodded and then crashed in the hut.

The next morning was beautiful and save for a Kea assault on a boot, uneventful. We hobbled to the road end and left for Wanaka. Clive and I drove through the night and early morning to catch the early ferry from Picton. We then drove straight to Massey and began work on Friday morning. I do not think we were at our best that day.

(Thanks Bruce - a true epic. Try not to do these things too often.)

HAPPY DAYS IN THE HILLS

PNTMC GUIDE FOR TRIP LEADERS

(All club Members should keep this for use/reference.)

AS LEADER OF A PNTMC TRIP, YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SAFETY AND WELL BEING OF ALL THE PARTY MEMBERS. YOUR BUSHCRAFT / NAVIGATION / LEADERSHIP SKILLS MUST BE SUFFICIENT FOR THE TRIP YOU ARE LEADING.

BEFORE THE TRIP

- 1: If you cannot lead the trip, try to arrange a substitute leader and/or contact one of the Trip Convenors as soon as possible.
- 2: Collect trip sheet at club night, and contact prospective members.
- 3: Make yourself familiar with the area to be visited; ask if in doubt. Obtain permission to cross private land. Got the latest relevant map and information on tracks/routes? Party First Aid Kit?
- 4: Make sure trip members are aware of the type of trip it is, its grading, level of fitness and experienced required. Any special medical requirements? If in doubt about any prospective members ability for the trip, quiz them and/or discuss with Trip Convenor. You can decline prospective trip members if you do not think their fitness / experience is sufficient.
- 5: Inform trip members when and where the trip starts. (Usually outside Foodtown in Ferguson St).
- 6: Discuss with trip members communal and personal food and equipment required, hut passes/tickets, estimate of transport costs. Be in early to hire gear from Gear Custodian.
- 7: Ensure trip members have informed their parents/partners/flatmate to phone trip leaders home and/or the Overdue Trip Contacts if they do not return after a reasonable time. The Overdue Trip Contacts will know if there is any need for concern at this stage.
- 8: Leave written information for SEARCH & RESCUE purposes either at your home with a reliable contact (i.e.: partner/parent), or one of the Overdue Trip Contacts (Mick Leyland, 358-3183, Linda Rowan 356-4655, Sue & Lawson Pither 357-3033), or at the Palmerston North Police Station. Include: PNTMC name; Overdue Trip Contacts names/ phone No's; date and duration, grading, destination and planned route of trip; description/registration of cars, what road end parked at; list of all party members names/phone numbers; and a generous due out time/date.
- 9: On returning to Palmerston North inform whoever has the list. When using the Police Station, uplift the information sheet in person (otherwise you may get a 2 am phone call!)

ON THE TRIP

- 1: The party always travels together which means it travels at the pace of the slowest person.
- 2: Communicate clearly your objectives to all trip members.
- 3: Be aware of where each member is, and how they are going, during the trip.
- 4: Collect all hired party gear at end of trip.
- 5: Make sure all members leave the road end at the completion of the trip.
- 6: Collect and sort out transport and other moneys.

AFTER THE TRIP

- 1: Check any hired party gear and return it promptly to the Gear Custodian.
- 2: Write a trip report (delegate?) and give it to the Newsletter Editor.

Any queries about the above contact a Trips' Convenor (Terry 356-3588 or Derek 326-8178).