

PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

**P.O. BOX 1217
PALMERSTON NORTH**

NEWSLETTER

May 1997 Edition

Club Patron	: Lawson Pither	357-3033
President	: Warren Wheeler	356-1998
Vice President	: Terry Crippen	356-3588
Secretary	: Sarah Todd	357-0612
Treasurer	: Peter Wiles	358-6894
Membership Enquires	: Sarah Todd 357-0612 and Warren Wheeler 356-1998	
Trips co-ordinators	: Terry Crippen (356-3588) and Liz Flint (356-7654)	
Gear Custodian	: Mick Leyland	358-3183
Newsletter Editor	: John Philips	358-1874

ENQUIRES CONCERNING OVERDUE TRIPS

Mick Leyland : Ph. 358-3183
Terry Crippen : Ph. 356-3588
Sue & Lawson Pither : Ph. 357-3033

Trips

The Club runs trips each weekend, either overnight and/or day. See scheduled events list below. There are also mid-week tramps. If you are interested in going on a trip, please advise the leader at least 3 days in advance. Trips usually leave from the Foodtown car park in Fergusson Street. For general information on the scheduled or alternative tramps please contact one of the trip co-ordinators: Terry Crippen (356-3588) and Liz Flint (356-7654).

Grade of trip: This is based on what tramping time a reasonably proficient tramper would be expected to cover in. 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. Beginners should start with Easy graded tramps.

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

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 7:30 pm during winter and 7:45 pm during summer unless otherwise notified in the newsletter. Please sign your name in the visitors book. There is a door fee of 30c which includes supper.

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

<p>Deadline for notices and trip reports for inclusion in newsletter: LAST THURSDAY of each month.</p>

NOTE TO TRIP LEADERS: PLEASE DISCUSS WITH THE TRIPS CONVENOR (TERRY 356-3588), AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, IF THERE IS ANY DOUBT THAT YOU WILL BE UNABLE TO RUN YOUR TRIP AS SCHEDULED. THIS IS SO THAT ALTERNATIVES CAN BE ARRANGED, PUT IN THE NEWSLETTER, OR PASSED ON AT CLUB NIGHT.

MAY 11 *Manawatu Gorge Walkway E Margaret Riordan 356-7460
Depart 9am A relaxed morning stroll along a section of the Walkway to stretch the legs and enjoy morning tea outside, returning to town in time for a late-ish lunch.

*Note that this morning trip replaces the overnight trip advertised on the Events Card.

MAY 11 Roaring Stag M Liz Flint 356-7654
Depart 8am (from PN Police Station). An enjoyable tramp through bush and valley in the north-eastern Tararuas (and a couple of bridges across the river to keep feet dry).

MAY 15 Midweek Tramping Russ Johnson 358-7777

MAY 17-18 Pourangaki M Patrick Janssen 356-3116
Depart 7am Sat Between the Hikurangi and the Whanahuaia Ranges, the Pourangaki is a major but less visited western Ruahine valley with two huts, Pourangaki and Kelly Knight. A number of routes possible depending on conditions. Bush, river-valley and open tops.

MAY 18 Kelly Knight E Dave Larsen 329-8054
Depart 8am A pleasant stroll through bush of the Pourangaki Valley in the Western Ruahines to Kelly Knight hut for lunch in the sun, possibly meeting up with the weekend trippers.

MAY 22 Midweek Tramping Keith Domett 04 562-7322

MAY 24-25 Jumbo-McGregor F Peter Burgess 354-3533
Depart 6am Sat Up to Jumbo hut from the Holdsworth road end of the eastern Tararuas, for Saturday. Come Sunday a horse-shoe loop over McGregor and Baldy. River valley, forest and open tops.

MAY 25 Holdsworth M Richard Lockett 323-0948
Depart 7am A traditional day trip onto the tops of the eastern Tararuas, via a well formed track through forest, and lunch at Powell hut just on the bush line.

MAY 29 Midweek Tramping Vina Cottam 354-5045

MAY 29 Club Night "Sea Kayaking - Chile" Peter Gates
Talk and Slide Show by Peter Gates, of Wellington. Peter is a dedicated sea kayaker, and has many stories to tell and pickies to show of sea kayaking in New Zealand waters, especially Fiordland, and the fiords of southern Chile. Guaranteed to be an excellent talk.

QUEENS BIRTHDAY WEEKEND

MAY 31-2 June Oturere, TNP M/F Warren Wheeler 356-1998

Depart 7am Sat A fascinating volcanic-moon landscape adjacent to Tongariro and Ngauruhoe. Starting at the Chateau across to Waihohonu and Oturere hut. Looping back via Tongariro and the Mangatepopo Valley. A great 3 day trip to this national park.

Day-trip Comet Range M Peter Wiles 358-6894
Depart 7:30am (?on the finest weather day). Off to Hawkes Bay, past the Blowhard and a chance to find the Comet on the Kaikomata (Comet) range and the Taruarau Gorge, which forms the boundary between the Kaweka and Ruahine Forest Parks.

JUNE 5 Midweek tramping June Sotherby 355-2690

JUNE 5 Committee meeting

JUNE 7-8 Leon Kinvig M Alan Bee 354-9180
Depart early Sat morning. In via the Apiti track through forest of the eastern Ruahine ranges, to the hut in the Pohangina Valley for the night. Route out may be via the Makaretu.

JUNE 8 Local Hound hike family Liz Morrison 357-6532
Depart at a reasonable hour for a relaxed tramp for all comers; family, friends (two or four leg types). Liz will decide on a suitable area nearer the time.

JUNE 12 Midweek tramping Carolyn Brodie 358-6576

JUNE 12 Club Night "Possum Control" Colin Giddy, DoC
Colin is the Field Centre Manager at DoC's Pohangina base. He will give a talk and slide presentation on the impacts of possums on native flora & fauna, control techniques, the costs and impacts of those techniques on the environment, and possum and vegetation monitoring methods. An absorbing evening about the furry mongrels from the wrong side of the Tasman!

JUNE 14-15 Tongariro Crossing, TNP M/F, T Toby Bunn
06/348 0408
Depart Friday night 7:30 pm. A crossing on the Great Walk route from Mangatepopo to Ketetahi hopefully with plenty of that white stuff about. Tenting or snow caving on Tongariro if weather permits. Give Toby a buzz in Wanganui in plenty of time.

JUNE 15 Stanfield, A-frame M Tony Gates 357-7439
Depart after breakfast with Tony, into the eastern Ruahine ranges via ridge and stream to Stanfield hut, then a "gentle" climb up the track and along the ridge to the A-frame hut. A descent back down to the Tamaki River to return..

JUNE 19 Midweek tramping Rose & Ken Hall 356-8538

MID WINTER CELEBRATIONS

JUNE 21-22 Kawhatau Base all Jenny & Llew Pritchard 358-2217
This traditional event of tramping and socialising will be held at Kawhatau base on the edge of the western Ruahines. Good facilities and a nice bush setting above the river.

Depart anytime on Saturday. Bring plenty of goodies to contribute to the meal. Contact Jenny or Llew for specifics. There will be a charge of \$10 to cover hire of the facilities and for those extra goodies.

NOTE: We need tilly/mantle lamps this year can you supply one? Let Llew Know.

How to get there: The base is located about 30km east of Mangaweka via Kawhatau Valley, Upper Kawhatau Road and Rangitane Road (or via Rangiwahia and Karewarewa-Aputa Roads).

JUNE 21 Kawhatau E/M Mick Leyland 358-3183

Depart: 7 am Sat morning and come along with Mick to investigate the local forest, looping back onto the track down from Colenso trig, in plenty of time to socialise and enjoy the evenings festivities

JUNE 22 MWD Midwinter dip! Be game, enjoy the pleasures of the flesh, have a swim in the Kawhatau. Its great and really enjoyable (when you get out!)

JUNE 26 Midweek tramping Pam Dransfield 357-0008

JUNE 26 Club Night Annual Photo Competition

This is one of the highlights of the year, with (usually) stiff competition, and plenty of awards. Come along and enter your own pickies, and admire others. Judge is local photographer John Cleland, who judges with a very democratic style. See *article below under "Notices" for details.*

JUNE 28-29 Haurangi Range, Southern Wairarapa

This Forest Park is south of Martinborough down to Cape Palliser on the coast. Some strange landscapes as well as forested ranges. There are about 8 DoC huts and good opportunities for tramping. The Club is running two trips this weekend both departing at 7am:

Medium Graham Peters 329-4722

North to south via the Pinnacles, forested ridges and valleys staying in one of the huts for the night. Being picked up by the other party on Sunday along the coast.

Easy Terry Crippen 356-3588

Visit the Putangirau Pinnacles via a two hour tramp on Saturday before tramping into one of the huts for the night. Sunday a tramp out and a visit to Kupe's Sail and Cape Palliser.

NOTICES

EDITORIAL

Well, winter approaches! And perhaps a tad earlier than previous years, with some early snows. And of course, the tell-tale sign of those shorter days - hardly enough time to mow the lawn after one get's home from work! Some rather tragic accidents on the mountains of the North Island recently have been an unfortunate reminder of the hazards that approach with this time of year. It has also perhaps reinforced the value of good training in mountain skills and safety, something of great value which the club has to offer.

The club has already started in this regard, this season, with the completion of a Risk Management course undertaken by 16 club members. This course was of great value,

and the members who attended have resolved to meet again as a group and develop some protocols and procedures to improve risk management throughout the club's activities. I, for one, was pleased to see that the MSC people who conducted the course were very committed to the concept of risk management, while also recognising that, by its very nature, tramping and mountaineering have risk associated with them. This is part of the stimulation of these activities & why they are a worthwhile challenge to us all. The key is to manage the risks so that the right balance is achieved; we want to minimise the likelihood of risks eventuating, but we don't want to make it so comfortable and risk-free that there is simply no enjoyment or stimulation left in the activity. The aim of risk management is to get 'a quality experience' out of what we do.

The summer has finished with a bevy of club tramps, vis the wide range and number of trip reports that continue to appear in the newsletter. Not that we ever get too many reports! Some months it has been quite an effort on the part of myself and Terry to chase up people who have been on club tramps and extract trip reports out of them. They all make great reading, no matter how small, so please think about writing that report if you've been on a trip. Leaders can take a pro-active role here, by using their short-lived authority to delegate report writing to a party member!

Until next issue, happy tramping and other 'quality experiences'!

TRIP REPORTS AND OTHER NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

To all of you who would like to contribute articles to this newsletter, small articles are okay hand-written (deliver to John Phillips, 87 Victoria Avenue), but it makes my job a bit easier if larger articles are on disc. Even better, if you have the facilities at home or at work, why not "e-mail" it to me at my work e-mail address which is PHILLIPS@MWRC.GOVN.Z.

PLEASE NOTE that I am now editing exclusively on Microsoft Word, and am no longer using Microsoft Works software. If you use any other software, give me a ring on 357-9009 (work) or 358-1874 (home) and I may be able to indicate whether it is compatible or not. If in doubt, a pretty safe bet is to send any files as an ".RTF" (Rich Text Format) file, which can be easily converted from one software format to another.

Please note the deadline for each month's issue on the front page of the newsletter.

SUBS DUE

A reminder to all members that annual club subscription fees are due now.

THE NEXT SIX MONTHLY EVENTS CARD

The new trip card for July to December 1997 is now being prepared, and comes out with the June Newsletter, so that gives less than a month for all your suggestions as to where you want club trips to go to, and your offers to lead them. Also your suggestions/offers for club night speakers/events. Be in early by contacting the Trips convenor Terry Crippen 356-3588, or Liz Flint 356-7654 and, for the club evenings, the Social convenor Tony Gates 357-7439 before we contact you!

ANNUAL PHOTO COMPETITION

The club's annual photo competition will be held on Thursday, June 26. The rules for the competition are:

- Slides/prints must not have been entered previously
- All entries must be related to tramping, skiing or climbing
- All slides must have a cross on the bottom left-hand corner of the mount for normal viewing (ie. top right-hand corner when loaded into the carousel)
- All slides and photos must be labelled (on back for photos!) with author's name, and entry category chosen from list below. NOTE: *Slides and prints not marked prior to judging in the manner outlined here WILL BE REJECTED.* This is necessary to facilitate smooth running of the event.
- Limit of 3 slides per person per category, but no limit on prints

Categories:

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------|---|
| 1. | Alpine (NZ) | Predominantly alpine scenery in NZ (ie. above bushline) |
| 2. | Scenic (NZ) | Scenes of natural pictorial interest in NZ hills, coasts, etc. (ie. predominantly below the bushline) |
| 3. | Natural History (NZ) | NZ flora or fauna |
| 4. | Topical (NZ) | People in tramping, climbing, or skiing related activities in NZ |
| 5. | Overseas Alpine or Scenic | Related to tramping, etc. overseas |
| 6. | Overseas People | Climbers or people met while tramping, climbing overseas |

Formats: Slides, black-and-white prints, colour prints. Prints do not need to be mounted. Prints may be judged as one group or separated at the judge's discretion, depending on numbers.

SNOWCRAFT 1997

As in previous years, this year the club will be conducting three snowcraft courses for members and those who are considering becoming members. The courses are designed to teach the novice the skills needed to go tramping or climbing above the snowline in the North Island winter, and to be able to tramp many of the South Island trans-alpine summer routes. Provisional dates are 19-20 July for Snowcraft I, 2-3 August for Snowcraft II, and 23-24 or 30-31 August for Snowcraft III. More details next newsletter, or contact Andy Backhouse (353-0774) or Bruce van Brunt (328-4761).

NEW MEMBERS

Please welcome three new members to the club:

Marion Carey	Marlene Henderson	Dave Henwood
7 Kingston Street, P.N.	15A Jensen Street, P.N.	333 Albert Street, P.N.
Ph. 358-2544	Ph. 358-5232	Ph. 353-2370

CONDOLENCES

The club has sent a card to the Massey University Alpine Club as an expression of sympathy for the loss of one of their members, Vicki, in a recent tragedy on the slopes of Mt Ruapehu.

To MUAC members and friends of Vicki,

The Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club wish to convey their condolences to all those who knew Vicki.

As people who admire and respect the outdoors we make the most of the opportunities the natural world has to offer as it is these experiences that enrich and enhance our lives. In doing so we are constantly reminded of the risks involved, either through our own experiences or through those of others. That the worst may happen is often at the back of many of our minds however this does not lessen the shock when it does. We can only be humbled by these tragedies which serve to reinforce the great respect required when experiencing the ways of nature. For us the loss of Vicki does just that, but for those of you who knew her it will be so much more.

*With deepest sympathies,
PNTMC*

CLUB BADGES

The club still has cloth badges for sale (\$4 each) for sewing onto packs, shirts, etc. See Liz Flint at Club night, or phone her on 356-7654.

ODDS & SODS...

"A Climber's Guide to Taranaki"
Summer, Winter, Rock, Ski-mountaineering

Review by Andy Backhouse

This handy little book came out over the summer and, having had a few occasions to use it, I thought it had plenty of useful information. It gives lots of ideas on where to climb and ski along with useful bits about safety, emergency resources, where to find a phone, plus maps and topos.

However I would like to grumble about the number of errors, and the layout which requires you to look in three different parts of the book to find the access route, topo and route description. It does not include anything on the Round The Mountain track except for access (nor should it, as this is well known anyway). It also tends to describe access from the extremely dull North Egmont access road, reflecting the greater numbers of climbers from New Plymouth. Most of us in PN would choose an alternative if possible. My other criticism would be where routes have been ignored (for brevity, perhaps) which prevents a new generation of climbers from knowing if they are on new ground. I believe, where no other guidebook exists, it should be as complete as possible.

All in all, a handy size, good price and well worth buying if you plan to venture out onto Taranaki's climbing or ski routes.

A LETTER FROM JAPAN

Hi Terry,

Good to here from you and it sounds as if people in the club are being very active at the moment. I went on a trip to Pureora many years ago with Jenny/Garry/Kent. Can't remember the track name but I remember the amazing forest and bird life. Do you think John will post newsletters all the way over here - the cost maybe a little high. Let me know

and I can throw a little money in the post. [*We will be sending Ron a low-cost copy via the wonders of e-mail* - Ed.]

Have just got in touch with a walking club which operates out of one of the institutes over here. So it will be great to get out on some trips locally. Slowly starting to see a lot more of Japan. Next trip is to Kyoto/Kobe to see earthquake landslides and attend sabo symposium (but probably I'll go and see gardens and shrines etc.).

Hi to everyone in the club.

Cheers
Ron (de Rose)

TRIP REPORTS

"A MEGA TRIP WITH NANO PACKS"

WAIOHINE RIVER TUBING

Feb 28-Mar 2

by Tony Gates

Nigel was the leader, a dedicated Tararua man, and Warren and Tony were there for the fun of it. This was to be another traditional Waiohine gorge trip into the guts of the Tararuas. This is always a fantastic trip. This was a mega trip, with nano packs.

Friday evening, oh my god, the big hill up to Jumbo Hut. It got dark and wet about half way up Raingauge Spur, so the luxuries of the hut were really appreciated when we staggered in. Gas on tap is the way to go!

Saturday was misty, and just to test our navigational ability, we trotted over the tussock tops to McGregor Biv. Two hours of bungling about in the mist and leatherwood! Where were you Derek Sharp? Eventually, we found our way off Angle Knob, much to our relief. Still, it was hardly plain sailing north along the ridge, as we didn't know about the cairns marking the turnoff to McGregor Biv, so dived off into the mist a bit too early. We all knew that our route finding was not quite accurate down there in the leatherwood, so we sidled north, and presently found the track. Much relief again. Five minutes, and we were in clear weather, and en route to McGregor Biv. The biv was excellent, recently done up, with water, and a welcome brew. Then the long ridge down to the Dorset/ Waiohine Forks, with the recently abandoned DoC track to follow. Testing route finding. Some great country about the place, as we could gain some views of the central Tararuas as we dropped down below the mist level. It was pretty steep towards the end.

As expected, the river was very scenic, with plenty of water in it, but still okay to cross. Some fantastic camp sights. We pumped up our tubes, waterproofed, brewed up again, and struggled into our wet suits. These fellows come prepared! Without all this paraphernalia, our packs were reduced in volume considerably. You could probably walk all the way down to Mid Waiohine Hut (with a few waist deep crossings), but you'd still get pretty wet and cold, and miss out on all the fun that tubing offers. We made sure that there was plenty of the fun side, with lazy floating and white water speed tubing, but always checking for danger signs (not too many of those). There were of course more than a few knocks and bumps on our bodies- ask Warren. It was a hell of a long way down to Mid Waiohine Hut, our destination for the night, so by six o'clock, when we

staggered up to the hut, we were ready for a rest. Phew! More great views of the central Tararuas, of river flats seldom, if ever, seen by trampers.

Sunday was warm and overcast. We wanted to reach Totara flats by midday, so felt that we had plenty of time to pack up, waterproof our stuff, and prepare. Now the main Waiohine Gorge is a pretty special place for those who visit it, and its actually seen a lot of tubers over the years, but once again, very few trampers. You get some amazing views looking up steep side creeks and slips to High Ridge and Maungahuka area. By the time you reach Hector Forks, the rivers volume has increased markedly, and the tubing is fantastic. Starting fresh, and with even smaller nano packs, we paddled and splashed down to Maungahuka Stream in two hours, then Totara Flats in another hour. Good rapids, fast times, warm weather, no sun. And so to the wide open spaces of the Tararua's favourite grassy flats. We all longed to continue tubing for ever, but the aches and pains caused by the (sometimes) rough ride gave us good enough reason to stagger onto dry land, and deflate our tubes and egos ready for the tramp back to the car. Someone said it was two hours to the car! It was pretty thirsty work, and three and a half hours later we made it to the car. Still overcast.

FIELDS HUT 20 April by Neil Campbell

Its nice when you get really lucky with the weather. The day before seemed like the first day of winter; rain, wind, low temperatures. Come Sunday the weather had changed to clear sky and not much wind. We left Palmerston North at 7.00 and got to Otaki Forks by 8.30. The track to Fields hut passes through some very pleasant Tararua forest. It is a well maintained track with not a great deal of mud. By 11.00 we were enjoying some early lunch at the hut itself. Fields hut is listed as being able to accommodate 25 people and is located on the tree line. We went on to enjoy some more lunch on Table Top just a bit further along the track. The views were excellent. At one stage a glider circled above us. Back at the cars we decided to finish the trip with a real fruit ice cream. These were purchased at the fruit shop on Highway 1 just South of the turnoff to Otaki Forks.

We were: Rod, Liz, Jenny, Dot, Simone, Judy and Neil.

TRACK AND TUNNEL March 9 by Tony Gates

As if pay tramping was bad enough, we had to queue! This was really tramping with a difference! While PNTMC members were thrashing about across the gorge on SAREX, we 600 "walkers" paid the Woodville Lions 12 dollars each to let us partake in their annual "track and tunnel", the only opportunity to walk the other side of the Manawatu Gorge. Its actually not all that easy, because the stones are uncomfortable to walk on, the bridges are very slippery, and there are a few tunnels. However, 600 of us were not disappointed with the two hour stroll, and variety of views. Now, could we SELL a tramp to Rangī?

CUPOLA AND HOPELESS (NELSON LAKES NATIONAL PARK)
December 13-18, 1997 by Barry Scott

In November 1992 Peter Wiles and I climbed Mt Travers from Summit Creek and while on top I noticed a very appealing mountain to the North, Cupola, that I promised I would come back to climb. So in December of last year Terry Crippen, Peter Wiles and myself headed down to Nelson Lakes with the aim of climbing Cupola. I had also heard that the alpine

flora in Cupola Basin was superb so a December trip seemed like a good opportunity to see many of the alpinists in flower.

We traveled by train, ferry, shuttle and water taxi on the 13th of December to arrive at the head of Lake Rotoiti mid-afternoon with plenty of daylight to walk into John Tait hut. This is a very pleasant walk through beech forest for about 4 hours. For those who have not been up the Travers valley recently you will be surprised to find in the lower section of the track several hundred metres of very classy boardwalk through a section of forest which to us did not seem fragile enough to warrant such a huge expense. One is left with the view that recently acquired extra funds by DoC are perhaps not been spent as wisely as they could be!

Following a comfortable night at John Tait the next day we headed up to Cupola Hut in fine sunny weather. The hut has a marvelous outlook being located on the edge of the bush line with a magnificent view of the South face of Hopeless at the head of the Valley. While we had come to climb Cupola one could not help but be drawn to Hopeless. Terry and Peter spent the remainder of this day exploring routes into Summit Creek while I explored the alpine flora and chatted to various people returning from climbs of Cupola; the first an Eastender whose only alpine equipment was a branch off a tree, followed not long after by two young fit lads from Nelson who climbed it with ski poles.

I must admit to being a little concerned about this casual approach to the mountains especially when the lads from Nelson started talking about going out via the South Face of Hopeless with only ski poles for climbing gear. Fortunately the weather deteriorated overnight so next day they went back down the valley. Despite the deteriorating weather, Terry and I were able to squeeze in a climb of Cupola before the snow and rain arrived.

Having knocked off Cupola we decided next day to climb the South ridge of Hopeless. The weather cleared up overnight so we were off by 6 am on the Monday morning with excellent cramponing up onto the South ridge. After a scramble along the ridge taking in the magnificent views down into the Sabine and south to Travers and Franklin we reached the crux of the climb which is a large step in the ridge. After messing around trying to negotiate this on some very exposed ledges on the Sabine side we opted for abseiling down into the gap. This committed us to traversing the summit. The remainder of the ridge is very straight forward until the final rock buttress is reached. This involved about two rope lengths of steepish climbing on very firm rock. What a buzz. I hadn't done any serious rock climbing for many years and was thoroughly enjoying myself as were the others. After emerging on top it was a short traverse along the ridge to the summit then a steep descent down a soft snow couloir onto a huge snow basin above Hopeless Creek. This is the more popular way to climb Hopeless. From here it was a long walk back around to Cupola Hut via the main Travers valley, arriving back at 9.30 pm. A great day and a climb to savor for quite a while.

On the Tuesday Peter climbed Hopeless and Terry Peak 1989 m while I settled for a book in the sun. Late that day we descended to John Tait hut and next morning walked out to the Lake head to meet the water taxi to return to St Arnaud.

We left the No.1 Dam at about 7.30am in calm sunny weather, as predicted by Jim Hickey the night before. The dam water level was very low which enabled an easy walk to Baber forks where the track to Ngapuketuru starts in earnest. Although the track is no longer maintained it is still fairly easy going and the climb is a gentle gradient. We reached the ridge about an hour earlier than predicted and were greeted with views of Dundas Ridge as far as Pukemoremore, essentially our destination today. Peter produced a large bag of lollies and David, not to be outdone, produced his scroggin mix, both of which were shared around. I offered to share some Gingernuts, but nobody was keen. The route along the tops to Massey Knob is generally easy going through leatherwood and other subalpine scrub; corridors through dense leatherwood patches still exist but could use a bit of work to ease the pain on bare legs.

Once at Massey Knob the subalpine scrub thins out and tussock dominates allowing pleasant travel through to Ruapae where the main track along Dundas Ridge is encountered. This was a fantastic section of ridge well worth the visit. We had lunch on Ruapae and speculated as to how long it would take to get to Dundas Hut, I reckoned we would be at the hut by 4:30pm. The weather was excellent, high cloud, patches of mist along the tops, light winds, cotton shirt weather. After a lazy lunch we headed on to East peak and the infamous East peak - West Peak saddle, which proved to be easier than anticipated. The ridge from West Peak to Pukemoremore is a very enjoyable rocky ridge that climbs with a nice gradient to the summit of Pukemoremore. A few photos were taken near the top before the 120m descent, 60m climb and finally 140m descent to the infrequently used Dundas Hut. We quickly set about the task of getting into hut clothes and then started the task of preparing the fire. The Pot Belly stove is in quite a state, first we had to use some No.8 wire to make a grate, then on lighting the fire, plumes of smoke came billowing out the back. Windows were opened but proved useless against the quantity of smoke produced by the burning leatherwood, eventually we evacuated, unable to return for about 15mins. Once back inside we began the dinner preparations. Dinner consisted of Soup, Puahoi Blue cheese and a shot of Galliano followed by a mega Goulash / Stroganoff with rice topped off with a tin of Boysenberries. Hibernation soon followed.

On Sunday morning we set off at about 7.45am our plan was to proceed south to Mt Dundas and then drop into the Mangahao river via the no longer maintained Triangle spur route. Things were rather chilly on the tops, misty with a stiff wind, not predicted by Jim Hickey. We made the turnoff to Triangle Knob without problem, the ridge down is quite steep in places but nothing too serious. We found the marked track to Avalanche flats without too much problem but lost it soon after. We spent some time mucking around trying to regain the track but eventually decided to bushbash down the stream that runs parallel with Triangle spur. Initially the stream was easy going until we reached the first of about seven 5m - 6m waterfalls. These took some time negotiating but posed no major difficulty. We reached a fork in the stream and from this point on it was easy travel right down to the Mangahao river. We saw a large triangular marker where the Te Matawai track sidles a slip and decided to stop for a late lunch. It was now 1:30pm and we had taken about an hour longer than expected to get to this point. We put a brew on and had a type of communal lunch, Peter donated Sardines in Mustard, I donated a Beetroot relish (Tony Gates Special) and David donated Butter and Jam. Feeling fully refreshed we set off to Mangahao Flats hut at good pace. The track is well marked and in excellent condition. We reached the Palatial Premises at 2:30 and with another 4 hours to go to the car it was looking like torches would be necessary, the rain had well and truly set in and

was quite torrential at times, thankfully the bush provided reasonable cover. After Harris Creek hut the track becomes significantly more boggy, some of which were quite deep. Torches were required for about half an hour, and we reached the car at 6.45pm, an 11 hour day.

We were: Peter Burgess, David Grant, Nigel Barrett.

NELSON LAKES

Easter '97

by Andy Backhouse

Leaving straight from the AGM, Terry drove Zoe and I down to the ferry, meeting John at the terminal. Driving on through the night whilst the rest of us slept, it must have been the prospect of good weather that kept Terry going (and a few strong coffees). The four of us arrived in St Arnaud in time to get changed and catch an early water taxi, and we were on our way up the Travers valley by about 9am.

It's a beautiful walk alternating between beech forest with tuis, S.I. black robins, fantails & bellbirds, and open river flats with views of the peaks all around. We had lunch at John Tait Hut and carried on to where the main path crosses Summit Creek, stopping at Travers Falls en route. We headed up the true right bank of the creek, following a vague trail, though the going was fairly good. After about an hour we emerged and found an excellent campsite an hour before dusk. As dark fell Terry thought he saw snow lying thinly round the tops.

The next morning, cloud in the valley obscured our view, but it was obviously thin. We set off at first light and made heavy going of the terrain with its long grass with bouldery streams underneath. The "spaniard" led to a few curses too. Another party caught us up having left from the hut that morning adding to our humiliation. Gradually the terrain tuned to scree, which was actually preferable as it was not too loose. However it was steeper and we soon climbed above the thin hovering carpet of cloud to get a clear view across to Mt Hopeless and down the Travers Valley.

The top of the scree led to a scramble on rock. It was shattered enough to require helmets but not the harnesses or rope we had brought. The other party had taken another route on the other side of the North Buttress so we now had the slopes to ourselves. There were snow patches left from the previous winter dotted around at this height (ca 2000m) and we picked our way up to the summit by following the best rock.

The summit is simply a jumble of large boulders on top of a ridge. They look like they fell from somewhere higher, but there isn't anywhere! After a pleasant lunch and the usual conquest photos, we were fascinated to watch several gliders pick their way from thermal to thermal through the passes, dodging the rocks and clouds. Fine views of the Travers-Sabine circuit, Mts Cupola, Hopeless and Franklin were all around us. Truly a good day for it!

We followed the route down the North Buttress until just before the point where it steepens to a face. From here we turned left into the bowl between it and the main ridge that runs towards Gunsight Pass and Cupola. Our descent was much quicker though the scree caused a few sore backsides. Soon we were back to the long grass and boulders. In an attempt to avoid the worst of this Terry led off into the bush on the true right along some animal trails before finally dropping down onto our camp.

That evening, with a little more time to eat our tea, I became aware of some notable differences in approach to tramping in our party. Without wishing to say whose style was preferable, I will try to explain what I mean. John likes to bring some home comforts. He had several changes of clothes (including pyjamas), plenty of food, a video camera as well as a normal one, and needless to say an enormous pack. When I mentioned this, he replied that it was fine until I gave him the harnesses and karabiners, though he did admit that Aussie bushwalking miles from the nearest water supply tended to make you carry everything you might need. A man who thoroughly enjoys these outdoor experiences. *[Don't laugh, pyjamas actually make a very nice substitute for a sleeping bag liner! - Ed.]*

Terry on the other hand, has every item weighed on in a stuffsac with this recorded on the outside. Essentials are stripped for function only, and it shows when he moves. You have to be trying to stay in touch, though he frequently stops and waits to ensure no-one is left behind. Each halt has a purpose, to check the map or take a photo. He is an organised trumper, and nothing will prevent his reaching the tops.

As for Zoe and myself, well, somewhere in between.

Another fine morning the next day saw a more leisurely start to the climb up to the ridge between us and Cupola basin. Though shorter than the previous day's climb we were back to carrying full packs as this was a one way trip. Cresting the ridge by late morning we then had a scramble down into the basin, sidling towards Gunsight pass as we descended. We had lunch where we met the valley floor, then a traverse under Mt Cupola to the terraces above Cupola Basin hut.

Another fine night spent in the hut with its scenic bathroom facilities and we were off down the track towards John Tait hut, full of plans to return to climb the rocks thereabouts and summit the peaks. The track down valley was quieter in terms of people but busier with wasps. One stung Terry on the hand so we spent lunchtime devising wasp traps with our leftover food. Sadly there are a few more million left to kill.

Finally we were on the water taxi and rode back to St Arnaud to discover where all the people were: on the beach playing tag with the sandflies. After signing out we were off to the ferry to catch the night sailing so we could get back to work the next morning. We had a superb trip blessed with excellent weather and smooth running by Terry. We all enjoyed the whole experience and for myself I will be keen to return to this area I have now sampled.

Anyone for a Cupola Basin climbing trip?

We were: Terry Crippen (leader), John Phillips, Zoe Hart, and Andy Backhouse.