



PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217, PALMERSTON NORTH

Newsletter - June 2001

THIS ISSUE:

NEWS

Historical and Alpine/ Antarctica Calendars for 2002 *already!*
Proposed Heaphy/ Haast road.
Photograph competition and Snowcraft Information

TRIP REPORTS:

Search Methods
Madeline peak, Fiordland
Roaring Stag
Iron Gates Hut- Tunupo, and Toka
Travers Valley pre report

CLUB NIGHTS

JUNE 14	Freda du Faur	Graham Langton
JUNE 28	Annual Photo Competition	Murray Woodcock
JULY 5	Committee Meeting	Warren's place
JULY 12	South to Antarctica	Harley Betts

Club nights are held for all club members and visitors on the second and last Thursday of each month at the **Society of Friends Hall, 227 College Street, Palmerston North**. All club nights commence at 7:45 pm **sharp**, winter or summer. The PNTMC Committee meets on the first Thursday of each month.

At the club night: Please sign your name in the visitors book. A 50c door fee includes supper.

UP AND COMING TRIPS & EVENTS

Trip Grades

Trip grades can depend on many factors, especially the weather. As a guide, a reasonably proficient trumper can be expected to cover the graded trips in the following times:

Easy (E): 3-4 hrs

Medium (M): 5-6 hrs

Fit (F): about 8 hrs

Fitness Essential (FE): >8 hrs

T refers to technical trips requiring special skills.

**14 June Club Night Freda du Faur
by Graham Langton**

Graham is a local historian, who has extensively studied and written about mountaineering history. His work appears in "Wilderness" magazine, and several books. Don't miss this talk.

16-17 June Cattle Ridge Hut M
Tony Gates 357-7439

Tramp thru to Roaring Stag Lodge, then up to the tops for the night. Views of the high Tararuas.

**18 June DOC User-Group Meeting, 7.00 PM,
Milson Community Centre**

16- 17 June Advanced TCA course.
This is stage 2 of the Track and Clue Awareness course, held last year in the Tararua Ranges.

21 June Thursday trampers
Ivan Alve 356-3123

23-24 Jun Midwinter Rangataua E
Mick Leyland 358-3183

Depart PN Friday evening for Lawson and Sue's house at Rangataua. Enjoy day walks, climbs, cafes, or ski slopes around Ohakune.

28 June Thursday trampers
Jill Spencer 329-8738

**28 June Club Night Photo competition
Murray Woodcock**

Refer notices. Come along, enter, and enjoy.

30 June- 1 July Sentry Box M
Mick Leyland 358 3183

Here is a seldom visited corner of the northern Ruahines, with a nice hut, tracks, and good views

1 July Waipawa Saddle M
David Grant 357 8269

Easy access from Hawkes Bay make the Waipawa a good spot for a day trip. Good tussock tops.

1 July First Aid course for SAR team
personel, Levin Terry Crippen. 356 3588

5 July Thursday Trampers
Graham Pritchard 357 1393

**5 July Committee Meeting, Warren's
place**

7- 8 July Full moon, Waterfall Hut F/T
Tony Gates 357 7439

Depart 6.00 PM Friday, heading to Purity hut. Saturday morning will be onto the tops, over Iron Peg, then down to Waterfall hut. We plan to exit by a different route. Hopefully, some excellent snow/ ice conditions and sunshine.

8 July Beehive Creek E
Stuart Hubbard 356 8782

This is a pleasant local walk in the Pohangina Valley, through some remnant native bush.

12 July Thursday Trampers
Neville Gray 357 2768

**12 July Club Night "South to
Antarctica" Harley Betts**

A slide talk by Harley Betts, on a month-long trip he undertook in January this year on a Russian ex-polar research vessel. He travelled from Bluff, across the Southern Ocean to Antarctica, and back. Stops were made at the Snares, Auckland, Macquarie, and Campbell Islands en route. There are plenty of images of birdlife (including penguins), seals, bizarre megaherb vegetation, ice formations and of course many photos taken under the midnight sun. There is also photographic evidence (for those not easily offended) behind the story that Harley actually swam in -1 degree water in his undies!

14- 15 July Blue Lake- Tongariri M/T
Harley Betts 354 2094,

or at work, 3567154, bettsh@landcare.cri.nz

Depart PN 8am Saturday for the Mangatepopo Road end. This will be an overnight camp beside the probably frozen Blue Lake, on the northern side of Mt Tongariro. It is an easy and incredibly scenic jaunt across from Mangatepopo Valley to Blue Lake, passing South Crater, Red Crater and through Central Crater en route, under the gaze of Mt Ngauruhoe. Given clear weather (I've made the booking with the big guy upstairs) the views

are spectacular. It's wise to have an axe and/or crampons handy for the section from South Crater to Central Crater, which is a bit exposed. Head back out the same way on Sunday. If you have a snow shovel for building a shelter (if needed) then feel free to bring it along.

15 July Tararua off track adventure M
Andrew Lynch 325 8779

It is leatherwood city up there, but a few tracks, and a good 4WD road to within a couple of hours tramp from the trig.

19 July Thursday trampers
Gordon Clark 359-2500

21-22 July Hikurangi Range M/F
Dave Henwood

Mangaweka trig is 1733 metres high, and is the highest point of the Ruahine Ranges. This peak, and other places, will be accesable on this trip. Be prepared for snow and ice.

22 July Longview Hut M
Stephen Liddall 357-6978

A nice day tramp to one of those traditional haunts in the southern Ruahines. This hut has gas on tap, and is set in a commanding location. Depart Palmerston North 8.00 AM.

Trip participants:

If you are interested in going on a trip, please contact the leader at least three days in advance. Trips usually leave from the Foodtown carpark in Fergusson Street with transport provided by car-pooling. A charge for transport will be collected on the day of the trip, the amount depending on the distance travelled and vehicles used. Leaders should be able to give an estimate in advance. For general information or any suggestions for future tramps please contact one of the trip co-ordinators Terry Crippen (356-3588), Janet Wilson (329-4722) or Stephen Liddall (357-69).

Trip leaders: Please discuss with the trip co-ordinators, 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.

*** OVERDUE TRIPS ***

Enquiries to: Mick Leyland (358-3183), Terry Crippen (356-3588), or David Grant (357-8269)

NOTICES

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES can be Emailed to tony.gates@horizons.govt.nz, or stuff can be delivered to him at home or work.

c/- horizons.mw

11-15 Victoria Ave, PN

If you're e-mailing, we'd prefer you to include your article as an attachment (please use Microsoft Word Version 7.0 or Rich Text Format), unless it is quite a small article, which can be typed it directly into the e-mail.

Note that e-mails with certain attachments (particularly scanned photos) will be filtered by a "quarantine" system. you will get an e-mail reply from the horizons 'postmaster', confirming this. Don't worry about this, all material gets through to us once it is checked for viruses etc. by horizons' staff.

The deadline for anything for the Newsletter is the **FIRST THURSDAY** of the month.

SUBS ARE NOW DUE

\$30.00 SINGLE

\$35.00 FAMILY

Membership for two junior members (up to 18 yrs) donated by Club Patron.

Cheques paid to PNTMC. Please forward to Peter Wiles, Treasurer, or post to P.O Box 1217, Palmerston North

NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome is extended to Morgan Hewitt, of 68 A Wyndham St, Ashhurst, ph 326 8052.

WEDNESDAY WANDERERS (or do we have a more exciting name for them?) tramp every every second and fourth Wednesday of the month.

Come join us. Ph Jenny 323 3914

Judy 357 0192

ADDRESS CHANGE

John Phillips has moved address to:

REMINDER

River Road
RD 6, PN
Ph: 324-8889, 025-210-4695

DOC USER GROUP MEETING

DOC P N hold regular user group meetings. This one will be held at the usual place, at Milson Shopping Centre at 7.00 PM, Monday 18 June. These meetings have proven to be informative, and a good opportunity to have our say. One positive result is that Joe, their hut and track man, has produced a monthly status report, as a newsletter, of huts and tracks in the Western Ruahines. Briefly, all huts have been inspected, and passed. Track clearing work has been done, and continues to be on a regular basis.

PROPOSED HEAPHY/ HAAST ROAD

Now I don't want to sound biased, but this monster has reared up again. I'm sure that club members will agree with me that the idea of linking Karamea to Collingwood, and Haast to Hollyford by road should be stopped. Also, the proposal to link Queenstown with Milford by gondola, via the Greenstone- Caples, is in the news once again, I think, as part of some sort of "mega proposal". A strong "development" lobby from the South Island's West Coast wants to cut a knife through some of the best and most remote wilderness of New Zealand.

Club Members can be assured that their committee will be supporting FMC in their stand against this road and gondola. Club members are urged to write to their MP, expressing their thoughts against these proposed roads.

HOWLETT HUT HAVEN HAS A HEATER

The popular Howletts Hut, strategically located in the central Ruahines, has a new fire box. Club members will recall sweating up to that popular spot, appreciating its shelter, but fumbling for real warmth from its decrepit fire box. Like the similar Waikamaka Hut, Howletts Hut will now provide delicious warmth from its new fire box. I guess it will be well used by trampers heading for the popular routes around Longview Hut, the Rangi Howletts crossing and Sawtooth Ridge.

SIX MONTH EVENTS CARD, July- Dec 2001.

The Events Card for the next six months is out. Lots of excellent winter, spring and early summer trips. Thank you to leaders who have committed yourselves. I'm sure all club members will

actively support this good effort. Don't forget to encourage flatmates, partners, parents, family and friends to come on these trips as well.

For newcomers please read the comments, regarding the grading of trips printed on the events card and in the Newsletter.

Remember to contact the leaders at least 3 days in advance - phoning up Friday night for a weekend trip is probably a bit too late!

For further info. contact trip leaders, or the trip co-ordinators (Terry Crippen 356-3588, Janet Wilson 329-4722, or Stephen Liddall 357-6978)

A range of club evenings has also been organised. Please try to come along to as many of OUR club nights as possible. As well as the excellent selection of topics being presented club nights are a good chance for a chat and hear what others have been up to. Our Club night organiser is Warren Wheeler, phone 356-1998.

"GUIDE FOR TRIP LEADER", "HELP", AND "TRIP FEEDBACK" FORMS

These three forms are always available at club nights - either by the server, or on our bookcase.

Trip leaders, don't forget your responsibilities when planning and leading trips. Please make use of the Guide for Trip Leaders, and take a copy with you on each tramp you lead for. Please contact a trip co ordinator if you need to change you trip date or area, etc. The guide is also good value for all trip participants, as it gives you an idea in what is involved.

The pink "Help" form is put out by the NZ Mountain Safety Council for possible Search and Rescue purposes. Trip leaders, please take some copies and use it as a guide to compile details prior to the trips departure.

The Trip Feedback form is designed for getting feedback, from trips you go on, so the club can help enhance your future outdoor experiences.

SNOWCRAFT INSTRUCTION 2001

This traditional and very worthwhile programme is designed to equip club members and other trampers with basic and intermediate skills so they can safely get out and about in snow



on winter trips, and alpine trips down south over summer. The course involves straight forward walking on snow, to simple snow climbing and aspects of technical mountaineering. A progressive approach is used: Snowcraft (SC1) assumes nil or only minor previous snow experience, Snowcraft 2 and 3 (SC2, SC3) build on the previous levels. Some people may enter at SC2 level. Some people just do SC1 and SC2. Numbers are limited, so be in early.

The programme consists of three weekends away (departure Friday nights), two at Mt Ruapehu and one at Mt Egmont; and three week night evenings. A comprehensive programme is presented

The programme dates and fees are:

Thurs 26 July applications (on registration form, with fee) close for ALL three levels.

SC1 **\$120** (\$125*)

evening TUES 31 July, weekend 4-5 August

SC2 **\$125** (\$130*)

evening WED 15 August, weekend 18-19 August

SC3 **\$115** (\$120*)

evening WED 29 August, Weekend 1-2 Sept

One-off discounted payment of \$345 (\$360*)
(*non PNTMC member rate.)

For details and registration form contact Terry Crippen 356-3588, Bruce van Brunt 328-4761, Warren Wheeler 356-1998

ANNUAL PHOTO COMPETITION

Yes its that time again! We've seen glimpses of some real winner photos & slides from club members over the past year, so come along and enjoy them. The club's annual photo competition will be held at the club night on Thursday, June 28. The usual rules for the competition apply:

- Entries must not have been entered previously
- All entries must be related to tramping, climbing, or the natural environment.
- All slides must have a cross on the bottom left-hand corner of the mount (ie. top right-hand corner when loaded into the carousel).
- Slides and photos labelled with photographers name and entry category.
- Limit of 3 slides per person per category, but no limit on prints.

Categories:

1. *Alpine (NZ)*. Predominantly alpine scenery in NZ (ie. Above the bushline)

2. *Scenic (NZ)*. Pictorial interest in NZ hills etc. (ie. predominantly below the bushline)

3. *Natural History (NZ)*. NZ flora & fauna or detail, eg. geology, ice formations, etc.

4. *Topical (NZ)*. People in tramping, climbing, or skiing related activities in NZ.

5. *Overseas Alpine or Scenic*. Related to tramping, etc. overseas or Scenic

6. *Overseas People*. Climbers or people met while tramping, climbing overseas.

The formats are; slides, b/ w prints, and colour prints. Prints can be digital images, and do not need to be mounted. The system for judging winners is a democratic one – a show of hands, after the guiding advice of our guest judge, Murray Woodcock. Murray often combines his passion for cameras with ours for tramping.

There will be another interclub photo competition later this year, between MUAC and MTSC to think about. Consider yourself warned.

2002 CALENDARS

Hedghog House are currently taking orders for their 2002 Alpine and Antarctica Calendars (as well as some books and cards). Priced between \$13.00 and \$16.00, these are good value, and make excellent presents. If you are interested in placing an order, then please contact Tony Gates.

And from New Zealand Outside;

To the President and club members

We would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to a limited edition calendar which will be published this year

Over the past few months, Mary Hobbs, Editor and Publisher of *New Zealand Outside*, has been working with the grandson of New Zealand's first NZ born mountain guide - Jack Adamson. The story behind him will be told in the 2002 issue of *New Zealand Outside*. It portrays a great, yet quiet achiever who was instrumental in establishing New Zealand's first guiding operation at Mount Cook in the early 1900's.

Jack Adamson was also a talented photographer, and has captured this era through a series of magnificent photos that *New Zealand Outside* have been granted exclusive use of. We are proud to publish them in our **History of New Zealand**

Mountaineering 2002 calendar, and share this remarkable era with New Zealanders.



[Photo by Jack Adamson, courtesy of NZ Outside]

The RRP price of the calendar is \$29.95. As a special offer, we are offering a **\$ 10.00 discount** off the price to all club members, applicable to a bulk order made for a minimum of 50.

If the Club or any of its members are interested in having the calendar personalised with a logo (business or club), - the price is \$12.50 per calendar. This is based on a minimum order of 200 units with the same logo on each.. Have a look at: <http://outside.co.nz/nzcalendar>

NEW ZEALAND OUTSIDE LTD
PO Box 17673 Christchurch New Zealand
outside@xtra.co.nz
(03) 326 7516, or fax (03) 326 7518.

Also, *New Zealand Outside (with Southern Alps Guiding)* has just produced an instruction video. This has featured on the TV news, and supported by SAR. PNTMC members may recall the producer, Mountain Guide Charlie Hobbs. He has instructed many of us at FMC courses on Ruapehu. A copy of the video has been purchased by PNTMC for your interest, and will be available for loan.

MAP ORDER

PNTMC has placed an order with FMC for maps. These are purchased at a heavily discounted price, and will be available soon. Future map orders should be made up with map name and number, and can be placed with FMC any time.

GPS ALMANAC PROGRAM (Plan 2.35)

If you own a GPS, and have wondered why it sometimes works well in the bush, and sometimes not, then this program may provide the answer. Quick Plan predicts the location, elevation, and azimuth of every available GPS satellite for any future day and time.

As you probably know, a GPS requires line-of-sight contact with a minimum of three satellites in order to establish its exact location. In difficult conditions such as an area surrounded by high hills there will be periods when fewer than three satellites are accessible. This program gives you the best times and the worst times using several varieties of graphs.

Merv Matthews has downloaded the program from the Internet and tested it thoroughly. It takes just a few minutes to install and set up. For the convenience of members he has packaged the program on to two floppy disks, along with installation and set up instructions. It can be installed on any PC from a 486 upwards. Members who would like a copy should deliver to Merv two new floppy disks and he will swap them for a ready-to-install package. If sending them by mail (to 19 Redwood Grove, Palmerston Nth) be sure to include a 9 x 4 (or larger) 90c stamped addressed envelope. There is no charge for this service.

FROM THE PRESIDENTS PC

Now is the Winter when we are Content (with apologies to Shakespeare). The new Trip Card offers plenty of scope to enjoy the Cold Season and practise old and rusty, or newly acquired Snowcraft skills (from the PNTMC Snowcraft Courses in late July-August, see the advertisement elsewhere in this newsletter – and have you heard the Ad on the radio yet?). Thanks to all the trip leaders who have put forward trips and to the Trip Coordinators, especially Janet Wilson for bringing it all together.

To kick start the season, I encourage you to join the Mid-winter Celebrations at our Patron's lodge at Rangataua, Ohakune. With fresh snow booked, we could be skiing on the lawn, but there are plenty of other trips to suit all fitness and skill levels. How about a climb to Ruapehu's summit, or a magical walk through snow-clad forest straight off a Xmas Card – oops I mean Samx Card (for the reverse season, you see). No special theme this year – perhaps "I'm Dreaming of a White Samxness" - just bring a song to share (dust off the old Tramping Song Book), something delectable for pot-luck dinner, and a small Samx-gift to add to the festive occasion.

Apart from the Snowcraft Course there are lots of other fun training opportunities coming up with a SAREX in Levin on the 9-10 June, Advanced Track and Clue Awareness, and Outdoor First Aid in the next month or so. Good value, and if Terry hasn't already approached you are encouraged to give him a ring. We will also be sponsoring Sarah Todd and Janet Wilson on the FMC Alpine Instructors Course in July.

We have received a copy of the proposed new ladder to replace the chain ladder at the Tararua Peaks. DoC requested our comments and it will be interesting to see if they take any notice of the less than encouraging comments they have been sent. The new ladder will be like a fire escape, with two

landings separating the three flights of web-grating steps. In my view this is total overkill, it will look completely out of place on such a route, and could well result in trampers being exposed to more risk from falling off, despite the structure itself being more strong and "safe". You can see the plans by contacting me – or come along to a club night.

FMC has also asked us for suggestions for spending the extra money that DoC has been given to upgrade huts and facilities, as well as our thoughts on good hut design with a view to 5-6 standard designs being adopted. The FMC will then discuss our ideas with DoC as part of on-going liaison with User Groups. Sounds good in principle but this could be addressed far more effectively by DoC coming up with its own ideas first – they have a huge depth of experience to draw on already – and then ask us for comment.

We have also been invited to help develop an Outdoor Recreation Strategy for Palmerston North – apparently there are concerns that there are not enough opportunities out there...hmmm.

Meanwhile I wish you good tramping.

Warren Wheeler
President PNTMC

TRIP REPORTS

SEARCH METHODS. March 31- April By Janet Wilson and Graham Peters.

We joined a group of approximately 20 people on a "Search Methods" course at the Makahika Outdoor Centre at Levin. The instructor was Ross Gordon. It was a full on course, with alternating theory and practical sessions interspersed with frequent and very well catered for meal breaks. Topics covered included; lost person behavior analysis, decision pointing, purposeful wandering, sound lines, sound sweeps, and sound light lines. The latter was done late on Saturday evening in the dark. Altogether, a very worthwhile weekend course, to be recommended to anyone involved in SAR.

FIORDLAND- DARRANS- MADELINE. April 7- 13 By Derek Sharp

After a quiet summer, the allure of the southern mountains was becoming strong. So it wasn't difficult for Patrick McNarama to con me into my

third attempt on Tutoko, and after sorting out my priorities of home, work, and play, I soon found myself heading into Turner's Biv on a forecast of four days bad weather.

Leaving early from Homer Hut with a full kit, we bet the sun to Leader Creek, now in the shadow of Tutoko itself. We bouldered up the creek, turned the falls on the true left, and tackled the slabs of Madeline. Here, as some people may recall, was where Nigel Barrett parted company with his pack on a previous trip. I didn't see it fall the eighty odd metres then, but I certainly heard it tumble down! Now, unwittingly, it was to be my turn. In my enthusiasm to ascend, I had managed to gain a position that couldn't be advanced or retreated from. With muscles tweaking, I was soon calling for help. Patrick's unruffled reply was "well, what can I do, you've got the rope!" True, true.

In rock climbing, I've noticed you can always sense when you are going to slip. Now, this sense was imminent! All fours suddenly tensed as friction was lost. Thankfully, I slipped only half a metre- from wet rock to dry. But I knew something had to change quickly. But what. Patrick suggested I uncouple my pack, so if I did slip, I would have more chance to stop myself without it. Off it came (after I managed to wrench off the rope)!

Clatter clatter bang bang.

Patrick thought of the party gear. I thought of the freed rope, and of my cramped calves. It took two attempts at throwing the end of the rope to Patrick before I managed to vacate my perch. Patrick disliked the idea of retrieving my pack, to help, so off I fetched. It would do my cramped muscles good I was told. After willing my muscles not to cramp, I collected my stuff- a holed pack, half a helmet, and a burst water bottle.

The climb resumed.

We stuck the rope around our middles for the two small bluffs, as the "plenty of snow grass to hang onto (Moir's Guide) doesn't exist. From the bluffs, the terrain got easier, but it still took a concerted effort to reach Turners biv just after dark. It was a relief to see it empty.

But we were not alone.

The forecasted weather didn't arrive the next morning, so we used the opportunity for reconnaissance. Madeline looked like it would be an easy six hours from the lower glacier, whereas Tutoko's access looked more challenging. Access along the lower ledges of Madeline to gain the pass was trickier, as the glacier had pulled away from the rock. Now, with the weather deteriorating, we retreated to the biv for a welcome rest.

The book with "Homer Hut" written on all sides quickly gained prominence as the day wore on. The next day was ditto. Rain gave way to intermittent snow flurries. Other than that, the only things to change were the stream beside the biv turning to an incessant roar, and the pages of the book being turned. Patrick, tired of reading, now occupied himself studying the encroaching

ceiling drips, while consuming vegemite by the spoonfull.

It's difficult to sleep. I'm tired of sleeping. No, it's the lack of noise that woke me up, and the cold. I wander outside. The snow is crisp, the night clear. Excellent. On return, I wake up Patrick with the idea of an early morning start, but at 1.00 AM, he's not interested. "No, at 5.00 AM we should check the weather". Patrick rolls over, turning his back to me. "Wednesday's meant to have the worst weather, remember?".

I'm not convinced.

At dawn, I'm impatient. We should have left hours ago. Perfect weather. Madeline, at least, was attainable. Patrick showed no hurry, as he reminded me of our rendezvous on Monday. It should be a short day.

A cracking pace was soon set. We ascended quickly, gaining the col between Mts Syme and Madeline in good time. This should be easy. The view down the other side was impressive, and Turners Falls, at 265 m, were outstanding. As the forecast was weighing heavily on our minds, we soon set off again with a sense of urgency that would stay with us the entire day. We roped up for the glacier travel, and weaved our way around the crevasses and over snow bridges, gaining the southern slopes of Madeline. Here, we started pitching. The late season's ice, coupled with the gradient, kept us on our toes. I'm sure that the ice screws would have been bomb proof, so with that in mind, I made short work of the steep ice through the rock step.



The final pitch to Madeline.

[Derek Sharp]

And on we pitched.

With the ever present thought of well, this must be the last pitch”, we never stopped. It wasn’t until the top, 8 pitches later, that we donned sunglasses and broke our fast. It was naturally pleasing to reach the top, at 2723 metres,, especially as it was one of the mountains I proclaimed to climb when I had seen it from the Red Hills with Peter Wiles and Nigel. But it was only when I reached the top that I realised I was even more keen to look back on the Red Hills (they had become obscured by cloud). Maybe one day I shall see them again, next time from Tutoko itself.

After the obligatory summit shots, a hasty retreat was made. Again, no stopping on the 8 pitches, and no dawdling on the glacier. The cloud was by now rolling in. Quick work was made of the lower slopes, and after a 12 hour day (who said 6?), we were back at the biv, just on dark- to an unpleasant surprise.

Patrick suddenly started shouting and swinging his ice axes. My imagination ran wild. An icy

feeling took hold- what was going on? Then, in the dim light of my torch, a shape rose up to greet me, flapping and screeching. I’m sure I was more startled than that kea! A kea. Oh no, our gear!. Patrick was meticulously inspecting gear, muttering obscenities. Phew, no damage. Just in time. Except we did notice that nearly all of Partick’s food, and my peanut brownies, had been chewed. This wasn’t kea damage, it was mouse. That night I slept with my food hanging from an old knife wedged into a flake above my head. Something told me it had been done before.

That night, we drifted asleep to light drizzle. On Thursday it rained. Soon, we were talking about escape plans, and as Tutoko looked more daunting than inviting, our minds drifted to the comfort of Homer Hut, and easier day walks. On Easter Friday, we took our chance to retreat. It was a good decision. Tutoko- 3, Derek nil.

ROARING STAG, May 12. By Malcolm Parker

The forecast wasn’t wonderful as we headed to Eketahuna, but we were all looking forward to putting the boots on and heading to the Tararuas.

We made reasonable time up to the second bridge. With the uphill slog in front of me, I decided to take it easy and plod at my own pace. The others were quite happy with this, so we had an enjoyable hour or so tramping and chatting, then pausing for a while as the lungs caught up sufficiently for me to carry on a little longer

Then it was all downhill to the hut. A casual lunchbreak for us, while we chatted with the residents, who were in for a few days hunting. There was talk about going up and having a look at the Ruapae lake, but I was happy just to sit down and polish off my lunch. My fitness levels may be better than at the beginning of the year but I wasn’t into pushing the envelope too far.

While we were chatting someone happened to mention how he had used his cellphone from right outside the hut. I tried but couldn’t maintain a signal long enough to make a call. I tried from the middle of the bridge and it worked fine.

On the trip out, about half an hour before the Herepai turnoff, Pat and Tony decided to take the scenic route out. They dropped down into one of the Mangatainoka side streams on the eastern side

of the ridge, reporting that it had suffered considerable erosion recently. I was in a state of mild exhaustion, so decided to stick with the track and meet them at the next bridge. A brief dialogue when we met up did not resolve who was late and who was early. The track was however a little bit quicker .

We finished the trip admiring a dairy herd crossing the road. The cows willingly parted

immediately prior to us meeting them, as if they had been trained like that. By mere fluke, they had done exactly that in the morning too! They were probably the same cows! Thanks to everyone for a very enjoyable trip in one of my favorite areas in the Tararuas. We were Tony Gates, Pat Janssen and Malcolm Parker.



Graham, Janet, Yvette and Terry linked arms to cross the Tunupo Stream. [Tony Gates]

IRON GATES HUT, May 26- 27. By the team.

With the excessively bad weather and floods over the preceding week, it was decided to alter the original destination of Porongaki Hut to the somewhat easier and less weather dependant Iron Gates hut.

Our leisurely Saturday morning departure then met at Graham Peters and Janet Wilson's Pohangina residence, with Yvette Cottam, Terry Crippen, Tony Gates, and Alistair Millward making up the rest of the team. The road end at Table Flat road was very cold and misty, so we were thankful for not heading up onto the tops.

We had to stick to the track all the way to Iron Gates hut- ugh- many ups and downs. Tunupo Creek was flooded, but crossable. Some recent DOC track work between Heritage Lodge and Iron Gates Hut did make it a bit easier though, so it took us a little less than three hours. Alistair soon had the Corker Cooker blasting out the heat, what with all that coal he had carried in. And someone said that they appreciated having a tramp with an entire afternoon sitting in the hut relaxing. Two out of us six had Joseph Conrad book to read- a sign, perhaps, of the literary strength of PNTMC. The weather outside was OK, but at times extremely windy inside!

Sunday morning looked promising, with some patches of blue sky. Keen men Alistair and Tony

decided to go out via the Ngamoko Range tops, which turned out to be a reasonably tough six hour tramp in the snow and hail. The rest of us had another brew, packed up 3 bags of hut rubbish, and strolled down valley. We stopped at Heritage Lodge for lunch, which coincided nicely with a heavy sleet/ hail shower. (Tony and Alistair were by then sheltering from the same downpour in a little hut on the slopes of Tunupo). There was much discussion as to who would reach the cars first. The tracks were checked at the junction, and sure enough, Tony and Alistair had not made it yet. The first vehicle was just departing with Terry et al, when Tony and Alistair were spied struggling up the last farm track. Then to the Waterford for Guinness and hot chips, to satisfactorily round off the tramp

TOKA, June 4. By Derek Sharp.

I was itching for a tramp. I had to kick some snow. For a whole week now, I had worked under its grandeur, and now I had my chance. After delivering telephone books all weekend, Monday was for celebrating. Monday was for snow. So with Warren Wheeler and Morgan Hewitt, we headed for whiter pastures.

We left the car at 10.00 AM, and went bush, literally. My short cut ended up a bush bash, so, with map and compass in hand, we reclaimed the track. As the aim was to ascend Shorts track, I was becoming concerned with our now slight descent towards the creek. I suggested that we carry on a small way, the track may climb back up. Warren suggested we bush bash again, so we did, and that was how we bashed up, approximately 100 metres parallel to the loop track all the way to Shorts track!

It's always neat to crunch through snow between the trees and leatherwood. Unbeatable. On the top, we had expansive views of the Hawkes Bay, right out to the coast, and to the west, of Ruapehu and Taranaki. Warren wondered what the possibility of Mt Ngaurohe being Mt Egmont was after pointing out Mt Egmont on the horizon. Morgan replied, oh 50/ 50!!!!

To the south, a front was approaching. The wind picked up during lunch, and Morgan mentioned being cold. "SO why don't you ask for your mittens and hat?" I exclaimed (as I has one pack

for both of us). "Because you said that you hadn't packed them". "But I was only joking, Morgan", I emphasised, as I hauled everything out of my pack. Now where were they?. Mmmmm. Maybe I hadn't packed them? As I passed my spare mittens and balaclava to Morgan, Warren kept dropping hints "well, that wind is rather cold, the weather looks like it is getting worse, and it will be a horrible plod through snow covered leatherwood to Toka". "So what are you saying Warren?", I replied. "It's great to be on the tops, but I'd be quite pleased to return the way we came". "yeah lets go back", Morgan quickly agreed. "Nope" I replied, "the weather has been like this all morning, and it hasn't changed, and I don't remember it being too difficult travelling from here to Toka either". "Your decision, then Derek". Morgan wasn't so easily persuaded. "How come you get your way when it's two against one?" "...cause" I replied, as we packed up. "lets go". In the saddle, we passed another party (one adult, two boys) doing our trip in reverse. Well, that was good, they made our travel even easier. No snow plodding.

On Toka, everything was more. More snow, more views. Grand views in fact, and of the central Ruahines. On the other side of Toka, Morgan ran off to test the strength of the ice covered tarn, while Warren and I admired the views and drank. "Its great to be wrong" declares Warren. "Yearh, I replied. "Its great to be here". Morgan returned, proclaiming loudly "*now* I can say I'm pleased to have come along". Well, who wouldn't? You just can't beat the snow- especially in the Ruahines.

TRAVERS VALLEY. Pre- trip report, By Terry Crippen

Queens Birthday WEEK: No wind, no clouds, all sunshine and moonshine, consolidated snow (a bit crusty at times), plenty of frosts, warm huts to ourselves, for 5 days (the sixth day a bit windy so we used ourparkas as a front come in). Climbed Kehu on warm snow free rock. An AAA+ trip. Nearly tripped over on chamois on Travers Saddle.

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