



PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217, PALMERSTON NORTH

Newsletter - APRIL 2002

"Mathias Pass is a delightful tussock saddle dividing the upper Hokitika Valley from the Mathias River. I've never encountered such a profusion of alpine plants; amongst others, the rare Rannunculus godleyanus, South Island Eidelweiss, bristly carrots, Mount Cook Lilies and daisies

Shaun Barnett, "Aoraki to Arthurs Pass", New Zealand Wilderness, June 2001

**NEWS: AGM stuff, and the President's Annual Report,
Snowcraft and Photo competition news
Results from the Tararua Biscuit competition.**

**TRIP REPORTS; Mt Evans
Letter from Photographer Harley in Argentina
Iron Gates Gorge
Photos and results of the Kaweka Challenge winners
Not quite the Ruapae Falls
Easter Eggmont**

CLUB NIGHTS

- APRIL 11** Climbing, Tasman Valley, Bruce van Brunt
- APRIL 25** Glow worms and Waterford Pub, Warren Wheeler.
- MAY 2** Committee Meeting
- MAY 9** South Westland Summer, with Terry Crippen and Jonathon Astin.
- MAY 30** Western Australia, with John Phillips.

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.

FROM THE PRESIDENTS PC

Thanks to everyone who helped scrape together the quorum for the AGM - just before Easter was not a good time for many heading away but those who were there were well rewarded, though not perhaps until after the AGM finished and the after-match function kicked off (if you will excuse the analogy). Peter Wiles reported that the club is in good financial shape and had the accounts there to prove it, nicely audited by Dave Henwood. The Executive remains the same except for Dave Grant taking over as Secretary. The Committee is also the same except for the addition of Elaine Herve and Stephen Liddall stepping aside for Andrew Lynch. There was a brief discussion on the merits of a web site and the consensus supported a further look at this over the coming year. A web site offers many opportunities – it remains for the Committee to define more clearly what would best suits us and the web-public. Members are reminded that you can receive your newsletter by email- contact the editor (tony.gates@horizons.govt.nz).

The AGM finished at 8.45pm and was followed by an entertaining Tararua Biscuits Competition thanks to Kevin Pearce's illuminating judging and some amazing entries – Terry Crippen's climbing nut really took the cake, although we await the results of field testing. (there is a report on these, and results, later).

Thanks for the vote of confidence in the present Executive and Committee – I will try and ensure that we continue to successfully meet, if not exceed, members expectations.

Good tramping.

Warren Wheeler
President PNTMC

SNOWCRAFT INSTRUCTION 2000

Preliminary Notice, by Terry Crippen.

Its that time of the year again; start thinking SNOW, and the clubs yearly snowcraft instruction programme. This traditional, 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: from straight forward walking on easy

snow slopes to simple snow climbing and aspects of technical mountaineering. A progressive approach is used: Snowcraft 1 assumes nil or only minor previous snow experience, Snowcraft 2 and 3 build on the previous levels.

Some people may enter at Snowcraft 2 level. Some people just do Snowcraft 1 and 2. Numbers are limited. Be in early. Pass the word round to any of your tramping friends.

The instruction consists of three weekends away a fortnight apart, two at Mt Ruapehu and one at Mt Egmont, and three week night evenings (one prior to each weekend):

Snowcraft 1 Aug 3-4 (+ evg TUES July 30)

Snowcraft 2 Aug 17-18 (+ evg WED Aug 14)

Snowcraft 3 Aug 30 1 Sept (+ evg WED Aug 28)

For further info, costs and registration form: contact Terry Crippen 3563-588 or Bruce van Brunt 328-4761.

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to;

Pauline Knuckey, 296 Albert Street, PN, ph 358-5532. Email knuckey@pncc.govt.nz

Jacqueline Aust, 31 Church Street, PN, ph 356-3663, Email aust@pncc.govt.nz

Elaine Herve, 20 Gloucester Street, PN, ph 354-2499.

Also, Harley Betts and Charlotte Sunde report a change of address, back to 658 Pahiataua Track, RD 1, Palmerston North. 06 353 8658.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions for 2002/03 are due now. The fee is the same as last year, and represents excellent value for money.

\$30 adult,

\$35 family,

\$15 junior.

A junior subscription is available for donation to a needy person by our club Patron, Lawson Pither, if so required.

NEXT SIX MONTHLY EVENTS CARD

Leaders and Ideas are wanted. Time again for all you keen leaders to offer the next lot of trips that

you want to lead during July to December 2002. Also for other club members to suggest places. Sunny trips on snow covered tops, then spring and early summer as well. Get your thinking caps on and contact Janet Wilson (329-4722), who is chief Trips Co-ordinator, before she or one of the other Trips Co-ordinators contact you. Also we want suggestions for club night speakers and events - contact Warren (356-1998) or somebody on committee.

MAP ORDER

A new PNTMC map order, with the great FMC discount (30 %), is currently being filled. I can't remember the exact final price, but it is well worth it if you use a lot of maps. Get your order in to Peter Wiles soon

ANNUAL PHOTO COMPETITION

Just a reminder that the PNTMC annual Photo Competition is coming up on June 27 2002. Murray Woodcock, from Bells Photography and Extraeye Photography, has agreed to be the judge, as he was last year.

Despite Harley Betts having just returned from a photographic tour of South America, (and we will no doubt see some of his work from there), other members are encouraged to enter a few slides and/or prints. Harley deservedly does well in our photo competitions, but he cannot scoop all the prizes (or can he?). More information in the May Newsletter.

TARARUA BISCUITS. By Kevin Pearce.

Tararua biscuits are "hardtack" bread substitutes carried by trappers undertaking long trips when weight must be kept to a minimum. The biscuits have a high energy content, a relatively bland flavour (so they can be eaten with savouries and

sweets), and are sufficiently rugged to withstand the rigors of tramping.

Tararua biscuits are World famous, not only in New Zealand but also throughout the Tramping universe. Even a few backpackers, hikers and bush walkers know of, and revere them. On long hard trips in remote areas they become more valuable than gold. Many a trumper's hand has trembled as he or she has reached for the delight while in a famished state.

Here's a simple recipe: 1 kg honey, 1 kg butter, 1 kg wholemeal flour. Mix, roll out, and bake for about 20 minutes at 160 #.

The biscuits presented to the AGM were judged for: appearance, edibility, durability, malleability, palatability, portability, toxicity, etc. by our expert panel headed by eminent eater Kevin Pearce.

In an exciting finish, Elaine's were the tastiest, and had potential as a floatation aid (if the river crossing wasn't too long). Warren's "forge hardened" multi purpose tent peg- ice screw and sky hook shark tooth helped earn him 3rd place, ahead of Hilda. Although Tony's entry earned praise for portability inside a billy lid or climbing helmet (it was cow pat shaped), it lost points or being too soft and undercooked. The Wooden Spoon is yours, Tony!

Results were:

Terry Crippen	17 points
Elaine Herve	16
Warren Wheeler	15
Hilda Heap	13
Tony Gates	9

PRESIDENT'S REPORT.

Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club

It is with pleasure that I present the 36th President's Report.

Membership

We have welcomed 18 new members over the last year with a loss of only 10, so current membership now totals 69. We have one youth member, Morgan Hewitt aged 13 whose membership is sponsored thanks to our Patron. Most of the influx of new members came from the Snowcraft Course, as usual.

Interest in the Club is also sustained by the Tribune "What's On" and The Guardian, with

enquiries from potential members also coming via notice boards around town, thanks mainly to Monica Cantwell.

Activities

As in the past, the committee this year has ensured that the club offers a wide variety of trips, club nights, social activities and instruction courses for members and non-members. Special thanks to Terry Crippen for again organising the Snowcraft and Navigation Courses. Thanks also to Bruce Van Brunt and the other Snowcraft instructors who helped make the Courses so successful for the dozen or so attending.

Club nights were generally well attended by members, with lots of visitors as well. This reflected the interesting topics which included slide presentations by club members on Ski Mountaineering, Swedish Wilderness Adventures, Climbing in Westland National Park, the Olivine Ice Plateau and Antarctica by Sea. Other speakers gave presentations on Biodiversity in Crisis, Mt Cook to Arthurs Pass, Early Female Mountaineer Freda du Faur, Focus on Birds, and Adventure Racing. We also had a Mt Cook mountaineering video night, Indoor Rock Climbing at the Massey Climbing Wall and City Rock, BYO slides evenings, Navigation, and a Wine and Cheese Gear Night at Mountain Equipment.

Mid-winter Celebrations were again based at the Patron's Lodge at Rangataua and gave vent to some fine singing voices – thanks Sue and Lawson for the hospitality.

The Club photo competition was again followed by the Interclub Photo Competition hosted this year by MTSC with PNTMC members scooping most of the prizes.

We hosted the Interclub Quiz and our team blew away the opposition, literally! Feedback on the night was very positive, even from the losing teams.

The End-of-Year BBQ at Ashhurst was a bit of a fizzer due to the weather but those attending made the most of it; and the January BBQ at Horseshoe Bend was blessed with fine weather by contrast with much of the summer.

Past Trips

We have offered a wide variety of trips again this year. The most popular area was the Ruahine Ranges (31 trips), followed by the Tararua Ranges (16), Tongariro National Park (7+5 Instructional). There was also rock-climbing at Titahi Bay, as well as extended South Island trips to Nelson Lakes, Mt Hooker and Mt. Brewster.

Analysis of past trips shows that numbers are slightly down on last year with, on average, 4.6 people on each day trip and 4.2 on overnighters (4.9 if you include Snowcraft). Coppermine Creek shares top spot with Titahi Bay Rock-climbing as the most popular destination with 10 people, and 9 people went on Harley Betts' Egmont Trip.

Some 28% of trips Did-Not-Go which is about the same as last year. Thanks especially to Janet Wilson and Terry Crippen for co-ordinating the Trip Programme, and to all the trip leaders without whom, none of the trips would have been possible.

It is pleasing to report that despite pushing the comfort boundaries at times there have been no major mishaps and although there have been a few sore heads on the odd trip, there was only one requiring stitches after a scree run turned bad.

There have been some excellent private trips to the Southern Alps, with Andrew Lynch climbing Mt Cook in a gap in the persistent bad weather that thwarted Malcolm Leary twice.

Search and Rescue

The club was involved in the Walker Peak Search and Rescue which resulted in our team just missing out on finding the lost party who had become disoriented in the clag. This was all good practice and done in good spirits knowing that the lost party was resting up in his tent on the advice he had received over his cell-phone.

The Levin SAREX was in June and the Irongates SAREX has just been. The team in each succeeded in locating the lost party and enjoyed practising such skills as tracking, sound sweeps, first aid and comms by radio.

The Police have made SAR Training more of a priority and members have attended courses such as Track and Clue Awareness (1), Outdoor First

Aid (3), Search Methods (2), and GPS familiarisation (6). Terry Crippen has also been involved as secretary for the local SAR Committee, and has just attended a week at the Police College learning how to be a Search Controller.

It was also pleasing to see that, at the end-of year session in December, the Police acknowledged the Year of the Volunteer by presenting Volunteer Medals to SAR members in the region – “good stuff.”

Gear

Further donations from the Hillary Commission and Trustbank Community Trust have enabled us to boost our gear to 10 complete sets for climbing instruction. Thanks to Bruce van Brunt for doing all the paperwork. A replacement for the less than waterproof tent flies is planned for this coming year.

A decision was also made to increase hire rates for gear in line with other local hire rates.

Huts and tracks

Howletts Hut is a popular destination high in the Ruahine Range and the club has assisted Heretaunga Tramping Club with replenishing coal supplies and other maintenance, with special thanks to Derek Sharp, and Tony Gates who has also been researching the fascinating history of this old hut.

Work continues on the Kahuterawa Tracks in the unused portion of the Turitea Water Supply Reserve behind Palmerston North. Several members have helped on working bees to mark routes, bench tracks, and carrying in timber. Terry Crippen has been the most involved with this work, along with Merv Matthews who has also done the GPS mapping.

DOC has run User Group Meetings during the year to keep us updated on what they are doing locally, but since being reassured that we would be losing no huts in the area the numbers attending have dropped off markedly and a change in format is likely this year to keep this worthwhile forum alive.

Submissions

As interested parties we have made submissions to DOC on the Management Plans for Egmont National Park and Mt Cook/Aoraki National Park.

A submission was also made to PNCC on setting aside the Kahuterawa catchment side of the Turitea Water Reserve for recreation reserve.

DOC Wellington also invited submissions on the replacement for the Tararua Peak chain ladder and we responded along with several other clubs that it was over-engineered and inappropriate. DOC revised the design accordingly and has just installed the new structure only days after the old one was destroyed by lightning – may it rest in peace.

Miscellaneous

Members will recall that they can now receive their newsletter by email. A web-site is the logical next step but cost is the main stumbling block at present, as well as uncertainty over how the site should function and look – not to mention the time that may be involved to keep it up to scratch.

We have definitely moved into the 21st century, with Peter Wiles, the Keeper of the Archives, having scanned all the newsletters onto CDs.

Our Patron Lawson Pither celebrated his 80th birthday recently and several members attended the knees-up at Whakaronga Hall. We presented him with a nicely framed and PNTMC-autographed photo of Ruapehu taken from the Mangaehuehu Track by Harley Betts. Happy Birthday, Lawson!

We also celebrated Sarah Todd and Dave Simcocks wedding with a photo from the archives in a similar frame. Thanks to Mick Leyland for making and fitting the PNTMC plaque.

Thanks

Thanks finally to everyone on the Committee who have helped keep the Club running so smoothly over the year. Special thanks to Tony Gates as Newsletter Editor, Peter Wiles as Treasurer, Sarah Todd as Secretary, and Terry Crippen as my trusty Vice-President.

And thank you all for supporting the Club.

Good Tramping.

Warren Wheeler
28 March 2002

**THE NOT SO WILD WEST, February 2002.
By Dave Henwood.**

Isn't memory a wonderful thing? Over time memories become quite selective, losing the bad trips into a foggy haze while magnifying the good bits. So it was for Don French and me (signs of encroaching old age and senility?). Since last years highly successful but arduous trip to the Clarke/Otoko/Mahitahi area of South Westland, thoughts of the huge boulders, impenetrable scrub, difficult rivers, steep trackless bush and constant rain had been replaced by memories of isolated valleys, rarely climbed peaks and beautiful views. This year we decided to head back to the Coast – more specifically the Waitaha area and Mt Evans just south of Hokitika. Joining us were James from Christchurch and James from Auckland (not at all confusing).

Original plans were changed at the last minute due to the Totara valley road into the upper Mikonui valley being demolished in January flooding plus the chopper we were going to use being in bits on the hanger floor. Thus, we found ourselves at the Hokitika Gorge road end waiting our turn to be flown one at a time in a little Robinson helicopter into the County Stream tributary of the Waitaha. The flight was cramped and chilly (no doors) but at least the weather was great and the views excellent. With the team reunited on open flats well up the County, we headed further up the valley to camp on open gravel flats close to the terminal of the County Glacier.

6 am next morning saw us heading up onto the glacier towards Mt Evans (2,620 metres). After the usual stumbling over moraine and picking our way through crevasses, we gained a moderately steep snow gully which took us through the lower line of bluffs and onto a broad snow slope leading up from Red Lion Col. Zig-zagging on snowy guts and rocky ledges brought us to another line of bluffs and the rope came out to protect one steep pitch. This took us onto the summit ridge, first easy snow and then appalling rock. Calling it weetbix would be an insult to that fine breakfast product. An abseil onto a sloping, rubbly ledge allowed us to bypass a couple of rotten towers and

we were soon on the summit, basking in the sun and enjoying views from Arthurs Pass in the north to Mt Cook in the south.

After lunching, we reluctantly headed down, descending our ascent route with a couple of abseils getting us past the steep bits. However with a weather front moving in fast, we were soon enveloped in cloud which slowed travel down the glacier. We reached our camp at 6 pm and with thoughts of our exposed site and the deteriorating weather, we hurriedly packed up and headed down valley aiming for County Hut. For a West Coast valley, travel was good with only one patch of scrub-bashing round a small waterfall. We reached the Bloomfield stream junction below the hut just as it got dark. The track up to the hut was somewhere close down river but we were stopped by a large boulder and, unwilling to attempt to cross and recross the river or attempt to bash through a few hundred metres of scrub in the dark, we camped on a gravel terrace in light drizzle, the end of a 15 and a half hour day.

Next day the drizzle was heavier and we decided to head down the County to the main Waitaha valley, then up that towards Ivory Lake Hut. We crossed the river and, looking back, we spotted, less than 50 metres past the problem boulder, permolet marking the track to the hut. Deciding there might be useful track info in the hut book, we dropped packs, found another crossing point and were soon forcing our way up the steep and very overgrown track to the hut.

The hut book dated from late 1991 and only 6 pages were used. The last party had visited in March 2001 and had taken 10 hours to come up from Moonbeam hut in the Waitaha. The next previous party (November 2000) had taken 12 hours and bivvied out on the way. Our guide book indicated 3 to 4 hours! Both parties complained of windfalls, slips, lack of markers, no ground trail We also found an entry from some Christchurch friends who had come from Top Waitaha hut in a good time by crossing the Bloomfield Range behind the hut. This was obviously more appealing than the down-valley alternative so we decided to sit out the bad weather in the hut, then cross the Range. A quick trip back to the river for our packs – then we retired to the cosy hut, warm sleeping bags, many

brews and the hut's disappointing library (1970's Readers Digests!!!)

Next morning brought a false start. No sooner had we packed up than black clouds rolled in. We retreated to the hut having got nearly 100 metres. By lunchtime, we were cursing as the sun and blue sky appeared. But by 3:30 pm we were patting ourselves on the backs as a fierce southerly front roared through bringing thunder, lightning and fresh snow. (This was the same storm that blew half of the yachts in Lyttleton Harbour onto the beach).

In beautiful weather next day, we left the hut early and dropped into Bloomfield Stream. This gave good travel into a huge basin. The central tussock spur between two stream branches gave steep but straight forward travel once we had forced our way through a wall of Spaniards guarding the bottom of the spur. When the tussock ran out, we angled towards a tongue of snow which led through the upper bluffs to the crest of the range. Unfortunately the scree was frozen which made progress slow and precarious. At one point, Don even tried cutting steps with his ice axe, to no avail. We were relieved to reach the snow which gave excellent cramponing onto the range and Mt Bloomfield. There were magnificent views in all directions – north to Ivory Lake, east to Mt Evans, south to the Gardens of Eden and Allah plus Cook and west to the coast.

From the peak, we dropped down a prominent ridge into the upper Waitaha, first on scree and then easy tussock. At the bottom, Reid Creek which flowed through a narrow, deep chasm threatened to cause a major detour. However, I was able to locate a tongue of scrub which dropped into the stream. It was nearly vertical but by swinging from shrub to shrub, we were soon down, across and up then up the other side and back to easy tussock country. Rapid progress up valley resumed and we arrived at Ivory Lake Hut by 4pm.

The lake is a magical spot, perched in a small basin above the Waitaha valley surrounded by rocky peaks and with the remains of the Ivory Glacier hanging above the head of the lake. The hut was built by glaciologists to study the shrinking glacier. 3 Christchurch trampers were already in residence. We actually felt quite put

out that other people were there intruding on our solitude!

Next morning, we headed for the Whitcombe Valley by climbing onto the range above the lake. Good travel led around scree tops and eventually over Mt Beaumont. There were more fantastic views to the Whitcombe valley on one side and to Hokitika and the coast on the other. From Beaumont, we headed along the pleasant tussock tops of Steadman Brow until a cairn marked a spur and track leading to Prices Hut in the Whitcombe. On the map, the track is marked as "overgrown" which proved to be somewhat of an overstatement. Despite the spur being well defined, the presence of the occasional marker and an intermittent ground trail, the 1,100 metre descent took nearly 5 hours. We emerged at the river sporting a decent compliment of cuts and scratches and crossed to the hut with another 9pm finish to the day.

The next day and a half were spent walking out down the Whitcombe. The track was in excellent condition, and the rest of the trip was pleasant and easy compared to the Waitaha. We emerged at the car impressed by the area, and pleased to have survived another excursion into the wilds of the West Coast.

OROUA- IRON GATES, February 17. By Marianne Tremaine

Jenny phoned the night before to invite me to go on this tramp. My dinner party guests were talking loudly and it was hard to hear her clearly, but she said easy to medium and that we would be coming back down the river, would that be all right? I said I was happy to get my feet wet in the cause of getting back into tramping, so next morning there I was in shorts and new, barely-worn tramping boots at the Foodtown carpark.

We piled into two cars, drove to the starting point, over the stile and a walk to the bridge (a handsome semi-circular wooden structure) for PooH sticks. So far so good, and our next stop was even better at Heritage Lodge where there was a flush loo! Not tramping the way I remembered it. Then some very attractive bush to walk through towards our lunch spot by the river.

By this stage I had realised that, while not lacking in enthusiasm I was very short on tramping fitness

and was very much the laggard of the party. My tramping friend Tom always used to say that I had 14 forward gears and in the lowest, movement was barely perceptible to the naked eye. Warren asked me how I felt about going back down the river and of course I felt fine about it, though I should have realised when he said "Yes, a bit of an adventure," that I might be in for more than I expected.

In my reasonably extensive tramping experience, my degree of water immersion while getting from here to there had not exceeded ankle height. That was soon to change. Being in the river and stepping from rock to rock was quite daunting and tiring. You can't just put one foot in front of the other. You have to concentrate. But being in the river, moving down it was a wonderful way of experiencing it. The sound of it, the beauty of it, the drama of it and yes, the wetness of it.

We crossed the river, it was a little higher than our leader expected. Then looping our arms through the backs of each other's packs, we crossed the river again and again, several times over. The water was waist high. Graham Heap gallantly helped me over the rocks with his hand to steady me. At one stage I almost lost one boot under a rock in the river as I tried to hoist myself out. But going the rest of the way with only one boot was unthinkable.

When we got down to the beginning of the gorge we separated into two groups - the still intrepid who went down the gorge and those who felt duty bound to get me back to the car, which included our leader who practically ran back to the car in spite of having picked up an attractive but huge flat river stone and put it in his pack as a souvenir.

Jenny toiled up the last little hillock with me back to our starting point where the others were all waiting and they gave me a round of applause which was a little embarrassing as Peter had told me that he takes his preschooler who has no difficulty, out on that track. Clearly they were acknowledging persistence rather than skill. So what did I gain? Two blisters, several bruises, tramping boots with a more credible 'used' look, a tear in my shorts, the sound of the river still ringing in my ears when I think back on that day and a huge admiration for the committed tramping club members, their low key way of teaching

skills as you go and their support even for a thoroughly irritating unfit slowcoach.

And would I do it again? I have put a new day pack on lay-by at Mountain Equipment. That must mean something. Being right there in the bush and the river was an experience. Mind you the stop at the Kimbolton Cafe on the way home (where it was agreed that I would write the trip report) was pretty good too.

We were: Christine Booth, Jenny Doyle, Hilda and Graham Heap, Warren Wheeler, Peter Darragh (leader), Marianne Tremaine.

KAWEKA CHALLENGE. February 23- 24.

Congratulations are due to Janet Wilson and Yvette Cottam, illustrated below, who won the womens 2 day 30 kilometre section of the 2002 Kaweka Challenge. They finished in under 6.5 hours, and were 4th overall. Well done.

And Llew Pritchard and Brian Lawrence won the veteran section- congratulations.

Mick Leyland and Graham Fletcher came in second in the Veteran Section. This was their tenth race, so they received a well deserved, and much sweated for, medal. Congratulations too.

LETTER FROM PATAGONIA, March 2002. By Harley Betts.

Am in El Calafate, Argentina, where we have been stuck for the last 4 days thanks to relentless rain that has taken out roads, bridges, etc. all in a place that gets less than 300 mm of rain a year. Finally got to the Perito Moreno Glacier this afternoon, which is mind-blowing. It makes the Franz Josef look like your average frost build up in a chest freezer. A 60-metre ice face, carving almost in slow motion into a lake, more or less right in front of your face. Well worth being sucked into the tourism machine for a day. It is Argentina's equivalent of Mitre Peak, etc as far as tourism goes. (is that Mitre Peak, Tararuas, Ruapehu, or Milford?- ed)

Off early tomorrow morning (it is 10pm Sunday night right now, about 2pm Monday your time I guess) to El Chalten. and the start of our excursion around the Fitz Roy area.. So by tomorrow night, with a bit of luck, we will be

camped out within cooee of Lago los Tres, to where we can head up for sunrise views over the massif and the famous needles of granite. We should be up that way for 5 days, then returning here and heading out via Rio Gallegos on the Argentine Atlantic coast, making our way towards Puerto Montt, Chile, in time to catch our flight up to the Atacama Desert by the 28th.

Argentina is justly famous for its beef, and pizza - I am stuffed full of both of them. I have quickly made up for the weight I lost on the Torres del Paine circuit, but will probably lose it again over the next week as my diet reverts once again to freeze dried delights (NZ's very own Back Passage Cuisine) and pasta, plus shameless quantities of chocolate and Torron (nougat and nuts). Still have bad tendonitis in each Achilles but I will just wing it and hopefully not fall to bits before the end of the trekking.

All is well overall. We're having an awesome time, and unfortunately the time is beginning to tick past. There are only 3 weeks left. Please pass my regards onto the others in the tea room, show them this email or whatever, I hope everyone is well and enjoying the last of the summer. Today's high here was a whopping 7 degrees!

See ya, Harley.

MANGATAINOKA- NOT QUITE RUAPAE FALLS Sunday March 17 2002. By Elaine Herve and Monica Cantwell.

We left Palmerston North at 8.0 AM, and the closer we became to Eketahuna, the more questionable the weather became. Indeed, the Mangatainoka River was running very high, so a change of plan was required. We followed the Herepai track for 40 minutes, to the swingbridge, and went off track, navigating our way along a ridge, and down to a small saddle (to avoid the walk up the stream.

After a bite of lunch, where the uninitiated of us were introduced to Terry's Tararua Biscuits, it was decided to proceed up to the falls. It was slow progress up to the falls due to the volume of water. Unfortunately, we were unable to safely take the last corner to see the falls to see the falls, as it was estimated that the water would be above head height.

It was decided to return via a different route, following the stream a little further down, and taking the three bottles track up to rejoin the boggy Herepai track. We made it back to the vehicles about 6.00 PM.

It was a very enjoyable day out that was regarded a M/ F! It gave good variation, opportunity to practice using mp and compass, and a chance to find other markers along the way. We were fortunate the rain held off until the last 30 minutes of the tramp.

Drenched and fast flowing rivers in the Tararuas. Many thanks to Terry, for imparting his valuable knowledge to two new people, and with two compasses going, being just about spot on. Janet was the other compass reader. So this E/M turned into a F/E (8.5 hours), but a great day.

EASTER EGMONT TRIP, 31st March, By Duncan Hedderly

The weather forecast was unpromising, but Warren said Let's go anyway - even if we can't get to the top we can do some of the Round the Mountain track.

The weather forecast was right. We set out at 6am Sunday, and drove through a mixture of lashing rain and perfect rainbows, listening to National Radio repeating the Queen Mother's obituary. Just after 8 we stopped in Hawera for a breakfast pie/hot cross bun/foccacia (delete as appropriate). The lowest slopes of the mountain were visible, though the rest was in cloud. Still, hopes springs eternal in the tramper's heart.

We headed up the Stratford Mountain Road, and by the time we reached the carpark we were in the cloud. We quickly changed and headed up to the Manganui ski-field. The ski-field was a strange site without snow - just the pylons of the rope-pull striding up the paddock.

From there we went north to Tahurangi Lodge, through bursts of rain. There were some good views of the lower slopes and the coast from there, before the next patch of rain hit; but it was windy and we encountered several people who had tried for the top but been put off by the wind and hail. We continued to Humphries Castle, where the Razorback track comes in; peered into

the murk towards the Pouakais; decided this wasn't fun any more, and headed back.

The walk back to Manganui shelter reminded me of the English Lakes District; the tracks were reasonably clear, we kept on passing other people (generally, like us in waterproofs with packs, but there were three guys who looked like they had wandering in off Stratford High Street by mistake), and there are enough buildings to track your progress by them. Manganui shelter itself is more like a visitor centre than the typical tramping hut.

By then we were quite wet, and it was good to be out of the wind (The water in our drinks bottles felt like it had come straight out of a water cooler) Christine ran into a couple of friends from New Plymouth.

After lunch, Warren suggested we walk round to Dawson Falls. Christine offered to meet us round there in the car, so we returned to the carpark, and Warren and I headed south on the Round the Mountain track.

Just before reaching the Dawson Falls visitor centre, there was a sidetrack labelled Wikies

Pools, which turned out to be a pretty set of pools and waterfalls in an old lava layer.

From there we dropped down into the goblin forest, and soon arrived at the visitor centre carpark. Christine found us in the visitor centre itself; it turned out she arrived a few minutes after we did. Warren and I followed her lead and changed into dry clothes, had a drink at the café ("Hot chocolate?" "No thanks, I think I've had my year's ration of chocolate already"), then set off back to Palmerston North.

Passing through Hawera, Christine asked if we had been to Dairyland. "An experience" It was; from the plaster cows and recorded mooing which greets you at the door, to the cafe tables on a slowly revolving platform (like a milking shed). The gift shop had an impressive collection of the usual gift shop stuff, but with a dairy theme.

A grand day out, thanks to Warren Wheeler (co-ordination and conversation) and Christine Cheyne (driving and conversation)

THE LIST OF HUMEROUS MOUNTAINEERING DEFINITIONS, PART TWO.

Off width crack: smartass remark.

Orienting: preparing for a trip to Asia.

Piton: antique metal work.

Rock band: Group of musical noisemakers.

Runner: very fast climber.

Scree: sound made by a mo when its hair is being removed. see mohair.

Sling: versatile strap dating to biblical times. when David the Israelite descended into the vale of elah, after a hard day of climbing, he used a sling to slay the philistine goliath.

Snow bridge: card game played on a glacier. as in other alpine endeavours, tricks are common, and there is always a dummy.

Terminal moraine: last glacier you'll ever climb.

Unzip: simple way to remove protection.

Vertical feet: what a mountaineer has on the ends of his legs when lying flat on his back.

Waist band: group of paunchy musicians.

Webbing: rope stepped on so many times it is flat.

Wilderness: archaic word used to refer to the space that once existed between urban areas and which is now used as a proving ground for 4-wheel drive vehicles.

Wilderness travel: art of avoiding snowmobiles, four wheel drives and oil wells.

Zip: placing protection while climbing. compare with unzip.

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