



PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217, PALMERSTON NORTH

Newsletter - November 2002

(Arawhata) Bill O'leary's only concession to mountaineering technology was not a pick axe, but a long handled shovel with which he would dig deep steps up a snow field.

Ian Dougherty (1996) "Arawata Bill"

TRIP REPORTS:
Whirokino Cut
A Frame Hut
Tongariro/ Ngauruhoe climb
Mt Taranaki/ Egmont
SAREX in the Kawekas
Toka
Kelly Knight Hut

CLUB NIGHTS

November 28	BYO slides/ photos	PNTMC
December 5	Committee Meeting, BBQ	Janet's house
December 12	End of year BBQ, Ashhurst Domain.	PNTMC
January	BBQ at Horse shoe Bend	PNTMC

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 depend on many factors, especially the weather. A reasonably proficient trumper can be expected to do the 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.

Nov 16- 17 Central Nth Island Rock M/ T
Pete McGregor w 356 7154

With summer here by the time of this trip, it will be a pleasant time on the rocks. Pete is a dedicated rock climber who will show you some neat places, and guide you up some rocky crags. Equipment will of course be required.

Nov 16- 17 Waterfall Hut M/ F
Mick Leyland 358 3283

This classic central Ruahine ex NZFS six bunker in the upper Kawhatau Valley is a favourite spot for many of us. Mick will take you there, and back again, via different routes, looking at scenic Ruahine beech and tussock country.

Nov 17 Waipawa Saddle- Sunrise F
Peter Wiles 358 6894

The plan is to leave PN 6.30 am, with the intention of cruising up the shingle and scree of the Waipawa valley to the Saddle on the divide. If the weather is okay, I plan to head over the tops, northwards, to Armstrong Saddle and down the easy track via Sunrise Hut. There might be the odd patch of snow on the tops.

Nov 21 Thursday Trampers
Nevelle Gray 357-2768

Nov 23- 24 Ruapehu snowcaving M/ T
Tony Gates 357 7439

We will depart Saturday morning for Ohakune, and climb to Ruapehu's summit plateau to set up camp. The choices are; tenting, igloos, or snowcaves, depending on what we want to do. An excellent place to visit, but come prepared.

Nov 24 Navigation & River Safety all I
Terry Crippen 356 3588

A day of instruction on two aspects of safe tramping. Come to one or both: First; a simple navigation activity to introduce people to compass use, estimating distance and times, etc. Terry will be organizing this, and compasses will be supplied. A lunch break, then river safety instruction, with Noel Bigwood and others of the local branch of the NZ Mountain Safety Council.

An enjoyable activity with the keen ones going in for repeated wettings in the river.

Meeting at the Ashhurst Domain public shelter. Starting times: 10:00am for the Navigation exercise 12.30pm for the River Safety (check with Terry) Navigation exercise: Bring your boots or other suitable footwear and a pencil. River Safety: bring your boots, pack filled up with the equivalent of a weekends tramping pack load - well sealed up in a pack liner, and lots of polyprop clothing for when in the lovely warm waters.

Nov 28 Thursday Trampers
Gordon Clark 359-2500

November 28. Club Night BYO Slides

This popular club evening gives club members the opportunity to show others what they have been up to recently. Bring your own slides and prints.

Replacing Christine Taylor's Pouakai tramp, due to her baby being due (Congratulations Christine)

Nov 30 Wharite E
Warren Wheeler 356-1998

Depart 8.30. We will take the sidle track through the lowland forest along the Coppermine Stream then head up through changing forest types into the leatherwood belt on the ridge leading to the TV mast you can see from town. After lunch, we will return via the track, or off-track via the stream (a bit of cutty grass!).

Dec 1 Navigation 2 M, I
Terry Crippen 356 3588

Depart 8 am heading over the hill to a pleasant part of the NE Tararuas. A day of navigation practice following on from the previous Sundays activity. Some forest, bush ridge and pleasant river flats, with a waterfall that we can visit if time permits. Everyone can benefit from this exercise - novice or experienced trumper - using compasses and maps we will get to grips with bearings, distances and contours. Maps and compasses supplied.

Dec 4 (Wed evening) club SAR members: Helicopter Safety and End-of-Year-get-together for SAR peoples. 7pm, the helicopter hanger, PN Hospital. (For futher info contact Terry, 356-3588.

Dec 5 Thursday Trampers
Liz Flint 356-7654

December 5 Committee Meeting, BBQ from 6.00 pm onwards, at Janet's place, Pohangina.

Dec 8 Honeycomb Rocks E
Fiona Donald 356 1095

The East Wairarapa, behind Masterton, is noted for wide-open views by coast. The track follows through farm, with views of bird and animal wildlife. You can climb the spectacular rock. Part of track goes through the bulls' paddock - they are very placid. If 4 people or more express interest to go then this is when the trip will go. (Please contact me early before Wednesday). The Track is on private farmland. No dogs or firearms are permitted. Also there are no toilets nor shelter. Depart 7 am Foodtown carpark- Sunday

Dec 7- 8 Oriwa Biv F
Tony Gates 357 7439

This neat little biv and tarn are located in the heart of the western Tararua beech forest, behind the new Waiopahu hut. Depart Friday evening, and enjoy a good stroll over Waiopahu peak Saturday to the biv, and to do some exploration. Sunday, if possible, descend the Makaretu Stream (very nice) back to the car park.

Dec 12 Thursday Trampers
Rose and Ken Hall 356-8538

December 12. Club Night

End of year BBQ, at the Ashhurst Domain, in a pleasant area of grass and trees. This BYO evening will feature awards, given to club members who have done interesting things during the year. Bring a small \$2.00 gift to put under the tree, Mr Snow will provide ice cream. Contact Warren, 356 1998

Dec 14, or 14- 15. TNP Craters M/F
Warren Wheeler 356 1998

Depart 6.30 Friday and stay at Elvins Lodge near Tongariro (\$15). Day 1, we will climb from the alpine flower laden Mangatepopo Valley to snow free Ngauruhoe Crater for views out over the craters of Tama Lakes and Tongariro. We will drop back down and traverse the west rim of Tongariro South Crater to summit Tongariro, and continue on to North Crater, the craters of Blue Lake and the Emerald Lakes, and Red Crater before dropping back down and back to our cars. Day 2 we will have an easier day and climb up (through snow near the top - ice axes may be required) to the Ruapehu Crater Lake from the Whakapapa (west) side - a good slide down is all but guaranteed. A circuit around the crater rim via Te Heu Heu is a less direct option. Contact Warren about meeting up with us to do a day trip.

Dec 15 Glaciercraft M/I
Bruce Van Brunt 328 4761

This is a follow up to our popular Snowcraft course, and is held on the southern slopes of Mt Ruapehu. It is an excellent time to practice your rope work, and afterwards, climb a peak or two.

1-5 January 2003 Tararua Forks and Flies M
Warren Wheeler 356-1998

Depart 8.00am New Years Day. This relatively leisurely fly-camping trip will take in most of the river forks marked on the Park Map in a traverse from Otaki Forks generally North-east to the Putara Road end. Plenty of time for trying out the best swimming holes and fishing spots, and if the weather is bad we can easily adjust our plans to suit, with huts and bridged tracks as alternatives along the way.

Note, Club trips start again January 11 2003. See the December 2002 Newsletter, and the next Trip Card, enclosed with next months' Newsletter.

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 Andrew Lynch (325-8779).

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 Janet Wilson (329 4722)

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, please include your article as an attachment (Microsoft Word Version 7.0 or Rich Text Format), unless it is a small article, which can be typed directly into the e-mail.

You may get an e-mail reply from the horizons 'postmaster'. Don't worry, all material gets through once it is checked for viruses etc. by horizons' staff.

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

EMAIL ADDRESS LIST

Committee members who are connected to Email are listed below. Please note that changes to this list may occur from time to time, so we will try to keep it as up to date as possible.

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NEW MEMBERS.

Correction. Sue Galbraith's address was incorrectly listed in the September Newsletter. It is 30 Matamau St (not 30 Manawatu)

NEW MEMBERS- JOIN FMC, \$10.00, SAVE!

Any new member who would like an FMC card to obtain a discounted Annual Hut Pass for use over the summer please contact Warren, 356-1998(hm) or 952-2840(wk) or email (warren.wheeler@horizons.govt.nz) by 28 November. Membership will be for the remaining part of the year - you will receive the 2003 FMC card with payment of your annual subs next year.

WEBSITE NEWS

www.pntmc.org.nz was agreed by a majority of the Committee to be our domain name. Peter Wiles reckons he should be able to have the site up and running over the summer so bookmark that space now!

ALPINE AND ANTARCTIC CALENDARS

The order for these fine calendars has arrived. They are \$15.50 each. Please contact Peter Wiles for your order.

WEDNESDAY TRAMPING GROUP

We go out every second Wednesday on easy tramps. Come and join us. For more information, please phone Judy 357 0192, Jennifer, 323 3914, or June 355 2690.

NEW TRIP CARD

The new trip card, for the period January- June 2003, is currently being drafted up. If you have any ideas/ desires, then please contact one of our trip coordinators. It should be printed in time to be distributed with the December 2002 Newsletter.

COOKER FUEL FOR SALE

For all your tramping trips; Terry has got bulk white spirits (Shellite/ Pegasol/ Calite- various names) available for your cookers. At \$3.50 a litre, it is much cheaper than up to \$8 when you have to buy it in the one litre containers from a garage. Contact Terry 356 3588. Bring your own container if you have one.

KEVIN PEARCE HAS MOVED TO THE MAINLAND. By Terry Crippen

Kevin Pearce, one of the small number of life members of the club, has recently moved to Hokitika to take up a job with Westland Co op Dairy Company (which by the way doesn't make Mainland Cheese), one of the two remaining independent dairy companies. Kevin's move follows the southward drift over the years for many of the PNTMC population - heading to where there is even more tramping and other outdoor possibilities than in the Tararuas and Ruahines.

Kevin joined PNTMC in 1968, with his first club trip being a Neill-Winchombe crossing of the Tararuas. Apart from being one of the keenest and fittest trampers for many years, always leading or going on club trips, he soon got onto the Committee, taking on just about all the possible rolls over the next decade or so, including 3 years as Club President. He also played an active roll in Search and Rescue,

including being a SAR advisor for both above ground and below (as he is also a caver). As a result of all the time and effort Kevin put into the club and SAR he was made a life member in 1984. He still gets out quite often.

No doubt Kevin will soon be able to enjoy day and weekend trips up the Whitcombe, Mt Evans, Kokatahi, Taipo, Paringa,Best regards, from us back in P. North.

PS: The drift south over the years to the mainland has included; John Barkla, Maree Limpus, Dot Brown, Colin Elliot, Keith Pollock, Andy Backhouse, Clive Marsh, Roddy Henderson, Damienne Eder, Mike Freeman, Graeme Roberts, Zoe Hart, Wayne Beggs, Steve Moore, Chrisse Williams, Trevor Meyle, Patrick Janssen, Linda Keall, Eric van Toor, Pauline Coy, Nigel Barrett. And no doubt many others.

Those going against the trend and moving north within NZ (goodness knows why) have included; Michelle Hobday, Peter Burgess, Trevor Lupton.

Those going well north, ie to the northern hemisphere, have included; Duncan Grant, Dave Henwood, Peter & Judy Stockdale, Jonathan Astin, Urs Schupbach.

While a few have moved to places such as Wellington and the Wairarapa; including Don French, Peter & Annette Clough, Lynn Murphy.

TRIP REPORTS

Tongariro/ Ngauruhoe. 5- 6 October 2002, by Florence Fraisse.

We followed the weather forecast for the whole week prior to this weekend. Despite a crappy forecast with showers we decided (four of us) to take off any way on Friday evening at 6.30 and see what we could do. We stopped on the way at Taihape to have tea, and then carried on to Eivins lodge at the junction of SH47 and 47A, which was booked for two nights. We were supposed to stay at Mangatepopo hut but we thought that having a hot shower after a wet day would be really nice. The price was only \$15 per person per night.

We were up at 6.00 on Saturday morning and drove to the car park at the end of Mangatepopo road. The weather did not seem to be too bad and we decided to start on the Tongariro Crossing

EVEREST AND BEYOND- A MUSEUM PRESENTATION.

Auckland Museum is currently displaying the fascinating story of Sir Edmund Hillary. From bee keeping to mountaineering, from polar exploration to school building, Ed made a name for himself, and became a real New Zealand Icon. He is a true living legend.

This glossy museum presentation has lots of original and genuine clothing and tools, still and video photography, and some lovely voice over's of Sir Ed's own reminisces. Two hours was no where near enough for me. A must to do during any Auckland visit.

MOUNTAIN FATALITY. By Tony Gates

I was very saddened to hear of the death recently, of Simon Hassall, in the upper Rakaia Valley. Rockfall killed him on the Ramsay Glacier.

I did a couple of trips into the Pohangina with Simon during 1999. He was a supremely fit and competent young man. He had boundless energy, and was safe and sensible at using it. At 26 years of age, he already had considerable experience. I recall him speaking of one Easter trip to the Garden of Eden when he encountered nothing but perfect weather and snow conditions. Typically, he climbed everything in site, and the Simon I knew would have done it safely at record speed, up one side, down the other, and on to the next mountain. Later, he completed an Arthurs Pass to the Godley in a week, and did many more great trips. He had huge potential to continue climbing and tramping, and was just setting out to spend three months in the Alps. It is such a waste for Simon to have died. He will be sorely missed by his many friends.

track. It took us a while to reach Soda Springs because we stopped often to take pictures of the icy Mangatopopo Stream and listen to Warren giving a history of the volcanoes. Good entertainment during the tramp. We found a new dunny after Soda Springs just before starting the ascent to the South Crater (Devil's Staircase); it would be a nice place to camp.

After the South Crater, we left the Tongariro track to enter the Red Crater. A strange noise came to use, like running water, but then we noticed the characteristic smell of sulphur and discovered that it was steam escaping from the rocky face. The different colours of rocks were quite neat too. Markus climbed up the snow in the old lava vent but was turned back by the rocky lip at the top. As we returned to the edge of Red Crater, the clouds disappeared and revealed the view over Emerald Lakes to Taupo. Still off track we passed Central

Crater and arrived at Blue Lake, which was completely frozen. The ice was really strong and some of us tested it by walking on it. We climbed out to the North East to have lunch with a nice view on Te Mari and Taupo Lake. The view was excellent but it wasn't very sheltered and some of us got quite cold. We then carried on up to the old plateau-like North Crater and skirted around the newer deep crater before a short steep snow climb up the south rim. After dropping down again we then started the climb up onto Tongariro (1967m). We stopped at the metal pole thinking that it was the summit but Warren said that it was a bit further. So we continued but the thick cloud prevented us seeing more than 10 metres in front of us. Suddenly the clouds disappeared and we found by surprise that the top was behind us. So we went back and we can say that we climbed Tongariro twice in a day. Then we started the descent to the west and for the first time fitted our crampons, as it was a bit icy. We did not really need crampons but as we carried them all that way, we can now say that it was not for nothing. We left the snow behind us at about 1700m and continued on along the ridge to the north of the normal Tongariro Crossing track, dropping down at the Armchair and back along the track to the carpark. This trip took us 9.30 hours - not too bad for a trip graded as "medium". We finally came back to our lodge and even though the weather had been dry the whole day, we were still happy to have a hot shower. Well at least the girls, as the boys were arguing on who had the key of their room. The key was left inside and they had to ask for the emergency key. We had a very nice meal even if some of us (myself) had forgotten the veges. Jim and Davina arrived from Palmy late in the evening to join us for the Sunday tramp.

The plan for Sunday was the climb of Ngauruhoe (2287m). Warren said that the north face (the normal route) is a bit boring and not challenging enough - the west face would be more appropriate. To reach this face, we first had to climb Pukekaikiore (1692m). The vegetation had overgrown the track we wanted to take so we backtracked and went around the base of the cliffs to the Stairway to Heaven (Warren's name). This was the only possibility to get to the top of Pukekaikiore. The climb started easily in the dry stream bed but then a dry waterfall forced us into the dense bush; hard to find our way but it was only a short stretch and we were soon back in the open again. We finally managed to get to the top and started the windy descent along the ridge to the Ngauruhoe saddle.

After a short lunch, this time with no view but sheltered, we got into the serious climb work. We quickly had to put the crampons on as it was

really steep and icy. Near the top was icy with lots of bumps; your body weight was breaking these icy bumps and you often went down a few centimeters. It took in average 2.30 hours to reach the summit with some people half an hour earlier. Good experience for our first alpine tramp after the Snowcraft Course.

The view to Ruapehu and Tama lakes was excellent. Ngauruhoe crater was also really impressive when the cloud lifted. We descended the north face, which was a bit icy on top but the snow was really soft so we removed our crampons about half way down and enjoyed sliding this big slope.

We had different methods of sliding (on your bum, on your feet or sitting on your feet with the ice axe used as a brake), but all of us managed to get to the saddle. We came back to the car after 8.30 hours tramping. During these two days we climbed 2200m and tramped for 18 hours - is it really a "medium" trip?

This tramp was done without troubles and with much better weather than we expected. Warren suggested that because nothing "memorable" happened (no broken arms, gashed legs, frost-bite, etc) the trip would soon be forgotten.

We were Helen Ronald, Markus Kirchberg, Jim and Davina Jones, Warren Wheeler (trip leader) and Florence Fraise.

Rain & Hail at Mt Egmont, October 12-13. By Markus Kirchberg

Here we go again. Same as the Friday before, Florence, Helen, Warren & I took off with Virgin Blue Airlines. This time, however, we have been heading towards Mt Egmont. Virgin Blue Airlines might not be famous for breaking any speeding records, providing a high level of security or its on-board catering service, but one cannot complain about the entertainment provided. OK, let's get back to our journey. As usual, we stopped in Wanganui to take in some food and to complete our pre-tramp shopping. We stayed that night at Konini Lodge (Dawson Falls). The place was pretty quiet since everybody else seems to have trusted the weather forecast. Our plans have been as follows: we intended to go up to Syme Hut on Saturday, and to approach the summit on Sunday if conditions allow, of course. However, things do not always work out the way you want them to ☺

Saturday: "the day of bad decisions" (Warren).
Decision 1: let's get up late - it is raining anyway. So, we got up at about 9am, had breakfast, checked the updated weather forecast etc.

Decision 2: let's delay our ascent to Syme Hut to the afternoon when the weather is supposed to be improved. So, we went to the Dawson Falls first – quite impressive waterfalls when it is pouring all night & day. Then, we continued up the Ridge track. Decision 3: let's extend our walk and go to the Mountain House Motor Lodge for lunch. So, we followed the ATM track all the way to the Plateau junction. It was already 1pm as we arrived there and some of us were soaking wet despite wearing (Gore-Tex) rain gear. Decision 4: let's go back, have a quick lunch and get started. So, we went up to the Plateau, cut across to the Wilkies Pools and then back down again to Dawson Falls. Finally, we are all quite wet; Florence even twisted her ankle while following my lead and jumping one of the numerous streams, etc. After having lunch, none of us seemed to be really motivated to get back out again since our boots, socks etc have been soaking wet, the rain has not stopped neither and it seemed to be quite windy up at Fanthams Peak too – which we have not been able to see all day. On the other hand, Konini Hut was quite warm and cosy, offers hot showers, a drying room, 'comfortable' mattresses etc. Decision 5: let's stay at Konini another night and make an early start tomorrow morning taking our daypacks only. So, we had to find some entertainment for the late afternoon. Warren tried to remember and demonstrate ☺ the broom traverse as learned at the Interclub Quiz – yeah; Florence figured it out at the end. However, we traversed not only the broom - tables, benches and everything else that one could imagine kept us busy for a while. It was a quite enjoyable afternoon – ok, not everybody might have seen it as such. However, some of us could 'enjoy' their bruises for the next three weeks.

Warren had something special in mind for our dinner at Mt 'Egg'mont: curry eggs, cauliflower, broccoli etc with rice, and custard with pears for dessert. It turned out to be a quite nice meal despite our initial sceptics.

Sunday: attempting the summit. We got up early, had breakfast and prepared our daypacks. Everything looked fine so far. OK, we could not see the mountain but the weather looked much better than the day before. However, we wanted to attempt the summit - you never know, you might get lucky (at least once in a while). We started at about 7.30am and speeded up the hill. About an hour later, we stopped at the Kapuni Lodge junction. The weather stayed fine until we passed the Upper Lake Dive Track junction. Afterwards the wind picked up and it got quite a bit colder. We soon put on our storm gear. Conditions turned really bad about half an hour later. Icy cold wind was blowing into our face and hail started to come down on us too. As we

reached about 1800m, we had to put our crampons on. However, we never did since more and more hail came down on us making it almost impossible to look up. We decided to turn back. We went down to Kapuni Lodge, had a short break and then returned to Dawson Falls facing some more hail showers on our way down. We left Dawson Falls at about 12pm and had a few stops along the way back to Palmy including the sunny Manaia Beach, Wanganui's sunny Virginia Lake Scenic Reserve, a couple of ice cream stops etc. Warren tried to motivate us to stop in every village/city along the way and to do something – I guess – memorable there ☺. However, the three of us did not seem to get into this stuff. But thanks Warren for not giving up on us. And many more thanks for making the trip possible by stepping in as leader on short notice.

Sub-alpine team: Florence Fraisse, Helen Ronald, Warren Wheeler (leader) and Markus Kirchberg.

KAWEKA SAREX, 11- 12- 13 October 2002. By Tony Gates.



Squadron 3's Iroquois near Rocks Ahead Hut. [Tony Gates]

On this bitterly cold weekend, the NZLSAR conducted a SAREX in the Ngaruroro Valley-Kaweka Ranges, based at Kuripapango. I was involved as a photographer and observer, and apart from the obvious action moments, like a few Iroquois rides, it was a busy weekend.

On Friday, the "lost" rafters, and their "pseudo" searchers were deployed in various secret locations, with ample evidence of their passing. It was the not unlikely scenario that a rafting team had come to grief somewhere like Rocks Ahead Hut, and had tried to exit the river. Their friends had somehow got lost too, somewhere along the Kaweka Range.

On Saturday, several search teams were deployed up the Ngaruroro Valley, to various huts, track junctions, and river forks. The RNZAF

Iroquois was a vital taxi. Footprints, pieces of a raft, and log book entries were all reported back to base during the day. Evidence was frequently found, emphasizing the need for track and clue awareness and good communications. The search area had been narrowed down by Sunday morning. A canine nose and bark, a firearm, and numerous teams of enthusiastic and well prepared searchers soon found the "lost" parties. Overall, a well organized weekend that offered good experience to the volunteers.

The Kawekas were lovely. I recalled a few past trips with Peter Wiles, Derek Sharp, and others, and planned many future ones. Sure, the PNTMC visits the local ranges often, but driving a little further afield can offer much more. When is the next Kaweka trip?

**Tamaki- A frame (Travers) Hut, 13 October.
By Elaine Herve**

The seven of us, and four dogs, met as usual at Foodtown at the civilized hour of 8.30 am. The weather was typical of spring, being rather unpredictable. After consulting Duncan's map for the shortest route to take, we piled into three cars, and drove in convoy to the road end at West Tamaki Road. We wound our way up the track that has been cleared in recent months, which made our progress easier. About half way up, we split into a faster and slower group. The ascent was made memorable by Max (my dog) maintaining his reputation, and catching two possums. If anyone can give me tips on how to dispatch possums quickly it would be appreciated.

We joined up at the A frame Hut (Travers Hut) for an early lunch. It was noticeably colder up there in the open, and no one was too enthusiastic to extend the trip. So we made our way sliding and splashing down the track, in places wet from several days or weeks of rain. We were lucky to experience only a brief hail shower. At the cars, we decided to go our separate ways, with Gina, Duncan, and Neil going to Dannevirke for a cappuccino.

We were; Gina Fermor (Trip Leader), Elaine Herve, Jo and Lawrence O' Halloran, Neil Campbell, Duncan Hedderley, Yoko Watanabe, with Max, Tessa, Mave, and Bridie.

Whirokino/Moutoa Loop, 19 October. by Janet Maessen

This was a pleasant 12-k amble along the stop banks and through farmland ending at "Cooks Pumpstation". In the past, this area was owned by the Easton family and used for flax farming. Our first stop before beginning our walk was to peruse the wonders of the Moutoa Sluice gates. Build in

the 1960's, it is opened to release floodwaters through the wide spillway which extends in a long curve to the Manawatu River south of Foxton. Narrated and dramatised by our leader we re-lived the story of the tension between farmers and sluice gate controllers in the last big flood where anxious farmers had used shotguns to "encourage" the controllers to release the flood waters!! Looking at the present dry paddocks and tame river it is hard to imagine the reality of a swollen and threatening river in flood. Moving on we started walking from the Whirokino road end and found our way to the Moutoa flood gates along the old loop of the Manawatu River, (now more of a creek). Here we could also see the original relics of the timber floodgates used in the last century. Curious young steers huddled around us at this point, which Fran found a bit off-putting! We assured her they did not usually eat little girls. Continuing on along the stop bank we searched in vain for bird life and their cute babies (as had been promised in the newsletter!) We doubled back taking the cycle track beneath the Trestle Bridge and then continued along the other stop bank, which makes up the sides of the spillway mentioned earlier. We lunched on the side of the stopbank overlooking the "Borrow Pit" drains, which lie parallel to the stopbanks. These borrow pits are simply where the soil was "borrowed" to build the stop banks and are now filled with water. We then took the path of the "Emergency Diversion" through a newly ploughed paddock to the Diagonal pumpstation. Here we could see the effects of weed that builds up and needs to be removed to prevent blockage. Fiona picked up her car and continued on with Fran to the reserve to wait as the rest of us followed the stop bank, aiming to meet up at the Cooks Pumpstation. It was a beautiful warm day, with blue skies and mild wind and I enjoyed our wander past the flax reserve, where samba deer are still found, and through the long grass and poplars of Blind Island Reserve. We passed several mai-mais nestled low in the grassland. They were well camouflaged along the banks of the river. Any duck would not be advised to loiter here! At trips end, hot and dry we all enjoyed a stop in Foxton for an ice cream on the way home.

Thank you Warren for showing us something of this amazing complex drainage system that has turned what once was swamp into now productive farmland.

Trampers were: Warren Wheeler, Richard Lockett, Fiona Donald, Neil Campbell, Francesca Croad (12), Janet Maessen.

Toka, October 20, 2002

Sunday morning at 7:30 we met in the Foodtown carpark. There were 9 participants for the tramp into the Ngamoko Range behind Apiti. The group was made up of the following people. Leader, Laurence Gatehouse, Jo and Lawrence O'Halloran, Martin and Anne Lawrence, Yuko, Megan, Suzanne and Nigel Gregory and Tim Odering. Conditions in the mountains were not meant to be favorable today. Winds were gusting and there was a threat of rain. But you can do a lot of tramping waiting for the rain. We filled three cars and made our way to the car park at the entrance to the trail at about 9:00. The carpark is at about 660 meters. From there we took the Shorts track that forms the southern half of the loop and winds up to the peak at about 1300 meters. This is a very steady climb for about an hour and a half. The weather was quite nice as we stopped for a breather after a rather steep section. There was no indication of the incredible winds we were to encounter higher up on the ridge.



We plodded on and extra layers went on throughout the group as we got into the cooler air. Laurence tried to spot some carnivorous plants to show us but there were none to be found. He did however point out that leatherwood, which was quite prominent in some areas on our tramp, is related to the daisy. We reached the ridge and began our crossing. Some of us realized that more layers were in order. It was quite cool and the wind was strong and gusty. It's quite an exposed area along the ridge with few hiding

places. This was a new experience for us and it was a bit unnerving to be walking along at an angle just to remain upright. I'm sure I'm not the only one who was blown off balance. Martin's hat got taken by the wind and may be discovered by someone down in the Hawkes Bay area. He considered running after it but quickly changed his mind. Although the wind kept us walking at a good pace, we had the opportunity to see some great views as we went. The cloud was only just forming at the ridgeline and we could see the sunny valleys below us on either side of the ridge.

We made our way along the poled ridgeline for another hour fighting to stay upright, clutching at clumps of grass to brace against the gusting wind. At 11:30 we came upon a protected area where the trail dipped behind a leatherwood outcropping and provided a bit of shelter from the wind. Everyone was quite windblown. Some had scratches from the dead leatherwood branches. We decided it was as good a place as any to stop for a bit of lunch.

From our lunch rest stop we had to climb another 150 meters or so. We were heading toward the peak of Toka. The cloud was getting thicker and darker. As we reached the split where you can choose to continue to the peak, the rain began and combined with the wind, made a trip up to the peak very undesirable. We noticed a tarn right at the fork and were disappointed that we couldn't have a bit of nice weather to explore it a little. We'll have to go back on a clear day and have a closer look. We braced ourselves and turned into the wind to begin our descent along Knights Track. It wasn't long before we were out of the wind and into some protective brush. The descent was very steep and quite a few trees had fallen over the trail. Evidence of some heavy weather. Although not today. They had been there for some time. It was another hour and a half down from the ridge on this steep slope but it was a relief to be out of the wind. We had an easy stream crossing at the bottom that was just a few inches deep. There's a lovely swimming hole there that is easy to get to from the carpark. A must see on a nice warm summer's day. A very enjoyable tramp. Lot's of good views and a great introduction to what the winds are like on a ridge. Wouldn't want to be there in really bad weather. An ideal lunch stop, and gave us the opportunity to quiz our new Canadian friends about life in their country.

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