



# PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217, PALMERSTON NORTH

## Newsletter - February 2004

### CLUB NIGHTS

Club nights are on the second and last Thursday of each month at the Society of Friends Hall, 227 College Street, at 7:45pm **sharp**. All welcome!

At the club night: Please sign the visitor's book. A 50c door fee includes supper.

Jan 29                    **BBQ** (see Dec/Jan newsletter)

**Feb 12                    Whitcomb Expedition**  
**Terry Crippen & Co.**

In January of this year club members were climbing in the Mt Whitcombe and Bracken Snowfield area of the Southern Alps, in from Harihari, Westland. The Bracken Snowfield is the northern-most high snow plateau and Mt Whitcombe, along with adjacent Mt Evans, are major peaks and feature in Hugh Logan's book "Classic Peaks of NZ." Come along and hear about this climbing and tramping area.

**Feb 19                    Committee Meeting**

**Feb 26                    City Rock**  
**Terry Crippen                    356 3588**

A chance to learn some new skills on 'inside rock,' or practice old ones, in preparation for outdoor rock climbing activities coming up. Instruction and gear supplied, just bring suitable clothes and footwear (rock shoes can be hired). Enjoyable and worthwhile. Cost \$7. City Rock, 217 Featherston St, phone 357-4552, behind Phil Turnbull Motors just along from the Rangitiki St intersection.

E-mail articles to [doug.strachan@xtra.co.nz](mailto:doug.strachan@xtra.co.nz)  
or post to 1 Worsfold Lane, Palm. North  
(by 20<sup>th</sup> of month)

### TRIPS

Please contact the leader at least three days in advance. Trips leave from Foodtown carpark. A reasonably proficient trumper can be expected to do the trips in the following times:

Easy (E): 3-4 hrs                    Technical skills reqd (T)

Medium (M): 5-6 hrs                    Instructional (I)

Fit (F): about 8 hrs

Fitness Essential (FE): >8 hrs

Jan 30- Feb 1                    **Waiohine Gorge** (see last newsletter)

**Feb 1                    Field Hut                    E/M**  
**Neil Campbell                    359 5048**

In from Otaki Forks to the historic Field Hut. If the weather is agreeable, we could go up to the tops. 8am start.

**Feb 6-8                    Te Hekenga Crossing                    M/F**  
**Mick Leyland                    358 3183**

Up to Rangi to spend the first night there; cross to Howletts for the second night, then out to the old DOC base. We could split into 2 groups and do a key swap, so we can start at opposite ends of this Ruahine crossing. There is a possibility that Mick will have to find a substitute to lead this trip.

**Feb 8                    Stanfield Hut                    E**  
**Duncan Hedderly                    355 1820**

An 8.00am start for a daytrip into the near-eastern Ruahines. Good bush and a decent little hut. Not much up-and-down, but expect to get your feet wet coming back down the stream.

For lots more photos & trips, check out  
[www.pntmc.org.nz](http://www.pntmc.org.nz)



## Something to Ponder

You may be surprised to learn that humid air is lighter than dry air (at the same temperature and pressure). This is something for you to argue about while tramping! I will give a scientific explanation of why this is so in the next newsletter. Ed.

## Portal to the Past

**From our March 1968 newsletter, in reference to Coppermine Creek**

"This mine was first mentioned in Government publications in 1888, when an official of the Mines and Survey Department, Mr. McKay, was taken over the area by the discoverer, a Mr. Price. Many thousands of pounds have been spent on the workings without any sales of copper being reported."

## TEFLON

Good ol' Teflon is used to line frying pans to stop food from sticking to the pan. I've also seen it listed as an ingredient in roof paint, but I'm not sure why it's there. Perhaps to stop bird droppings sticking to the roof? I've recently learned that Teflon is also in Gortex raincoats, and in everyone's bloodstream.

Some of you will have seen a documentary on TV that questioned the safety of Teflon. When we forget about a frying pan and it over-heats, odourless vapours are given off from the Teflon, and these vapours have proven fatal for pet birds kept indoors. They can also produce flu-like symptoms in humans.

The jury is still out on Teflon. Who knows, it might be another "asbestos." That stuff was used to make handkerchiefs, rooves, car brake pads, tablecloths (the dirt was burned off them), ironing boards. It was considered a safe, wonder mineral. Today we know better.

You should keep using your Gortex raincoat of course, as hypothermia is a greater evil. The makers of Teflon assure us their product is safe (if not mis-used). Allegations made against the DuPont company just won't stick. Ed.

## BOOK REVIEW

"What the hell are we doing here!: an extraordinary journey through the Sahara & the jungles of Africa" Murray Gough & Peter Travers Overland Publishing Ltd, Wellington.

Photography: Cameron and Murray Gough, Hamish and Peter Travers. pp. 188

ISBN: 0-473-09951-9 [www.forbiddenzones.com](http://www.forbiddenzones.com)

Reviewer: Fiona Donald

What events would make two Wellington men, in their mid-fifties, action their dream of driving across the Sahara Desert in a Land Rover when neither of them had any previous experience in travelling by four-wheel drive nor any direct experience of deserts? The answer is within the first three pages of this well-designed and riveting story of their journey. The book is divided into two main chapters – Across the Sahara to West Africa and Through the Jungles of Central Africa; there are mini detailed maps at the beginning of each sub-chapter as they travel through each country. These mini maps hint at the progress they will make across the African continent and are quick to return to and find out their next stage in the journey. The easy reading text is also enhanced with superb photographs; one of my favourites is of the Land Rover being driven over huge rocks and these rocks are part of a perilously unstable bridge that they have built in order to continue their journey between Assekrem to Tamanrasset in Algeria. The beauty of the Sahara, the vibrancy of West Africa, the chaos of the Congo, the adventures they all shared makes this a dynamic story which would appeal to anyone who has dreamed of travelling to remote parts of the world.

## Maorimu

The Maori made torches from the shredded, gum-rich heartwood of the rimu tree.

Captain Cook made beer from rimu leaves to prevent his crew from suffering scurvey (vitamin C deficiency).

## NOTICES

### PNTMC Awards, Lost 'n' Found, DOC User Group Meeting, Mattresses

**NEWSLETTER ARTICLES** can be e-mailed to [doug.strachan@xtra.co.nz](mailto:doug.strachan@xtra.co.nz) or delivered to 1 Worsfold Lane, PN

#### PNTMC AWARDS FOR 2003

Balmy weather and soft sunset lighting under cloudy skies provided a fitting backdrop for the end of year celebration of the memorable events that add to the enjoyment of being in the club. Here then is a selection of the more printable awards that were selected in an exhaustive process by the Committee and announced by Warren Wheeler, President PNTMC. Those recipients not present who wish to receive their Kinder Surprise may try to contact Warren.

Real Kiwi Trumper Award – Wara Teeranitamkul for noting that the Top Gorge Trip into the clouds and falling snow in the headwaters of the Pohangina River was his most enjoyable trip yet.

Serendipity Award – Doug Strachan for the near-perfect situation for his car to blow-up (close to the Waterford Café and just before Nigel Gregory arrived on his way home with an empty car that was able to take stranded trampers back to civilisation).

OSH Award for the Promotion of Safety in the Outdoors – Mick Leyland for severely injuring his ankle at work (its safer outdoors, right Mick?).

Pukha Sahib Award – Malcolm Leary for being unable to confirm whether he had a particular item because his ever-attentive better half packs his gear.

Mountain Mule Award – Ian Harding for the heavy pack full of goodies that he lugged on the Abel Tasman NP and Egmont NP trips.

Retirement Commission Award for Meritorious Active Lifestyle Planning – Chris Saunders for the purchase of over \$120 of maps to add to his already extensive collection.

Social Climbers Top Hat Award – Craig Allerby for his distinctively appropriate jester hat at Mid-Winter High Tea on Colenso.

TV One Muse Award – Nigel Gregory and Tony Gates for Coronation Street ruling the trail across Blue Range and beyond.

NZ Air Farce Award for Distinguished Conduct in a Search and Rescue Role – Janet Wilson and Jenny McCarthy for their execution of the Iroquois tuck'n'roll when evacuating the aircraft under emergency conditions as the battery threatened to melt-down.

Cold Shoulder Award – Graham Peters for his forbearance while calmly waiting as the sun slowly set for the aforementioned helicopter to reappear after dropping him off "briefly" on Shoulder Knob to dismantle the radio repeater aerial.

Posh Nosh Award – Ann and Martin Lawrence for their pumpernickel and salmon, real bacon cabonara pasta, and stewed dry fruit selection with creamed rice at Mangahao Flats Hut.

Sleepyhead Sweet Dreams Award – Harley Betts for nearly gassing himself at Pouakai Hut.

Nescafe Beware of Imitations Award – Graham Peters for mistaking a Japanese branded hand-warmer for coffee grinds...(thanks Yuko).

Castrol Award for Off-road Performance – Neil Campbell overcame slippery conditions on Takapari Road and getting stuck in flood gravels in the Kumeti Carpark to get everyone safely home.

Dave Hodges Award for Excellence in Pursuit in Forgetfulness (our most prestigious award) – Warren Wheeler for forgetting to pack his sleeping bag on an easy trip to Robsons Lodge, Kuripapango despite the check list he was given....it was a close contest this year with Doug Strachan being a contender for forgetting to check the temperature of his car on the way home, even though he checked it carefully going out after noticing it took a litre of water to top up the radiator before leaving. Bad luck Doug, with a bit more effort perhaps you will be decorated next year.  
Happy Tramping!

(Warren, you still deserve the award for no doubt feeling colder than my car's engine felt hot. Hope you warmed yourself up with a cup of Graham's just-add-cold-water self-heating coffee. Ed.)

## FOUND / LOST / SWAP?

Found at end of December BBQ at Ashhurst Domain - Large black plastic serving spoon. At the above - Lost one stainless steel large serving spoon with wooden handle. Most likely swap?  
Contact Peter Wiles

## DOC USER GROUP MEETING

Monday, February 16th, Milson Community Centre, 7.00pm...for an update on DOC activities.

## SELF-INFLATING AIR MATTRESS

Ruff Stuff New Zealand have announced a special offer available till the end of February. A three-quarter length (122cm long) foam self-inflating air mattress costs \$70. It weighs 800g. The full-length mattress costs \$90, weighs 1kg; 51cm X 185cm X 3.8cm. Free 20cm X 25cm stuff sack. Free postage and packing. Order by phone, or via their website. Note, the prices listed on the website are higher (\$90 and \$110), as the special price is aimed at outdoor clubs.

Ruff Stuff New Zealand  
P.O. Box 8844, Havelock North  
Tel. (06)8771260 or 021 1903852  
E-mail: [sales@ruffstuff.co.nz](mailto:sales@ruffstuff.co.nz)  
Website: [www.ruffstuff.co.nz](http://www.ruffstuff.co.nz)

## 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.

## THURSDAY TRAMPERS

We go for a tramp every Thursday. If you wish to join us, contact Merv Matthews 357 2858, or Liz Flint 356 7654.

### Hair-raising?

Early settlers thought rimu juices rubbed into the scalp could reverse baldness.

### Oh, my God!

A vicar is out climbing on a remote mountain when disaster strikes. He falls off a ledge breaking both his legs in the process. Being a clean living and devout man of the cloth he is sure that God will come to his rescue. An hour passes and local shepherd happens upon the prostrate priest.

"Oh dear," says the shepherd, "Don't worry, I'll have you out of here in no time."  
"No, it's ok, I have put my faith in the Lord and he will be my saviour," says the vicar.  
So the shepherd leaves and two hours later a mountain rescue team finds the injured man.  
"You're safe now," says the team leader.  
"Thank you but no," replies the vicar, "God will save me." Another few hours go by and the peace is shattered by a search and rescue helicopter overhead. "Cripes," says the winchman, "You're in a jolly state but we'll get you out of here." Again the vicar refuses, "I've told the others that God is my saviour and my faith is unquestionable. Please leave." Eventually the vicar succumbs to his injuries and dies on the mountainside. He is met by St Peter at the Pearly Gates and the disappointed clergyman asks, "Why didn't God spare me?" "Flippin' heck, mate," replies the angel, "He sent a shepherd, a search party and a helicopter...what more did you want?"

### Medical fact

A genuine article from the Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine's website, entitled 'The danger of wearing an anorak', compiled by Chui M.G. Cheung MRCOphth, Omar M. Durrani FRCS(Glas), Ming S. Lim MB BS, Mahesh Ramchandani FRCS(Ed), Somnath Banerjee FRCS(Ed) and Philip I. Murray PhD FRCOphth at the Birmingham and Midland Eye Centre: Campaigns to reduce road traffic accidents have paid little attention to the way headgear could interfere with vision. Binocular visual field measurement was undertaken in six healthy volunteers wearing four different types of anorak. All four anoraks greatly reduced the horizontal and superior field of vision. The anorak producing the worst reduction resulted in a width of vision of 99 degrees and only 15 degrees of vision above eye level, versus 167degrees and 52 degrees respectively without an anorak. Conclusion: Anorak wearers should turn their heads to look sideways before crossing the road.

## TRIP REPORTS

### Honeycomb Rock, Manawatu Gorge, Pourangaki, Wakelings, Tarn Ridge, Atiwhakatu, Sledge Track, Lewis Pass - Arthur's Pass

#### Honeycomb Rock November 23

##### By Fiona Donald

Crew: Carol Brungar, Barbara Mare, Neil Campbell, Stan Mackowiak and Dorothy Neild, Fiona Donald (leader).

This trip was a great day out on the Wairarapa east coast. We couldn't have asked for better weather; there was a stiff cool southerly breeze combined with a very sunny day. A very easy trip suitable for families, over farmland and about 2 hours walk to the Rock. The walkway is closed from August to October for lambing.

Along the way we saw seals, crabs and black oystercatchers. Some of us got caught out in the only significant boggy patch, others climbed up part of the Rock or they visited the remains of the beached shipwreck of a Fijian trader. Good company and great food. At lunch, Fiona shared some of her Christmas cake with the crew.

This is the last day trip to be taken by the leader due to the length of time it takes to travel there. This time we left at 7am and returned at 6.45 pm. In previous years, this trip started at the same time but usually finished by 5.30pm in P.N. Perhaps the laid-back lateness appeared to be the large amount of sea-laden air we inhaled or the vast quantity of icecream consumed in Masterton!

If anyone would like directions to Honeycomb Rock then please contact me at home 35 61095 or work 35 30475 ex 845 (voicemail available) or e-mail: [Fiona.Donald@natlib.govt.nz](mailto:Fiona.Donald@natlib.govt.nz)

#### Manawatu Gorge & River Safety, Nov 30

##### By Neil Campbell

Terry Crippen (leader of the Manawatu Gorge trip), Tony Gates, Barbara Mare, Lee Chin and Neil Campbell.

On the morning I did the Manawatu Gorge trip and in the afternoon I did the River Safety course taught by Noel Bigwood of the NZ Mountain Safety Council.

We left Palmerston North at about 8am. The weather was warm and pleasant. We left my car at the Balance end and Tony's car at the Ashhurst

end. The track was in very good condition and the shade from the trees was very welcome. There are several lookouts along the track giving clear views of the Gorge itself. It is also possible to see the Wind Farm if you know where to turn off the track and walk through the bush, for about 20 meters or so, following an indistinct track. It would seem a good idea to have a sign on the track to alert walkers of this feature. We reached the Balance end at a bit past 11.30am. Terry, Barbara and Lee wandered down to the cafe while I took Tony back to his car. We were shocked and disgusted to find that Tony's car had been broken into. Thanks go to Terry for leading an otherwise very pleasant walk.

The instruction on river safety was very helpful. It was held at the Ashhurst Domain. This session normally involves getting wet but because the river was murky and fast-flowing, following recent rain, all the activities were conducted on dry land. Noel gave a well-structured lecture and we practised linking up together and walking forwards and then walking backwards. Noel emphasised that it was ***a "river safety course" not a "river crossing course". That is, if a river is not safe to cross then do not cross it.***

#### Full length Pourangaki River Dec 5-7

##### By Lance Grey

We were Jean Garman, Gary Grayson, Peter Rawlings, Brian Webster and Lance Gray.

With this trip very much weather dependent the forecasts once again provided riveting viewing besides Toni Marsh. Sunday looked okay and we hoped the forecast rain for Saturday would not amount to much. Friday night was into Kelly Knight while early Saturday we blasted up the Whanahuia Range along to Maungamahue. From there we took the exit ramp toward Te Hekenga, where the cloud lifted enough to enjoy the surrounds. Lunch was just below Te Hekenga which was still shrouded in cloud. Peter's local knowledge found the excellent sidle track on the South side of Te Hekenga which cannot be underestimated if you find the thought of the infamous "Cheval Pitch" a little daunting.

Contrary to expectations, the weather turned foul immediately we left the main ridge dropping into

the Pourangaki headwaters. Information was at best sketchy so we were not surprised to engage a 10 metre waterfall which Brian and Gary rock climbed around and to then inform us that it was not flash going (it was terrifying to put it mildly), so Peter followed by myself and Jean took to a classic Ruahine sidle where Peter chivalrously destroyed as much leatherwood as possible. For all of Peter's good deeds he deposited his digital camera to the leatherwood. We all marvelled at how well he took this realisation – his stoicism was an inspiration to us all.

The rest of this windy, shitty afternoon was spent looking for the "Hilton" as Brian put it. Thankfully the right combination of flat terrace and cover presented itself and we made camp. With an existing fireplace we made a stunningly successful smoky fire before noshing up and retiring to our tent flies. Immediately the rain set in. Jean informed us next morning that the rain commenced at 9pm and ceased at 3am depositing approximately 20mm going by her billy. When did you sleep Jean? The Pourangaki was running clear with an honest flow so we departed at 8am, because as Jean said, "We have plenty of time." Brian then said, "Well if we have plenty of time, then we can walk all the way to the Kawhatau at the road bridge, it wouldn't be a full-length Pourangaki if we didn't do that would it?" And here was Jean wondering if she had graded the trip as too difficult. It had just become "FE."

And so it happened under a beautiful blue sky and **oodles upon oodles of crotch-deep river crossings**, the odd pack-float, the more than odd "Bambi," the Pourangaki and Kelly Knight Huts before slogging it to the Kawhatau, a swim and the nirvana of the Mangaweka petrol station. Thanks Peter for the sacrifice of picking up the car and saving yourself 2 hours of extra walking! As Jean was heard to lament "We could have used a perfectly good track!"



**Smoked Boys**



**Upper Pourangaki**



**Mid Pourangaki**

## Wakelings, 13-14 December By Graham Peters

Firstly an apology to Nigel - his GPS is accurate. As we wandered around in the mist it agreed with our position as determined by map and compass.

So that we had a relaxed but early start to the trip, we camped at the Kawhatau road-end Friday night and were on our way to the cableway across the river at 0730. The plan was to proceed onto the Hikurangi Range then down to the Kawhatau via McKinnon Hut before heading up onto the Mokai Patea Range, Rongotea then down to Wakelings Hut. The weather was not that flash and as we exited the bush onto the tops we were following the poles through the mist. It was fairly breezy and we decided the turn off to Crow Hut would be a decision point. We were there in a jiffy and were all happy so carried on for an early first lunch and brew at McKinnon. As we descended through the bush from here we left the mist and had patches of dappled sunlight interspersed with heavy showers of rain. In the river, however, it was positively summery, leading Janet to muse aloud about bathing in the Waikamaka later. We had our second lunch in the riverbed at the bottom of the track leading up onto the Mokai Patea. This track has a great, steep little start to it but the gradient eases with the gain in altitude. Higher up, the ridge broadens and the track turns and becomes a bit indistinct before leaving the bush for a short climb to the top. We were still in the mist and wind as we followed the poles to Rongotea then down to Wakelings on the freshly cut track.

The plan for Sunday was to go back up onto the Mokai Patea Range, along that to the north and back to Kawhatau Base via Colenso. As we left the hut we had views of the tops to the east so were optimistic that the weather may have improved. Our optimism was misplaced. As we exited the bush onto the reasonably narrow ridge we were getting a fair old buffeting as the wind whipped up and over. Ever the optimists, we put parkas and more clothing on and thought it might be better on the broader tops - if not we'd go down to Crow and out via the poled route. When we got to the parting of the ways with the poled route we decided it wasn't that bad and ***it might even be fun navigating our way through the pea soup***. At least it was a nor'wester and not that cold. Found a nice sheltered hollow for lunch partway along the range. As we headed down the spur to Colenso, we eased up in the rigour of our navigation and started down a false spur. This was picked up pretty smartly and corrected and we were soon on

Colenso for afternoon tea. We hadn't dropped far off Colenso and we were out of the cloud with views out over the farmland and up the Kawhatau Valley. In no time it seemed we were back at the car in hot muggy weather.

All three of us, Nigel Gregory, Janet Wilson, Graham Peters, thoroughly enjoyed the trip.

## Tarn Ridge Hut, 10-11 January By Janet Wilson

We were Nigel Gregory, Graham Peters and Janet Wilson.

It was on a beautiful clear morning that we set off from The Pines road end, about 8am, heading for Mitre Flats and on to the tops. The day promised to be very hot, but at that time of the morning a lot of that initial walk is in the shade. We were expecting to see plenty of people along the way, but at Mitre Flats only the hut warden was there to have a chat to.

From the hut, the track climbs gradually to the bush line. The wind had picked up and, hoping to avoid this during lunch, we stopped just before breaking out of the trees, in what turned out to be a particularly cold, windy spot. Only a short lunch stop!! A much warmer place was found shortly after we started moving again out into the open. Fantastic clear views but enough wind to be annoying. On the top of Mitre we found a group of 3 lounging around. We moved on, into new territory for me, over Brockett and Girdlestone, to reach the hut about 4pm. Plenty of time left to sit around in the sun. A friendly group of 8 people in the hut that night – nice big hut in a great position.

Our plan for the next day was flexible, depending on how well we were going. Plan A was to continue Sth along the main range, over Adkin and the Kings to turn off for Baldy and the Atiwhakatu Valley and meet up with the day trip at Atiwhakatu Hut, before 1pm, or at the road end before 3pm. We got away at 7.30am, another beautifully clear but breezy morning. We made good time and so plan B, to head off Baldy towards Mitre Flats, wasn't needed. Other people in the hut had warned us that the route through the bush off Baldy was difficult to follow and so we were looking forward to the challenge, only to find that the route is now marked with the usual orange markers.. We still managed to overshoot the move to the left, part way down the spur, where most people got lost in the past. The section of track from the saddle to the hut took a little longer than I had remembered and we arrived just as Fiona's group were preparing to head back. We

had lunch and then followed, catching up just before the carpark. Good timing.

Nigel grabbed the spare seat in a car to take him back to Palmy. Graham and I shared the passenger seat of another car to take us the short distance back up the road, to where you cross the Atiwhakatu. From here we did a quick dash across a field to the Waingawa River, which you cross a little up stream near the pipe bridge to reach the road on the other side. Although I had my running shoes with me for the jog back to our car, I soon got offered a ride for most of the distance back – there were people everywhere looking for a place to cool off in the river, on a very hot Wairarapa Day.

### **Atiwhakatu Hut, 11 January By Fiona Donald**

Wara casually remarked he had heard the temperature was predicted to reach 29 degrees that day while I was driving along the bypass on the outskirts of Masterton. Already the sky had taken on a fashionable washed-out blue look combined with the faint stirring of a shimmering haze that was beginning to rise up from the earth.

My carload arrived at Mount Holdsworth in 1 hour 35 minutes proving that taking the high road (Pahiatua Track) is often quicker than via the Manawatu Gorge; however, the map I had given Pauline did not entirely equate with the roads listed on the bypass short cut. Thus 1 hour 45 minutes is a more feasible time for those unfamiliar with travelling to the Mount Holdsworth car park.

### ***The car park was full with cars, 20 husky dogs and their owners.***

We made moves to get going and so did the huskies. Initially we were going the same way to Donnelly's Flat so at times several owners who each had two huskies per person overtook us. The huskies were tied to a leather belt around each owner's waist and the owners were being towed at a fast pace along the track. We also met joggers, families eating morning tea, and people returning from a night in Jumbo Hut. The morning got steadily hotter and the vistas more glorious.

This track is not for people who are scared of heights and/or swing bridges. Instead, it is a beautiful area of bush, toitoi, views and a wide variety of bridges.

Two hours later we were at the Atiwhakatu Hut. Lunch was a leisurely hour. I was very hot and got

into my togs for a dip. The water was deliciously cold and very refreshing; others dabbled in the water, Andrew sang an African inspired melody and more photos were taken.

Just as we were preparing to leave Janet, Graham and Nigel arrived for their lunch break and thus ensured they had lifts back in the cars. We returned in 2 hours on a very hot day (32 degrees!). The others caught us up by the Mount Holdsworth Lodge. A little juggling then Pauline's car left and we followed later.

We had a quick trip to the nearest dairy for refreshments; now, it was almost unbearably hot and my car has no air-conditioning! Despite the heat we made it back to P.N. in good time. The day was fun and interesting with this vibrant company: Ron Gregory, Pam Peters, Karen Thomas, Andrew Schurr, Pauline Knuckey, Duncan Hedderley, Warapong Teeranitamkul and Fiona Donald – Leader.

### **Tramping through a Minefield, 18 Jan. By Doug Strachan**

The 10 mine victims were: Elaine Herve, Fiona Donald, Andrew Schurr, Duncan Hedderley, Pauline Knuckley, Christine Cheyne, Barbara Mare, Wara Teranitamkul, Adrienne Cavanagh, Doug Strachan.

The first section of the Sledge Track has an arguably over-zealous array of signs immortalising those who toiled to build the track. Then it turns into a track proper.

After an hour and a half, we reached the junction where you turn off to the platinum mines. We rested here, and pretty soon we were trading insults about each other's hats. In the end, bathing in UV as we were, we all agreed that "any hat is better than no hat."

We walked on to a wonderful, breezy lunch spot, with a view of Palmerston. Three of us looked at the map and came up with 3 suggestions as to our location. At this point, the chance of even finding mines seemed slim, but find them we did.

The first mine (a horizontal mine) we came to was full of mud and would perhaps be better named a "yours" than a "mine" as nobody was terribly keen to explore it. Pressing on, we came to some vertical mines, with ladders protruding from them. It's a bit dangerous walking in a minefield, so the mines had tape around them so people wouldn't accidentally fall into a hole. Some canary among

us volunteered to go down into the mine first. Then, one by one, we took turns seeing inside the mine. The mines are fairly short, presumably just exploratory prospector's scratchings. I was a little disappointed not to see big chunks of glistening, pure platinum protruding from the walls; however, the walls did glisten with moist glowworm threads. I saw a glowworm larva hanging on a thread, but it wasn't shining as there was too much daylight. I gave it a lesson in how glowworms are supposed to behave, by zapping it with my camera flash. Then I had a sterling, nay, a platinum idea. "Wow, hey you guys, look at this," I yelled. Barbara fell for it and peered down into the mine shaft only to be blinded by my flash. Then we decided it would be cool to have a photo, taken from the bottom of the mine, of everyone looking down into it. Everyone gathered round and looked down at me, grinning like I was the quarry that fell into a pit trap. I flashed 'em!



**Looking up from within the Mine**



**Lunch Spot with View of Palmy**

We continued on and found another horizontal mine. Christine, torch in hand, went in on a reconnaissance mission. "Christine, can you see where it ends?" "Um, well, maybe, yes, I think it ends a little further...no, wait...yes, it ends...unless another tunnel goes off from this one...but, no, I see the end." As she came out of the tunnel, ***a supernova of camera flashes went off, leading her to make some comment about Paparazzi.***

We walked out. After Argyle's Rock, we passed a few people with toddlers. There was even a pushchair. If the track can take a sledge, it must be wide enough for a pushchair... They certainly won't be going any further than the Rock.

Considering we'd been through a minefield, casualties were light. Duncan dinged his head on a ponga, but not hard enough to see glowworms. Andy's newly repaired boot had a rivet that rubbed. Fiona came to the rescue with special, Danish blister prevention plasters, and we're pleased to report that foot amputation won't be necessary. My own boot, on the other hand, ...looks like I stepped on a mine.



**Doug's Boot**

### **No Xmas Trees in the South Island**

The Pohutukawa is only found naturally in the North Island. It is a popular nesting tree for shags.

## Lewis Pass – Arthurs Pass, 2–9 Jan. By Anja Scholz

(Warren Wheeler (trip leader), Craig Allerby, Peter Wiles, Anja Scholz)

One stinking hot January 2<sup>nd</sup> I debarked a Christchurch-bound bus at Windy Point in the Lewis Pass area to start the trek towards Hope Kiwi Lodge along the Hope and Kiwi rivers. (As Craig, Peter and Warren were not disgorged at the same spot by their bus until later that day, we had agreed to meet up the following day) The going for the first 45 minutes was tough, as the track leads over farmland and climbs without shade or shelter onto the river terraces before heading into the bush. The basic 6 bunk Hope Halfway Hut was reached after 3 hours, and thankfully several little side creeks had provided water on the way. As it was still early, I carried on after leaving a message for the other three Hobbits. The ring<sup>1</sup> had welded itself to my finger because of the heat, so there was no chance of any of the grazing Orc-cattle getting hold of it. A pleasant 2 hour walk took me over the Hope swingbridge and on to Hope Kiwi Lodge, passing only a few intimidating young steers. Hope Kiwi Lodge was a treat: linoleum floors, two separate bedrooms, clean, spacious, scenic – and only 2 other trampers in residence, so I had a peaceful and quiet first night. The next morning, come half past eight, Peter, Craig and Warren wandered up to the hut. They had slept outside Hope Halfway Hut until the sandflies woke them, so had started their tramp at quarter to seven that day. After a second breakfast, we all wandered on together, **and I was glad for another red pack when we crossed the “bull ridden” river flats.** After some river flats travel, we ascended towards Kiwi Saddle on a good track. A side-trip to Lake Marion provided us with a refreshing view, and Warren with a “dip opportunity” – I soon learnt that water and untracked bush seem to have an almost mystical attraction for Warren (“Warren...come here...go this way” I swear I faintly heard an elfen voice whisper at times). We found a great spot for lunch and, because of the heat, an extended midday siesta. The track then led to Lake Sumner, where Warren dipped again. Taking the lesser used track along the lake edge, we came out in the (grazed....Orcs...) river flats of the Hurunui River, and travelled on flat country again, partly on four wheel drive tracks, and still in the heat. We crossed the river to the true right and, after the track climbed briefly above the river, the last half

hour to Hurunui Hut was easy and shaded (Warren and Craig decided on another dip in the river 10 minutes before the hut). For me the day had been long enough (e.g. medium), the three Musketeers had done 12 hours from start to finish (okay, long siesta, dips and breaks). A pleasant surprise was that we had the hut to ourselves (20 bunk, new and in good order), only a couple of people tenting next to it.

Day three, we left the hut at about 7:30 towards “Number three” hut (three hours away) and the hot springs that lie halfway there. In a perfect bathing pool about 10m up from the track, Warren, Craig and I soaked our weary bones. Excellent, but followed by a mad dance to get dressed while the combined sandfly population of the Hurunui tried to get a feed off us. Onwards to No.3, and in view of the good weather quickly on to Cameron’s Hut (1 hour), where we stopped for lunch. We had met a keen solo tramper who had advised us that there was only the 2 bunk Harper Pass bivy left close to the actual Pass, but hoping the weather would hold we decided to push on. So we did another couple of hours with the riverbed narrowing and the track moderately climbing. Harper Pass bivy is located in a beautiful spot with a view of a waterfall and great bathing pools in the river (guess, what?). It had recently been painted and had near new mattresses. Not being too sure of the next days’ weather, we eventually all squeezed in and covered every square inch of floor space.

Thankfully, the weather was still good the next morning, else getting up and getting ourselves organized and packed would have been a ‘logistical nightmare’(quote Peter or Craig). The track now scrambled up to Harper Pass at 963 m, and as if on cue the clouds had come in so that the views from the top into the Taramakau valley were non-existent. Rather steeper now than on the Hurunui side the track descended a few hundred metres towards the river, and we did get a couple of views after all when some cloud lifted. A river crossing to the true left brought us to Locke Stream (No.4) Hut, which is a classic – having been restored “true to style” with a legacy left for that reason. After I commented that the disgusting looking toilet was out of style with the rest of the hut, Warren showed real leadership by grabbing brush and bucket and giving it a good clean (it was mould on the toilet seat, no worse..). Onwards we went and did a couple of hours of river travel with several pairs of feet starting to write letters of complaint to their owners. We reached Kiwi Hut, situated a few minutes off the track in a not particularly awesome location, but sore feet, threatening rain and other excuses determined that we stayed there. (...to be concluded next mth)

<sup>1</sup> e.g. wedding ring

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