



PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217, PALMERSTON NORTH

Newsletter - June 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.

May 27 La Perouse (see May newsletter)

June 10 Mt Tasman
Andrew Lynch

A slide show and talk on a successful climb of Mt. Tasman last November. New Zealand's second highest mountain, and considered to be our most beautiful. It is a committing and technical mountain to climb on any route, a real mountaineers' mountain.

June 17 Committee Meeting @ Peter's

June 24 Shishapangma, Tibet
Clive Jones

Shishapangma, Tibet with Clive Jones. Clive lives locally and climbs globally. His ascent of this 8027m peak involved surviving 5 nights at 7000m and an avalanche...no-one said it was going to be easy, but...

For lots more photos & trips, check out www.pntmc.org.nz

E-mail articles to doug.strachan@xtra.co.nz or post to 1 Worsfold Lane, Palm. North (by 20th of month)

TRIPS

Please contact the leader at least three days in advance. Trips leave from Countdown 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

May 30 Stanfield (see May newsletter)

June 5-7 Nydia Tk, Malb. Sounds E/M
(Queen's b'day) Janet Wilson 329 4722

A relaxing early winter weekend in the beautiful Marlborough Sounds. Departing Palmy Friday 4th to catch the 2pm sailing to Picton. Overnight there or Havelock. Next morning, start the Nydia track, overnighing along the way in a DOC Lodge or backpackers. On Sunday, walk the rest of the track, returning to Havelock for Sunday night. On Monday we may find something interesting to do before returning home on the 1.30pm sailing from Picton. The Nydia track is said to take a total of 10-12 hours so we shouldn't have to rush too much. Opportunities for shellfish gathering or fishing. Cost will be between \$150 and \$200 depending on ferry fares – I need to know if you are interested as soon as possible."

June 7 Manawatu Gorge Walkway E
(Mon) Duncan Hedderley 355 1820

Leave 8.30 from Countdown carpark for a great little walk just down the road from PN. Road and cars permitting, we will walk through from the Ashhurst end to Balance.

TRIPS contd...

June 12-13 Sunrise Hut E
Liz Morrison 357 6532

Leave 7am to beat the crowds and secure a bed at the hut. It's only a couple of hours to the hut, so there will be ample time for pottering around the saddle above the hut. Possible views of Ruapehu. This will be a laid back weekend that is also suitable for families, and new trampers. On Sunday, we'll have a nosey around the town of Ongaonga on the way home.

June 13 Rimutaka Incline MTB
Richard Lockett 323 0948

It's a 2hr drive to get there, so we'll leave at 7:30am. There's plenty of room to carry bikes. Anyone with a mountain bike can manage this trip as the terrain isn't too rough. If you don't want to cycle, you can always walk (about 4hrs) to the top of the incline and back, while the bikers go right across to Kaitoke and back. Torches will be needed for the half a km long tunnel. If we have time, and some steam left, a visit to the Sell Engine Museum is a possibility.

June 19-20 Mid-Winter Celebrations
Warren Wheeler

Depart 8.00am. All Social Climbers are invited to Mad Hatters High Tea on Mt Colenso on Saturday 19 June, to be followed by a Pot Luck Dinner Party at Kawhatau Base which will celebrate the Winter Solstice and coincidentally the Editor's 40th..."let them eat cake"... Celebrations will conclude with a Bad Taste Breakfast and the annual Polar Bear Club Dip on Sunday morning. Contact Warren for details on what to bring, 356-1998.

June 26-27 Holly Hut M
Malcolm Parker 357 5203

Up to Pouakai Hut (on Mt Egmont) for lunch, then on to Holly Hut with its solar-powered lighting. Should get there in time to whip down to the impressive Bell's Falls. Returning by same route on Sun. (This trip was originally scheduled for 29-30 May).

June 27 Hihitahi Forest E
Tony Gates 3577439

Hihitahi forest is just north of Taihape. There is one public access point thru the farmland and over the Hautapu River, then some interesting looking forest to explore. We hope to get some good views of Ruapehu. Depart 8.00 AM. BYO picnic lunch (but there are a few nice cafes in Taihape for before and afterwards).

July 3-4 Triangle Hut M/F
Janet Wilson 329 4722

The plan is to go up Deadman's Track to Mangahua, down the old track from here to the saddle on the track that bypasses part of the Oroua, and then up river to Triangle Hut for the night. Return from Triangle directly up to the tops, then along and down to Rangi Hut where we may meet up with the day trippers.

July 4 Rangi Hut E
Mick Leyland 358 3183

Leaving 7:30 to do the Deadman's loop. A western Ruahine's tramp.

July 10-11 Caving, Waitomo M
Graham Peters 329 4722

A chance for people to have a go at caving. Details in next newsletter or contact Graham.

July 11 Akatio Ramble E
Ian Harding 06 376 5707

Portal to the Past

April 1969 newsletter:

"...after giving Roger's boot some much needed attention with screw driver and tyre lever, we duly headed off."

Trip participants:

Contact the leader at least 3 days in advance. Trips leave from Countdown carpark. A charge for transport will be collected on the day. Leaders should be able to give an estimate in advance. For general info, or any suggestions for future tramps, please contact Terry Crippen (356-3588), Janet Wilson (329-4722) or Tony Gates (357-7439).

Trip leaders:

Please advise a trip coordinator, as soon as possible, if 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

Snowcraft, Subs Due, Track Status, Dear PNTMC, Phone Nos, Found

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES can be e-mailed to doug.strachan@xtra.co.nz or delivered to 1 Worsfold Lane, PN

SNOWCRAFT INSTRUCTION 2004 **Terry Crippen**

Winter is finally here, so you may be interested in the Club's snowcraft programme. This comprehensive programme has two aims: Firstly, to equip trampers with the necessary skills for safe travel in snow. Secondly; to pass on the fundamental skills for snow climbing and mountaineering. The programme consists of three weekends away (Friday night departure) a fortnight apart (on Ruapehu and Egmont) and three evening sessions prior to each weekend. A progressive approach is used, with Snowcraft 1 assuming little or no previous snow experience, and Snowcraft 2 and 3 building on the previous levels.

Most participants enrol in the complete programme, while others just in Snowcraft 1 and 2. Numbers are limited. Fees cover; transport, accommodation, most food, and technical equipment (there is a minor additional charge for non Club members needing to hire personal gear).

Dates and fees are as follows:
Close off date for applications is 12th August

Snowcraft 1 \$120 (\$125)
Weekend 21 - 22 August (evening Tues 17 Aug)

Snowcraft 2 \$135 (\$140)
Weekend 4 - 5 September (evening Wed 1 Sept)

Snowcraft 3 \$125 (\$130)
18 - 19 September (evening Wed 15 Sept)

One off discounted fee for full programme \$365 (\$380)
(* non PNTMC member rate)

For further info, costs and registration form contact;
Bruce van Brunt 328-4761 or Warren Wheeler 356-1998.

SUBS DUE

Please make your cheques out to PNTMC and mail to PO Box 1217, Palmerston North or hand directly to Peter Wiles at Club Night.

Individual sub \$30
Family sub \$35
Individual e-sub \$20
Family e-sub \$25

TRACK STATUS REPORT 05/05/2004

Check with DOC before planning any trips into the Ruahine Forest Park. For further road information, check the district council websites.

- **Manawatu Gorge Track: Now Open.** Structures have been stabilised and the track cleared.
- **Oroua Track to Heritage Lodge:** Passable with care. Some windfalls.
- **Heritage Lodge to Iron Gate Hut:** Slips on track.
- **Status of Rangiwahia hut: Open.** Slips have been benched for safe access.
- **Mid Pohangina Hut:** Sidle track has impassable slips at the start of the track (where it crosses Kevin Billet's farmland). Access is still possible upstream from the Piripiri Bridge.
- **Centre Creek Biv to Mid Pohangina Hut:** 2 major slips on track but can be passed.
- **Otukota Hut:** Big slips on track in from Mokai Station. These are difficult to cross, and extreme care is needed. Alternative route via Bruce Ridge.
- **Coppermine track: Closed until further notice.** This includes access to the Coppermine Loop, Wharite Peak and Billy Goat tracks.
- **Kawhatau Base:** Road access is single lane in places. Care is needed and 4WD is recommended.

"My two favourite women are Flora and Fauna."
Spike Milligan

DEAR WARREN AND THE PNMTC

This letter has often been thought about but never done, and it needs to be said – THANK YOU!! Some of you lot will remember me, and I owe a lot to some of you fellas cause you have played such an important role in helping me fulfil a dream. It was your tramping club that gave me the skills and the confidence to play and work in the outdoors, and to do something that I truly believe in for a living. Last November I finished my 2.5 yr contract as an Outward Bound instructor. This sort of work had been what I had dreamed about for many years – working with people in the outdoors to help them learn and to grow and to live. I vividly remember how nervous I was when Bruce Van Brunt took me on my first trip up Mt Taranaki – I very nearly pulled out, but it was the first of many amazing and awe inspiring trips into the mountains that I was to do with people from Palmy. It is the people like Bruce and Clive (Marsh) and Warren Wheeler (sorry I can't mention all of yous like the Terrys and Micks etc) with their unending patience and willingness to give of their own time to help others, that have had such an impact on my life – I owe you so much. Besides the joy that I experienced (often at the end of a trip rather than during actually!) while actually out there, I learnt so much. Your fantastic mountain craft trips taught me so much and gave me the ability to do something that I never thought I would do – climb Mt Cook (that's the one south of Wgtn!). And it was this in part that gave me the confidence to apply for the position at OB. In my position here I was able to help others find the joy and excitement and "stuff" that life can hold. There were some truly beautiful moments when I saw what students were getting out of the course and for that I thank you people that give up so much of your time to help and encourage others like me. Anyway, I could talk forever on what your club and the special individuals in it have given to my life, but I am going to end here. I am now living at Rarangi – a fantastic beach half way between Picton and Blenheim and at the moment am running an alternative Ed programme for "naughty" 13 – 16 yr olds – hummm! If any of you lot are passing by I would love to see you and offer you a patch of floor or grass on which to sleep (my house is very very tiny, but my section is big)! My phone no. is... and my address is (contact Warren if you want Maree's phone number, address, or e-mail addy. Ed)

Happiness, laughter and adventure always and a huge thank you from the bottom of my heart.
Maree Limpus.

NEW PHONE NUMBERS

Craig Allerby: 323 7913

Katherine Lauchland-Farquhar: 354-6594

FOUND

Green-coloured aluminium whistle in boot of my blue Renault 12. Contact Warren Wheeler 356 - 1998.

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.

Improve Your Upper-body Strength

To improve your ability to carry a pack, the following regimen to build upper-body strength is recommended.

Begin by standing straight, with a 2.5kg potato sack in each hand.

Extend your arms straight out from your sides and hold them there as long as you can. Try to reach a full minute. Then return your arms to your sides and relax.

After a few weeks, move up to 5kg potato sacks, and then 25kg potato sacks, and eventually try to get to where you can lift a 50kg potato sack in each hand and hold your arms straight out for more than a full minute.

After you feel confident at that level, start putting a couple of potatoes in each of the sacks, but be careful not to overdo it.

TRIP REPORTS

South Island, Hunterville Hills, Tunipo, Not Tama Lakes, Digger's, Maharahara, Bruce's Hill, Toka Circuit

Breakfast at Staveley's – South Island Easter Climbing Trip, 7-13 April By Anja Scholz

The guts of this trip was two days at Arthur's Pass followed by three days on the Mount Somers Walkway further south. We attempted two climbs: Philistine (Arthur's Pass) and Winterslow (Mt Somers Walkway). We turned back on Philistine but successfully got up Winterslow.

Staveley, a tiny settlement on State Highway 72 near the Mt Somers Walkway road-end is the perfect place to reflect on an Easter trip. Especially when it is Tuesday morning and you are sitting outside the Staveley café bathed in glorious Autumn sunshine facing a breakfast that even Terry concedes is great value for money!! For the record: bacon and eggs, tomatoes, unlimited toast and tea for three set us each back \$15. Removing ourselves from such bliss to head to the Ferry and home took some persuading. Oh yeah, we also had the complementary paper to catch up on the world since we last cared about it.

On the Bluebridge I tried to take Craig's mind off the fact he was seasick by coming up with titles for the Trip report. Terry didn't participate because he was sleeping under the table – and no, we didn't get a photo. Here are our picks that give some flavour to the trip:

1. Terry's furniture transport service
2. Breakfast at Staveleys
3. Philistines on the mount
4. Winter's-not-slow at the walkway
5. Three ways to burn a hut down
6. Sleeping at the Bus stop
7. Running with wasps
8. Lost: One hut one track
9. Hut interviewing: A how to guide by Terry Crippen

Terry unbeknown to me was in the second hand television business. Listening badly as I always do I thought originally we were going to Rangiora on our way through to Arthur's Pass to pick up Nigel Green – but no, we were delivering his telly! You see some bewildering sights on a Ferry and one of the more disconcerting was this family that had a 27 inch telly strapped into the back of their

econovan, replete with Xbox, so that junior could watch his favourite movie. Good sound though!! Rangiora meant dinner at 9pm and lots of grovelling so that the chippie would turn his "closed sign" around.

We arrived at Arthur's Pass and the NZ Alpine Club Hut at 11.30pm and were relieved to find that a Tongue & Meats party had also only just arrived so there was no round of apologies for waking everyone. We awoke to a light but persistent snow-storm but undeterred we packed and visited a concerned DoC person with our intentions: Temple Basin over Temple Col and down to Goat Pass Hut for a look at Mt Franklin and Mt Oates. By now it was snowing harder and the bus-driver gave us an even stranger look. Terry was revelling in this – certainly great entertainment for the rest of the folks on the bus for the trip up the road. At the Temple Basin ski area we could indeed confirm that it was still snowing and so reluctantly, after a compulsory brew of course, exercised caution as the greater part of valour and wandered back down to the road. Here it was our turn to enjoy others making fools of themselves. First up a Japanese couple with snow chains wrapped round their axle. He jumped out to inspect his chain while she popped out and opened the umbrella for him. You had to be there. Second was the Type "A" American chappie who was sliding his car backwards towards the village. He was cursing and blaming the cheap chains he had bought. We found his chain which was not broken – just poorly fitted. Never mind.

The following morning out of great optimism we sought out Mt Philistine up the Otira River Valley. Terry distinguished himself a) by taking the wrong track, and b) falling over and bruising his shin. I have seen that shin a dozen times now – it ain't pretty. He'll show if you want a look. Back on track and into the serious stuff we made our way onto the Bluffs of Philistine. The conditions were not flash, snow on tussock on rock. What should have been a relatively straightforward rock scramble turned into some slightly less than fun slides so we turned round. Like the previous day we had the late afternoon to drink pots of tea and marvel at the number of people in Arthur's Pass. Terry also gave a wonderful lecture on surveying, theodolites and the like, stimulated by my question about how you get the two ends of the

Otira train tunnel to meet. This was a highbrow trip.

We gave up on Arthur's Pass, so early Saturday we hoofed it to Staveley and the Mt Somers walkway. Springfield was a date with mediocrity with the worst café service ever experienced. Craig is still grumbling about the vegetarian pie he got when he was expecting venison. Craig the pie man. We tramped the newest aspect of the Mount Somers Walkway first which takes you round the eastern side of Mt Somers and was notable for the slow progress through the tussock. Not before, however, Terry's disposable nappy removal from the Sharplin Falls Roadend bog. You wouldn't believe how stuck it was Terry lamented. We stayed well away from that ice-axe!!

Close to Mt Somers Hut we chanced upon a couple who were making their way out due to the presence of the hordes (Scouts) at Mt Somers Hut and so with the prospect of fun and frivolity with adolescents we bivvied at the Bus Stop, a rock overhang which was only protective from a Southerly direction. A Northwester and we would in all likelihood get wet. Terry and Craig played engineers constructing flatter sleeping surfaces while I sourced water. Our night out was a treat with a clear night with little wind. Special mention, single women I hope you are reading this, Craig was the only one of us to remember to bring the Easter Eggs. "Extra weight" said Terry, "oops" said Lance. I actually berated Craig for making us look so uncaring and thoughtless. It might be true but we revel in delusion.

Pinnacle Hut must be one of DoCs most heavily used huts given its numerous advantages. The Canterbury rock climbing book devotes a chapter to the Mt Somers Walkway (based at Pinnacles Hut) for good reason. There is climbable rock coming out their ears. The two and a half hour walk in is obviously no deterrent. On arrival from the Bus Stop we had a bit of a snooze before doing a "reccy" onto Mt Winterslow. Straightforward it was not. First we realised that Terry's topo map had the track and Pinnacle Hut in completely different places, second Pony Knob which we thought would provide easy access onto Winterslow was bluffed as far as the eye could see. We found this out once we had dropped into the Bowyer Stream and not before

Terry had destroyed a wasp nest with Craig and I receiving a dozen stings between us.

Terry received not one sting and could not work out why I ran over the top of him in my efforts to

get away from them. Typically sympathetic he rummaged around for some anti-histamines but try as he might he couldn't get that smile off his face. "Cotton shirts" he tells us; "wasps can easily sting through that poly-pro you two are wearing." Thanks for the advice Terry. On the injury front we came out about even as Terry dinged his head the previous day and I managed a spectacular fall into a stream while Craig put up a stoic front with his sore knee.

The reconnaissance eventually showed us the simplest way onto Winterslow which we took without difficulty the following morning. The climb itself was straightforward: which suited Craig and I. Given the boundary fence on the summit it was not exactly K2 but we did get superb views of D'Archiac and Cook which by our maps were actually due West of our position. Something to do with NZ sitting on an angle as you would think it was actually South West. The slog home was used for map and compass work. Back at the hut we were visited upon by some non-trampers who had three goes at burning the hut down. First try involved leaving a candle to melt on the top of the pot belly and smoke us out. Second go was the Saturn rocket approach where the incorrect gas cannister was fitted to the burner. Try cooking on a burner perched one foot high on a tiny diameter cannister. The final go was to leave a large diameter log in the pot belly sticking out for a foot and then going to bed with the notion it would burn through like it was on a conveyor belt. Terry made some diplomatic suggestions that were not well received. As always we had the last laugh by getting out of the pit at a leisurely (by Terry standards) 6am and rustling as many plastic bags as possible. Our date with the Staveley café was before us and is still savoured by the three of us. A 7pm Bluebridge sailing equated with arriving in Palmy at 2am. We were Terry Crippen, Craig Allerby and Lance Gray.

Warren and Penny Souffot say "hi" to everybody. Call in down their way, Christchurch, Kaiapoi. They have a van for borrowing also. See Terry for details.

Storm Ravaged Hunterville Hills

17 April

By Ian Harding, in the company of:

Malcolm Leary (Leader), Edith Leary, Terry Crippen, Warren Wheeler, Lance Gray, Anja Scholz, Craig Allerby, Diana Caird, Monica Cantwell.

Departing P.Nth at 8am saw us reaching the Leary Hunterville farms by nine, where we were met by Malcolm and Edith at the second of their two properties.

Clear and sunny weather was the order of the day as we headed for the hills, stopping to view a substantial landslide that had spilled onto one of Malcolm's treasured flat paddocks, wiping out a fair slice of fence in the process. At this point we were able to inspect first-hand some of the fencing repair work done by fellow club member Lance Gray, who had volunteered his services to the Leary family. A considerate gesture well-received, clearly a man of many talents.

Onward and upward on recently cleared tracks, passing a lone Kahikatea (White Pine) tree abundantly laden with berries. Mention was made of them being edible; several partook in the resulting taste test.

Meeting a mob of inquisitive beef heifers on the way allowed Anja to portray to us her life-long fear of bovine creatures. Somewhat of an over-reaction (in the writer's view) given the docile nature of the beasts. At best, a sniffing at and a damn good licking would have been the worst possible fate endured. Obviously not a country girl.

Reaching a vantage point on the property (the back paddock) enabled commanding views of the surrounding Manawatu and Rangitikei farmland along with distinctive sights of Mt's Egmont and Ruapehu. Although scarred hillsides seemed to be the predominant feature. Unfortunately, the location also found favour with hordes of flying ants, creating an unwelcome distraction.

Dropping down to a lower ridge gave a bird's-eye view of a natural spring-fed lake. Quite a pleasant sight with an appealing shape, flanked with native bush and large enough in size to enable powerboats and associated activities. In fact, several of these such lakes exist within the region with a number of varying sizes being on or near the Leary properties.

A welcome lunch-break, but not before traversing a shear slip face and two barbed-wire fences; one minor casualty: a ripped pair of shorts (not the writer's).

Downhill towards the parked cars where in transit we were relayed some of the interesting local history, along with an explanation of the dynamics of the district water scheme to which the farm is connected.

A 6km drive to the "home" property, passing through some rather picturesque road-side poplar plantings exhibiting intense autumn colour. Stopping briefly at the house to top-up water bottles, we were joined by son John, who has recently returned to rural life after a period of doing the "city thing."

The afternoon excursion began by heading up the main gully behind the house, passing a native bush remnant containing many specimen trees. It wasn't long before we were greeted with the same wide-spread destruction as witnessed earlier in the day. However, one interesting aspect pointed out, and not usually considered, was the resulting heavy silt build-up around the bases of a group of isolated White Pine trees in the gully floor. If left undisturbed, tree death would ultimately result. In this case Malcolm had employed a machine digger to remove the deposit, thus ensuring tree survival. Indeed a worthy candidate for the "Green Award" (yet to be conceived).

The skyline was soon attained, with more of those talked-about lakes clearly visible. Though, perhaps of more significance was the chance to appreciate the extent of commercial Radiata Pine plantings in the area, best described as immense, with much of it in foreign ownership.

On the home straight, eventually reaching the road where a lone quince tree provided ample fruit for those interested in filling their packs.

Back to the house for a welcome "cold-one," where everyone gained much delight in the inquisitive antics of two 6wk old Hunterway pups recently acquired. *A well catered for barbecue followed that even included pavlova and fruit salad for afters.*

While relaxing after the splendid meal, we were given the chance to peruse the Leary's extensive photograph collection and hear some of the more memorable outdoor experiences shared over the years with family and friends.

On closing I would like to thank Malcolm and Edith for making the effort, and taking the time, to show us their property, and for extending such generous hospitality, thoroughly enjoyed and admirably appreciated I'm sure by those in attendance.

Tunupo, 18 April

By Neil Campbell

The party consisted of: Warren Wheeler, Mick Leyland, Doug Strachan, Angela Hartman, Katrin Daehnel, Anja Scholz, Lance Gray, Neil Campbell and Barbara Mare.

Tunupo is a prominent peak located on the western side of the Ruahine Ranges. We left Palmerston North at 7.30am passing through Kimbolton and Apiti on the way to the road end. There was very little driving on unsealed roads and the small amount of unsealed road was in good condition. We reached the road end at about 8.50am. *There was an unfortunate incident at the road end* when our leader, Anja Scholz, shut her finger in the car door. We were in the fortunate position of having enough cars to allow Anja and Lance to retire from the walk and drive back to Palmerston North Hospital. Warren took over as leader.

Once we started out on the track we enjoyed fine weather and good views. The track is in good condition and passes through very pleasant beech forest. It was a reasonably steep ascent and once on the open tops the wind picked up and the cloud came in. Some parts of the track are close to steep drops and so with the wind a degree of caution had to be used. At the top we had a quick lunch before heading down again. Once we had lost a bit of altitude it became warm and pleasant again.

We had the traditional drink at Kimbolton and then headed back to Palmerston North. Thanks go to Anja and Warren for leading a most enjoyable walk.

Tama Lakes – Not this time

ANZAC Day

By Peter Wiles

Team:- Peter Wiles (organizer), Katrin Daehnel, Trevor King, Martin Lawrence, Heather Purdie, Anja Scholz, Yuko Watanabe.

Seven arrived at the Chateau at about 9 a.m. Steady rain and a temperature of 8°C suggested that Tama Lakes would be a bleak, cold, miserable spot that day.

Where to go to avoid the worst of the rain – a tramp through the bush seemed like an attractive

idea – where? – the southern side of Ruapehu looked kinder as we drove past it.

We got changed under cover before getting back into our cars and returning to Ohakune where we enjoyed a snack and coffee at a café that was open that morning.

Only very light rain was falling at the Blythe Track car park – hardly sufficient to bother with a parka once in the bush – much better than at the Chateau. (An alternative was to investigate the Lake Surprise track, however, this, like the Tama Lakes track, is largely over open ground with little shelter, so we took the Blythe track.)

We enjoyed a well-paced walk, stopping at various points for photographs up to Blythe Hut, which we reached at midday. The rain had stopped altogether now and a suspicion of some sun emerged. The hut was empty, surprisingly, and was immaculately tidy.

After lunch we continued up the track that heads onto open country before petering out. Peter's intention was to strike across country at the appropriate stage to reach the MUAC hut and the road. Unfortunately, having not taken this route for more than a decade, Peter couldn't accurately recall the directions. No matter, all routes westwards (within reason) must eventually reach the road at one point or another. Cloud threatened to restrict our visibility at various stages, but held back. We reached the road just below the Turoa car park, only a good kilometer from our MUAC target! In the process a couple of P. Contorta were spotted and eradicated (note Janet W).

We reached the car park around 3 p.m., returned to Ohakune for another coffee before heading to Palmy.

Diggers Hut, 25 April (ANZAC Day)

By Warren Wheeler

We were Duncan Hedderley, Janet Wilson, Lynne Atkins, Mick and Marion Leyland (logistics), Steven Knutson and Natasha Sitarz (logistics), Tim Swale (logistics) and Warren Wheeler (leader and embedded reporter).

After some initial confusion this trip went on Anzac Day as listed on the Events Card, not Saturday as advertised in the Newsletter. I hope that didn't upset too many people – as it was we had seven troops fall in at 0800hrs for this voluntary expedition force, plus two sets of reinforcements who rendezvoused en route – a

total of nine personnel keen to reconnoiter the shattered "war-zone" following the devastating assault across the rural landscape in February. Fortunately the sappers had pushed a rough route through the debris and after gathering intel from command base at the end of Arbons Road we set off at a steady pace uphill and along the long ridge reminiscent of bloodier campaigns on Chunuk Bair.

The threatening clouds finally unleashed a light drizzle as we entered rain forest reminiscent of that which faced the Chindits in Burma and our lads in the Pacific Campaign.

We dropped steeply down the slippery trail into the Makawakawa Valley, and after crossing the stream without drawing sniper fire we reached the safety of Diggers Hut.

After the 2 hour tramp in, the troops enjoyed a spot of R&R and tucked into their ration packs before the Last Post was sounded and we decamped downstream.

Travel in the rocky streambed was nerve-racking, with a high ambush potential from the forested valley sides and large boulders en route. A few of our platoon were felled occasionally but the wounds were largely self-inflicted and minor, and fortunately no medi-vac was required.

Sunny patches cheered our crew as we followed in the wet footsteps of our lead scout, Mick, who called lunch break and smoko at beautiful resting spots he had secured for the rest of us "grunts". The forested sides eventually gave way to steep marginal pasture savagely scarred by what appeared to be have been missile fire and that had trapped several of the locals high above us. With heavy hearts we left them to their fate and continued onwards with steely resolve.

Our lead scout finally hailed us from the right bank where the valley floor opened out and he quickly proceeded to deliver us past the blackened remains of an upturned bathtub (a sad reminder of happier days), across a swamp, up the precipitous banks (so vaguely reminiscent of Gallipoli), on to the high terrace and back to our vehicles.

After a quick but thorough debrief we slipped into our civvies, loaded up and were away by 1530 hours, having taken just under 3 ½ hours from Diggers (Intel as usual was suspect, with 4 for average and 4 ½ for slow parties).

R&R at the Waterford seemed to be appreciated by all, after what had been adventure enough for this Anzac Day. Lest we forget.

Maharahara Crossing, 2 May By Craig Allerby

We were Anja Scholz, Warren Wheeler, Yuko Watanabe, and Craig Allerby.

The weather wasn't looking that good for the weekend, so decided to change the trip to a Maharahara summit and return. As it turned out, the weather was a bit claggy Sunday morning, and the tops of the Ruahines were clouded over. Not very inviting. Nonetheless, we headed off and were trudging across the farmland at about 8:45am.

The beautiful, serene silence of the morning was broken by the sound of some paradise ducks. Warren started mimicking their calls and then started interpreting what they were actually saying!

Avoiding crossing the swamp and getting muddy boots, we detoured around it, went up a different spur joining the main ridge, and headed to Opawe Hut. Strangely enough it was quite muggy, so we stripped off a layer at the hut.

It's a good climb of 700m over 3km to the summit of Maharahara from Opawe Hut. So off we plugged at 1.5km an hour. On reaching the summit, the weather had changed to cold and unpleasant and, as it was only just after 11am, we decided to consume only half our lunch. Anja told us of Lance having purchased a rolling mat and a book on making sushi and doing an impressive job of making some for their dinner last week. Warren asked Yuko if she makes sushi to which she replied, "No, it's too easy!" Maybe Lance or Yuko could give us a demonstration one club night. Would be good for lunch on a day trip.

On the descent, we finished off the remainder of our lunch where Warren had spotted a large orange marker on the way up. This marked the start of an alternative track back down. We bowled on down it and though it was a bit overgrown, it had been well-marked by DOC. Finished the day off with coffees and cake at the Waterford.

Bruce's Hill, 9 May

By Douglas BRUCE Strachan

I've heard of people pulling birds, but on this day it was a case of birds pulling people, 16 of them in fact! As I write, Chris is notifying the Guinness Book of Records. There to savour the weather, birds, and views were: Duncan Hedderley, Leal Jones, Katrin Daehnel, Doug Strachan, Warren Wheeler, Malcolm Parker, Cale Olsen, Grant Floyd, Monica Cantwell, Elaine Hervé, Diana Caird, Terry Crippen, Fiona Donald, Amanda Simpson, Ian Harding, and our leader Chris Saunders.

We parked in the soggy carpark, confident that we had ample people to extract any vehicle that might get stuck.

Chris impressed us all by introducing all 16 of us as we stood in a circle before starting the climb. We could see many Kaka circling above the bush. Perhaps Chris thought they were vultures as he gave us a lecture about not straying from the group. Perhaps we should have all worn radio transmitters, which I later discovered some of the Kaka were wearing.

Before we could get going, there was quite a discussion about who would get the coveted position at the tail-end of the party. Terry forged himself a role here. He said something about looking after people who fall behind to take a pee.

Terry also pointed out that Bruce's Hill, commonly but incorrectly referred to as Mt Bruce, should not be called Bruce Hill as another hill already has this name. Paradoxically, the real Mt Bruce is below Bruce's Hill. It's all a bit confusing, and we were just glad that Bruce didn't come on this trip to further complicate matters.

On the way up Mt Bruce, I mean Bruce Hill, er... Bruce's Hill, we found a clearing with magnificent views. Chris named all the peaks, which just proves the thing he did with people's names in the carpark wasn't a fluke.

After two and a half hours, we reached the summit, which is in the bush. Some of us made our foot connect with the metal peg in the ground just to reassure ourselves that we had truly reached the summit.

We continued on to a lunch spot that Chris had sussed out on an earlier visit. It was ideal. We put on sunscreen and ate lunch while enjoying panoramic views.

Throughout the day there were conversations about what huts people reckoned they could see over on the main range, abusive phone callers, and the ever popular "should I get a digital camera?" Katrin told us about an odd German custom called *Polterabend* whereby people smash crockery outside the door of people who are about to marry! Presumably this is to teach them how to clean up broken crockery, ready for the day when the married couple starts throwing dishes at one another.

On the way out, we took photos of blue Dianella berries, and a Kahikatea laden with fruit. Lots of ripe Tawa berries explained the presence of wood pigeons. The Coprosma bushes were smothered with fruit too. The fruit, and abundant predator traps, make this area a real sanctuary for birds.



15, Plus Elaine Behind the Camera



Insect Admiring Kahikatea Fruit

We rounded off the trip with a visit to the Mt Bruce National Wildlife Centre café. Katrin and I nipped over to the 3pm Kaka feeding session, where the Kaka come to get a date (or corn etc). The birds with transmitters attached obviously thought they were a cut above the rest.

A big thanks to Chris for not losing 16 untagged Kiwis (some party members have been made honorary Kiwis here), and for arranging such a fabulous day.

Toka Circuit, 16 May

By Duncan Hedderley

We were, Anja Scholz, Lance Gray, Doug Strachan, Katrin Daehnel,, Mick and Marion Leyland, Neil Campbell, Heather Purdie, Cale Olsen, Natalie Moreitz, Yuko Watanabe and Duncan Hedderley.

Driving out past Feilding, *Doug was explaining to Katrin the difference between 'sniffing' and 'snivelling'. Lance suggested we remember this for the trip report, as it would probably be the most noteworthy thing on the trip.* Shows how much he knows.

Table Flat roadend lived up to its reputation - we got out of the cars and immediately put on several extra layers because it was so cold. Ten minutes along Shorts Track, sheltered from the wind, people were stopping to take it off again. A little later there was a clear-as-the-roof-of-the-house-across-the-road view of Ruapehu, and we took the opportunity for a photo stop, since the tops were shrouded in clouds.

Half an hour later we got into the mist, and the gusts of wind were more noticeable. Half an hour after that I first spotted ice in the tree branches. Then we got out onto the leatherwood and tussock; it looked like ice sculpture, there was so much drizzle frozen to it. The wind came and went, with drizzle and a vengeance. Everyone stopped to put gear back on.

We carried on in this for just over an hour, past the rain gauge at the top of Shorts Track and along the ridge to Toka. The cloud meant we could not judge our progress, just aim for the next pole on the poled route. Thanks to shepherding by Anja, Doug and Lance, the group stayed reasonably close together. I was fairly cold and very glad when we got to a V of poles and Anja said this was the way down. As soon as we dropped off the ridge the wind disappeared; and surprisingly soon we were below the ice level.

Coming down Knights Track was uneventful. We got spread out, so at the bottom Mick and Marion took the drying-feet across-farmland route, while

I tried a short cut and ended up leading Yuko to the Umutoi Road car park.

At the cars, the sun was shining, though the tops were still in cloud. Later, at Kimbolton, the cafe was open and the fire going. No-one snivelled on the way back.



Give Me a Break



Iced Tree Anyone?

Club Patron	Lawson Pither	357 3033	
President	Warren Wheeler	356 1998	warren.wheeler@horizons.govt.nz
Vice President	Terry Crippen	356 3588	bluesky_tramping@clear.net.nz
Secretary	Dave Grant	357 8269	gaewyn.grant@xtra.co.nz
Treasurer & Webmaster	Peter Wiles	558 6894	p.wiles@wiles.gen.nz
Membership Enquires	Warren Wheeler	356 1998	warren.wheeler@horizons.govt.nz
	Anja Scholz	356 6454	a.scholz@massey.ac.nz
	Mick Leyland	358 3183	
Gear Custodian	Mick Leyland	358 3183	
Newsletter Editor	Doug Strachan	353 6526	doug.strachan@xtra.co.nz
Trip Co-ordinators	Terry Crippen	356 3588	bluesky_tramping@clear.net.nz
	Janet Wilson	329 4722	jwilson@inspire.net.nz
	Tony Gates	357 7439	leatherwood@pcconnect.co.nz
Aides de Camp	Andrew Lynch	325 8779	atlynch@ihug.co.nz
	Bruce van Brunt	328 4761	B.vanBrunt@massey.ac.nz
	Alasdair Noble	356 1094	a.d.noble@massey.ac.nz