

Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.

www.pntmc.org.nz

P.O. Box 1217, Palmerston North

Newsletter September 2012



Sparrowhawk Biv, Ruahine Range up from Maropea Forks Hut [Chris Tuffley]

Club Nights

All are welcome to our club nights. These are held at 7:45pm on the second and last Thursday of each month at the Society of Friends Hall, 227 College Street, Palmerston North.

13 September

What's Up, DoC

Andrew Mercer

Andrew will give us a round up of local DoC issues particularly regarding the potential impacts of reduced funding on huts and tracks in the Ruahine Forest Park and how we can be involved.

27 September

Photograph Competition

Martin Lawrence

For details of our Annual Club Photo Competition see the Notices section inside.

1 October

Interclub Debate

PNTMC and MUAC teams will be competing for the Old Boot Trophy. 7.00pm Vet Tower Lecture Theatre.

2 October

Interclub Quiz

See Notices inside.

Contributions to the newsletter: Send by the 20th of each month to Tony Gates, the newsletter editor, at kiwi@leatherwood.co.nz, or via <http://www.pntmc.org.nz/mail/>

Upcoming Trips

1 September

Living Legends planting day All
Janet Wilson (contact) 329 4722

As with last year in the Manawatu Gorge, this is community volunteer work organised by DoC to check on some re-vegetation work.

1-2 September

Waterfall Hut F
Derek Sharp 323 3028

In the upper Kawhatau Valley and central Ruahines, Waterfall Hut is a special place. It is an historic DOC hut with good access to and from lots of areas.

2 September

Herepai Hut M
Malcolm Parker 357 5203

This is a pleasant Tararua forest stroll behind Eketahuna, with good access to the tussock tops, and great views.

8- 9 September

McKinnon Hut M
Dave Grant 357 8269

This hut on the northern end of the Hikurangi Range is always a popular destination, with great tussock tops and views all around. Access is from Kawhatau Base via the novelty of a river cableway. Leave Milverton Park 7.30am.

9 September

Zekes Hut M
Peter Wiles 358 6894

This new hut, located in a forgotten corner of North Island forest near Taihape, will be a lovely spring time destination. There is a good track there (maybe a bit muddy), and views of Ruapehu, the Ruahines, etc.

15 (Sat) September

Rangi Hut E/ M
Woody Lee 357 2390

A nice track leads to the hut and tussock tops where we will have great views of the Ruahines and snow-covered Ruapehu. This track also provides some interesting scenery such as an active slip, arched wooden bridge opened by Helen Clark, and a pretty waterfall. Join in for a lovely spring day out. Depart 8am from Milverton Park.

15-16 September

Parks Peak Hut E/ M
Kathy Corner 356 8186

We will leave at 8am. This is an easy-medium trip to a new six-bunk hut in the north-eastern Ruahines. It is only a 2-3 hour walk with a bit of a climb. This should be a cruisey weekend with time to read and admire the view, and superb

weather of course! Also two birthdays to celebrate on this trip (if Warren comes) so bound to be some wine!

21- 22 September

Tappy and Alarm, Kaikoura F/ T
Malcolm Leary 06 327 7825

This will be the same as previous trips to the Seaward Kaikoura Range, as a long weekend departing Friday morning, and returning Monday evening. We plan to take the Inter Islander, then rent a vehicle. This trip is weather dependant because the access route to the hut is up the Hodder River, crossing it some 70 times. With luck and determination, we can climb both peaks in one day from the hut. Come prepared for the alpine environment. This is an ideal climb for graduates of our Snowcraft course.

23 (Sunday- changed from Trip Card date)

Sledge Track E
Janet Darragh 353 0922

A pleasant riverside track up the Kahuterawa Valley, in good Tararua bush. Distance depends on group fitness, with the possibility of tramping up the hill to the Platinum Mines. Several good lunch and picnic areas en route.

22-23 September

Waikamaka Hut M
Richard Lockett 323 0948

In from North Block Road end, up the Sunrise track and down the Waipawa Forks track, then up and over the Waipawa Saddle and down stream to the well appointed Waikamaka Hut. Option for return over the tops via Sunrise Hut if weather and snow conditions suit.

29-30 September

Hinerua Hut-Smiths Stream M
Martin Lawrence 357 1695

Located in the Ruahines in Southern Hawkes Bay, in the Tukituki River headwaters, these huts are both cosy and historic. There will be plenty of opportunity to nick up onto the tops near Hinerua Hut for some great views of Sawtooth Ridge and the high peaks near Sunrise Hut.

30 September

No 1 Line Explorer E/M
Peter Darragh 353 0922

DoC have a new and very easy circuit track near the car park at No 1 Line, then the main track up a short, sharp climb to the lookout seat. We could return down the stream (around the giant waterfall), or just enjoy the Ruahine bush.

6- 7 October

Kaweka Tramp E/ M
Geoff Beaumont 354 4929

Lovely country, with great huts and tracks. Longer day hours will make for a pleasant tramp.

Trip Grading

Trip grades depend on many factors, especially weather and terrain. A reasonably proficient trumper should expect 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):	over 8 hrs

Other grades:

Technical skills (T)
Instructional (I)

Trip participants

Contact the leader at least 3 days in advance. Trips leave from Milverton Park. A charge for transport will be collected on the day.

Gear for trips

Minimum gear for day trips is appropriate footwear, pack, lunch and snacks, waterproof jacket, overtrousers, gloves, warm hat, torch, toilet paper, matches or a lighter, sunblock, first aid kit, and a survival bag or space blanket. Each person needs to be equipped to survive overnight.

Trip leaders

Complete the trip intentions form and leave with one of Overdue Trip Contacts or drop into 44 Dahlia St. If you are unable to run your trip as scheduled, advise a trip coordinator as soon as possible so that alternatives can be arranged.

Overdue Trips

If a club trip is late returning, please do not worry unduly as there is probably a good reason for the delay. If you are in any doubt, please phone one of the Overdue Trip Contacts:

Tony Gates	357 7439
Janet Wilson	329 4722
Martin and Anne Lawrence	357 1695

PNTMC Photo Competition

27 September

NB - date changed from 13 September

Rules

- Only digital entries accepted
- No previous entries
- Images must be related to tramping, climbing, trekking
- Limit 3 images per category (per person)
- Images must be clearly labelled

Categories

Alpine NZ
Scenic NZ
Natural History
Topical NZ
Overseas tramping/ alpine
Overseas people

Deadline

Entries due ASAP, so that they can be given to our judge. These can be provided either by pen drive, CD, or email. Contact Martin Lawrence on 357-1695 or martin.lawrence.nz@gmail.com

Notes

There is a prize for the overall winning image. It is anticipated that the winning images will be entered in the Interclub Photo Competition (Thursday 11 October 2012) and the FMC Photo Competition 2012. In addition, some of these images may be used to promote PNTMC. Please indicate if you do not want your images used in these activities. Images remain the property of the photographers.

Annual Interclub Quiz

TSC is hosting the Annual Interclub Quiz on their Tuesday club night at 7.30pm, Rose City Aquatic Club Rooms (to the right of the Lido pool entrance). Come along and make up a team for a fun night out competing against MUAC and MTSC for the coveted Trevor Bissell Memorial Billy Trophy.

DoC Update August 2012

Heavy frosts have caused problems with the pipes on the water tank at Purity Hut. Water cannot be guaranteed here, and trampers should note that there is no other water source here.

DoC are expecting to soon open the 'Big Slip Track' to view the slip from the Manawatu Gorge Track. There is a lookout over the slip site.

Takapari Road has been repaired and is once again suitable for 'shiny' 4WDs as far as the A-Frame shelter.

Notices

Conservation Award for Club Member

Each year, DOC gives regional Conservation Awards to people who have been doing great work for conservation in our communities. The awards are an opportunity for DOC to recognise and show their gratitude for the effort that individuals and organisations are putting in to conservation work, usually over a long-term and "behind-the-scenes".

This year, Janet Wilson has been chosen as a recipient for this award, to show DOC's appreciation for her involvement in conservation work through volunteer projects such as Te Potae O Awarua over the years, but particularly for taking on the role to coordinate the Oroua stoat line and breathing new life into this project.

The award will be presented to Janet at club night on 13 September.

Help Stop the Glenorchy Tunnel by Terry Crippen

A private company has plans to dig a tunnel from near Glenorchy (Dart-Rees area) through to the Hollyford Valley, to enable tourist buses to connect Queenstown to Milford Sound and shorten the travel time rather than going via Te Anau. The tunnel will only be available to specific commercial buses. The tunnel will be cut through the World Heritage area of Fiordland National Park (and possibly Aspiring National Park). The Department of Conservation has given its approval to the scheme and all that is needed is for the Minister of Conservation to give her approval. She will be doing this very soon!

There is an on line petition that you can sign to attempt to stop this crazy plan:

<https://www.change.org/petitions/stop-plans-to-dig-up-fiordland-national-park-in-new-zealand-for-a-private-use-tunnel>

And a FaceBook page for further information:

<http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/People-Against-the-Milford-Dart/122229837886973>

Meanwhile, by the time this newsletter is out we will probably know what the Minister of Conservation has decided on the proposal for a monorail to cut across the nearby Livingstone-Greenstone areas!

From the Committee Table

We have made progress with negotiations with DoC about the club taking on the management of Mid-Pohangina and Ngamoko huts, and sharing in managing Rangiwahia hut. The contract documents produced originally by DoC needed significant changes to be acceptable to us. We are now comfortable with signing them. Once these are signed by Anne as president, the signage at all three huts will need to be changed to reflect the club's involvement. Our first major project will be a spring clean of mid-Pohangina hut on the weekend of 13/14 October... we want all hands on deck so put the date in your diary now!

You will also remember that this situation has arisen because of constraints in DOC funding, and a change in DOC emphasis to higher use front country facilities has meant that DOC will now only maintain about 50% of Ruahine backcountry assets. Anne and Janet, with reps from other tramping clubs and deerstalkers branches from the wider region, have been meeting with DOC PN to put a user group slant on the ranking of Ruahine huts and tracks for continuing DOC maintenance. One of the

outcomes so far is the formation of a Ruahine User Group.

Anne, Tony and Dave have met with our MP, Ian Lees- Galloway, and Dave also made a presentation to the Wellington Hawkes Bay Conservation Board to make them aware of our concerns about the future of the Ruahine backcountry huts, tracks and bridges under current DOC policies.

Federated Mountain Clubs (of which we are a member) have just released the 11th edition of the classic backcountry handbook "Safety in the Mountains". Your committee have decided to do a bulk order provide all PNTMC members with a copy. You will notice major changes in the presentation.

The club's Snowcraft courses have been completed under the very able leadership of Terry and Bruce. 3 students attended Snowcraft 1, 11 attended Snowcraft 2, and 9 attended Snowcraft 3.

New Member

Welcome to new member Kelly Holland. His phone number is 357-0680.

Book Review

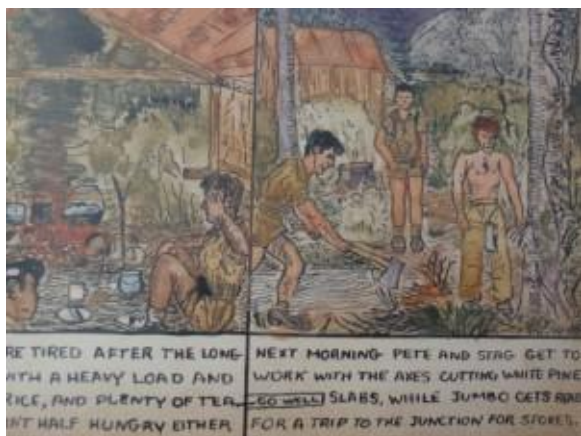
Stag Spooner, Wild Man from the Bush.
The story of a New Zealand Hunter-Artist.
By Chris Maclean (2012). Craig Potton Publishing
\$50.00, 240 pages, hard cover.
Reviewed by Tony Gates

Chris Maclean is well known for his "Tararua" book, as well as other award winning volumes, including "John Pascoe" and "Kapiti". His latest, reviewed here, is the story of a Wairarapa boy and family man in the 1930's and 1940's who learned to hunt the Tararuas, illustrate his many trips there, then continue with his wonderful art work whilst a deer culler in the Southern Alps and a soldier in World War Two. On his return to New Zealand, Stag (Neville) Spooner continued to hunt and produce art, then met an untimely death in Fiordland in 1946.

Of the numerous books available, both in and out of print, there are far more hunting books than tramping books. Government ex-deer cullers often feature. Most of those books, plus those of any other outdoor activity such as mountaineering, are text and photographs. Stag Spooners' story is different. Chris Maclean presents a few well written biographical chapters, with much of the book an illustrated story of what this character got up to. Stag drew

and coloured remarkable annotated cartoons (he called some of these tattooed envelopes) of track cutting in the Tararuas, deer culling in the Whitcombe Valley, and life in between.

His art work developed rapidly, and the war exploit illustrations are obviously a valuable record of the time. He made a post card when the allies liberated Rome from the Germans, and arranged printing of these. He sold thousands of copies. Stag Spooner had immense potential as an artist.



Chris Maclean writes of the historical and cultural significance of Stag Spooner's work, and compares its discovery to that of finding long lost works by old masters. For those interested in the Tararuas, the Southern Alps, hunting, and World War Two, we are extremely lucky that the Spooner family kept most of Stags' works.

I was lucky enough to attend the book launch recently, at the Masterton Art Gallery. There was an entire hall filled with displays of Stag Spooner's work, and enlargements of various drawings. There was even a life sized studio portrait of the man himself before his departure to the war. Mounted Tararua stags featured, with Stag's best trophy on display. Also displayed in museum style were Stag's wooden carvings, which included an intricate wooden medal named the "D T W M", or Distinguished Tararua Walking Medal (conceived at the battle of El Alamein and based on various military medals), and a German 8 mm rifle smuggled into New Zealand inside a very fat walking stick carving made to look like a work of art. This exhibition is on until the end of September 2012.

Another new book out now is the story of Ralph Wood. Written and published by his grandson Paul Wood, it tells of tramping the Tararuas, then Wood's tragic death on the slopes of Twin Peak, Waiopahu during the great storm of 1936. His memorial is located next to the track.

Trip Reports

8 July
Fern Walk, Pohangina
Report and photos by Janet Darragh



The Fern walk is an easy track just off the main road on the way to Totara Reserve in the Pohangina Valley. I looked on the DOC website, and other similar sites, but couldn't find a useful map. If anyone has a detailed map of the Pohangina tracks could you let me know where to find it?

So anyway, I had to rely on my memory of two past trips and our combined local knowledge. We were a team of five: Ping, Coco, Warren, Peter and myself, not forgetting Marty, our three legged dog. We left Milverton park around 9am and set out through Ashhurst to the beautiful Pohangina. The day was overcast with rain expected but we hoped it would hold off a while. As we started our walk along the track we heard a cacophony of screeching coming from above us. It turned out to be a group of paradise ducks up in the kahikatea trees having one noisy fracas. I've seen one or two ducks in the bush,

but 4-6 at once is a bit unusual. Once they eventually had finished their scrapping, and flown off, the natural peace of the bush returned. Along this track magnificent old trees can be seen - thick trunked kahikatea, rimu, tawa, and I was pleased to see a good thick growth and variety of ferns and plenty of bird song. Certainly seems the vermin are under control here.

Warren educated and entertained us by sharing his knowledge of ferns and fungus, in his usual amusing fashion, while I tried to keep Marty out of the muddy patches on the track. I was really only thinking of the state of my car on the way home. He is a good little trumper and does so well, but can get grubby from his adventures.

We enjoyed the changing views as we gained height and stopped at the highest point to gaze out at the valley. From there we spotted a couple of native pigeons (kereru). Eventually hunger pangs overcame our enthusiasm for nature and we stopped to have lunch on a grassy patch over looking the river flowing some distance below. Luckily the rain held off and we enjoyed a relaxing time chatting while tucking into our lunches. Once our tummies were filled, we set off again to complete our journey. The track continues on for some time through a grassy area where flax (harakeke) and cabbage trees grow on either side. It then comes out onto a gravel road for a short distance, and heads back into the bush. Once here you know it's near the end. The last few metres we emerged out onto the main road and walked the short distance back to the car park.

Once damp boots were removed we hopped in the car and headed to the "Waterford" for a refreshing coffee (or a beer for some). Before we got there though I remembered a place up the hill opposite the Pub I thought everyone would enjoy. It's a place I used to take my kids when they were young and not too many people know about it. There is a short walk up to the vantage point, and once there a fabulous vista opens up. The view encompasses the Pohangina landscape including the Ruahine ranges and a glimpse of the windmills as well. I was right, they did enjoy it and the cameras came out. Then the Waterford and that hot coffee beckoned. Thanks guys for your company on a really enjoyable trip.

14 July
Burn Hut
Report and photos: Woody Lee

Dave picked me up on the way to the Milverton Park and we met Russell there. On a warm and calm morning just three keen trampers headed off to Shannon for a day tramp. Another three were supposed to join us but they withdrew at

the last minute.



Woody, Dave, and Russell at Burn Hut

They showed their intentions a few days earlier and one of them wanted to take a dog so I contacted the local DOC office and it was ok because there was no pest control operation in that area.

When we drove past the hydro power station behind Shannon the water level of the Mangahao White Water Park was amazingly low and there were no kayakers around. We arrived at the Mangahao No 2 reservoir for the tramp shortly after the Tokomaru No 3 reservoir. We soon walked into the dark bush track after a few photographs around the dam and then crossed a wooden bridge and three little creeks to reach to a tiny lookout. Dave showed us an old rusty wire hanging down to the stream after crossing the bridge and I imagined how hard it would have been to climb up the steep hill back to the track with bare hands before the bridge was built. The lookout did not provide a great view but we enjoyed a quick break with a snack.

When we came out of the bush I saw two red roof buildings on the far right spur (the smaller one should be a toilet block and it seemed too far from the hut) and it was easy going to the hut. We saw thick rain clouds moving in from the north and it soon started raining but then the rain started pouring down when we arrived at the hut. The Burn hut is a cosy and nice place with great views from the windows. The time was 11.30 am - definitely too early for lunch but we sat down and had lunch with hot drinks (we all brought thermo bottles!)

When we came out of the hut after lunch, the rain was easing but there was still strong wind and mist in the ridge so our pace was a bit slow until we reached the College stream. The stream was not deep but we soon got wet feet from crossing it and we did a lot of climbing over slippery rocks rather than rock hopping until the Baber Creek junction. A large open area was seen there and it looked like it was dry season

as the water level was low. We spent some time hanging around the dam and found a manufacturing year of 1928 from a piece of equipment in the dam. We walked down the 4 km metal road to the vehicle at dam 2. Many thanks to Dave for the leading this nice trip and Russell for the company.

We were Dave Grant, Russell Watts, Woody Lee



At the top Mangahao dam.

21- 22 July

**Triangle Hut- the making of a legend (maybe)
Report: Graham Peters, photo: Woody Lee**

A mid-winter trip to Triangle with Michael Allerby seemed like a good idea, especially as the the snow conditions that people had found trying a couple of weeks before had moderated. Five of us headed up the Deadmans track on the Saturday morning - the Allerby twins, Woody, Janet and myself. The weather forecast was good and we were full of optimism for the weekend. Rather than go in and out via the cut track it was decided to go in via the route that heads south off Mangahaia. This would have the benefit that we could check the stoat traps in the Oroua river on the way. We had first lunch in the leatherwood and made good time to the tops and down the other side. There was a bit of confusion on the best route in the transition zone between the leatherwood and the bush proper but all routes lead to the saddle. There we had a bite to eat and while Janet and Craig headed south to check those traps on the track to the Oroua, Mike, Woody and I headed north checking the traps. The river was at a good level for travel but cold, and as you're in it often with the many crossings, our feet were pretty soon numb. It was good to smell smoke as we turned the final bend and see smoke curling out of the chimney. Two people in the hut already and five of us meant it was going to be cosy. With one of those being a geriatric gypsy from Nelson and the other a DOC chap from Wanganui there was plenty to talk about.



Triangle Hut region, and Oroua River, 21-22 July. Woody, Mike, Graham, Janet and Craig.

The next day there was plenty to talk about as we headed up the track out. For some inexplicable reason during the night the chap from Nelson felt the need to shift his bed onto the verandah, slamming the door as loudly as possible. He muttered something about the loudest snoring he'd ever heard and it seemed to have put something on his liver. Personally I heard nothing and he obviously hasn't shared a hut with Mick. Still, as we headed up the hill we were discussing this chap going back to the South Island travelling around recounting the story of the legendary snorer of Triangle Hut.

The day was magic. On the tops the vestiges of the previous snow lay around in patches, the sun was shining and just the odd zephyr to remind us that the air was quite cold. The hills were alive with people. As we approached the top of the Rangī track a group of around 15 headed off on the Deadmans track, another couple of people were there and as we finished our lunch half a dozen from MUAC arrived. There had been a bit of discussion about the Rangī falcon and as we headed down it came down to inspect some of us as we headed down. The rest of the trip passed pretty uneventfully with us trying to pick out the flagged route for bypassing the slip and we were back at the carpark around 3.00pm after a jolly fine weekend; thanks Mike.

21 July

**Snowcraft 1, Whakapapa, Ruapehu
Report: Nicola Wallace**

Snowcraft 1 started off not in the white snow of Mt Ruapehu on Saturday, but in the black of night on the prior Wednesday evening. At the Quaker Hall, Terry and Bruce got us acquainted with ice axes and crampons, how to use and carry the former, and how to adjust and strap on the latter. The strapping seemed a little complex at first, for those of us new to crampons, and we were given instructions to practice putting them

on at home that night, before bed. Bruce then showed us what equipment to take. After being told we were leaving town at 4.30am on Saturday, weather permitting, each of us left with crampons, ice axe and helmet.

Fast forward to Saturday, and a very early rising at 4.00. I couldn't eat breakfast at this hour, so it was straight off to Milverton Park. On arrival, I saw we had a couple of hitch hikers for the day. Warren and Angela were coming up to do a day's skiing. I went in Terry's car, and dozed most of the way to Waiouru, taking a half hearted interest in the conversation and stuff on the radio. We got to Waiouru at about 6.15am, and had a breakfast stop at the ever fantastic Angkor Wot café, which was just opening as we arrived. Most of us had meat pies, but Warren opted for eggs on toast. Because I always enjoy stuffing my face to the max, I topped off my pie with a peanut brownie. When we got outside again, it was getting light, and there was a beautiful clear view of Mt Ruapehu. It was going to be a very sunny day!

Then on to Whakapapa, and up to the ski area. I had never been up here in the winter, and was amazed at how many cars and people there were, so many that marshals were directing drivers into parks. Our second vehicle, driven by Thomas, ended up not too far away from us, and we were soon together, crossing the road and heading off past the MTSC lodge.

Now down to business. First up was step cutting, up and down a slope. If you're cutting well, snow should be flying out behind you. We all tried out our steps to see how well they worked. Step cutting is an essential skill, as one day you might not have crampons with you, and need to ascend or descend a snow slope.

Then on with the crampons, and practising walking on a variety of ups and downs, and across slopes. The thing with crampons is to get as many points as possible contacting the snow, which at times requires very flexible ankles, which I don't have! It's amazing how the points don't even need to dig in to hold you. You also have to keep your feet well apart, to avoid grazing the other leg with points. Crampons on, we walked down into a stream bed, and up the other side. Soon we stopped, removed crampons and cut more steps, this time practising turning on the hill with the ice axe. It was a very warm sunny day, and we all had the sunnies on.

Lunch, eaten in the sun, came soon enough. It was surprisingly warm, eating, and watching a few people heading up the mountain on the National Downhill chairlift. I pondered the

different types of snow I'd seen this morning, soft slushy snow that had been warmed by the sun, and hard packed snow that had remained in the shade.

After lunch it was on with the leggings, raincoat and helmet, in preparation for self-arresting. There wasn't as much snow as usual, limiting the choice of places in which to arrest oneself but Bruce chose some short, soft snowy slopes where we could at least learn the basics.

First of all we learned a very important skill for all trampers: self-arrest without an ice axe, by means of digging inward pointed fingers into the snow. Then we learned and practised ice axe assisted forms. Sliding around in the snow was surprisingly enjoyable on this very warm, day. We finished off this session by having a go at glissading, while Terry went off to "bury something in the snow".

Next was a go with avalanche transceivers. Each of us had a different model, and had to find the "person" buried under an avalanche. Some models were clearly a bit easier to use than others, but all were effective, and we all found the "person" in the end. Terry showed us an avalanche probe, which looked to me a bit like a thick shock cord type tent pole.

Then the last session of the day, and the most challenging one for me. We put our crampons back on, and walked over to quite a steep, shady slope. I found I couldn't traverse it like the others could, my ankles weren't flexible enough, but we all practised descending it by backing down, digging the pick of the axe into the hard packed snow. We did several ascents and descents, and had a go by using 2 axes, which made it much faster.

That was the last session, and we headed back to the cars, getting there at about 4pm. Because of the snow conditions, not much snow, and what there was being quite hard packed, our wise instructors had opted to do more on cramponning, and less on self-arresting, which worked out well. Warren and Angela arrived back just after us, looking very pleased with how their day had gone. We took off a few minutes later, had tea at McDonalds in Taihape, and got back to town some time a bit after 7pm.

We had all had a really good day, and our instructors taught us many valuable skills. Everything we were taught was new to me. Even if you just do tramping, and seldom venture in to the snow, the course is well worth doing as you never know when you will need some of those skills. And besides, practising cramponning and self-arresting is fun!

Many thanks to our instructors, Terry Crippen and Bruce van Brunt, and my "classmates" for their good company.

We were: Jeanne Ramponi, Thomas Robertson, Nicola Wallace, and our hitchhikers Warren Wheeler and Angela Minto.

21 July

Snowcraft 1 Extra Activities

Report: Ange Minto

As a brand new PNTMC member, it was my job to write the skiing component of the SC 1 trip report, so here goes an attempt at an accurate account of the day's events.

Warren Wheeler and I quietly hopped into the belly of Big Red TC's Pajero as stowaways, given that we intended sliding down the snowy slopes and free riding up instead of manoeuvring about the hard way, on foot armed with ice axes. Albeit instead of better equipping ourselves to cope in the snowy tramping, climbing conditions one hopes for this winter. Warren informed me he had not skied a lot, and not for six years either. The suggestion of a warm up on the gentle Happy Valley slopes was quickly ruled out by Warren's eagerness for speed and action. Watching below from the 1st lift (The Rock Garden) it was evident that a lot of snow had disappeared from a fortnight ago with plenty of rock obstacles and very icy patches about to be avoided if possible, by the amateur skiers. Once reaching the top of lift 1 the enticing height gain was just too good for Warren, and we headed on up further. On reaching the new palatial Knoll Ridge Café, Warren again decided yet more height and steepness was required. Straight across to Knoll Ridge T Bar he headed before giving me any chance to hesitate. Off up we went to nearly as high as you can get on the Whakapapa ski field lifts for our 1st run.

Clear views enjoyed and only a mild breeze compared to the forecasted 30km winds were a pleasure to ski in. Warren continued to excel in speed and "grace" while I struggled heart in mouth to keep up! While heading over to the Far West lift we spotted what we thought was likely to be the diligent SC1ers, ice axes vigorously cutting steep slopes. Yelled hellos and frantic waves brought no response, a very focused group of student and instructors obviously. A very enjoyable set of runs were had over in the steeper west terrain even by Warren's standards, until we could both make it down without any spills or stops (which took a while) No queues at the lifts either (fabulous).

Due to the lack of skiable snow back to the main field, we even managed a crawling ride on a snow cat delivering us back. That was after Warren downed the hugest sausage on sale while we waited. A late lunch at the Knoll Ridge Café and we were all but spent for now.

A great day all up, thanks Warren for your company. Muscles crying, it was time to go and meet the SC1ers back at the car park. Happy faces greeted us with stories of wild instructors no names mentioned!

20/21 July

Ruapehu Three Peaks Climb

Report: Grant Christian

On 21 July I finally climbed to the top of Ruapehu on the Whakapapa side for the first time. I was accompanied by Owen Rodda, a climber from NZ Alpine Club.

We arrived at the Top of the Bruce car park about 10 pm. Laden down with climbing gear, we slowly trudged up the mountain to the NZ Alpine Club hut. Encountering groomed snow that is tiring to walk in followed by icy slopes and then bare rock. It meant having to stop and remove crampons and then stop again to put them on again. Thankfully the weather was good.

Next morning we headed over to Pinnacle Ridge, gaining the top of the ridge past the most difficult part of the ridge. The snow was icy but the weather was good. We made our way up the ridge which was generally easy travel but care was needed in some places due to the icy snow and dangerous (exposed) slopes either side of the ridge. Below us was a thick blanket of cloud, close to the mountain but back from the slopes. It extended as far as we could see. We could see the top of Ngaruhoe piercing the cloud and in the distance was the top of Taranaki.

We continued up the ridge which rose steadily towards Te Heuheu (2732m). The pace slowed as we got nearer our destination. At this altitude the oxygen is already only about 75% of the volume at sea level. The final section to the summit was misleading because upon reaching a crest that looked like the top I realised there was still more climbing to attain the highest point. Eventually we reached our goal where we caught our breath and admired the views.

From the top we headed down and towards the south west. We peered over the edge at some of the steep bluffs leading to the Summit Plateau below. We carried on around the side of Tukino peak and enjoyed lunch in the sunshine, out of the cool breeze that was channelled between the two peaks. Amazing what a difference to the

wind moving on a couple of hundred metres can make, even when the wind is coming from the side you are on. After lunch we scrambled up the short slope to Tukino Peak (2720m) where we took in the views of the summit plateau and the surrounding peaks. It was interesting to view the plateau from this side as I had never realised the extent of the plateau. It looked like a great place to play in the snow or camp.

From Tukino we dropped down and proceeded towards Glacier Knob. We struck a lot of bumpy ice on the slope. We had to sidle this carefully because it was so uneven and you could easily go on to the edge of a crampon. We soon got tired of the strain on our ankles and feet. At one point I got a painful cramp in my leg when I raised it to adjust a crampon strap. It took a bit to get rid of and I was careful not to raise my leg like that again during the trip. We were relieved when we finally reached the plateau through the gap between Tukino and Glacier knob. It was time for a break and more food and water. The weather was still great with no sign of the cloud moving in.

Replenished and recovered from our efforts we made our way up the short and easy slope to the top of Glacier Knob (2642m). From this point we headed back the way we had come up to the peak and then down into the plateau where we made our way across to the gap between the edge of Glacier Knob and the ridge leading to Dome. I considered carrying on to Dome but thought my partner mightn't be as keen as he had dropped behind a little. He confirmed he preferred to head down when he caught up so we headed down the slope to the hut. We carefully negotiated an icy and bumpy slope after watching a skier ski down very skilfully. From this point it was any easy walk back to the lodge where we enjoyed a well-earned rest.

I managed to climb three peaks in one day and realised that it would be a big challenge to do all twelve peaks in one day, as some people do.

28 July
An icy climb of Girdlestone
Report: Terry Crippen,

Ruapehu had gone at least two weeks without any snowfall, but there had been plenty of rain; so conditions for a climb of Girdlestone from the Turoa side were not the most impressive. It was very cold as Ange and I reached Skyline Ridge and looked across the Mangaehuehu Glacier to our objective; an easy gully on Girdlestone's face.



"Don't get ya rope in a tangle". Ange on the Summit of Girdlestone Peak, 28 July 2012

We had very hard icy surface conditions all the way from the ski field, with water-ice in places from the rainfall. So crampons were certainly going to be put though their paces sidling across the basin. There was a fair bit of indecision on our part, but we eventually decided to give it a go. When we reached the face and started to head up we began to encounter, at about 2500m, a thin covering of wind compacted snow; this caused a far bit of slipping with the crampons. So we cut left towards the ridge and continued the climb. Anyhow it was all good practice as we were now using all our gear including rope and anchors. Often "all the gear" stays in the pack – not this time though.

We ran into two other climbers who had come up one of the other gullies but they were also not impressed with the snow conditions. Heading down and across to the ski field even though the sun had been on the slopes for most of the day, the snow was still completely frozen and ice covered. Skiers certainly were not going off trail unless they were mad! And as usual we were almost the last vehicle left in the carpark.



On the slopes of Girdlestone Peak [Ange Minto]

4 August 2012

Snowcraft 2 at Turoa

Report: Dwight J Swainson, Photos: Terry Crippen

Before I talk about what happened on SC2 I thought it may be a good idea to give myself a brief intro. My name is Dwight J Swainson I'm 27yrs and have completed snow craft through PNTMC last year and also done a few trips with Bruce afterwards in which has given me an insight to the thrill of climbing mountains and pushing my limitations plus to get some cool photos to show my mates. I was keen to redo the snow craft again to revise the skills that I learnt last year as I would like to take on some real challenges the great South Island Mountains have to offer.

I couldn't attend SC1 this year due to a wedding but was determined to make it on SC2. SC2 was held on Turoa side of Mt Ruapehu this time due to the snow conditions or lack of. We were split up into two groups Terry leading one while Bruce was leading the other. I was in Terry's group and when we got our selves sorted at the base of the ski field, we headed up the ski slopes in search of some snow suitable for our lesson on this fun white cold stuff we call snow. We found a suitable gully with enough snow to start the lesson. My thoughts about SC2 this year was that it would be very much the same as last year but because we had split into two groups due to the experience levels of the people on the trip

and Terry's students having done some snow and rope work before while Bruce's group were mainly virgins to mountaineering which meant that we were able to cover a lot more different skills that may be used on a mountain climb.



Anchor, belay, and ropework at Turoa on Snowcraft 2.

My opinion of SC2 this year was that it was more like an advance level of both SC1 and SC2 as we started off practising the different types of snow anchors and then followed by the belay and the crazy stick you stick your ice axe in the snow, standing on it and using it as a quick belay for a short snow pitch. After the rope work, it was the self-arrest which I couldn't help myself but go a little crazy and throw myself down the steepest part of the slope trying to stop my slide, just to run back up and do it all over again. After the falling and sliding down the snow, we packed up our gear and headed up the slope to just near the Giant café for lunch.

After lunch we walked back to the top of the gully which we had been practicing in, roped up with our climbing partners and started our pitches making our way down the gully using the different anchors, sometimes using a good rock along the way. We finished up the training with Terry giving a talk on the placement of multi anchors as it is important on getting it right otherwise you could end up with a weak anchor that could be dangerous. After the talk it was a steady walk down the snowless ski field back to the cars, a bit of sorting out gear and a catch up with the other group on how there day went and then headed off for the great Taihape Mac Donald's for dinner before heading back to Palmy.

My overall opinion of SC2 was that I learnt more than I expected to learn and it was really worth doing it again this year. I know I've still got a lot to learn about the sport of mountaineering and would say the best thing for me is to get out there and get a few more mountains under my belt. I would say to someone that has done

Snow craft before in the past that doing it again is definitely worth it as there is always something new to learn.

Just one last thing is that I would like to say thanks to the guys run and help out with Snow Craft as you guys are the people that inspire us to give it ago.

Instructors: Terry Crippen, Bruce van Brunt, Peter Darragh

Pupils: Kelly Holland, Greg Thurlow, Mary McBride, Grant Christian, Peit de Vegt, Thomas Robertson, Michael Allerby, Angela Minto, Hannah Lund, Mary Lund, Dwight J Swainson.

4 August

Snowcraft 2

Report: Thomas Robertson

We left Palmy bright and early at 4.30 AM, making our way up to the Turoa ski field, stopping in Waiouru for coffees. We took three cars. The weather was perfect, although it did start to cloud over later in the day and a bit of wind. Once we got there we split into two groups, as there was such a large number, and different levels of experience. Bruce took myself, Hannah, Mary, Pete and Mike up the mountain and then to the West of the ski slopes looking for a good area. We were warned not to head too far from the ski slopes as they were doing control work on the avalanches. On the way up, Bruce had us all practising moving with an ice-axe, and showed us walking up slopes in a zigzag, making sure we turned into the slope. We found a decent slope and started by revising our self-arrest technique in the full range of positions. We also looked at self-arrest without an ice axe, and had a go at glissading. Unlike the last snowcraft course we found a decent slope where we could get a bit of speed up, all good fun. After this we moved further up and over-the control work was finished by then. On finding a new slope we practised setting in anchors using the snow stakes, and then belayed each other down-this was purely practice as it was a fairly easy slope. Me Pete and Mike took turns with one person sitting out at a time as we had an uneven number. After getting the hang of the ropes and belaying basics we stopped for a bit of lunch. Terry texted us asking us if we wanted to catch up with his party for lunch, but we didn't notice this until almost 3. After this we changed directions again going across harder almost icy snow. We stopped to get our crampons on for this part, which were definitely needed. We traversed across this area, then started moving downhill again. As this was still practice and the slopes weren't so steep they needed belaying in

anger, the person walking was always able to move far faster than the other person could let rope out, which slowed us down a bit. Part way down the slope Bruce got us to try using our snow pigs and stakes to set up T-bar style anchors for the belay. This worked really well, and getting them out was a struggle. While doing this we had a group of cross country skiers come along who decided to start going over the rope, including the lady who kept saying 'you don't want us to go over this do you?' then going over anyway before Bruce got them all to step over it. We decided to leave it at that as it was getting close to 4.30, which is the time we had set with Terry for getting back to the carpark. From there we headed down, stopping in Taihape for a cuppa and debrief. All in all it was a great day, and good weather for it. We got to put into practice all the skills we had learned from our Wednesday night meeting. Everyone in our group is now comfortable with self-arrests, snow anchors, belaying and crampons. Thanks a lot to Terry, Bruce and Peter for organising and instructing this event, we all really appreciate it.



Ropework at Turoa on Snowcraft 2.

5 August

Knights /Shorts Track Loop

Report by Lizzy Kent



On Toka trig, Ngamoko Range

We were favoured by an unexpectedly balmy day on Sunday 5th August and our party of 8 and one dog left Limestone road end carpark in good spirits. After filling our boots with water we set off up Knights Track to the top of Ngamoko

Range and hence to Toka Trig. Bruce the dog lead the way and seemed to be baffled at times by the laggardly pace of some of the party (Lizzy and Blair). We stopped for lunch a little short of the trig and had wonderful views of the ranges all around. There was scarcely any breeze though after sitting for a while we were reminded of the season.

of us stopped at Kimbolton Cafe and the beer and chips went down well. Great weather and company and a delightful canine guide. Thanks Craig for organising the trip. We were Craig Allerby, Martin and Anne Lawrence, Graham Peters, Warren Wheeler, Ping Yang, Lizzy Kent, Blair Crosbie and Bruce.

After lunch, an easy dander down Shorts Track and back to the carpark. On the way home most

Canine Section. By Tony Gates

April 2005 saw a good PNTMC overnight tramp into Waikamaka Hut. Included on the trip were two canine companions, "Petra" and "Bridie", who both enjoyed the stroll as much as us, and naturally carried their own dinner. On the trip were; Yuko Watanabe, Craig Allerby, Warren Wheeler, Jo OHalloran, Tricia Eder, and Tony Gates. The weather was a bit damp to start with, but soon cleared up.



Petra keeps an eye on Tricia and Jo in the Waipawa River



Bridie, Petra, plus PNTMC on the rocks

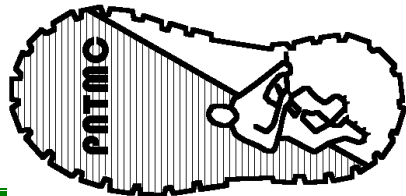


The two sisters, Jo and Tricia, with Bridie (Petra partially hidden from view)

I hear that there are one or two other PNTMC canine companions. "Holly" is a regular down at Foxton Beach, and "Bruce", from Pohangina, now joins us up in the Ruahines and Tararuas.



Bruce in the Ruahine leatherwood, August 2012



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Inc.

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PNTMC Newsletter September 2012

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Our popular snowcraft courses

Ruapehu Three Peaks Climb

An icy climb of Girdlestone

Articles for the newsletter

Send by the 20th of each month to Tony Gates,
the newsletter editor, via the club website
<http://www.pntmc.org.nz/mail/>.

Get out and about with us!

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