

PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217, PALMERSTON NORTH

Newsletter - August 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.

July 29 Photo Competition (see July edition)

Aug 12 Out of Aotearoa
Anja Scholz

Anja Scholz returned to Germany in 1992 after a year in search of the ultimate Kiwi experience. This is her story.

Aug 12 Applications close for Snowcraft. See notices.

Aug 17(Tues) SC1 Evening for participants only.

Aug 19 Committee Meeting at Terry's

Aug 26 Philippines
Doug Strachan

In 2000, I boldly went where no one (except the Filipinos, Spanish, Americans, and Japanese) had gone before. My occupation of the islands only lasted a month but, as General Douglas McArthur famously said, "I shall return," which I did. Come along and find out why I thought the country was worth a second visit. Environmental issues will feature prominently in this talk, and Mt Pinatubo won't go unmentioned. (Note: this presentation replaces that listed on the Six Months Events Calendar.)

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

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

July 24 Kelly Knight Hut (see July newsletter)
July 25 Tama Lakes

July 31/Aug 1 Kime /Hector **M**
Peter Darragh **353 0922**

8am start. Kime Hut is accessed via Otaki Forks and Field Hut. We'll overnight at the hut, but there's the possibility of a moonlight walk to Mt Hector to see the lights of Wellington and the Hutt Valley. Note: my phone number is new, replacing that listed in the July newsletter.

Aug 1 Iron Gates **M**
Craig Allerby **323 7913**

A popular western Ruahine tramp. From Heritage Lodge, the track follows the Oroua River to Iron Gates Hut. Probably an 8am start, but check with Craig. Tip: don't sit in the front passenger seat or you'll have to open the Iron Gate to the road end carpark!

trips continue overleaf

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

TRIPS contd...

Aug 7-8 Ruapehu Climbing M,T
Terry Crippen 356 3588

Departing Friday evening, this will enable us to have an early start on the Saturday morning. I am yet to decide on either the Turoa or Tukino side of Ruapehu, but could include something different on Girdlestone for a starter. This is a technical climbing trip, not instructional. Grab a climbing partner if possible. Some club gear available.

Aug 8 Powell/E. Holdsworth Loop M/F
Nigel Gregory 354 8124

A nice day trip loop in the Tararuas. Start from the Holdsworth carpark up to Mt Holdsworth via Powell hut. We'll then head on down to the Atiwhakatu river, via the East Holdsworth track, and back to the carpark. A foul weather loop will be up to Powell and then back down to Atiwhakatu hut via Mountain house, quite a sheltered track. We'll have a 7:30am start at Countdown.

Aug 12 Clubnight (see page 1)

Aug 12 Applications close for Snowcraft. See notices.

Aug 14-15 Mitre Flats E
Iz Morrison 357 6532

Mitre Flats is in from Masterton. The track sidles along the Waingawa river. The bridge before the hut may be out so, depending on the weather, the trip destination may change. In any case, it will be an easy trip leaving Countdown at 7:30am.

Aug 15 Blue Range E/M
Liz Flint 356 7654

The track starts from the Kiriwhakapapa Rd end shelter, and heads up the ridge to Blue Range Hut. A north-eastern Tararua tramp. Contact Liz for a start time.

Aug 17 SC1 Evening for participants

Aug 21-22 Snowcraft 1 M,I
Bruce van Brunt 328 4761
Terry Crippen 356 3588
 See notices.

Aug 22 Herepai Hut M
Neil Campbell 359 5048

Another north-eastern Tararua tramp. Leave Countdown at 8am to head for the Putara roadend in from Eketahuna. If the weather is agreeable, there's the possibility of going beyond the hut to Herepai.

Aug 26 Clubnight (see page 1)

Aug 28-29 Full Moon Sawtooth or Bannister F
Tony Gates 357 7439

For the end of the month, Tony will head off in search of good snow and ice. Depending on likely conditions, it may be the high Tararuas, and along Bannister Ridge, or Sawtooth Ridge, of the Ruahines. Whichever route followed, departure will be early Saturday morning. Alpine equipment required.

Aug 29 Beach Walk E
Duncan Hedderley 355 1820

8.30 start for a chance to view some of the prime beachfront real estate around Himitungi. "It's so bracing."

Sept 1 SC2 Evening for Participants
(Wed)

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)

Portal to the Past

August 1969 newsletter:

"Past Club Night: 26th

June: "Four members from

the Y.M.C.A. Karate Club

provided entertainment this

night. Members were

shown how to drive a

person's nose bones up

into the brain with a blow

from the base of the hand."

NOTICES

Snowcraft, Website, Treasurer's Reply, Shisapangma, New Members

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

SNOWCRAFT INSTRUCTION

There are still some places left on the Club's annual snowcraft instruction programme. This programme is designed to equip trampers with the necessary skills for safe travel in snow; and also to pass on the fundamental skills for snow climbing and mountaineering. A progressive approach is used over the three weekends, with each level building on the previous one.

Most participants enrol in the complete programme, while others just in Snowcraft 1 and 2. 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 17th Aug)

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

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

Discounted fee for full programme \$365 (\$380*)
(* non PNTMC member rate)

For further info, and registration form contact Terry (356-3588)

WEB SITE STUFF

More than a dozen members have taken up the option of receiving the newsletter from the web site. Great!

I have heard at club night that a number of people have heard about the club by finding our web site. Also good. An issue that arises from someone recently who tried searching on the web using the term "back packing" or some such term. Perhaps

not surprisingly, this did not result in our site turning up. I am not sure that I can correct that, but it might be possible. Some search engines (I do not think Google is one) use things called Meta-tags (nothing to do with lighting white spirit burners) to locate relevant web pages. These are non-readable codes entered onto selected web pages (typically the home page) that describe the site's activities which can be assessed by search engines. I have put one on our home page with a wide variety of terms – tramping, mountaineering, climbing, back packing, hiking, bush walking, trekking – any other options; please let me know. That may help.

I was asked recently if we could have a list of past newsletters that can be accessed on the site. Answer – there is. Go to newsletters/archive. Follow the instructions – specifically, the months that have an underline are a 'hot-link' to that month's issue. The available set goes back about 18 months.

The current events card is also on the site. Unlike most other documents that are in PDF format, the events card is in html, which means it loads directly in your browser, rather than having to open up Acrobat reader.

I have been recording for a year or so how many times the home page is being accessed. That of course tells us nothing about what pages people access after the home page or who go directly to some other page. There are now counters on about 7 or 8 of the other major pages – e.g. newsletters, events etc. This took a bit of effort as I had to delve into the mysteries of UNIX file access permissions. Got it sorted.

I have no intention to log all pages on the site as this already runs into some hundred+ pages! The reason is a balance between usefulness and effort. For each page to be monitored i.e. file, three additional files need to be created – one to keep a record of the accumulated count, another to record the hit and add it to the existing count and overwrite the record, and the third to read the count file to recall the current value.

I have refined the counting log to retain a record of the set of counts for prosperity after any period since the last record of >30 days. Should be an interesting record. This involves delving into the mysteries of UNIX time, which is counted in seconds since 1 Jan 1970, but will suffer from a

YK2 type problem in about the year 2038! That will be someone else's problem. Phew.
 Latest technological advance is dynamic content. Each visit to the home page presents a unique view. Happy clicking/refreshing. It will be interesting to see how it boosts the counter! (it took a couple of rainy days and quite a bit of frustration + learning quite a bit about programming to do it, but it's there now.) Enjoy.

Any suggestions welcome to consider.
 Peter Wiles (p.wiles@wiles.gen.nz)

REPLY – REGARDING RESIGNING AS TREASURER

Peter Wiles has sent a letter to the committee regarding his resignation as Treasurer. The committee doesn't agree with all the points raised, but is reviewing its procedures in light of some of them. A copy of Peter's letter can be obtained by club members from the Secretary.

WANT TO CLIMB SHISAPANGMA?

Warwick White from the Alpine Club, Wellington, is organising a climbing trip to Shisapangma (8046m) in April 2005. The hard parts are taken care of (Tibet Visa's, climbing permits, yaks, cooks, accommodation, transport etc) until advanced base camp. If you are interested please contact him directly: warwickwhite@yahoo.co.nz
 Length: 6 weeks - 42 days
 Costs: \$4000US (normally about \$15,000 US)
 A full version of Warwick's letter is available from the PNTMC Editor.

NEW MEMBERS

Christopher French tel. 353 8601
 Natalie Moreitz tel.(06) 368 3397
 Bienvenu! Willkommen! Welcome!

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Peter Darragh has a new address and phone number. Tel. 353 0922.

MITRE FLATS

Mitre Flats swing bridge replacement work is starting on 21 July and should be finished by end of September - hopefully the Mitre Trip on 25-26 September will be one of the first groups to try it out.

WEDNESDAY TRAMPING GROUP

We go out every second Wednesday on easy tramps. Come and join us. For more information, please phone Bev Akers 325 8879.

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.



**Green Porridge with Baked Beans
 (Mid-Winter Celebrations – see trip report)**

Ask Charles Montgomery

Q. Dear Charles, I get terribly sore feet when tramping. What should I do? Tenderfoot.

A. Dear Tenderfoot, you should wear footwear, preferably boots. These provide a protective shell from stones, sticks, roots, cold snow etc. If the problem persists after applying this remedy, try minimising movement of the feet within the boots. Wearing 2prs of socks is always a good idea. Charles.

Note: Charles (a pseudonym) wishes to remain anonymous. Charles has years of outdoor experience. Send any questions you have to the Editor, who will forward them to Charles.

TRIP REPORTS

Rimutaka Incline, Mid-Winter, Blowhard, Triangle, Rangī, Mangatiti Falls, Mt Cook

Rimutaka Incline, 13 June By Richard Lockett

We were Doug Strachan, Malcolm Parker, Duncan Hedderly, Carole Brunger, Tim Swale and Richard Lockett (leader).

Finding the Pahiatua participants Carole and Tim for this trip was a challenge, with pea soup fog conditions prevailing on arrival, but out of the mist a lone Harvard aircraft appeared ahead, trying to land on the road. Driver Malcolm pulled over off the road, *missing the aircraft by a mere 15 metres*, and as it happens right beside where Carole was cowering in the roadside ditch. Tim was briefly sighted heading in the opposite direction as if chasing that low flying aircraft. Malcolm, driving a red Ford, gave chase and was able to catch him up.

So on to the Cross Creek car park and, surprise, no cold wind. Most unusual, "give it time," I said, and as no one had brought their bikes we had to walk. "Bugger," I said.

20 minutes saw us at the site of the Cross Creek rail yards - the start of the incline proper - and after a quick morning tea and look around, we headed up the grade, 5 km's to summit, cold wind guaranteed.

Headlights were attached as Prices Tunnel was reached, and on to Siberia where the embankment was washed out in the mid sixties. Through Siberia tunnel, still on the 1:15 grade, and finally the 584 metre long Summit tunnel. The light at its end seemed a tad brighter than I remembered from previous visits; because of time of year, time of day and grade of tunnel the sun was shining just about right through it. Lovely camp sites up at Summit, just a pity about the year-round cold wind.

Lunch was taken with a look around the pile of old rusting boilers and stuff displayed nearby, and then it was back into the tunnel to escape the wind, Featherston bound.

If you are going to try cross-country skiing, start with a small country.



Waiting for the Train...



The Train that Never Arrived

Mid-winter Celebration, 19 June By Doug Strachan

Forty PNTMC members, no sorry, it was 6, celebrated Samx (Xmas backwards). We were: Liz Morrison, Warren Wheeler, Yuko Watanabe, Anja Scholz, Lance Gray, and Doug Strachan.

Much rain put a damper on the idea of having high tea on Mt Colenso. Also, we weren't sure what state the road to Kawhatau Base would be in. Plan B kicked in, where we opted for high tea at Ketetahi Hut on Mt Ruapehu, and a soak in hot pools in lieu of a Polar Bear Dip. It was coincidentally my 40th birthday on the Saturday, and I'm getting soft in my old age, so Plan B was most appealing. We booked in to Eivan's Lodge for Saturday night, so we would even have hot showers.

On the drive up, we noticed that the Ohakea airfield landing lights (on poles) were on. We wondered whether Elaine or Adrienne had arranged for these candles to be lit.

After off-loading food at Eivan's Lodge, 5 of us headed up to Ketetahi Springs Hut for high tea, while Liz remained at the lodge to blow up 40 balloons and otherwise prepare for the evening's festivities. While she was struggling to puff up the 40 balloons, we were struggling to puff uphill, carrying wine glasses and crockery. At least we didn't have to carry table and chairs like last year's party did. I had suggested that we carry 4 teapots as they would be 'four tea' (40). Warren wisely pointed out that it would be easier to carry up one teapot 'for tea' (40). I guess that's why he's president.

On the way up the mountain, a robin came and wished me happy birthday. We plodded on, stopping for a rest after 40 minutes of walking. There was talk of singing Happy Birthday 40 times, but fortunately that didn't happen.

At the hut, we put the table and chairs on the deck, and decked ourselves out in posh shirts and ties. Yuko's homemade floral hat was most impressive. Time for high tea. Suddenly we all had pompous royal accents. "Anybody fancy a cup of tea?" "Oh yes please, frightfully kind of you old chap." The tea was served in real china, and the bubbly in Bohemian crystal.



High Tea at Ketetahi

A group of trampers turned up, their faces showing a mixture of surprise and bemusement. Warren greeted them in the Queen's English, then asked, "More tea?" An English woman among the trampers asked if we were making fun of the British. Lance made some excuse for Warren and explained that Warren is our club president. "So you couldn't really leave him at home then?" came the reply. Love that British wit.

We made it back down to Eivan's lodge in fine weather. That evening the rain bucketed down, and we were glad we weren't in a hut in the hills, with slippery tracks or swollen rivers to contend with on the Sunday.

Liz had made a superb job of decorating the kitchen with balloons and crepe paper. Needless to say, much fine food was consumed that evening. I received some cards and confectionery, and an odd present. It didn't feel like a UB40 CD, and it wasn't. It was a pirate's hook, dagger, and eye patch. Just what I wished for when I blew out candles 35yrs earlier; proving that wishes come true eventually.

We each received a Kinder Surprise. I thought mine was most appropriate as the assembled pieces formed a robot which did ironing. The faster you wheeled it along the table, the faster it ironed. It was appropriate because we had talked earlier about the sport of extreme ironing. If you don't know it, that's where people carry an iron and ironing board to places like the sea floor, or the top of Everest. I continued to push the robot along, dangerously close to the edge of the table.

I shared a cabin with Warren, and settled down for 40 winks. The first thing he said in the morning was that he had dreamt that a woman had shot him with a chrome six-shooter. It made quite an impact on him as he'd never been shot before. Lance later told me that Warren had told him about his dream over in the ablution block, and he wasn't sure it was something the father and son who were there should be over-hearing.

We met the others in the kitchen for a "bad taste breakfast." Warren had food colouring to colour the milk, creme cheese and apple slices blue or green. It would be worth your while looking at the on-line version of this newsletter to see the food photos (and Yuko's hat) in colour. Warren offered the little boy at the other table some blue milk to go on his breakfast. Without hesitating the kid said "No!"

We put some gluten-free "this muesli contains no artificial flavours or colours" cereal into our bowls, then poured blue or green milk over it.

Lance got up from the table to make some more tea and he caressed my shoulder in passing. We all laughed and concluded (hoped) that he mistook me for Anja.

Packs in the car, we drove to the Tokaanu Thermal Pools, where we enjoyed a soak in a private mineral pool, followed by a play in the public pool. Warren has a repertoire of pool

antics, one of them being to create a whirlpool by everyone running in a circle around the pool. We might not have reached our 40 laps goal but, with the aid of some kids who recognised fun when they saw it, we did get quite a current flowing.

Anja and Lance had a debate about the length of the pool. I saw Yuko laughing as Anja actually counted the number of tiles along the length of the pool and multiplied that by the width of a tile. With true German precision, she even made an allowance for the grout between tiles. Meanwhile, Warren was demonstrating how to emulate a submarine.

On the way home we stopped for afternoon tea at the Waiouru War Museum, as you do when you want to make Japanese and German club members feel guilty and hopefully shout afternoon tea as a kind of war reparation. They didn't cough up, but at one point Anja conceded to Lance that his side won the war and hers lost, giving her hubby a brief victory.

The days and my tooth are getting longer, so let's all jolly well start behaving and writing sensibly, what?

The Blowhard Bush, 27 June By Tony Gates

This was a day trip to the Kaweka Ranges, an area that is often considered to be a wee bit beyond the easily accessible day tramps for PNTMC. Despite short winter days, we managed a good day stroll, quite easy, and well worth the drive. And it was easier to cancel the proposed Hihitahi forest tramp due to the impending rain - the Kawekas are a pretty safe option in poor weather. In the event, it didn't rain.

Tony Gates (leader), Yuko Watanabe, Richard Lockett, Barbara Mare, Heather Purdie, and Grant Floyd all drove up to the northern Ruahines, and in via the Gentle Annie road east from Taihape. As a warm-up, and to look around the place, we made a 15 minute climb from the summit of the Gentle Annie, up towards Te Iringa. We easily reached the shoulder at 900 metres. The summit would be a good day walk, in itself, but the weather forecast was doubtful. We wanted to look also at the Blowhard Bush, which the guide book describes as a fascinating Tolkein like area. The book wasn't wrong.

The Blowhard Bush is located alongside the Napier Taihape road, on the high, pine covered Kaweka plateau. It's not steep country, and is

well tracked. We did virtually all of the tracks in three hours, and felt like we saw most of the reserve. It's a special place, with limestone rocks, podocarp forest, and good native bird life. The reserve is about fifteen minutes drive from Kuripapango, and forty-five minutes from Napier/Hastings. Our very interesting exploration route mostly followed the trail of the Tui, and zigzagged slowly up to the fine lookout on Blowhard Road. We bypassed some caves (a couple of brave explorers actually went through them), and were enthralled with the "Tolkien like landscape."

Limestone boulders as big as houses made the trail quite mysterious, often following a narrow, dark alleyway. There were several potential bivvi rocks, and many places where a tent fly slung between rocks would provide excellent shelter.

Lowry Lodge, located near the top, was just a large day shelter with no facilities. Near the car park, one section of the stream has a natural rock bridge over it, and a lengthy natural arch. A special place.



Heather, Yuko, Tony Karst in Rock

Triangle Hut, 3- 4 July By Graham Peters

The team was - Craig Allerby, Nigel Gregory, Jean Garman, Yuko Watanabe, Janet Wilson (leader) & Graham Peters

It didn't look promising but Janet, leader and weather forecast groupie, was convinced that although the weather might not be flash on the Saturday, most likely it would be good on the Sunday. On that basis six optimistic souls were at the Rangi carpark at 0815 and after some discussion on whether to wear longjohns or not, we headed up the Deadmans track.

It was fairly cool as we headed up and before long it was snowing - nice big soft friendly flakes gently falling down creating a picturesque landscape. As we gained altitude however, the snow became less flaky, harder, and a lot less friendly and the wind made its presence known.

We had a short break before we left the Leatherwood, for food and putting on parkas. The higher we got, the worse the weather became until the final bash up onto Mangahuia was quite unpleasant – about the only good feature being that the wind was to our backs. At this stage it was discovered that naughty Yuko didn't have her gloves on and her hands were severely cold with the potential for worse. There were some spare gloves to hand so these were donned then we hastily followed Jean on the route down to the saddle on the Triangle - Iron Gates track.



At Least We're Not Miserable



Whitey Wood

We had hoped that once we headed down towards the Oroua River we might get out of the worst of the weather, however this wasn't to be - if anything we were more exposed to it. The route into the leatherwood is a bit tricky to find but we found it quickly and were in its shelter. About this

time Craig came up with the quote of the trip ***"We may be cold; we may be wet; but at least we're not miserable."*** The way through the leatherwood is a little indistinct in parts but when it gets into the bush the going is easy.

By all accounts the Oroua at this stage is only a trickle and there would be no trouble going up to Triangle. It was good to finally reach the river with the expectation that there was only about 1.5km of river travel to Triangle hut and a warming and drying fire. The river was a bit discoloured and we crossed easily. The second crossing came immediately and this was a bit deeper and felt a lot colder. After about 50m along the bank we were confronted by the river bank to bank between rock walls and so we sidled up into the bush. Before long we were in a position to get a view up the next stretch of the river and it didn't look very promising. On the basis that there would likely be a lot of time consuming sidling and energy sapping river crossing we decided that a campsite beside the river might be fun. Coincidentally, not long before we left the river there were good campsites and not only did Janet, as a diligent trip leader, have a fly, but Jean also had one. Fortunately the weather cooperated and we pitched camp and had dinner and were tucked up under cover before it started raining and hailing until 3.00am (or so they tell me).

Interestingly, while we were fetching water from the river we observed that the river was clearing; however, as we watched it changed to a chocolate colour. It repeated this sequence of events a couple of times throughout our stay.

When lying under the fly, listening to the hail beating down and the wind thrashing the trees, it is at this stage you do hope the weather forecasters have it right.

Morning, and the weather has eased and the barometric pressure has risen (as had Jean's thighs - she had bare legs crashing through the icy undergrowth the day before), so after a leisurely breakfast and pack up, we started to retrace our steps. Odd patches of blue in the sky were cause for optimism as we headed up through the bush but significant amounts of snow on the ground suggested the route through the leatherwood might be a pain, and it proved to be so. The sky however became mainly blue and it became apparent that the wind was not going to be annoying, so we were a pretty cheerful bunch as we ascended Mangahuia. The last part of the

climb onto Mangahua was tiring breaking through the snow so it was a great relief to find a track through the snow as though an army had passed by. There was a great deal of discussion amongst the erstwhile trackers as to how many people had passed by and in which direction they travelled.

Fortunately Nigel had bought his cellphone so we could rendezvous with Mick and his lot on their day trip. As you could well imagine, we were plunged into a deep, collective state of depression when it didn't work. We got over it though - quite quickly really.

Stopped for a lunch break looking across to the ridge down to the Rangī hut before carrying on down. On the way we met two groups of people on their way to Rangī. They had torches fortunately as they would be unlikely to be there before dark.

We were back at the carpark at about 3.30pm to find Mick and his crew there having done their round trip. We headed off back having arranged to meet at the cafe in Kimbolton.

Rangī Hut, 4 July By Doug Strachan

Mick Leyland (leader), Heather Purdie, Elaine Hervé, Doug Strachan.

Heather was sitting in the passenger seat when Mick picked me up on the way to Rangī. I opened the passenger door and stood there waiting for Heather to get out. Everyone thought I was commandeering the front seat. Then I realised it was a 4-door car, not a 2-door as I was thinking. There were some comments made about it still being a bit early in the morning. I slinked into the back seat.

The conversation in the car turned to GPSs, and then speeding and the fines that it elicits. We passed through Kiwitea, and I suggested there was an opportunity for an enterprising person to open Kiwi Tea rooms at KiwiTea. "Great idea Doug!" said absolutely nobody at all.

We arrived at the Rangī carpark, and noticed the cars of the other PNTMC members who were doing an overnight trick. There was laughter as we discussed the atrocious weather they must have encountered on the Saturday.

We grunted up Deadman's Track in dead calm conditions. The higher we got, the better

conditions became. The cloud was lifting, snow replaced mud underfoot, and the gradient wasn't so steep. We stopped for a break and a couple of guys passed us. Now we didn't even have to break a track through the snow.

Deer, stoat and hare footprints were well-defined in the snow. These were soon to be joined by dog pawprints. We met people who had a pair of Huskies. Heather went all mushy over the doggies, and it may well have been the highlight of the trip for her.

The scenery was beautiful, and we could see the farmland on either side of the ranges. There was a gentle breeze now, but if you didn't stop too long it wasn't too cold.



Fabulous Weather at this Juncture

Near the junction to Triangle Hut, a runner passed us. His shins were all bloodied from whacking them against the hard crust of snow at the top of the hole he made with each pace. All he said was, "can't stop, I'll get too cold" as he ran past. We followed a trail of red snow much of the way to Rangī Hut, where we had quite a late lunch.

There were 3 surprises in the hut. I hadn't been to Rangī Hut for maybe 10yrs. There on the wall was an account of the history of Rangī Hut, complete with photos. In one group photo there I was sitting next to the late Trevor Bissell.

Surprise number 2 was the Dalmatian dog at the hut. It helped Elaine get through her lunch.

The last surprise was that Janet's group wasn't in the log book. We were expecting to either pass them on the Deadman's track, or see them at the hut. Whatever had happened to them?

The Dalmatian's owners, and the Huskies' owners, had reached the hut via the main Rangī track that was "closed" due to a slip. We went out that way and had no difficulty crossing the slip.

Some blue snow had us puzzled until Mick explained that possum urine turns blue if they eat certain fruits. At first we thought Mick might be taking the, um, Mickey out of us. Then Elaine told us about how much she loves eating beetroot and what effect that has.

On down the track we went, with concrete steps (that I don't remember being there 10yrs ago) aiding our descent over the rocky bits. Over the bridge that used to be a swing bridge, and out to the carpark.

Shortly afterwards Janet's party showed up. We were quite warm, but they were still in coats and hats. You can read their trip report for details.

Mick asked Graham if by chance he had a Jerry can of petrol in their car - nope. Marion had told Mick he had to get petrol before leaving Palmy, which he forgot to do. Seems I wasn't the only one a bit groggy at the start of the trip.

We left for Kimbolton before the others in case we ran out of fuel. The needle was on empty the whole way, but we made it. Fortunately, the owner of the petrol pump was in the Kimbolton Café when we stopped for sustenance.

It was a fabulous trip. All that's left to say is: ***Don't eat yellow snow, nor red snow, nor blue snow!***

Mangatiti Falls, 11 July

By Fiona Donald

along with Leader – Ian Harding and Company - Barbara Mare, Monica Cantwell, Mark Spash and Freckles, Ricky and Cobber.

* Denis Glover

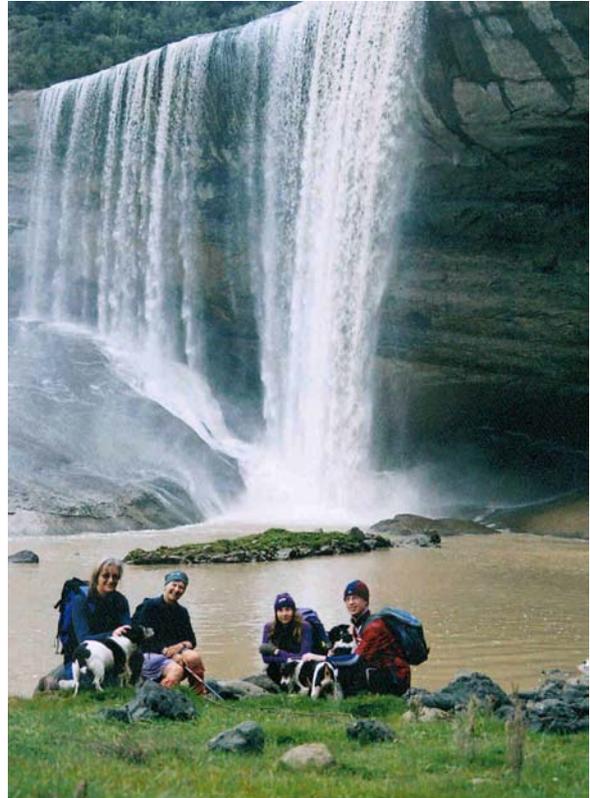
It was one of those Minty moments on Sunday where you wished you had taken your camera.

The Mangatiti Falls are as magnificent as the Niagara Falls;

one could almost imagine what it would have been like to be squashed into a barrel, go over the falls and live to tell the tale!

The day was cold and calm. The magpies quietly sang "quardle oodle ardle wardle doodle"* songs in the pine tree tops while in the meantime we slowly walked uphill along several farm tracks until we could hear the falls. We were in awe of our first sightings of the falls - the water plunged down over a giant mudstone boulder then

streamed into the river and misty spray billowed out from the cliff's underside; we were so eager to get closer that we swung down the steep hillside using the manuka trees for support. At last, we were there just in time for a photo shoot with the 3 fox terriers.



Mangatiti Falls

After a quick lunch (for those foxies were keen to get some of our sandwiches) Ian took us on a cross-country challenge along the riverbank. For those of us who have already experienced some bush bashing then it was a breeze. We stoically climbed over fallen trees, sidled passed stinging nettle, sank into mud, and cautiously walked around wild-eyed Hereford cattle. The highlight of this cross-country challenge was a large streaming rock that was worthy of being in anyone's garden.

Back to Anne and Carne's home where we discussed fossils, saw last summer's photos of the falls and talked of the dogs' adventures.

Next we went to Akitio Beach for a walk and ice cream. Later, we had afternoon tea in Dannevirke then a quick side trip along the Saddle Road to view the windmills.

Ian with his vast knowledge of the local area made the day very interesting for us all. He was very considerate and made sure everyone was

treated well, including the dogs. One dog wanted to get through the fence and despite Ian's best efforts Freckles found his own way. Thank you Ian for arranging a fantastic day out.

For those who are into details, we departed at 8am and arrived at 9.40am at Anne and Carne Berry's farm (Coast Road, Pongaroa) where the Falls are located. Later we continued in a circular route encompassing Akitio Beach, Weber, Dannevirke and Saddle Road so we arrived in P.N. about 5.15pm.

Sky to Sea or: Cook to Coast, 18 July By Anja Scholz

(Warren Wheeler (expedition leader), Lance Gray, Tony Gates, Craig Allerby and Anja Scholz)

Only a smattering of fading stars watched when the famous five got ready to tackle the flanks of the formidable mountain massif of Mt. Cook which overshadows the Baines Road. After all gear was sorted and distributed we decided not to rope up for the first leg up the west ridge to base camp. There, Tony pitched the mess tent while the rest of us donned crampons, harness, helmet, carabiners, and packed snow stakes, rope and oxygen bottles.

Soon we ascended steeply up the treacherous gorse-fall, where many an unwary climber has met an untimely end, but, alas, at sunrise (unfortunately obscured by a layer of cloud) we traversed to the bottom of the East Face, looming darkly overhead. Tony and Craig now led, fixing metres and metres of rope, so the remainder of the expedition would have a less harrowing experience. Soon it sounded "on belay" and "climbing", and I ascended with the help of a prussic, clutching my ice axe tightly. Lance and Warren followed, and we caught up with the lead team. From the top of the face we trod up the fairly wide Cowpad ridge until ***we reached the summit of Mt. Cook*** at approximately 8 a.m. . Stunning views from close to the SKY rewarded us for the hard work, and after a brief break the guys got ready for their second summit bid within half an hour, this time alpine style and without oxygen.

Official winner was Warren, whose speed-ascend of 44 seconds remains unchallenged. The demands of the exercise left some of the contenders definitely gasping for oxygen, and we all descended quickly for a hearty breakfast served at base camp. Bacon and eggs, bubbly

and buns were devoured with good appetite, and in blazing sunshine.



The Summit of Mt Cook



Baywatch Babes

We retreated to the cars, but when I suggested to ride with Craig so he wouldn't be by himself, he quickly managed to lock his keys in the car, so we all squeezed into Tony's vehicle to drive to the SEA at Himatangi. There Tony appointed himself team photographer (unfortunately thus having to miss out on a refreshing swim), and the rest of us got dressed in togs (me) or polyprop full body armour (the shy guys), and gingerly (me) or bravely (the baywatch guys) made our way into the just-above-freezing-level water. Surf was definitely up, but before hypothermia or frost bite could get at us we dashed back to the car, and were soon drowning. The obligatory latte bowl, that is.

Back in Palmy by lunchtime, and an enjoyable afternoon was spent getting the mud out of the crampons.

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