

PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217, PALMERSTON NORTH

Newsletter - February 2007

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.

**8 Feb Geocache Navnite
Barbra Cowen**

Barbra will introduce club members to the world-wide treasure hunt navigation craze. There will be an introduction at the Hall before decamping to the Esplanade to find hidden treasures. Bring your GPS, if you have one, as well as a treasure or trinket.

15 Feb Committee Meeting

**22 Feb Rescue Chopper
Warren Wheeler**

Meet at the normal time of 7.45pm at the hospital hangar on Ruahine Street for a date with the Rescue Helicopter and Pilot. If you are heading toward Tremaine Avenue you take the last entrance available to you on the left. The pilot will take us through the various operational aspects of the rescue service. You don't have to have any involvement with search and rescue so come along and smell the Kerosene or whatever it is they fill it with.

Articles to Lance gray.family@actrix.co.nz or post to 48 Savage Crescent, Palmerston North (by 20th of the month).

TRIPS

**Feb 3-4 Cattle Creek & Beyond M
Llew Prichard 358-2217**

Cattle Creek is approached from the West Tamaki stream behind Dannevirke with many options for interesting side-trips, bush bashing or simply lazing around soaking up rare rays of sunshine. Contact Llew for further details.

**Feb 4 Atiwhakatu Hut E
Warren Wheeler 356-1998**

Join Warren for a pleasant day trip up to Atiwhakatu Hut. Accessed from the Holdsworth Roadend, near Masterton, this trip has no difficult hills and should be pleasantly cool in the bush. Leaves Countdown carpark at 8am.

**Feb 10-11 Waiohine Gorge Tubing F
Tony Gates 357-7439**

This trip is a classic Tararua River Tramp, heading initially into Totara Flats to a good camp. We will then walk up the gorge with day gear only (tubes, wet suits, and helmets) where we can tube back down some of the very best rapids in the world.

**Feb 11 Beehive Creek E
Doug Strachan 353-6526**

This walkway (just past Pohangina town) is a pleasant amble if you feel like some not-too-strenuous exercise, or only have half a day available. The walkway opened in 1983, is 30km from P.N., and involves about 2hrs of actual walking. No dogs allowed. I'm taking a 15mth old toddler with me, so whoever finds the pace too slow can have a turn at carrying an extra 10kg. We will stop at the Waterford

Cafe on the way home, so you can have a snack or even lunch there. If this all sounds too easy for you, you can always bike out there and meet the rest of us who are leaving Countdown by car at 9am.

Feb 17-18 Lancaster F
Janet Wilson 329-4722

Situated close to the peak of Arete on Carkeek ridge, Lancaster would not normally be a destination which makes this trip even more fascinating. Lots of entry and exit options so contact Janet for more details of this challenging weekend trip.

Feb 18 Iron Gate Gorge E/M
Warren Wheeler 356-6526

Depart 8.30am. A classic fun-filled Oroua River trip. From the Table Flat Road-end we take the sidle track past Heritage Lodge for about an hour until it meets the river. After first lunch and a swim we head downstream, rock-hopping and criss-crossing the stream several times (and pack-floating pools if you like) before reaching the impressive little gorge, which involves a short but refreshing pack-float swim to get through (!).

Feb 24-25 Whirinaki Forest M
John Feeney 354-2940

Whirinaki Forest located on the way to Lake Waikaremoana is home to some of the most impressive stands of North Island Podocarps. The type of place that will give you some idea of what an uncut forest can be like. Contact John for further details.

Feb 25 Mount Bruce E
Trevor King 325-8874

Possibly the most popular day walk on the PNTMC calendar. There is always room and a day to mix up a leisurely stroll with the café society of the Northern Wairarapa. Good opportunity for a bit of botanising or bird watching. A great day out. Contact Trevor for further details.

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), Febet Wilson (329-4722) or Tony Gates (357-7439).

Trips

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

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 Febet Wilson (329 4722)

NOTICES

Meguru Inoue killed on Mt Cook

Meguru Inoue and a Japanese friend were killed when descending Mt Cook at about 9.00pm on Wednesday 24th January. A third Japanese friend survived the collapse of their rock anchor point when they were abseiling off the Summit Rocks.

The cremation service in Timaru on 29 January was attended by Terry Crippen and Tony Gates as well as close family and friends from Japan and PN. Meguru's parents will visit PN before leaving for home on Friday 2 February.

Meguru started her working holiday here in PN by joining the PNTMC in July, and after attending our Snowcraft Courses went on tramping and climbing trips almost every weekend. She was arguably our most fit and enthusiastic club member, and a wonderful ambassador for Japan.

Meguru also joined the NZ Alpine Club and had recently been climbing with club members in Arthurs Pass. She planned to return to PN for a busy few months including the Kaweka Challenge with her father, and the Tararua Mountain Race with Janet Wilson.

She leaves a huge hole in many hearts, filled with sunshine.

PNTMC 2006 Annual Awards

On a lighter note, here it is - our light-hearted list of achievers, as announced by the President at the EOY BBQ at Ashhurst Domain.

Tararua Trophy for best newsletter article – Meguru Inoue for her many enjoyable trip reports.

High Fliers Award - Martin Lawrence for launching himself over the handlebars on a flat bit of track just around the corner from the carpark at the end of the Rimutaka Incline MTB trip.

Voltarin Rock and a Hard Place Award – Anne Lawrence for her ability to carry on despite a wrenched knee in the Ruakaturi Wilderness.

Chocoholics Anonymous Award – Anja Scholz for baking two chocolate cakes for the 40th AGM but not indulging herself.

Naked Chef Award – both Ian Harding and Christine Cheyne for baring their culinary talents on the D’Urville Island Trip

Most Lame Excuse Award – Craig Allerby for being out of action all year with his sore toe.

Buzzy Bee Award – Peter Darragh for helping out as a Snowcraft 2 Instructor despite the very short notice.

Hubbards Best Breakfast Award – Meguru Inoue for her savoury style Japanese porridge, including dried scallops and salted plums.

Poster Boy Award – Tony Gates for appearing on the FMC 75th Anniversary poster.

Just Gremlin Award - Richard Lockett for deciding to “just” drop back down to the Matanganui Stream to see if he could find his favourite cap that the wind had blown away, only to find it a few seconds later, just 10m down the steep overgrown track where the downdraft off the ridge had dropped it.

Work-Life Balance Award – Dave Grant for selling his Mountain Equipment business to Bivouac so he could spend more time tramping.

Dave Hodges Award for Excellence in Pursuit of Forgetfulness – Warren Wheeler for omitting to plug in the other end of the laptop cord and caused a “slight technical hitch” (flat battery) during the Kahurangi Spotlight club night presentation.



The Botany Tramp with Peter van Essen providing the interpretation

TRIP REPORTS

No 1 Line, Kahurangi Labour Weekend Trip, Ruapae Falls not quite & Roaring Stag not at all, Totara Flats, Burton's Track, Saddle Up - Ruahine Tops, Stanfield Hut

No. 1 Line 15th Oct
By Richard Lockett

Five starters for this trip - Meguru Inoue, Trevor King, Graham Peters, Warren Wheeler and I up the track at the road end and back via the Matanganui steam.

It had been a year since my last trip up here and my memory doesn't serve me well as I had told Trevor that its not to steep up the track but it actually is a tad on the steep side as Trevor was getting a good work out.

A typical October day wind and possibly rain later in the day kept it cool ideal tramping weather, we were soon at the track end and bashing our further along up towards high point 1011 looking for a good spot to drop over the side and down towards the Matanganui.

Having a breather before we dropped over the side a discussion developed as to the small distance to Keretaki hut on the other side of the range only 2 Km's away, make a good bush bash trip, yes It was agreed but their has to be some leather wood there somewhere it can't be too far away. Anyway keep a look out on a future trip card for this exciting trip.

So it's over the side at a saddle just before the last steep slope below high point 1011 by consensus a suitable spot. We dropped down steeply Warren picking up an animal trail onto a large slip face, which afforded good views of the upper Matanganui catchment and the realization of impending rain. A final scratchy bash saw us all in the streambed and donning raincoats.

Good progress down stream soon had us surveying the interesting section of this trip the point where the streambed narrows between two bluffs 5 metres the gap with a waterfall. Meguru was keen to climb down it and wile standing above looking down wind gusts would catch the spray from the waterfall and hurl it back up all over Meguru. What you have to do is backtrack a few metres and

climb up on the true left approximately 60 metres onto a saddle and down two ropes on the other side.

Whilst standing on the saddle a gust of wind ripped my cap from my baldhead and took it high into the sky and down towards the streambed out of sight. Human hair must act a bit like Velcro. Warren persuaded to return down to the streambed and retrieve it. Yea right I said ain't going to see that cap again but Warren felt sure it would be in the streambed. Anyway I decided to return down to the stream just to prove him wrong, so off I went and within six metres of travel their was my cap bang in the middle of the track, Amazing.

Having returned to the stream from the saddle, Meguru was keen to view the waterfall from the bottom, which involved a bit of rock climbing around a deep pool. Graham and Warren following suit discovering some aids for climbing the waterfall unseen from the top.

Half an hour and back at the cars and heading to the Waterford for refreshments where Trevor told us of having just returned from Ireland checking out his family roots, farms once owned, pubs frequented. I thought that would explain his tardy climbing up the track today. It'll be the Guinness!

Kahurangi National Park
(Lab Weekend) Oct
By Murray Gifford

Day1:

Rory Moore of Trek Express shuttles collected our group at Nelson airport and shuttled us to the end of Baton Valley Road for an 11.30am start.

I recall the Moutere countryside as a mixture of the latest lodges and wineries to the very old and run down, a great place to own an old barn, house on wheels, cottage or maybe a hippy lifestyle.

Light rain fell. We met the Hutt Valley TC van on the way up the road; twelve going to Flanagans ahead of us, so the decision to opt for beds in the Ellis Hut was easy. Ellis River track began at 300m with a few river crossings in tall beech forest that would be demanding in heavier flows, but we were able to boulder hop thru with dry feet mostly.

Soon the valley grew narrow and the track climbed to avoid deep gorges. Three hours spent rising rapidly under heavy load, in mud and roots and spirits dampening, to a fork and small clearing. The track flattened briefly and turned right to once again ascend steeply to the upper edges of the bush, under tall limestone cliffs and finally to a spectacular cascade of falls.

Opening finally into a steep mountain basin the hut thankfully appeared on the edge of the bush with no one at home, 1100m. The rain was setting in, six hours on our feet, we were all wet, and thankfully shed all the damp clothes for dry, started the fire, cooked tea and a brew to go over the days adventures with.

Day 2:

Terry up before dawn (why am I not surprised – Ed.), skies are clear he told us (heard that before!), time to go. We were all up and away by 7.30am, thru a few short flats of tussock before the poles headed sky ward way up on the ridge ahead. Cloud rolled in and light snow fell as we reached the upper basin below Winter peak. The winds were light and we still had reasonable visibility. Three hours to reach the ridge of Mt Arthur about 1600m, passing Winter peak on our left, I was the only one to visit, great place for a base jump, lucky I had no room for the parachute.

Three of us opted to visit the top of Mt Arthur at 1795m, the others to press on for Salisbury hut, The top was only half an hour, up some steepish snow slopes with softening snow, ice axes in hand, onto the flat ridge and 200m to the cairn at the top, photos and congratulations all around. We all stared out into the mist and imagined the views.

On down the Mt Arthur east ridge towards the hut for an hour, dropping off the main track to a poled route into a basin and a long grind

(multiple false peaks in the mist) back up to Gordon's Pyramid (1489m) with no views and short bite to eat.

We descended thru the snow grass quickly to the bush edge and a magical forest of stunted beech, mosses and flax-like plants which seemed to be planted in a man made garden, quite stunning along with our first siting of *Dracophyllum*.

The track descended quickly, 0.5m steps in mud and roots, very tiring and an hour later out of the bush and onto the tablelands, red tussock and limestone outcrops everywhere, and flat plans ahead. Salisbury hut lay to the right 20mins across the flats, a welcome sight. TTC invited us in for tea and we stopped for lunch at 3.30pm. Well refreshed we then headed up a wide track towards Balloon Hut. The track was steady uphill, thru patches of forest and tableland, the views very scarce. A long 10 hr day and tired muscles.

Day 3:

Awoke to 50mm of snow, a forecast for rain and a change of plan, day trip from the hut, stay a second night with the gas heater and straight forward walk out to Flora saddle on the last day.

Leisurely breakfast, donned all our wet and warm snow clothes and headed for Mt Peel (1654m). A 3 to 4 hr return trip, thru up to 300mm of snow in places, dropped off the east ridge of Mt Peel thru rocks, spear-grass and soft snow to Lake Peel. A small shallow lake set in a rocky basin, a chance to make and float icebergs.

Afternoon trek back along the track to Salisbury to a cave site. Found an underground labyrinth, a chance to test out the headlamps and find a few cave wetas. Found a second large open cavern, most picturesque just metres off the main track.

Day 4:

Up at 5.30pm, had be at the road end by 12.00 to connect with Transport. A quick trip back over the tablelands, bypassing Salisbury hut and stopping to visit the Dry rock shelter, two beds under a large overhanging rock with loo.

The track drops into Balloon Creek; a steep bush clad valley with stoat traps every 250m beside the track. Further on we stopped at Growler rock shelter, unfortunately the latte man was not at home and we settled for munching on scroggin. A policeman scooted by on a bike, informing us a 74 yr old from Hutt Valley tramping club was being assisted out and that as he was police they were able to ride bikes in the park.

Past the confluence with the Flora River, the river becomes the Takaka River. The track now rising towards the Flora saddle, we spotted a large native snail beside the track and he was pleased to be photographed many times.

Growler rock shelter was next, a multilevel residence with mattresses, fireplace and great open bush feel all under the shelter of another overhanging rock. A second shelter just a little further up the track, offered swinging seats beside the fire. The track widened to a road and continued up thru the beech forest to Flora Hut, a rather old hut (originally the site of a commercial store) that could sleep 12.

Twenty minutes on to Flora saddle (at about 800m) and 10mins down the hill to the road end. We were greeted with a tourist shelter and our first real views of Mt Arthur with its snow covered peak, majestic, oh at last we could see where we had been.

We were: Terry Crippen (leader), Warren Wheeler (caveman) Martin and Anne Lawrence (gourmet cooks on three nights, food sherpas), Meguru Inoue (Japanese language tutor and always gracious) and Murray Gifford (stumbles).

Ruapae Falls not quite 12th Nov By Richard Lockett

With no starters for either Warren Wheelers over night trip to Herepai Hut or my day trip to Ruapae Falls Warren and I were both keen for a day out tramping, so Ruapae it was. Three days previous, the 9th of November was foul, 10 degs with snow on and around Herepai, plus the rest of the Tararua's this would make a trip up the head waters of the

Mangatainoka interesting if not impossible with snow melt swelling the streams with extra cold water.

Sitting in the car at the Putara road end the weather was still foul but a bit warmer, with both of us thinking that a coffee and sticky carrot cake in Eketahuna was a far better way of spending the morning each waiting for the other to make the call. But the rain stopped as it sometimes does at the Putara roadend but never for long, so it was boots and raincoats on quickly.

At the first swingbridge we got our first view of the river and it was roaring "must have rained over night". Worth the trip just to watch it! We continued on captivated by the Mangatainoka in flood.

At the second bridge we didn't cross but bush bashed in a northerly direction up onto the broad high spot 655m. Here we picked up a marked track which crosses this high spot before dropping down unto the grass flats beside the stream about 600 metres below the falls.

With the rain holding off lunch was taken and then a reconnaissance further up stream to ascertain weather it was worth trying to get to the falls. It wasn't so a backtrack on marked track to the highspot 655m and we kept following said track as to discover where it starts from which to our surprise was back at the first bridge 5mins from the car making for a quick return.

Still the rain held off till that part of all tramps when raincoats and boots have to come off. A good easy tramp on a day when one might have stayed at home.

Roaring Stag not at all 3rd Dec By Richard Lockett

With Warren leading Dave Grants trip to Roaring Stag Hut and myself being the only starter and only desiring of a Sunday tramp for the exercise and having visited the Putara roadend not too long ago we decided on somewhere closer to home. "Haven't been up the Mangahao for a while and there's creek that I've been intending to explore up there".

Tramway Creek enters the Mangahao about 1.5 kms below the No.1 dam. Warren was keen to explore this creek to see if any sign remained of it ever having a logging tram up it, possibly during the construction of the hydro scheme?

We headed up stream from the road bridge, it being dark and slimy not much sun light in here but within half a km had opened out with terraced grassy banks with filtered sunlight, affording pleasant easy travel. No sign of a tramway but it would have been good stream to put one up.

After 1.5 km's of travel the gradient got a lot steeper with four waterfalls to climb around not good for tramways but with plenty of hand holds no problem for us. As we climbed higher the stream disappeared from underneath us and we were soon on top of the ridge 657m.

A plan was formulated over lunch to follow the ridge, which curved to the east back to the Mangahao. There was a lot of pink marker tape on the trees up there, "must be a popular hunters area". The more we followed along the ridge the more markers there were, different colours, pork brawn wrappers, a marker every metre, the best marked track I've ever been on and its not even a track!

But it is or is to be as it became obvious that we had stumbled across the extension of the Te Araroa walkway to Makahika from the Tokomaru valley road. We left the freshly cut track when it turned north away from our easterly travel, which was now across a broad flat scatchy area before dropping down steeply right along side the bridge over tramway creek. Good compass work or Warren following his nose I'm not sure. Another enjoyable easy Sunday trip which will feature on a future trip card.

Totara Flats 24-25 Nov By Tony Gates

We began our overnight Tararua tramp at Pukaha, the National Wildlife Centre at Mt Bruce, and were thrilled to see both kiwi and kokako. Then it was a depressing looking gloom that we headed off into from

Holdsworth Lodge carpark. "Might be a flood" the friendly ranger's wife Di suggested.

We had enough daylight to tramp most of the way to Totara Flats, and its mansion like hut, but I had rather pessimistic visions of a forced return to Holdsworth Lodge itself, at the road end. We tramped briskly past the lodge, and once in the bush, were pleasantly surprised at its shelter. And the clag rolling down off Mt Holdsworth and the high Tararuas kept at bay as we sped up the Gentle Annie track.

"Tararua tears" (ie sweat droplets) fell in profusion. One hour up, 1.45 down Totara Creek, which was thankfully not in much of a flood. We reached the hut just before needing torches. The swingbridge over the Waiohine River was a bit shaky though- it is apparently the longest in the country, and is prone to wind shake. Slept on the hut porch.

Saturday was a nice day, so we strolled about the luscious grassy Totara Flats taking photos and botanising. There was a large wind cloud overhead, and a lot of clag up high, so we abandoned our original intention of climbing High Ridge, and wandered back the way we had come after a morning coffee at the hut. Many day and overnight trampers were met on the track, and three mountain runners who had suffered in the high winds up on Jumbo. They were training for the popular Holdsworth Trail Race, held each January. A nice cuppa and chat with the DoC Ranger finished the tramp. We were Meguru Inoue & Tony Gates.



Tony Gates by Meguru Inoue

Burttton's Track – 10th Dec

By Martin Lawrence

We split into two groups for this and swapped car keys at lunch time. Richard, Tony, Warren and Tristan started on Mangahao Road. The other group was myself, Anne, Tina, Adele, Su with Jean-François and Veronique from Belgium.

We started from Scotts Road with a pleasant and easy walk on the forest track which climbed gently to the DOC land and a more normal tramping track. We had an excellent view over the Tokomaru before dropping down to cross No 1 stream, No 2 stream before meeting the Tokomaru River itself. The overseas visitors seemed to enjoy our "wet boots" method of crossing streams.

Once we met the Tokomaru River we were to pretty much follow it South with much of the walk on the tracked originally formed by Jim Burttton. A bunch of startled sheep alerted us to the other party heading North. This was close to one of the many clearings so was a great place to sit in the sun and have lunch. There was still a decent distance to walk after lunch but the track was easy as we followed alongside the river to the Mangahao Road behind Shannon.

This track is very accessible from Palmerston North and would also make a good return trip from either end with lunch somewhere around the Burttton's home .

Ruahine Tops

3-6th Jan 2007

Preamble:

This trip started as "Saddle Up" (a start at Pohangina saddle and an end at Armstrong saddle), but was adjusted to suit an exit at the start point and a grand loop of some prominent tops. The trip comprised a start at North Block Road (west of Ongaonga), Waipawa saddle, Rangioteatua, Rangi saddle, Waterfall Hut, Pinnacle stream, Iron Peg, Mangaweka, Hikurangi, Crow Hut, Rongotea, Wakelings Hut (lunch only), West branch of the Maropea river, Top Maropea Hut, Armstrong Saddle and Triplex Stream to road end.

The forecast was excellent for most for the days ahead, so we were in great spirits.

Day1:

The Renault took us safely to the end of North Block road with a leisurely 9.30am start in the Waipawa River. A quick trip thru the gorge, onto the flats and our first stop at Waipawa Forks Hut for a peek. One recent trumper was boasting 7 huts in 22 hrs, must have been a mad man. On up the rocky river bed and lots of interesting flowers to ponder over, guess names and photograph. By 12 noon we were on the saddle and found a rare Waipawa saddle strawberry plant in full fruit. My, they were delicious. The clouds were swirling around a bit, blanketing some of the tops.

East then up the ridge to Three Johns, south along the ridge and up to false Rangioteatua, only to find the peak further on up the ridge a half hour away. We battled up thru long tussock and the frequent spear grass to keep us on the lookout. On the top by 3.00pm, but views a bit obscured. We headed down the steep westerly spur from the top (best to keep on the south side), over a knob and down to Rangi Saddle by 5.00pm.

Down to the south side of the saddle, quickly into the leatherwood, beech, steep track thru the bush and finally the stream. Down the stream to the Kawhatau, back up for 400m and finally the cairn for Waterfall Hut, 7.0pm, a solid day, 9 hrs in the boots. Managed a soap up in the last rays of sun to freshen up.

Day 2:

Up the Kawhatau 400m and right into Pinnacle Stream. A great walk up through the flowers again to the main ridge. There by 11.00, a bit of a steep pinch at the end up the scree. The day was glorious, no wind, blue skies, peaks everywhere, so we sat and surveyed a while.

North up along the ridge, dropping to the west for the sheer rocky saddle, on up the ridge, meeting a fellow trumper heading for Sawtooth. We strolled north along the tops most of the day, Iron peg, Mangaweka for lunch, many breaks to chart progress, chats to hunters (the no luck types), views to Ruapehu-Tongariro and Egmont.

Finally onto Hikurangi and the longish descent to the McKinnon Hut track. We headed for Crow hut, better to get the 600m descent done that day than do it first thing in the morning. Good steep track down, Crow was a gem, beautiful pool for an end of day swim, 6 bed well maintained hut, and no one at home. Another long day, 10 hrs in the boots.

Day 3:

Big swing bridge over the Kawhatau (don't look down type), 400m up the river and a tricky entry to the ridge track (almost have to cross the river to access the start of the track, a nasty bluff to clamber around). Very steep up, thru the bush, finally into the leatherwood and tussocks. Well-formed track to the tops, some rock scrambling over the tops of scree to the top. Sighting of four deer as we climbed, they quickly bid us farewell. Back onto the gentler tops and up to Rongotea. Another glorious day and pats on the backs as we surveyed the routes we had taken way out there in the distance. Hadn't we done well? Oh dear, 600m back down to Wakelings for lunch and another swim (good pool here also). Four hunters had filled the place and had two deer in the bag. After a good lunch, back up a bush track towards Maropea Forks Hut.

Warren was keen to save our legs, so when on the ridge we bush bashed straight back down to the west Maropea streambed. We were lucky and seemed to avoid any bluffs, as the slopes are very steep near the bottom of the ridge into the river. Finally into the main stream, and a couple of kms up the main branch, veered off to the true right and a further km to the waterfall that halts progress.

Warren took a swim (that's a surprise - Ed.), but sun was going down and bit chilly in the pool at the base of the falls. Final half hour up to Top Maropea hut very steep thru the beech. An older couple were at the four bed hut, had come up for the day, weather so good they decided to stay the night. Another 10 hr in the boots.

Day 4:

Weather not so good, cloud and wind setting in. Up the ridge, along the top to Armstrong

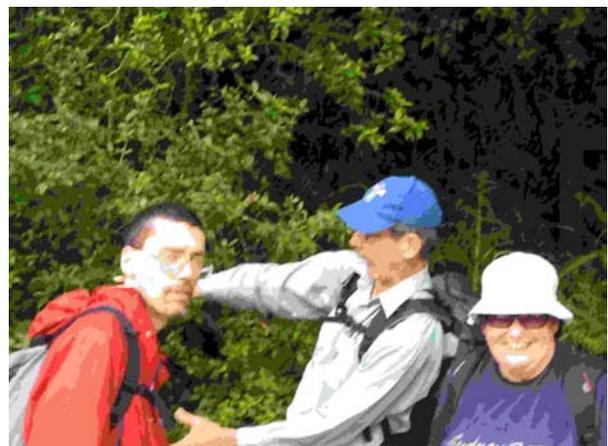
saddle, the odd steady in the wind to keep us on the track. Warren was dead keen to tackle Triplex stream by the direct bush route, so we dropped off the saddle into the leatherwood and low beech. Generally we found the going ok, fairly clear in the beech, a few streambed scree that speeded us up.

The going gradually deteriorated into a bush crash thru the over grown lower flats of the Triplex and we took a southerly exit back into the bush to meet the old track which we followed almost to Triplex Hut. This was a 4 hr route, no more than 500m from the leisurely 1.5hr Sunrise hut track, but what the hell we had all day. Out by lunchtime.

We were Warren Wheeler, leader (its just a dawdle) and Murray Gifford (apricots, figs and custard for desert).

Stanfield Hut 22 Jan By Duncan Hedderley

Wellington Anniversary was sunny and warm, but windy, on the eastern side of the Ruahines. As usual, the West Tamaki valley was a benign spot to exercise some new year resolution; perhaps the one bit of news is that the floods of recent years have left a 6 foot drop at the end of what used to be the 4WD access track from the roadend - maybe that's why there's a gate at the roadend now - so the easiest way out of the riverbed is slightly further downstream at the picnic area. The company - Neil Campbell, Margaret Riordan, and last-minute-Warren Wheeler - was good too, with stories of cycling in France and - other people's - hypothermia experiences.



Duncan Hedderley and his team

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