



Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.

www.pntmc.org.nz

P.O. Box 1217, Palmerston North

Newsletter November 2008

Club Nights

Club nights 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. All welcome! Please sign the visitor's book at the door.

13 November

Club Night: BYO Pics

Show and tell of trips by Club Members over the last six months or so. Bring your best pictures on CD or Memory Stick. Maximum of 10 pics per trip, please.

Contact for details:

Warren Wheeler 356-1998

18 November (Tues)

Alpine Rock Climbing evening (Instruction)

An introductory session on some aspects relating to rock climbing in the (NZ) alpine environment. The rock climbing in this environment is usually of a lesser grade than undertaken by pure rock climbers elsewhere but other factors such as the snow/rock mix, stability and nature of the rock, available gear, all come into play. This evening session leads onto the trip away on 22/23 November.

Contacts for details and venue:

Terry Crippen 356-3588

Bruce van Brunt 328-4761

20 November

Committee meeting

27 November

Club Night: Fog and scrub – Seven days in the Paparoa Wilderness.

Peter van Essen will take us on a virtual tramp along the foggy northern Paparoa Range (Westland) from Buckland Peaks to Mt Mendel. This part of the Paparoa Range is rugged granite country with impressive jagged peaks and is within a gazetted wilderness area. Travel is slow and sidling under some of the impassable rock tors inevitably entails an intimate and scratchy inspection of the scrub.

Articles for the newsletter

Send by the 20th of each month to Anne Lawrence email: dahlia44@xtra.co.nz or post 44 Dahlia St, PN.

Trip Notes

Trip Grading

Trip grades depend on many factors, especially weather and terrain. A reasonably proficient tramping should be expected 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 required (T) and Instructional (I)

Trip participants

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

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

Note to partners, parents or friends of members:

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:

Mick Leyland	358-3183
Terry Crippen	356-3588
Janet Wilson	329-4722

Upcoming Trips

1-2 November

Longview E/M

Peter Wiles 358-6894

Leave for the eastern Ruahines at 7.00am on the Saturday. There are several route options depending on weather and energy levels.

2 November

Te Atuaoparapara F
Warren Wheeler 356-1998

Depart 7.00am. This classic day trip takes us up past Sunrise Hut and around the northern ridge tops of the Waipawa Stream over one of the highest and most spectacular peaks in the Ruahine Ranges. This is a long day but not technically difficult and is rewarding for its variety of tall forest, alpine scrub, tussock tops,

rocky lookouts, loose scree, boulder-hopping, and wide gravel flats. Expect to finish tired and very happy, with nice wet feet from the last hour of easy stream travel.

8-9 November

Pureora Mtn Bike M
Richard Lockett 323-0948

Accommodation is at Pureora Field Centre and from here there are a number of options. There are three mountain bike tracks including the 25 km Waione Tram track. There are also various walks through the forest for those not interested in biking. Contact Richard for further details.

9 November

Botanical Tramping III E
Peter van Essen 355-9076

Depart 9am and home by mid-afternoon. This trip we are going to the Manawatu Gorge Scenic Reserve. You've all been through the Manawatu Gorge Track but how much do you know about the forest you tramped through? If you can't confidently answer the following questions then this trip is for you:

- What species found at the Ashhurst end of the gorge indicate that this area was coastal not that long ago?
- What are the dominant canopy trees in the Manawatu Gorge Scenic Reserve?
- How do you tell northern rata from the four species of climbing rata found in the reserve?
- What two introduced weeds are invading the gorge, one smothering the ground and the other smothering the canopy?
- Name ten native plants you saw along the gorge track on your last visit.

Learn the answers to these and much more on this easy botanical amble to the Te Apiti lookout and back.

15-16 November

Matui/Sommes Island E
Janet Wilson 329-4722

Overnight Camp

Matui/Somes, an island in Wellington Harbour, is both a scientific and historic reserve. It is predator-free and so has tuataras and a number of different skinks living on it. There are some short walks and great views back to Wellington City and up the Hutt Valley. We will be staying at the small camping ground which is limited to 12 people. It is equipped with a small kitchen and gas cookers. The plan is to head down to Wellington on Saturday morning, crossing over to the island on the regular ferry service around lunch time. We will explore, camp, etc until around midday Sunday when we will return home. Costs include the ferry (\$21) and petrol/carparking, and camping on the island (\$10pp). You will need a tent - it may be possible to borrow one if you don't have one yourself - let me know. Most other stuff can

be borrowed /shared if you don't have lots of camping gear – perhaps this could be your chance to give camping a go. I have booked all 12 places at this stage. Please let me know asap if you are keen to come down - I need to let DOC know so they can offer the places to others if there aren't enough of us.

16 November

Stanfield Hut E
Doug Strachan 353-6526

Wake up dopey. Get cracking at 8am. The track to this SE Ruahine Hut is accessed by speeding along Top Grass Road. Get a little high by snorting up the Holmes Ridge to the hut for a joint lunch. Stimulating trip out down river. Don't forget your meth cooker, pot, and other gear. On the way home stop for petrol, Coke, Ice, P, and sit. Graded E for Ecstasy.

22 or 23 November

Alpine Rock Climbing M, I
Terry Crippen 356-3588
Bruce van Brunt 328-4761

Following on from the Tuesday evening session, the purpose of this day is to develop and practise skills in rock climbing using approaches that relate to climbing in a mixed snow and rock alpine environment such as found when undertaking straight forward mountaineering in the Southern Alps. An early departure time and probably heading to the Mangatepopo Valley (TNP).

23 November

Centre Creek Bush Bash M
Warren Wheeler 356-1998

Depart 7.45am. This is a classic fine-weather Ruahine trip with lots of variety. We start near DoC Pohangina Base and follow the track upriver to Centre Creek. We then rock hop up this delightful stream until we reach a large waterfall and head steeply up onto a spur with an old cut route leading to Takapari Road. We follow the road a short way back to a track turnoff heading down to the river past the old Centre Creek Biv site. We will then either return along the track or take the more adventurous river route. Expect to get more than your feet wet!

29 November (Sat)

Tongariro Crossing M
John Feeney 354-2940
Fiona Donald 356-1095

This trip is designed so that those who want can also go on Trevor's trip to Tama Lakes the following day.

The aim is to depart PN on the Friday evening at about 5.30pm and stay at the Whakapapa Holiday Park; Then on Saturday morning we will catch the shuttle, about 7 am, in order to do this popular one day Great Walk. A flexible return to PN either Saturday evening or Sunday morning. This trip can

be combined with the Tama Lakes trip on the Sunday: instead of returning to Palmerston North on the Saturday evening, some people may prefer to stay another night in our accommodation and join the Tama lakes trip on the Sunday. Bad weather alternative is Waihohonu Traverse. Anticipated costs: petrol for the return trip, one or two nights at the Holiday Park, shuttle and food.

30 November

Tama Lakes **M**
Trevor King **356-4557**

Early rise to leave Countdown 6am. for The Chateau. Meet overnigheters from John and Fiona’s Saturday Tongariro Crossing at 9am, and head to Tama lakes via Taranaki Falls. The Taranaki Falls should be impressive fed with spring snowmelt. Great vistas if fine. Return from lakes about 3p.m., coffee in Ohakune, then home. Be prepared for cold winds if the weather is foul.

6-7 December

Upper Otaki **F**
Tony Gates **357-7439**

We plan for an early departure, and to enter the Tararuas at Waikawa (near Manakau), with car (s) driven around to Otaki Forks for road end security. The trip will go over the low bush saddle in the south branch of the Waikawa Stream, into the Waitewaiwai (YTTY) headwaters, and down thru gorgeous beech forest and grassy flats to the Otaki River above YTTY hut. No tracks- just good Tararua forest. The car driver can amble into YTTY hut, then up river to join us at one of the many paradise like campsights. Out to Otaki Forks via YTTY hut on Sunday.

7 December

Ohau River **M**
Richard Lockett **323-0948**

Contact Richard for details of this trip.

Notices

Interclub photo competition

The interclub photo competition was hosted by Massey University Alpine Club on 22 September. Congratulations to Jean Garman from MTSC who was the overall winner. The top two photos were selected for each section as follows:

Overseas:

- 1) Bruce Van Brant PNTMC
- 2) Andy Foggal MUAC

Natural History:

- 1) Richard Lander MTSC
- 2) Bruce Van Brant PNTMC

Alpine

- 1) Terry Crippen PNTMC

- 2) John Appleby MUAC

Scenic NZ

- 1) Jean Garman MTSC
- 2) Richard Lander MTSC

Topical NZ

- 1) Peter Rawlins MTSC
- 2) Katie Hoff MUAC

Interclub quiz evening

Report: Warren Wheeler

The Interclub Quiz was organised this year by PNTMC and was held on our club night of Thursday 9 October 2008 at the Quakers Hall.

Each club team had five or six members to tackle the questions and tasks set by our Quiz Master Janet Wilson. Teams answered each round of questions or tasks and these were marked by the Lovely Assistant Graham Peters, with sweeteners being distributed between rounds by the Lovely Lolly Assistant, Warren Wheeler.

Low scoring from the multi-national MUAC team did not deter their enthusiasm for such tasks as the “nanny goat call” and “deer roar”. Map reading and GPS use was more of a trial, and naming the huts in the Powerpoint presentation was limited by their lack of local knowledge but they deserved bonus points for trying.

The more experienced teams rose to the challenge with mixed results but in the end it was congratulations to the PNTMC A-Team, our 2008 winners of the Trevor Bissell Memorial Trophy.

Here are the final scores:

Club	Team	Score
PNTMC	“Greywacke”	58.5
MTSC	“OngaOnga”	54
PNTMC	“Bushwackers”	37
MUAC	“Coolicious”	17

Thanks again to Janet Wilson for organising the competition this year. See you all next year for another fun night out.

Map orders from FMC

The club is able to purchase maps from FMC at a discounted price. Martin is placing an order shortly. If you want to order any maps, see Martin at club night or phone him on 357-1695.

New member

Welcome to new club member, Annett Pätzold (ph 351-7935). Annett has previous experience as a member of a German alpine club.

PNTMC Events Card Jan - June 2009

Over the next few weeks Janet and Terry are putting together the next events card for the period January - June next year.

- Trip leaders - please think about trips you would like to lead and contact Terry or Janet with your plans/ideas.
- All others - if you have ideas on where you would like a trip to go then give us your suggestions and we'll try to match it with a trip leader.
- New trip leaders are welcome - If you'd like to give it a go, talk to Terry or Janet.

Most dates are available at this early stage.

Thanks from the Trip Coordinators:

Janet Wilson 329-4722
Terry Crippen 356-3588

News from DOC

Due to large amounts of rain there is a high possibility of windfalls and slips on tracks. The Department of Conservation are urging people to exercise extreme caution and report any damage to your local DOC Area Office or via the DOC hotline.



The club receives regular updates about changes to DOC facilities and services. Recent items are summarised below.

Tararua Forest Park

Oriwa biv, Mt Dagg Hut and Harris Creek Hut

These have all been removed.

Cattle Ridge Hut

The woodburner at Cattle Ridge hut has been removed and won't be replaced.

Aokaparangi Biv has been replaced. New hut location NZ Topo Map S26 E088 N322

Arete Biv has been replaced. New hut location NZ Topo Map S25 157 N480

South Ohau Hut has been replaced. New hut location NZ Topo Map S25 E2711869 N6051530

Atiwhakatu Track

A bridge on the track has been destroyed. Do not cross when stream is in flood. Take care when crossing at normal water levels.

Waiohine Gorge Road

Waiohine Gorge access road has been closed but is now open. However, care needs to be taken when driving along the road due to remaining debris.

Mangahao Valley Dams Road

Mangahao road has been closed but is now open. However, care needs to be taken when driving along the road due to remaining debris.

Rimutaka Forest Park

Battery Stream bivvy

This has been closed due to the need for major structural repairs until further notice.

Cattle Ridge and Butcher

Cattle Ridge and Butcher Tracks will be closed until further notice due to windfalls.

Wairarapa

Castlepoint Lighthouse

The Castlepoint causeway and wind fence leading to the lighthouse have been removed. Access to and from the lighthouse will be restricted by high tides and strong winds. A new access track will be in place before the summer season 2008/09.

Mt Munroe Mt Bruce Track, Pukaha Mt Bruce

The public track through Pukaha Forest from Braddocks Farm, Mt Munroe Road (South) to SH2 south of the Mt Bruce Visitor Centre will be closed until further notice to allow contractors to work on the track with machinery.

Trip Reports

Snowcraft 3

22-24 August

Report:

Kelly Buckle

After a Snowcraft 2 weekend full of sun and brilliant weather, we came full-circle back to the precipitation and wind of Snowcraft 1, with an anticipated low moving in midday on Saturday. The group included three snowcraft students and three veteran snowcrafters from previous years, as well as leaders Terry and Bruce. An enormous storm the week before had dumped huge quantities of snow, and instead of the mountain's usual icy conditions, we had a deep pack of soft white stuff to work with.

On Friday night we drove to Konini Lodge in Taranaki National Park. Terry encouraged us to get a mountaineering start to take advantage of the small window of fine weather on Saturday morning, so Saturday's sunrise found us postholing up through soggy snow to Kapuni Lodge. After digging out the lodge, we grabbed a bite to eat, and split into groups. The snowcraft veterans decided to take a stab at summiting Taranaki, while the current snowcraft students practised setting snow anchors and experimented with the prevailing snow conditions. We quickly discovered it was loose, difficult snow for setting any sort of anchor, and our simple stakes and bollards failed under test loads. Nevertheless, we persevered, and by the end of the session we had become more comfortable setting and testing anchors, and better at working with a heavy, wet rope. By the time it started raining in earnest it was past midday, and we were happy with the learning that we'd done. By that time the veterans had turned back due to poor visibility.

We all retired to the lodge for an afternoon of review, clothes-drying, and snacking. In honor of Andrea's birthday, streamers were hung around the lodge, and several delectable puddings and beverages were consumed. Sunday morning the weather was still howling, and the temperature was above freezing. We practised prussicking in the lodge for several hours, and then packed up and headed back down the mountain through the slushy remains of the previous day's snow. All in all, the PNTMC Snowcraft Series was an excellent start for this newbie to what will hopefully be a long and rewarding string of adventures on snow and ice.

Instructors were Terry Crippen and Bruce Van Brunt. Participants were Andrea Coleman, Stephen Crouch, and Kelly Buckle. Veterans were Christopher Tuffley, Shintaro Fukuhara, and Murray Gifford.

Mick Trip - Urban Variation

7 September

Report: Warren Wheeler

Only two of us had our names down for this trip and with my trusty Renault in need of attention for a WOF we decided on Backup Plan B, the spring version of the urban walk we did a few months ago.

This time we started from Countdown and walked through the streets to the Esplanade and on out to Bledisloe Park carpark next to Massey. From Bledisloe Park we followed the Turitea Stream walkway to the Arboretum (next to Massey) and carried on to Old West Road and Aokautere, and back again.

This was a very pleasant way to spend four hours, made all the more enjoyable by the unexpected discoveries along the way. Like "Track Closed"

means a teensy bit of the track has been lost to a slip, no worries. Or watching lots of tui feeding in the flowering gum trees. Lovely sunny weather, with good company.

Welcome back to New Zealand to my walking partner, Alan Li!

Makairo Track

14 September

Report:

Fiona Donald

It was very pleasing to see blue sky and sun as we drove towards the Tui Brewery in the Wairarapa. At the Brewery, we turned left and travelled another half hour towards the hills. The trip seemed shortened by the promise of a warm day.

Some of the drive is on a heavily metalled unsealed road and Richard made a comment that I was driving too slowly. Little did he know that the previous night I had spent checking the pressure in my car tyres and discovering a large hole in one of the tyres - most likely caused by a rock while travelling on the same road the previous weekend.

The track, which used to be a road in the mid 1970s, goes from Maikairo to Coonoor; now, the road is closed and it is one of my favourites for its suitability for anyone who wants to get into the bush without travelling for hours. It is usually very easy walking uphill with only some mud and large puddles to add to the challenges for the day. It was ideal for Richard to scoot up on his mountain bike and have great fun.

I had brought a book along to identify the Red Admiral butterfly. These butterflies make full use of the Ongaonga native stinging nettle to hibernate and feed from the plant. The only hazard, along this track, is the stinging nettle and it can be very painful if you happen to brush past it; it pays to carry antihistamine cream at all times, however, on this occasion, most of the nettle had been cut back.

At the top of the summit, there were wonderful views that stretched back to the windmills by the Manawatu Gorge but we were also blasted with a cold wind. No-one wanted to hang around to see whether Richard was at the summit and we snuck down until we found some shelter. It was still cold because some of the group wanted a view of the bush and surrounding hills so we didn't stay as long as we would have done of a warm sunny day.

Richard had not turned up and I thought I would have to go and look for him. It was an unappealing thought....but then he arrived and it turned out that he had been tucked in a small hollow at the summit, out of the wind - we went to have a look and there I met a group from MTSC.

Suddenly it was all too cold and some of the group were looking very uncomfortable so Richard took the lead and the rest of us were chased back down by the buffeting cold wind until we reached the bush.

It was a busy day on the track and we met two more groups of people; the parking area was full of vehicles. All in all a good day out with a lot of talking amongst excellent company.

We were Duncan Hedderley, Deirdre Morley and her friend Nilofer, Richard, Katharina Fischer, Andrew Batchelor and Fiona Donald (scribe, leader, driver).

Mohaka Hot Pools tramp

20- 21 September

Report and photo: Tony Gates

Palmerston North trampers might have the Tararuas, Ruahines, etc, at their doorstep, but Hawkes Bay trampers have the lovely Kawekas, with their large rivers, delightful forests, good weather, and hot pools. They are accessible to us with a little dedication to the long drive, but are well worth it.

Luxurious hot pools are found beside the Mohaka River, some four hours tramp from the car, then there is another hot pool back at the car park. What a way to tramp- through great scenery, camp at the hot pools, then wash up at the other hot pools back at the car. And there are two good tracks that people can follow to/from the hot pools. Other features of the tramp included Terry's encyclopaedic knowledge of the geological features, fresh trout for lunch, and everyone's great gourmet dinner preparation.

So, after a fairly long drive, with a decent coffee stop in Taradale, we made it to "The Blue Gums" otherwise known as the Mohaka Valley road end. We ambled up the river side track admiring the scenery. Doug showed us a giant natural pumice arch expertly analysed by our resident Geologist: a very impressive natural earth formation carved by water, wind, and time. Back at the river, trout number one was caught just before Te Puia Lodge, and was duly consumed with relish. Two young fishermen/deer hunters resting up at the Lodge were impressed, so rushed off to continue with their quest. They caught a good sized trout, so we too were impressed. Hot sunny weather was easily avoided in the forest.

We soon arrived at the Mangatainoka Hot pools campsite, set up camp, and tested the waters - mountain river as well as hot pool. Such brave trampers - rushing between the hot pools and the freezing river, then back again. If it is true that this is a healthy practice, then Warren must be the healthiest amongst us. It was a fairly chilly night under the fly.



Kaweka - photo of natural pumice arch.

Sunday was another good day, commencing for most of us with a hot soak. The dark, brooding forest soon lightened up as we sipped and looked for more trout. Number two succumbed, then number three (but the latter escaped). We broke camp, with four heading out via Makino Hut, and four back via the river track. Summery weather hounded us. Good views all around, with the Mohaka River and its sinuous valley the centre piece. There were quite a few other people out and about, which proved useful when the battery in Terry's wagon was found to be flat! Powerful jumper leads, tow ropes, and various tools are a must.

We were: Doug Lagerstad, Tony Gates, Tina Bishop, Jo OHalloran, Lawrence OHalloran, Sallie Hewson, Terry Crippen, Warren Wheeler.

Makino Bivvy

By Alan Lee (2008)

Thrashed by gales and driving rain, for thirty years it
stood,
not much more than sheets of tin propped up by
lengths of wood.
A haven from the winter storms that swept the ridges
bare,
of all but the most hardy souls who dared to venture
there.

Nothing much to talk about, no architect's delight,
in fact if any came this way they'd likely die of fright.
But to the ones who love the hills, who tramp the
great unknown,

this humble structure nestled there was something
they called home.

A place to camp a night or two, and hunt the gully
heads,
seeking quiet sika deer, or bumble footed reds.
Shelter when the night steals on, and mist is creeping
in,
there's comfort in the sound of rain upon the rusty tin.

But sadly there's the word out there, that it may have
to go,
Taken from it's resting place, a devastating blow.
A cruel end to years of service, ripped from ridges
top,
to end up bundled in a net, hanging from a strop.

I'd rather that it sat around, and crumbled into dust,
twisted lengths of number 8, and little flakes of rust.
A memory for old timers, who've passed this way
before,
And those who've shared a steaming brew, on the
dusty floor!

Ruapehu

27-28 September

Report: **Annett Pätzold**

Mike's plan was to climb the highest point of Mt Ruapehu, Tahurangi, via Girdlestone Peak and Girdlestone Ridge.

On Sunday we reached the peak of Girdlestone by 2:30pm - reasons being a late start but mostly me being very slow. We decided to continue from Girdlestone Peak along Girdlestone Ridge, Gendarme included, towards Tahurangi as far as time would permit. As we were running out of time, we decided to descend after the climb of the Gendarm. Terry and Mike tackled the Gendarme easily. It was a very interesting climb and it became more interesting along the top (very narrow and exposed) with the most difficult part (from my point of view) down the policeman as it is very steep with only rock to climb on in places.

It was a day with very fine weather - just the opposite to Saturday when we had spent some time in the Giant Café warming up but mainly climbing up and down a short gully wall close to Giant Café and close to chair lifts gaining confidence in using crampons and axes. I am certain that we all enjoyed the views - particularly in the evening of Tasman Sea, Mt Taranaki and the setting sun, and that all of us enjoyed the sight of blue sky, ice and snow and, if not enjoyed, the at least patiently endured, getting very cold now and then. A full trip - no wasted time at all!

We were Terry Crippen, Mike Archer, Daniel Donaldson and Annett Pätzold.

Tunipo

28 September

Report: **Craig Allerby**

Realizing that it was the start of daylight savings, meant changing the start time of the trip from 7.30am to 8am. Murray saved me a drive to Palmerston by picking me up from Feilding and allowing me a little more sleep time. We arrived at the Oroua Valley road end with the weather looking good - just a few clouds passing over the tops. With boots and packs on, we headed on down the farm track then over the stile into the Ruahine Forest Park. We stopped at a loop in the track for a good view of our destination - Tunipo clear in the distance.

Marching on, we soon arrived at the track junction to Tunipo and proceeded to climb steadily up through the red beech forest. We noticed that someone (presumably from DOC) had been through recently with a weed-eater cutting down the grass and ferns along the track edge to widen it. As we got higher onto the ridgeline we came across toppled trees - the result of the fierce winds from the storm on the 18th August. It was disappointing to see the first of the two beech, which have a protected mistletoe growing on them, blown over. Thankfully the second tree was still standing upright! Further on we came to an area on the ridgeline where several trees had been toppled leaving a large opening in the canopy. Some trees had even been snapped off at the base!

Climbing out of the forest we headed into the leatherwood with the track steepening. After a short drink stop, we carried on getting into the more predominately tussock grass zone. There was a light dusting from snow that had fallen overnight. The route passes over several bumps on a narrow section of ridge then broadens out until, with some relief, we finally reached the top of Tunipo. Murray snapped a few photo's and Nicola on her first club trip enjoyed having reached the top. We sat down for some welcome lunch taking in the views. Then the cloud decided to roll in blocking the sun and cooling the temperature.

After a good lunch and before we got too cold we headed back down. It soon warmed up as we descended back into the leatherwood. We carried on steadily down with a couple of short stops, finally popping back out onto the Oroua Valley track. We took a quick detour to Heritage Lodge for a look and relax in the afternoon sun. Then with a short walk back to the car we were packed up ready to leave once Murray had managed to relocate his car keys after misplacing them! We headed home with a brief stop for a well earned coffee and cake at the Kimbolton cafe

We were Murray Gifford, Nicola Wallace and Craig Allerby.

Ngaruhoe and Tongariro (or The Early Bird Catches the Wind)

4/5 October

Report: Grant Christian

Warren Wheeler was planning to lead a trip up Mounts Ngaruhoe and Tongariro. The forecast mid week was not looking favourable, with high winds and rain forecast. I put my name down, hoping for a change in forecast. There were three of us scheduled to go. By Friday, although the forecast had not improved, it seemed the trip was still on. I received a last minute call from Warren to say we were down to two and he was unsure about the wisdom of going. Never one to let bad weather put me off I recommended we still go and undertake a different trip if the weather was too bad.

The forecast was for winds strengthening later in the morning. We were staying at the Tongariro Holiday Park on Friday & Saturday nights. While travelling up I suggested an early start to beat the approaching winds. Warren thought this idea had merit and we agreed to get up at 2:45am.

After a few hours' sleep, the alarm signaled it was time to be off. We had breakfast and drove down the road to the Mangatepopo car park. The plan was to walk into the saddle and then climb to the top of Ngaruhoe from the saddle. It was drizzly and foggy but still calm. We set off walking just after 4 a.m. with Warren leading the way. Starting in the dark made it seem like more of an adventure. The misty drizzle meant it was sometimes difficult following the track.

We arrived at the base of the climb to the saddle and could identify the grey metal that had been laid on the newly completed and nicely graded track to the saddle. I had taken over the lead due to Warren's failing torchlight. The lack of visibility meant that a lot of the time I could only make out the track by the grey metal. It was certainly an easier climb than previously. We arrived on the saddle around 6 a.m. It was still dark due to the thick cloud. The wind was still not too bad. We headed off in the direction of Ngaruhoe and with the increasing snow cover soon decided it was time to put on the crampons. By the time we were ready to continue it was light enough to see without the torches.

We were soon heading up the cone. The snow was mostly firm with icy patches. The wind was increasing and getting quite blustery now. As we climbed the wind increased and at times we were just about blown off our feet by sudden gusts. I have only climbed here in summer previously and I found it easier climbing in the snow, compared with the loose rock encountered at other times, which is a bit like climbing a sand hill. The wind was getting up earlier than we had hoped. At some points on the climb the

wind was magnified by the contour. One minute it was howling around us and then it was relatively calm as we moved on. We eventually reached the edge of the crater where the wind was blasting across the top. We tried looking down into the crater but the cloud meant visibility was only a few metres. It was now 10 past 8. Just below the rim of the crater it was comparatively sheltered. We had a quick snack here and then headed back down.

We moved around to the east a bit for the descent. Here the snow was thicker and softer. This made for a quick and easy trip down. With the increased amount of snow and the thick cloud we were in a world of whiteness. Hard to tell the ground from the sky when we looked ahead, especially when we got back down to the saddle. Before long Warren spotted a marker post, just a few centimetres sticking out from the deep snow. We knew this should be the track across the south crater. We discussed carrying on around Tongariro but decided to head back, given the unpleasant conditions. We followed the nearly buried marker posts back across the crater and out of the snow onto the saddle.

With crampons removed we made good time back down from the saddle and along the track to the Mangatepopo hut. We passed a few other trampers heading towards the saddle who may well have wondered if we were serious when we said that we had already been up Ngaruhoe.

After a well-earned early lunch at Mangatepopo hut we had a short stroll back to the car. We were back at the cabin around 12. We had completed a 7 hour trip and still had a whole afternoon to fill in. After hot showers we hung out our wet gear to dry in the more pleasant conditions at the holiday park. Later in the afternoon we headed to Tokaanu to enjoy a soak in the hot pool. It was crowded with frustrated skiers. A couple of beers with dinner back at the lodge capped off a great day.

Sunday dawned wet and miserable and we discussed various options for activities. After nothing more interesting arose we stuck with the original plan of going for a trip on Tongariro, to Blue Lake. The rain fell steadily as we left the car park. The waterfalls were looking good. We stopped at the Ketetahi hut for refreshments and more clothing. The rain was not letting up. Not far from the hut we were able to take shortcuts up large patches of snow which took us between sections of the track that zig zagged up the easy gradient. As we got higher ice axes were deployed to safely cross the snow. The wind was rising again with the increased altitude. Upon reaching the highest part of the Tongariro crossing track we were greeted by some very strong winds in places. There were sections where the wind was being funnelled between the peaks. At times we were blasted by the wind but soon we would be sheltered

as we rounded a corner or went over a ridge. We eventually reached the viewpoint looking down into the Blue Lake. In the misty and white conditions it looked to be a long way down to the Lake. I was surprised it only took a couple of minutes to get down the slope to the edge. After inspecting the ice we headed back. Battling our way across the gusty areas where we had to be careful to keep our footing.

It wasn't long before we were back at Mangatepopo hut where we stopped for more sustenance. With constant rain we were damp by now so we didn't waste any time. We had a quick walk back down to the carpark, taking a short diversion to view one of the waterfalls on the way. A change into dry clothes at the carpark was welcomed before heading for home. We didn't see anyone else on this track, which is a contrast to the large numbers on it in good weather.

I really enjoyed the trip and the chance to make good use of all the gear I own and my recently acquired cramponing skills. I mostly felt comfortable and warm despite the conditions.

Warren Wheeler and Grant Christian were on this trip.

Hemi Matenga

11 October

Report: Warren Wheeler

Our leader arranged a perfectly fine calm spring day for this trip – well done John! We took two cars for the five of us and dropped one off at the end of our walk opposite Peka Peka Road, just north of Waikanae. We all squeezed in for the short drive into Waikanae and followed the signs to the Bush Walk in Hemi Matetanga Reserve. We were joined by five members of the Kaumatua Tramping Club at the carpark by the concrete water supply reservoir for Waikanae.

Our leader John Hunt was looking forward to catching up with some of his buddies after recently moving to Feilding but many had just been on a hard overnight trip so numbers were less than might have been expected. Still, it was a good sized group and meant we could get to know people that much better.

The coastal bush is quite different to the normal beech and podocarp in the higher ranges, with lots of nikau palms, broadleaf and tawa. The kohekohe had already finished flowering but the clematis was putting on a good show here and there. Spiralling vines of supplejack hung in columns from high in the trees. We took the easier gradient of the southerly track and climbed steadily upwards to a grassy lookout for morning tea and homemade fruit cake...hmmm, these Kaumatua can really show us a thing or two.

Up on the ridge the Reserve backs onto farmland and we followed the fenceline for a little while, avoiding the spring growth of blackberry. Turning off about 50m down the less used (steeper) spur track we found another grassy lookout and a memorial seat – nice spot. Back on the ridge track we carried on until the track started to drop.

This looked to John like the turnoff to carry on along the ridge, although he had some doubts. Sure enough, after about five minutes bush bashing we started to go down rather steeply and our progress was called to a halt by cries from Glenys and her trusty GPS. Back on the track again we carried on until we reached the correct turnoff point, well marked with a handmade sign “Main Track” pointing back down to the carpark, while we kept going straight along the old ridge track, following the markers put in for a bait line.

A lunch break was called in the third small clearing, nicely sheltered from the light breeze that had sprung up. A little further is another clearing with coastal views, but a little more exposed.

We carried on along the ridge and emerged from the bush into the wasteland that is a recently felled forestry plantation. We followed the forestry road to the first of several communications towers on what is clearly a prime location. Our destination was the one furthest to the east where there is an old trig mark on Field peak. From here we hoped to find the Lodestar that had crashed in 1949 and killed the 15 people on board. Our directions took us east down the bush clad spur for about 15 minutes then branched off more steeply down a spur. Old bits of string seemed to indicate we were on the right route but these soon petered out. After we had dropped past our target altitude of about 480m, about two thirds of the way down to the stream, we gave up and returned to John who was enjoying the sunshine and medicating himself for leg cramp. He said they had some trouble finding it last time too amongst all the kiekie. Perhaps another time we could try again, taking a shorter route in. 60 years next March perhaps?

We returned along the forestry road, and instead of taking the long zigzag main route down we backtracked to what seemed to be our steep side road down, but soon found this was blocked by felled pine slash and had to return back up again. A little further on we came to the end of the road and looked down the spur. It looked like it might do, despite a bit of slash and windthrow from recent storms.

Sure enough we were soon on a good old forestry track that dropped steeply to another newly felled area. Here the track was more fresh with loose rock underfoot, like ball bearings. This track graded steadily around to the road end and John's car.

The drivers duly piled in and went back to get all the vehicles while the others pulled off boots and waited in the sunshine or shade depending on ones inclination. After waving off the others we headed home with a stop for fresh fruit icecreams...must try the chilli and chocolate next time. Thanks to everyone for a good muddleforth trip, especially to John for his calm leadership. Now, has anyone seen a stray size 11 Norsewear sock?

Participating bush bashers from PNTMC were Anne and Martin Lawrence, John Hunt, Warren Wheeler and Kathy Corner. Kaumatua Tramping Club were David, David, Glenys, Hillary and Marian.

Sunrise Hut

19 October

Report and photos: Malcolm Parker

The weather forecast was not fantastic, but was due to improve in the afternoon. Terry had rung on Friday night and said we may meet up with them on their way back from Waikamaka. I was expecting us to get drenched. We left early from Countdown to give us plenty of time. It's quite a long drive over to the road end. On arrival we discovered heaps of cars in the carpark. Apparently the Heretaunga Tramping Club had a large party (about 30) going to Sunrise too!



So we ambled on up to the hut. Towards the top we had quite a reasonable amount of snow. Decided it would be wise to stop and put our coats on. And the temperature had dropped significantly. I had expected rain today but not snow. Arrived at the hut in a very reasonable time



This was my first trip to the hut since it had been "modified" somewhat. What an improvement! It really is very comfortable. And when we arrived many of the HTC were comfortably ensconced inside. We had an early lunch and then decided to have a look over the Armstrong Saddle. Surprised at how calm it was - I've never seen it like that before. I thought it always blew at gale force over this spot. The child in us made an appearance here as some tried rolling up snow. I think he referred to them as snow roly polys !!! They didn't seem to have much substance though and collapsed.

It was still quite cold, so we didn't hang around too long. Back to the hut to grab our gear and wonder on back down. We did stop at the turnoff to Waipawa Forks to consider dropping down there and following the river down, but decided against it based upon our suspicion about how cold the river would be today!! We had a quick look at Triplex before going back to the cars and heading on home. We had missed Terry's party by about ½ an hour.



We did make the obligatory stop at Ongaonga for an ice cream on the way home. An excellent trip in great company!

We were Malcolm Parker, Warren Wheeler, Janet Wilson, Graham Peters, John Feeney, Jennifer Kitchen and Jess.

Of interest...

Kilimanjaro SAR

Tony Gates wrote this piece up after listening to a Kim Hill radio interview.

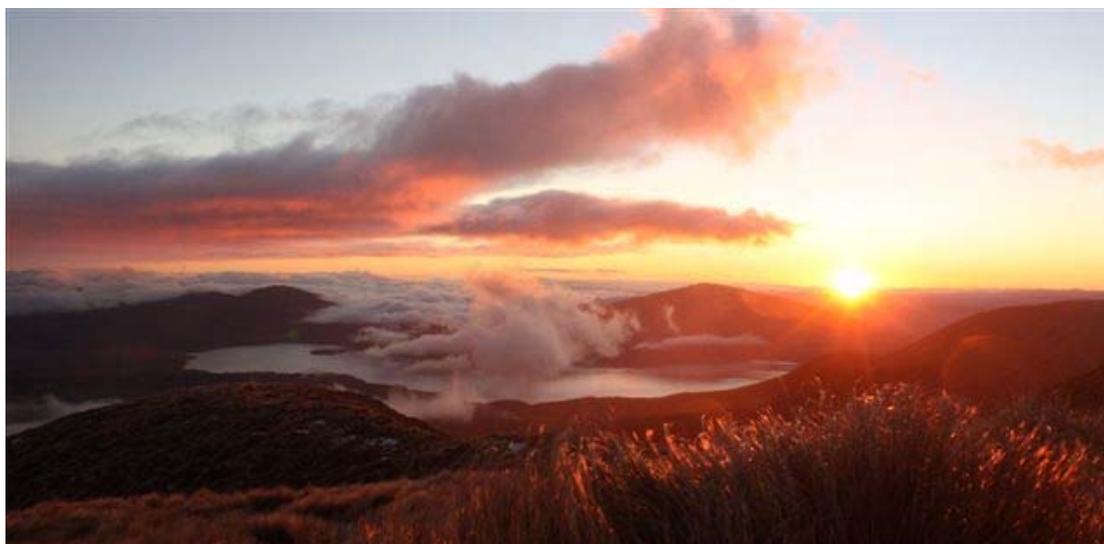
A recent scientific lecture tour of New Zealand featured an American glaciologist who studied ice cores on Mt Kilimanjaro, and other tropical ice fields. His well funded expedition took one hundred porters to the summit, and drilled into the twelve thousand year old ice field - 51 metres deep at the time, and loosing some 2 metres of depth each year.

The National Park Government Minister arrived to observe the happenings, so was treated as an honoured guest. He was served chicken- and refused to eat it due to the presence of chicken bones. Apparently, it was beneath his level of social standing to remove the bones himself, so his servant did it. Then he came down with altitude sickness, for which he requested assistance from the well equipped Americans. They had pre-paid a government levy for SAR purposes, so suggested that he utilise those funds to assist with his rescue. "Impossible!" came the reply. "That levy is purely to make money, it is never used".

Needless to say, the Americans did assist this extremely important Government Minister down off the mountain.

Hut warden Anja

Anja Sholz has a job with DOC. She is going to be hut wardening at Tongariro National Park, from 20th October through to 15th December. She says that there is still a lot of snow on the top parts of the Tongariro Crossing, and she will certainly NOT have central heating at her workplace, but she thinks the views might make up for it – she sent this photo to prove her point.



Memories of PNTMC trips

Terry Crippen has been receiving some emails via the club web site from ex club members and associates. The following comes from Glen Dixon who was a member about 1972-76.

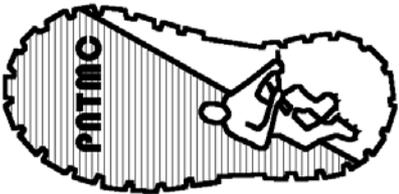
I have the most wonderful memories of the Club, the people and our trips. Many of them I look back on as real adventures.....

Christmas - New Year of 1975 or 1976.

We got the railcar across to Greymouth from Christchurch. Keith Margrain got a badly infected finger and we had to bail on the trip, crossing the main divide at Whitcombe Pass and ending up at Klondyke Corner. Keith nearly lost his finger. I remember we hitched from Klondyke corner into Otira and we were picked up by the MOW's truck. Oscar Coberger (we used to call him Oscar Swindleburger - on account of the fact that he owned the most expensive mountaineering shop in NZ in those days) was a passenger in the truck. Keith and I thought it was pretty cool to be travelling with Oscar who was considered to be a legend of the mountaineering scene in those days...

It could have been 1976 as it was that year that I had an accident on Mitre Peak and got flown off by one of the legends of the South Island - Bill Black. Keith, Tim Short, Trevor Sands and I had been in the Darrens for three weeks and we were spending a few days camped behind the THC at Milford being feed by the chefs. We decided to take a day trip via crayfish boat over to Mitre Peak and I slipped near the summit and dislocated my shoulder. A very miserable night indeed!!

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PNTMC Newsletter

November 2008

What's Inside this month:

- ***Upcoming trips and club events***
- ***Reports on recent trips***
- ***News from Department of Conservation about tracks and huts***
- ***Results of inter-club Quiz and photo competition***

**Get out and about with us!
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