

Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.

www.pntmc.org.nz

P.O. Box 1217, Palmerston North

Newsletter April 2009

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.

9 April Norwegian Trails with Warren Wheeler

Warren will give a presentation on a 2 week hiking trip in South-West Norway that explored the fjord lands of the Sauda-Etne range and the alpine plateau of the Hardangervidda National Park.

16 April Committee Meeting

30 April Camino de Santiago with Margaret Riordan

From mid-April until early July last year, Margaret walked about 1600km along a pilgrim trail in France and Spain. She began in mid-April at Le-Puy-en-Velay in the Auvergne region of France, and reached Santiago de Compostela in Galicia early in July. She has many photos of the varied terrain she crossed on her journey.

Trip Notes

Trip Grading

Trip grades depend on many factors, especially weather and terrain. A reasonably proficient trumper 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 (T) 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.

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

4-5 April

Lost Hut, Haurangi Forest Park F

Terry Crippen 356 3588

We will again head high up onto the Aorangi Range, SE Wairarapa. But now that we know where the Lost Tarn is, we will be looking for the "Lost" hut - not actually lost but we only have a rough idea where it is. Expect some good steep scrub-bashing, tops travel and fly-camping. We will depart PN Friday afternoon or evening and either stay Friday night at White Rock Station quarters or fly-camp up the Whawanui.

4-5 April

The Pinnacles FP

E/M

Trevor King

356 4557

A scenic day trip to the Pinnacles Reserve in the southern Wairarapa. The tramp loops up around a picturesque coastal valley. May meet up with Terry's overnight party looking for the lost hut at some stage. May also have a chance to enjoy the wonderful food (or coffee) at Lake Ferry on the way back. Leaving Countdown 6am,

9-13 April

Easter SI Climbing Trip

F, T

Terry Crippen

356 3588

027 643 3637

We will be teaming up with Wellington Section NZAC, and heading up the Cameron Valley, to attempt possibly Arrowsmith or other peaks at the head of the valley. Departing Thursday night, returning late Monday night. Contact Terry ASAP, as ferry bookings are in very high demand over Easter. The vehicle may be full by now anyhow!

10-13 April

Easter Egmont M/F
Warren Wheeler 356 1998

Depart 8.30am. No rush, we are just heading for Lake Dive, a good Friday stroll of 3 or 4 hours from Dawson Falls on the southern side of Mt Egmont/Taranaki. With grief and torment we proceed to the Waihua Hut, with lots of streams to cross, and a boggy overgrown track. On Sunday we rise again along the Brames Falls Track and up to Syme Hut. Finally on Day 4 we ascend to the heavenly heights of Mt Egmont before descending to more earthly levels back at Dawson Falls... and promised peace at last. Contact Warren for details. Plan A is rather weather dependent but other options abound.

18-19 April

Mangatainoka Hot Springs E/M
Tina Bishop 355 5755

Tina has changed the destination for this trip – it was to be Castle Point but the tides don't work well so she is heading to Mangatainoka instead. The track follows the Mohaka River to TePuia Lodge. Further up the track are the hot pools where if the weather permits we will camp under flies and enjoy the hot pools so brings togs and towel and a torch. If the weather is not so good we will stay at the hut. There are plenty of places to fish and swim along the way. There is the option of leaving Friday night and staying in a Hawkes Bay camping ground otherwise it will be an early start from Palmie on Saturday morning. If you want to go on this trip, you need to contact Tina by Tuesday night at the latest.

19 April

Mania Track M
Dave Grant 357 8269

North of Rangiwahia, Mania track heads up into the Ruahines. The lower levels pass through dense mixed beech-podocarp forest. Higher up there are awesome views down huge slip faces into the Pari stream leading down the Pourangaki and upper Kawhatau river terraces. With a bit of luck we will climb on to the open tops of the Whanahuia range and look south to Rangiwahia hut. We will return the way we came. Leaving Countdown carpark at 7.00 am

25-26 April

Turoa Climbing M/F T
Annette Patzold 3551 197

Depending on weather conditions and fitness/skills level a tramp/climb up one of Ruapehu's peaks. Contact Annette for more details.

25 April Anzac Day

Diggers Hut E
Warren Wheeler 356 1998

Depart 7.30am. From the carpark off Pohangina East Road we wander steeply up through farmland to the bush edge at the top of the western foothills of the Ruahine Range. The forest here has impressive rata

and rimu trees and makes for a pleasant walk until the track drops fairly steeply to the stream and Diggers Hut. After a cuppa we will be back in time for the afternoon wedding of Peter Darragh and Janet Maessen, both long time PNTMC members.

26 April

No 1 Line M
Richard Lockett 323 0948

8.00 am start at Countdown. Approximately 4 ½ hrs long involving a climb up the track to warm ourselves up. Having got up, we then bush bash down off track to a stream and then down the stream back to the start of the track. We can then head to the Waterford to refuel.

2-3 May

Mangahao Flats M
Warren Wheeler 356 1998

Depart 8.00am. We drive to the end of the winding Mangahao Dams access road behind Shannon. Yes, this is prime Tararua country. We follow the DoC track from the upper dam carpark with a short cut up the river to the swingbridge if flows allow. We continue along the track, which is a bit up and down as it sidles along above the Mangahao River for about 4 hours to the Mangahao Flats Hut. The larger streams are now bridged so getting there and back is not weather dependent. We will return the same way with some variation if river conditions allow.

2 May

Te Araroa Walkway E
Peter Wiles 358 6894

Note the change of date from the Sunday to the Saturday 2nd May. We will leave at 8am. It is an easy day trip on a good gentle track.

Queen's Birthday Weekend trips

Some of you will have noticed that there is an error in the trip card and that the dates for this weekend should in fact be the 30/31 May and the 1st June. Janet's "Coastal Classic" this year based at Mistletoe Bay, on the Queen Charlotte Walkway, will be held on that weekend, starting on the Friday 29 May. Please let Janet know very soon if you are thinking about going along as accommodation bookings need to be confirmed soon.

There may be changes to other trips that weekend – any changes will be in the next newsletter.

SUBS for 2009 are now due

At the AGM, the decision was made to make no change to subscriptions for 2009. Please send these in to Martin or pay at the next Club night.

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.

Notices

The Who's Done What List 2008- 2009

Terry Crippen (3563-588) is currently compiling the "Who's done what list" for April 2008 to end of March 2009. So if you have done any South Island, overseas or extended North Island tramps, climbs, cycle trips etc, or visited interesting places such as Uzbekistan let Terry know so it can be added to the list.

New maps from LINZ

Land Information New Zealand will launch a new 1:50,000 topographic map series in 2009: Topo50 maps.

From September 2009, the entire Topo50 map series will replace LINZ's existing 1:50,000 scale NZMS260 series.

ENTIRE SERIES ROLLED OUT IN SEPTEMBER 2009

The entire Topo50 map series will be available from map retailers from September 2009. The new series will provide the same detailed and accurate representation at 1:50,000 scale as LINZ's current NZMS260 series.

- > The series is made up of 446 full mainland map sheets, including approximately 40 sheets with little land cover.
- > These 40 sheets will be printed with one-third overlap from an adjacent sheet.
- > Topo50 maps will have no part sheets.
- > LINZ will also produce six map sheets for the Chatham Islands. These are based on the Chatham Islands Transverse Mercator 2000 (CITM2000) projection. See www.linz.govt.nz.
- > The new 1:50,000 topographic maps will be launched in September 2009.
- > The maps will be known as the Topo50 map series.
- > For the first time the entire series – 452 maps – will be released simultaneously.
- > The Topo50 maps are easily distinguishable from the current NZMS260 series maps. They feature green and orange covers, are printed in A1 portrait format and have new sheet numbering (see the example above).

For more information, check out www.linz.govt.nz/topo50. Also, find out about the Topo250 map series at 1:250,000 scale to be launched in September 2009 at www.linz.govt.nz/topo250.

You can register for regular email updates on launch progress by emailing newmapseries@linz.govt.nz.

PNTMC Snowcraft Programme 2009 - Preliminary notice

It's time to be thinking about SNOW and alpine skills seeing it's now autumn. PNTMC's comprehensive Snowcraft Programme (three weekends up the mountains and three Tuesday night seasons) gets underway at the start of August. This newsletter includes a report about the upskilling of our instructors. If you are interested in going on any or all of our snowcraft courses, contact Terry (3563-588) or Bruce (328-4761). Likewise pass the word round to friends who could be interested.

Distress beacons

February 2009 was the deadline for the change to 406MHz for all distress beacons. The old 121.5MHz and 243MHz Personal Locator Beacons no longer generate an alert or give your location. The new PLBs are faster, more accurate, and are rarely out of range. Each 406MHz PLB has an individual code with different codes allocated to different regions around the world. So when you purchase a 406MHz PLB you need to make sure it is coded for New Zealand.

PNTMC is looking into purchasing PLBs so we have them available for club members to hire. In the meantime, there are other options. Bivouac (Ferguson St, Palmerston North) has one for hire. The cost is \$40 for the first 4 days then \$5 per day after that.

For more information about PLBs go to: <http://www.beacons.org.nz>

News from DOC

• Atiwhakatu Hut

The hut and surrounding area will be closed from 14 April for the construction of a new hut. The adjacent track will remain open. Please exercise caution when walking through the area as construction activities will be underway. The new hut is expected to be open by end of May 2009.

• Waiotauru Track

An 80m section of the track has slipped into the river, approx. 10min from the Fenceline carpark at Otaki Forks. Attempts are being made to keep a route across the slip, but due to the current unstable nature of the slip care needs to be taken when using this area. Present access is across the base of the slip and should not be attempted in wet weather or high river flows.

• Ruapae and East Peak

A section of route between Ruapae and East Peak, north-east of East Peak on the tops between Herepai and Dundas huts, grid reference 214543, has eroded on both sides of the ridge. Roots and branches only are holding the ridge top track together. Please take care when tramping in this area.

Obituary

Monica Cantwell

27 December 1935 – 2 March 2009



Monica joined the club in 1986 and until her recent illness was an active member whose enthusiasm and cheerfulness greatly contributed to the enjoyment of any trip. Her love of the outdoors was reflected in her keen support of the club and for many years she has been the Club Promotions Officer, happily distributing fliers around shops and community notice boards in Palmerston North and Ashhurst.

Several club members attended the funeral on Friday 6 March 2009, along with other tramping friends from the Wednesday and Thursday tramping groups. Monica will be fondly remembered and sadly missed.

A note from Noel Cantwell

“We never lose the ones we love
For even when they’re gone,
Within the hearts of those who care
Their memory lives on”

Noel wants to convey to all the members of PNTMC the grateful thanks from Monica’s family for all the years of happiness and good times enjoyed by Monica with the Club. The companionship and sheer enjoyment that Club members provided Monica with, over the years, contributed to a very happy and contented life.



Trip Reports

Makairo Track

Report: Fiona Donald

Rochelle, Jeff and Nicola were already eagerly awaiting my arrival at the Countdown Supermarket, well before the departure time. We chatted and a few minutes later, Jennifer arrived. After a quick discussion, Jeff and Rochelle offered to take us all in their bull-barred spacious vehicle (looked ready for some off road adventure) that was a far more comfortable ride for all of us rather than being crammed into the leader’s car.

There was a lot of grey sky, misty on the hills – it looked bleak as we turned left at the Tui Brewery and drove towards hilltops that were, at times, completely obscured.

We walked through thoroughly saturated bushes and we got regularly sprayed with water. No-one had been up the Makairo recently because the puddles were clear, shallow and had no quad bike tracks; usually there is deep holes which are rather fiddly to get around without slipping and sliding on mud.



The great excitement of the day was when Nicola spotted a tiny bird. It was a tomtit. It flitted from branch to branch and seemed remarkably relaxed before flying off. It is the first time I had seen one with a group of people.

Despite my many warnings to the others about “watch out for the Ongaonga nettle” – unfortunately I got stung twice; some of the others had got a touch of the nettle but seemed unfazed by it. My body let me know how painful it was (throbbed for hours) even though I put lots of anti-histamine ointment on the stings.

There were showers and some of us put on our raincoats then it would stop raining. At the top of the Waepaepa saddle we enjoyed views right over to the wind turbines; the western wind was very strong and we spent some time seeing who could lean back into the wind. Rochelle saw the dead trees rising above the bush and said, “they were the personalities of the land” and “were very sculptural”.

At lunch we all found we had a similar humour and had a very entertaining time. Jeff told us about this fantastic hunting and fishing shop he visited, in Les Vegas, where you could try the fishing rods, before buying, because there was a river that flowed through the shop; it sounded so good that it is a pity there isn't something like this in N.Z.

We returned the same way we had come, from the top, to the car. The wind was very blustery and it was cool after lunch. At the car park I had a hot thermos with tea, coffee, milk, sugar and chocolate mint biscuits. Jeff said, “it hit the spot” and “great to finish on”. We left in sunshine, called into the Tui shop where Nicola had to buy a stunning orange hat complete with long plaits.

Filled with good humour we waited at the rail crossing at Woodville for the milk train to pass. Jennifer suggested to Nicola to hang out the window (hot orange hat on) and ‘signal’ the driver to toot the horn. We got what we wanted...we caught up with

the train, just before the Gorge, but despite best efforts from Nicola we did not get another toot.

It was a very enjoyable day, lots of laughs and friendly people. Jeff made a good job of driving there and back.

We were Nicola Wallace, Jennifer Kitchen, Rochelle and Jeff Beaumont, Fiona Donald (leader)

Cape Kidnappers

Report and photos: Chris Tuffley

Gannets were proving popular, but driving less so: “I have a car, but only if you're desperate” was the common refrain in phone call after phone call about the trip. But one way or another it all worked out, and in the end seven of us set off for Hawkes Bay in two vehicles. Five women and two men - surely this was some kind of club record!

Helpful brown signs pointed the way to the Cape, and after only a U-turn or two we found ourselves walking along the sweeping curve of the beach towards the distant gannet colonies. Tall cliffs towered above us, and their many layers and deeply cut gullies gave us much to admire, explore and speculate about. Was this layer once vegetation?

Where does this opening lead? As the tide receded, motor- and quad-bikes passed more frequently, and finally the first tractor-drawn trailer of tourists reached us. By chance we were in just the right place and time to hear their guide point out a faultline: a slanting crack, where the layers were offset from each other by several metres on either side.



Tidal pools drew our eyes as we neared Black Reef, but then our attention was seized by our first sight of the birds we'd come to see: large, white and beautiful, with rusty orange coloured heads, they perched on rocks, courting and grooming, covering every surface and swooping by on the wing. We stared, enraptured, then pressed on to the head, knowing this was just a taste of what was to come. Reaching the head, however, we got a rude shock: an undated DoC blackboard suggested the low tide was an hour earlier

than the time I'd got from NIWA! Which to believe? Erring on the side of caution seemed in order...so we had a hasty lunch then headed up the hill (at last, a slope!) to the colony above.



What a sight, sound and smell! Gannets, gannets, gannets, covering the ground, swooping by in tight circles, landing, taking off, and calling, calling, calling! Never had I seen so many birds all in one spot - and such beautiful birds, too! We drank it in, snapping pictures and ducking the occasional low flying bird...then reluctantly turned to leave, anxious to beat the tide. The journey back seemed to go more quickly than the walk in, and without incident - save for a rockfall ahead of us! Keep back from those cliffs... - and before we knew it we were back at the cars, looking forward to our next visit.

We were Tina Bishop, Jennifer Kitchen, Fiona Donald, Annett Patzold, Chris Tuffley, Warren Wheeler, and Janet Wilson

Siberia – Young trip

January

Report and Photo: Peter Wiles

We got the jet boat up the Wilkin River to drop us off near Kerrin Forks at the start of the track up into the Siberia Valley in Mt Aspiring National Park. The previous night a front had passed by turning the wind to the south and dumping snow down below 1500m. After the rain the rivers were up a little.

We were soon making steady progress up the zig-zag track into the Siberia. At the top of the 450m climb it was time for lunch. Shortly after we looked down onto the Siberia flats ahead and watched a plane drop off a party at the airstrip. After another hour we turned a slight corner and arrived at the DOC hut. Mt Dreadful dominated the view up towards the forks at the head of the flats.



Terry above Gillespies Pass

Next morning was clear except for quite dense valley fog to walk through. The fog was nice and cool to walk in and by the time we reached the forks it was all but dispersed. After crossing the river and having a brief look at the south branch, we continued up the north branch for another hour or so before reaching a broad area of river gravel where we decided to pitch camp. (The indications being that further progress greatly diminished the chances of finding a useful campsite amongst the increasingly large boulders and scrub. More handily, a large nearby rock gave us good shelter from the northerly wind coming down the valley. Despite the promising initial indications of a fine day, by lunchtime the first shower arrived.

Despite the weather, after lunch we did a reconnaissance trip up the valley up to a point where we could see ourselves clear of the scrub with a viable route ahead to Mt Aweful. Directly ahead and about 1000m above us, was the unique hole in the ridge. The odd shower continued into the evening. Camping at only 700m, meant that the sandflies were bountiful.

In the morning we did not bother to make an early start as we expected the weather to be poor, but were surprised to find a reasonably fine day. We decided to give Mt Aweful a go, so we headed once more up stream. Once clear of the bulk of the scrub we tackled a direct grassy spur that led directly up towards the summit ridge and a snowfield. After gaining about 300m up the spur it became evident this was not a good route. In wet conditions (which by the time we would have returned it was) the steep snow grass would be a death trap. We climbed down 200m and found a better but less direct route. The clouds started gathering again and we could see that the same scenario as the day before was in the offering. After a quick lunch we got onto a snow slope at about 1700m that disappeared up into the mist. The slope got markedly steeper and even with crampons was not easy. After a huge effort we got to the top of the snow (that we could see) at about 2000m (still 200m from the summit) at about 3.30pm,

where we decided to bail out before the weather deteriorated much further.

Back at camp for dinner, we settled down for another reasonably comfortable night in the tent. In the morning, it was more cloudy but otherwise fine-ish, so we packed up and headed down the flats to the start of the track to Gillespie Pass. We found a nice campsite under the beech trees. After lunch we went in different directions. Peter went off for a walk up to Lake Crucible, while Terry wandered down to the hut to check on that outpost of civilisation and the latest weather forecast.

Drizzly showers set in later in the evening and became steady rain during the night. In the morning and before emerging from the tent we decided to head down the valley and catch the jet boat back to Makarora. However, after emerging from the tent, we found the rain had stopped and there was the odd patch of blue sky, so we changed the plan completely, had breakfast, packed up and headed up the track to Gillespie Pass. Conditions were quite good considering, so rapid progress was made up the track. Once above the bush and scrub, views were quite extensive. After 3h we arrived at the high point of the track at almost 1600m and dropped down to the pass itself. There was the odd slight shower but otherwise good visibility – the 700m drop into the Young Valley being quite impressive. We had lunch on the upper flats in pleasant and improving conditions. Another 1½h down the valley and into the bush for a bit, we arrived at the palatial new DOC hut. There was no one about. With increasing signs of sun, we hung all our damp gear about to dry. Later in the afternoon a couple of parties arrived from up valley.

We walked out in pleasant and fine conditions the following morning, arriving at the Makarora – Young junction at lunchtime. Despite being given much advice on where to cross the Makarora River, we opted to disregard it all and headed up the river about 300m to a wide easy crossing in about 50cm of water. Shortly after the river, we crossed some flood protection works, a paddock or two and reached the carpark by the Haast highway, where we were able to borrow a car from one of the members of the party at the hut the previous evening (which solved our problem of getting back to Makarora and solved her problem of having to return back from Makarora to retrieve it)

We were Terry Crippen and Peter Wiles.

Roaring Stag

6 February

Report: Duncan Hedderley

That was a good day out. There were five of us in the end, none of us kiwis (which isn't unusual), all of them younger than me (which is). The weather was hot, but overcast with a cooling wind which made the afternoon bearable.

The car park at Putara roadend was full of cars, and we passed several family groups on the way in - all heading for Roaring Stag, mostly planning to stay the night. We even ran into Tina Bishop, with her two boys; as she observed, with a hut full of eight-year olds, it wasn't going to be a weekend away from it all. The new Roaring Stag hut has a view over the river, looking up to Cattle Ridge - very picturesque. Reo and Stephanie went exploring over lunch.

Coming back we passed another party of adults and children headed for the hut - guess they spent the night on the veranda. Ah well, the weather was warm and it would have been an adventure. We got back to the cars about 5pm and went hunting for icecream. In Ekatahuna several 'cheerful' patrons of the hotel were shouting at each other. Ah, Waitangi Day.

We were Reo (Japan), Kelly (USA), Melanie (Canada), Stephanie (Germany) and Duncan (UK)

Snowcraft Instructors South Island

February 1 – 5 (plus a bit more)

Report and photos: Alasdair Noble

Club members may not be aware that the committee made an application to ECCT for some money to enable our ageing snowcraft instructors to update their instruction skills from those learnt in the sixties and seventies to more modern techniques. To their surprise the Trust made a grant of some of the costs and the club also made available some money for us to have a guide for four days in the Fox neve area. So at lunchtime on Sunday Feb 1st I found myself on a plane out of Palmy to Hokitika via Christchurch. The flight over the hills to Hokitika started off with the pilot telling us the weather over there was not good and we may well have to return to Christchurch!!

However, when we got over there the front had headed north and it was sunny but breezy. Bruce and Terry were waiting for me so we grabbed my bag and set off to the Alpine Club hut (Porter Lodge) in Fox. Dave McKinley, the guide, arrived from Twizel about 9.00pm and we went for a beer and a chat. Then we went through gear and got ourselves organised for an 8.00am start the next day.

Monday dawned beautiful – blue skies and sunshine, so off we went in search of the chopper that had been booked. Terry set off in the wrong direction but we got there and at 8.30 we were loaded on and at 9.00am we were on the snow at 2360metres just outside Pioneer Hut. Ten minutes later we are in the hut claiming bunks, there were four others in the hut, and sorting gear and then having a cup of coffee. By 10.30 we are on our way to Pioneer Pass and we meet the other four occupants of the hut on their way back from Lendenfeld Peak. Their plans were to pack up and fly back out to Mt Cook Village, maybe we will have the hut to ourselves tonight!

We carry on to a late lunch on Pioneer Pass and then the instruction started. V threads in the ice alternatively called after a Russian whose name Terry noted down but if you say a couple of random syllables quickly and end in “kov” you will be close enough! These are constructed with two ice screw holes joining somewhere in the ice so you need a good eye or lots of luck. Then a tape or small rope (6.5mm max) sling is threaded through to make the anchor. This requires a new tool (music to the ears of a gear freak like me) 20 Euros in Chamonix or 20 minutes in the garage at home with a piece of curtain wire and a couple of cup hooks!

A slow climb of Grey Peak followed as we were practicing some of the new ideas that Dave had suggested. Topping out at 2880 we felt we had achieved quite a lot already, and the descent over the northern side and back to Pioneer was very pleasant. We got the 6.00pm radio sched. half way back on Dave’s hand held radio and it appeared we were the only people in the Westland Park high huts. The weather forecast sounded reasonable so we happily plugged steps back to Pioneer for a late meal of smoked chicken and rice with Chateau cardboard without the cardboard.



Dave the Guide with Grey Peak behind

Day Two dawned a little less inspiring but we left the hut at 6.00am (almost an alpine start) and headed across to the north and over Newton Pass. We could then look out over the Franz Josef Neve to Centennial Hut but our objective for the day was much closer. We headed up Triad Peak a rather insignificant little bump but again it gave us a chance to practice some more new ideas that Dave showed us. Setting up anchors with two climbers being belayed by the leader, simulclimbing with three on the rope and setting protection were all practised. We didn’t actually get to the top as the rock was very loose so prudence won, looking down the ridge to Mount Halcombe we can see a huge rockfall which had collapsed the summit onto the snow below. We could easily go and stand on the “Summit of Halcombe” if we wanted to!

We returned to the hut across the neve and up a steep little slope close to the hut. Dave had suggested we try some pulls on the rope as a communication rather than shouting so Terry led me up that slope and I had said “as soon as you disappear over the top I will start”, Terry being diligent promptly gave three strong tugs on the rope to tell me to start – just as I got to the delicate bit around a deep crevasse! We returned to the hut a little earlier than planned and found a guide and his client who had arrived during the day who were heading out for a bivvy the next night before attempting Tasman. The weather had been overcast with a cool breeze for most of the day but it was still great to be out. We had a session on modern belay devices and crevasse rescue in the hut and then venison, fresh veges and pasta for tea. These guides certainly know how to feed hungry people. The helicopter-in helps as well. That night there were six in the Park.

Day three had Plan A and Plan B. Plan A was a true alpine start and a trip up Lendenfeld, Dave got up at 4.00am to find cloud and wind outside so it was back to bed and Plan B. Plan B involved a number of cups of coffee a leisurely breakfast including bacon and the morning spent in the hut going back over rope techniques and crevasse rescue as well as looking at more modern equipment – spectra ropes and slings, very strong but low melting point, ATC guide, self locking belay devices and pullers for V thread anchors. Dave also talked about the climbing gear he would take on a climb and to our surprise a couple of old style pitons were high on his list. (Note to myself – must find my old ones and clean the rust off!)

The other guide and his client packed up and left early in the afternoon for a bivvy out to attempt Tasman the next day. We walked all of 50 metres from the hut in clearing sunshine and jumped into crevasses, whilst roped to someone else, to practise the crevasse rescue we had been talking about in the morning. The technical bits were quite easy but the effort required to pull someone out was not. I only

hope that in a real situation the adrenalin kicks in. By the time we had each fallen into the crevasse and had someone rescue us the afternoon had passed and so it was back to the hut for dinner and our last night high up. Again we were alone in the hut, thinking about the other two in their bivvy.



Day four dawned clear and bright and we were out reasonable early to catch the firm snow as we descended to Chancellor Hut. The route was easy and we made good time apart from Dave dropping a foot into a hole and spearing his neck with an ice axe. A sobering experience - even the professionals have small accidents occasionally. We arrived at Chancellor Hut before midday and half an hour or so later a helicopter arrived, ten minutes and we are back in civilisation. We sorted gear and had a bite to eat then Dave took off for his home and we whiled away the afternoon. The four days and been very worthwhile, partly because we had not been doing things that were terribly wrong but also because we now felt we were more up to date. Thanks Dave for your hard work and helpful comments, you didn't abuse us too much for our old gear and ideas to match and you were very aware of what we were there for. It was great and we all feel ready to get out instructing again.

The forecast for the next few days was not very inspiring, though nothing like as bad as the West Coast can be, so we planned a number of short excursions. Like the keen young students we are we spent the next day following the tourists up the lower part of the Fox Glacier then finding a short steep ice face where we practiced our V threads and ice climbing techniques. The day after was a tramp up through the bush to Roberts Point above the Franz Josef Glacier. A 5 hour out and back walk which was well worth the effort. The views were varied and the terrain interesting.

The following day, Sunday, was a travel day. The weather was supposed to be drizzly so it sounded like a good idea. However the weather gods continued to smile on us and we got a scorcher. Lunch stop was at

Murchison where we parked by the river between two cars which just happened to belong to Andy Backhouse and Zoe Hart who some club members may remember. Then on to St Arnaud and then down the Wairau Valley to the Branch River and some four wheel driving to a base hut under Scotts Knob. It didn't seem to cool down at all as night fell so we planned an early start (6.00am) to get high before the real heat came on. We even succeeded and set off through pine forest up Scotts Creek. The pines are spreading rapidly which is a shame and the few remnants of the beech forest are struggling to hang on. However above the tree line is a lovely basin with rocky steps and alpine meadows.

The route description said the true left of the waterfall, unfortunately the waterfall was not flowing so we went up the true left of another water course and saw across to our left a cairned track. The minor deviation was not much of a problem and soon we were on the final a scree slope which was not too bad to a small col with a large cairn. There followed a rocky scramble to the summit. The day had been a little overcast so it was not nearly as hot as we had expected. The views as we ate lunch on top were great, it is easy to dismiss this area as not having any mountains but we could see from Tapuaeunuku and Alarm in the east to Mt. Arthur and Owen in the west and all of the Nelson Lakes peaks to the south. Scotts Knob is 2150m and as you start at 600m it is quite a climb. The hut is excellent so it is worth a look sometime. We wandered back to the hut with a brief stop for a swim in a pool in the creek, a wonderful scene only spoilt by Terry's . . .



After a 10 ½ hour day we packed up and descended on friends of mine in Blenheim for the night then got the ferry back. All in all a very successful and enjoyable trip. We would all like to thank the Eastern and Central Community Trust and the PNTMC committee for their contribution to the expenses. These covered the four days we had with the guide including hut fees, food and instruction and about a third of the helicopter costs; the balance was funded by ourselves. Any members who have not done Snowcraft, make sure you book in for this year's and get the new and improved instruction!!!

We were Bruce van Brunt, Terry Crippen and Alasdair Noble

Cow Creek Hut

21-22 February

Report and photos: **Woody Lee**

We started our tramp in the rain from the Kiriwhakapapa camping ground, where the level of the streams around the area were already high because there was heavy rain in the lower North Island the day before. The track to the Blue Range was wet and slippery, but the weather was clearing when we arrived at the Blue Range Hut for our lunch break.

The hut was painted blue and it had two lighting lamps on the wall; one was above the kitchen bench and the other was near the bunks, presumably solar-powered.

Back to the track junction we turned off to the Waingawa River and I noticed something different in the environment along the track. There were several boggy areas and the trees were wearing mossy fur and some of them had funny shapes.

The Waingawa River generated loud noise, and was running high and we soon faced a small challenge of a fresh landslip near the Cow Creek hut. After detouring and crawling to pass the landslip I was surprised to find a swing bridge as I never thought there would be a bridge in the Tararuas.



We really wanted a hot drink straight after dropping our backpacks in the hut, and I quickly assembled the gas cooker and poured water into a pot. 'Where is the gas cartridge?' I searched my backpack and its side pockets again and again but there was no sign of the cartridge.

Anyway we went out and Warren showed me a tiny clearing with soft ground near the river bank, which seemed to be a perfect shelter for a campfire. Finally we had a hot drink and then a nice warm meal.



The next morning we made a decision to take the Cow Saddle track. This track had pink ribbons but no orange markers and was a bit longer than the river track. There were chilly winds all the way but it was easy and there were delightful views with a rainbow above the misty Waingawa valley.

It was sunny when we were back to the car park and was a nice afternoon to enjoy coffee at the Pukaha Mt. Bruce café.

The happy campers were Warren Wheeler and Woody Lee.

Irongates Gorge

8 March

Report: **Warren Wheeler**

There were only two of us interested in this trip, not surprising given the scattered showers forecast. However, Julian was especially keen to get back into tramping after an illustrious career with the Club in his younger days – he needed a “first blood” trip and there was no time like the present.

We strolled down to the new Heritage Lodge and had a good natter for an hour or more on the verandah while occasional patches of drizzly mizzle passed by on their way up the Oroua River valley. It didn't take much convincing to shorten the planned trip and head down the old bulldozed track to the campsite on the river flats below the hut. These are quite overgrown compared with 20 years or more ago.

The river wasn't up with such light precipitation so we had no trouble crossing the river several times on our way down to the gorge, which was a fairly easy hour or so from the hut. There had clearly been a good-sized flood through recently going by the flattened tutu and debris in the riverbed.

We stopped for lunch at the gorge, but it didn't look very inviting for a swim so we crossed the river and took the short steep track up into Pedersons Bush. The start of the track is now nicely marked with a

small arrow, the old mark on the big rock now obscured by regrowth. In the Bush several beech trees had been blown over by an easterly gale but this didn't hinder progress and we were soon back to the farmland and heading up to the carpark.

Here we counted our blessings as we had missed any more showers. And Julian cheerily surveyed the two gashes on his legs (from sharp rocks in the river) and a bump on the back of the head and concluded he was well and truly "blooded". Welcome back to tramping Julian !!

We were Julian Dalefield and Warren Wheeler.

Wakarara - Parks Peak Loop Trip

7-8 March

Report and photo: Peter Wiles

It was a very warm and sunny morning when we arrived at the Makaroro road end. After crossing the river and another 30min of track preamble we started the track up to Parks Peak in the north eastern Ruahines. Once we started climbing quite rapidly, we were soon soaking in sweat. To our surprise we came across a morepork sitting on a branch beside the track about 15m in front of us and watching us intently. We managed to get a photo before it flew off. There was no wind even when we reached the ridge crest. However the sun had disappeared and the odd light shower headed our way.

We fitted lunch in between a shower and arrived at the new hut at about 2pm. There was no one about and we settled into this cosy spot (with double glazing etc). Shortly afterwards cloud descended and drizzle set in for a couple of hours while the wind arrived from the west. The cloud and drizzle departed in the evening, the wind remained and the drop in temperature was a sharp reminder we were at 1300m rather than sea level.



The new Parks Peak Hut

Dinner was a multi-cultural offering, starting with soup and cheese and crackers, followed with tuna, rice, dried seaweed and a variety of vegetables and a

dash of wasabi. Too full after this to consider dessert, we finished up with a drop of wine.

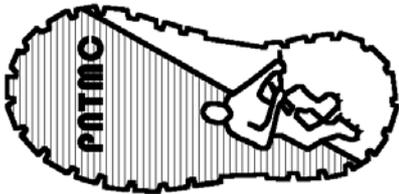
It was still clear but windy in the morning as we left for the descent down the Sentry Box track. A couple of passed by, but otherwise it was sunny. We had a quick look in the old Forest Service Sentry Box Hut which still stands near the bottom of the track, but is not marked on the map. Once on the road we had a mid-morning snack sheltered behind some trees. Then we walked up the metal road for a couple of km before reaching a farm. There did not seem to be anyone at home, or at least interested in us, despite the number of vehicles parked outside and the attention given us by the dogs. So we continued up the road heading eastwards towards the Gwavas range. Here we found that the plan of linking with the road along the Gwavas forest was at least initially not feasible because the stream was cut down 10-20m in a shear mudstone ravine. Still the road continued but finally ceased at a large paddock of brassicas. At its southern end, we had to find a route that would return us to Makaroro base somewhere to the south.

The first problem of crossing the stream was tackled after a quick reconnaissance. A slightly hairy route down was achieved by hanging onto the vegetation. Once in the creek we headed upstream a few hundred metres before finding a relatively easy spot to climb up the other side. We were now at the edge of a pine forest which we travelled through on a southerly compass bearing. About 0.5km later we arrived at its southern end and faced an even larger gully. Not wanting to spend the day bogged down in numerous gullies that might take nearly forever to emerge from, we instead headed east. At the edge of the pines again, and facing the prospect of another gully, we were lucky to find an overgrown bulldozer track down to the stream. At the bottom we took a left branch and found the corresponding track up the other side. At the top, the route opened out into a forestry clearing and then a regularly used forestry road.

We had a quick lunch while studying the map to try to determine which road we might be on. At the top of the road a signpost of Whitnell Road confirmed our location. Then followed a series of roads – Mangleton, Whakarara, Ellis (which had us a bit confused until we concluded it was a loop road), until we reached Yeomans Road and the start of Yeomans track. A short side trip of about 300m took us to Ellis Hut, one of the oldest backcountry huts in the country still standing; built in 1884 and you can still stay in it! Yeomans track is very easy as it is an old forestry road, but we were glad of the shade the bush offered. Tiredness was taking its toll, but by 3.30pm we reached the track junction that we had passed the previous morning and 30min later we arrived back at the car.

We were Tina Bishop, Woody Lee and Peter Wiles

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PNTMC Newsletter

April 2009

What's inside this month:

- *Upcoming trips and club events*
- *Reports on recent trips and events*
- *Information about the upcoming SNOWCRAFT INSTRUCTION Courses*
- *DOC update*
- *Information about the new Map series*

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