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# Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.

[www.pntmc.org.nz](http://www.pntmc.org.nz)

P.O. Box 1217, Palmerston North

## Newsletter September 2011

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*"Bruce made comfortable steps for me to safely and comfortably practice the feeling of using ice axe and crampons.". Shoukai Yu, Snowcraft One, August 2011. [Photo - Tony Gates]*

### Club Nights

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

#### **8 September** PNTMC Auction

Purchase a bargain, sell a treasure for profit - this is your chance to offer your pre-loved stuff up for auction, and to buy someone else's.

#### **29 September** Mission Mt Cook

Nine years ago Malcolm Leary completed Snowcraft with PNTMC and set off to climb our highest peak – after five attempts he finally reached the summit this year - this is his story.

#### **3 October (Monday)** Interclub Photo Competition (see Notices)

## Upcoming Trips

### 3 September (Sat)

**Ngauruhoe, TNP** M,T  
**Peter Chamberlain** 356 5539

It is possible to climb this classic winter peak of 2287 metres in a day from Palmerston North. We plan to enter via the Mangatepopo Valley. Come prepared for snow and ice. Depart Milverton Park 5.00 AM.

### 3-4 September

**Ngamoko Hut** M  
**Craig Allerby** 323 7913

We plan to climb Shorts or Knights track, on the Ngamoko Range, in from Apiti, then stroll south along the easy tussock and leatherwood tops. It is a steep descent to this tidy hut beside the Pohangina River headwaters. You should see who here. Expect winter conditions on the tops. Depart PN 7.00 AM.

### 10 Sept

**Foxton Beach** E  
**Tina Bishop** 355 5755

We will follow the hidden tracks in the dunes then will head onto the beach back to have lunch (supplied) at "Bishops hut". After lunch we will continue around the point and explore the estuary and new tracks. All welcome, bring your dog, togs optional ☺. Meet Milveton Park at 8.30 - Holben car park Foxton beach at 9.15.

### 10-11 Sept

**Three Johns-Waterfall Hut** F  
**Derek Sharp** 323 3028

This sturdy tramp is alpine exploration at its best, up to the icwy and snowy crags of the high central Ruahines. There are relatively easy routes to the delightful Waterfall Hut if you know where you are going.

### 17-18 Sept

**Cow Creek** M  
**Richard Lockett** 323 0948

Depart PN 7.30. Tramp up the old tram line at Kiriwaka, before climbing up to Blue Range and dropping down to the Waingawa River and Cow Creek Hut for the night. Returning via the same route. Good tracks and a great bridge.

### 18 Sept

**Te Atuaoparapara** F  
**Warren Wheeler** 356 1998

Depart 7:00am. This is a classic circuit over one of the highest peaks in the Ruahine Ranges. We go up past Sunrise Hut and follow the ridge line around to the summit, which hopefully will still have some snow on it. Fantastic views. We drop

down a short scree to Waipawa Saddle, rock hop down to the gravel flats of the Waipawa Stream and finish with several stream crossings through an easy gorge section. A great day out.

### 24-25 Sept

**Cone Hut** M  
**Michael Allerby** 323 8563

More good Eastern Tararua forest and river scenes, this time to an historic Tararua Tramping Club hut in the Tauherinikau valley. We go over the hill from Waiohine Gorge road end to Cone Hut, for the night, so will have time to explore Omega peak and the valley. Sunday, probably back via Totara Flats. Depart 8.00 AM

### 25 Sept

**Scrubby Spring Slog** F  
**Peter Van Essen** 355 9076

September's Sunday scrubby spring slog involves scrambling, slipping, sliding, sloshing, slimy stream splashing, and some severe scrub scratching in a seriously steep and scraggy secret secluded spot until stuffed, sore, soaked and shivering. Sorry, only suitable for silly sods.

### 1 October (Saturday)

**Living Legends Planting Day, Manawatu Gorge Scenic Reserve** All  
**Janet Wilson** 329 4722  
 Refer Notices.

### 1-2 Oct

**Ketetahi explorer** M/ F  
**Warren Wheeler** 356 1998

Depart 7:00am. We drop our gear at Ketetahi Hut at lunchtime and probably spend the afternoon exploring around to Te Mari Craters. On Sunday we will explore higher up on Tongariro, including North Crater and Blue Lake. Crampons and ice axe required.

### 8-9 Oct

**Sayers Hut/ Totara Flats** E/ M  
**Tony Gates** 357 7439

This rustic, if smokey hut, is a favourite of many, set in forest on the expansive Totara Flats, beside the Waiohine River. Tony will (may) provide fresh trout for dinner, grilled over the open fire. Depart PN 8.00 AM Saturday.

### 8- 9 Oct

**Tongariro 12 peaks** F  
**Mike Archer** 027 687 8477

If the deep snow of 2011 turns to ice, this sturdy expedition will be made a bit easier. Depart early and climb for long days. Good experience and equipment required.

### Trip Grading

Trip grades depend on many factors, especially weather and terrain. A reasonably proficient trampers should expect to do the trips in the following times:

Easy (E):	3-4 hrs
Medium (M):	5-6 hrs
Fit (F):	about 8 hrs
Fitness Essential (FE):	over 8 hrs

Other grades:

Technical skills (T)
Instructional (I)

### Trip participants

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

### Gear for trips

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

### Trip leaders

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

### Overdue Trips

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

Mick Leyland	358-3183
Martin and Anne Lawrence	357-1695

### Articles for the newsletter

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

## Notices

### PNTMC 2011 Photo Competition Results

#### Alpine

- 1 Eric Liu - Girdlestone
- 2 Bruce van Brunt - Mt Cook early morning
- 3 Martin Lawrence - Mt Owen Tarn

#### Natural History

- 1 Eric Liu - Wild horses on the East Coast
- 2 Chris Tuffley - A Slim Existence
- 3 Martin Lawrence - Mt Owen Robin



*"A Slim Existence" by Chris Tuffley*

### Overseas

- 1 Dave Grant - Mt Matterhorn
- 2 Martin Lawrence - Uluru Waterhole
- 3 Dave Grant - First Tarn

### Overseas People

- 1 Eric Liu - Young monks in China
- 2= Chris Tuffley - Rock climber in Teton NP
- 2= Martin Lawrence - Canyonlands Trekking

### Scenic NZ

- 1 Eric Liu - Starry night - East Coast camping
- 2 Bruce van Brunt - Lower Dart River
- 3 Martin Lawrence - Mt Owen

### Topical

- 1 Eric Liu - Bruce, Derek & Eric at Girdlestone
- 2 Woody Lee - Northbound
- 3 Bruce van Brunt - The Saddle

Udo also selected his Best of the Show, which was two photos this time. These were Chris Tuffley's alpine flower which he felt showed great skill, and Eric Liu's Starry Night, which he said was an excellent creative effort.

We had an excellent turnout at short notice of 120 shots this year. Thank you everybody for a great effort. You can refer to the PNTMC website to view copies of these images.

## **8 September PNTMC Auction**

Purchase a bargain, sell a treasure for profit, or just enjoy studying what old (?) equipment is up for sale. The PNTMC auction 2011 is your chance to offer pre loved stuff up for sale, and to buy someone else's. PNTMC takes a percentage of the sale price if it is sold for over ten dollars.

## **11-18 September Conservation Week**

The Department of Conservation has organised a number of events for Conservation Week 2011. The photo competition "Get Snapped" is being held. Contact [kstratford@doc.govt.nz](mailto:kstratford@doc.govt.nz). I recall that Woody Lee won this last year.

There will be more conservation work in the Manawatu Gorge, and an award winning movie "River Dogs" (cleaning a remote Wairarapa river) on at the PN public Library Friday 16 September.

Find out more at [conservationweek.org.nz](http://conservationweek.org.nz)

## **26 September Interclub Debate**

MUAC is again hosting the rejuvenated Interclub Debate between MUAC and PNTMC. Last year MUAC got their name on the Old Boot trophy – this year we hope it will be our turn. Let Warren or anyone else on the committee know if you are keen to be on our team or come along to offer your support at the ICTL lecture theatre in the Vet Tower at 7.00pm.

## **1 October Living Legends**

Living Legends is a community conservation initiative planting native vegetation in chosen locations throughout New Zealand during September and October 2011. On Saturday 1 October, Living Legends will aim to plant 5000 native trees in the Manawatu Gorge Scenic Reserve. If you are interested in volunteering to assist, then please register online, and refer

[www.livinglegends.co.nz](http://www.livinglegends.co.nz)

## **Monday 3 October Interclub Photo Competition**

MUAC will be holding the interclub photography competition and prize giving on Monday the 3rd of October, during their usual meeting time (7:00pm in ICLT lecture theatre, ground floor of

the vet tower). Members of PNTMC and MTSC are of course welcome to attend.

The categories will be the same as last year (listed below). Please note that these are a little different from those used by PNTMC. The **three** best entries in each category from each club's individual competition are eligible to enter (i.e. in the final competition there should be a maximum of 9 photos in each category, 3 from each club). Refer to the above notice for PNTMC entries.

MUAC would like to have all the files by 26 September (1 week prior to the competition).

### **Categories**

- 1. Landscapes (NZ)** Scenery, no people.
- 2. Above Bushline (NZ)** Predominantly alpine scenery in NZ, above bushline, e.g. rock and snow, tussock, etc., may include people.
- 3. Below Bushline (NZ)** Predominantly bush, scrub, lowland to sub-alpine areas, may include people.
- 4. Natural History (NZ)** NZ flora and fauna or detail, e.g. geology, ice and snow formations, animals, plants etc.
- 5..Topical (NZ)** People or detail related to tramping, climbing, skiing etc in NZ.
- 6. Overseas** - Photos taken overseas - open category: e.g. landscape, people, natural history.

### **Tutawai Hut Damaged**

Tutawai Hut, located in the Tauherinikau Valley, on the popular Eastern Tararua valleys' track, has been closed recently due to tree fall.

With the mega snow from August 2011, it is highly likely that this is not the only damage to DoC facilities in the area.

## **Membership**

Welcome and happy tramping to our new member Ray Corner, 06 354 2312

## **Editorial**

### **SAR News**

Full credit to the couple stuck high in the Tararuas for six nights during the end of July

2011. They reached Kime Hut safely, and planned to cross to the Wairarapa the next day or two. Weather prohibited them exiting the hut for the following five nights - something that some trampers may have been tempted to do. In average weather conditions, escape to Bridge Peak, then Table Top and Field Hut may seem a relatively easy option. I understand that the wind, combined with all else thrown at them, made their decision an easy one, and they sat tight, hungry and cold, until a helicopter rescue was possible. I understand that they had cell phone reception.

Kime Hut is located in from Otaki Forks, on the Southern Crossing Tramp. It has easy access, you keep your feet dry, and you can gain altitude rapidly. PNTMC regularly tramps in this area. Weather and snow/ ice conditions change markedly as you climb out of the bush above Field Hut. DoC plan to replace Kime Hut in a year or two. The Southern Crossing is very exposed to southerly weather, and this area has seen a number of people perish in the tussock.

There was other SAR news during winter. Two trampers at Craighburn were delayed finishing their trip by one night. With wet boots, they were forced to bivvy out in extremely frosty conditions, possibly damaging their feet with frost nip or frost bite. A snowboarder up on Mt Taranaki somehow missed the bottom of the ski field (it must have been great snow then), and he drifted down into the bluffs and scrub. It was only quick acting SAR people and good local knowledge that got the helicopter to rescue him just before dark. At the same time, a hunter behind Gisborne successfully bivvied out in a nest of ferns and leaves and a warm (hopefully cuddly) dog on an extremely cold night.

Good reminders to be prepared.

And offshore, during much warmer weather, North East Wales Search and Rescue (I think that is near Snowdonia) recently featured on prime time TV. There were a few scenes of the men and women with all their rescue equipment, some pleasant Welsh countryside scenes, then fashion guru Gok Wong getting them photographed. His popular TV show "How to Look Good Naked" obviously wanted some rugged mountain men and women (one with pink hair) posing naked in the mountains. Definitely not you typical comments about mountain people!

### **New Zealand Geographic Board**

PNTMC has previously mentioned the good work that the NZGB does with New Zealand place

names. During 2010, we supported DoC with a successful proposal for some creek names in the Oroua Valley, and ourselves proposed several names for Ruahine creeks and ridges. More on that in a later edition, when we receive formal notification of name acceptance.

Place name proposals are not without controversy. Renaming the south ridge leading up to the highest piece of rock, snow, and ice in New Zealand caused considerable debate. It was recently named "The Hillary Ridge", after the great man who completed the first ascent in 1948. This obvious and very famous feature dominates the view of Aoraki Mt Cook from the McKenzie Basin and Mt Cook village, so you should be familiar with the Hillary Ridge.

### **The Big Snow**

Mid August 2011 will long be remembered for the big snow, I think the biggest since the glaciers melted from the Tararuas. It was remarkable to experience a blizzard right in Palmerston North, and see the resultant white scenes. It was also remarkable that Bruce and team squeezed in a very successful Snowcraft Two at Whakapapa the day before this much heralded event.

So, all the mountains and hills, including some at Dargaville, got dusted, and a lot got buried. The skifields on Mt Ruapehu recorded approximately half a metre falling in three or four bursts over four days, and in between were some crystal clear days on the slopes. Some snow up in the Ruahines and Tararuas will hopefully freeze and turn to ice (like the ice for Snowcraft One), and it will definitely last. Your Editor therefore expects some good stories and images of the big snow.

## **Trip Reports**

**16-17 July 2011**

**Powell Hut-Mt Holdsworth**

**First Report dictated by Conan (age 4),  
Photos by Doug Strachan**

We eated chocolate and lollies and cake. We goed to Mountain House. I saw the snow when we were up on the mountain. There was snow and we got some coli (Japanese for ice). I liked the bridge and squishing in the mud. We slepted at the hut (Powell Hut). I was on the top of the world (Conan got that line from his "Little Bear" story). I did a wee off the cliff.

**Second Report dictated by Minami (age 5)**

There was a worm and lots of trees. There were silly trees; their roots were all going around the place. There were signs showing the way to go. We saw a tui. It had white on it. There was a lookout. The view was beautiful. I liked stomping in the mud. Making the snow kiwi was the best. It was windy. I didn't like getting a wet bum when I slid on the ice. The hut had no electricity but lots of candles. It had bunks. It took a long time to have dinner. We played in Mummy's sleeping bag and in the snow. I think going up is more easier because we don't stomp our feet. Going down our feet go bang, bang.

### Third Report by Doug Strachan

Nobody phoned to come on the trip, so just the 5 of us went: my wife, our 2 kids, and Peter – our international student from Germany. The logistics of an overnight trip for 5 people were more complicated than for a typical tramp. We needed 10 lunches, the kids didn't have boots, sleeping bags, long-johns, overtrou. The tramping gear outfits didn't carry boots for 4 and 5 year old feet. Fortunately, we found some "Turoa Snow" boots at No. 1 Shoes on The Square. These turned out to be perfect, and the kids' feet were not sore at all after 10.5hrs of tramping. We borrowed some kids' sleeping bags, suspecting that they would be inadequate and the kids would have to share our bags. In Masterton, we bought the kids some sunglasses just in case we encountered glare from snow.

We started tramping at exactly 10:30am, and were soon passed by a few girls from Sacred Hearts College in Lower Hut. They informed us that their group of 26 would spend the night at Powell Hut. When we rested at Rocky Lookout, it felt like a mid-summer's day. Just beautiful. We carried on to Mountain House and then onwards and upwards, where the wind became strong. The snow kicked in around about the fault line dip, where the kids enjoyed karate-chopping a large sheet of ice. Conditions became rather icy, and I had to cut steps for the kids in some places. Conan said, "I'm not giving up." We reached Powell Hut right on 4pm, exactly 5 ½ hrs after we started, and only about a minute ahead of the first group of Sacred Hearts girls.

Peter and I left Maho and the kids to play in the snow, and headed off to climb to the top of Mt Holdsworth (see Peter's account). We returned to a rather worried Maho (it was dark outside), and a hut full of people, with gear strewn all about. At dinner, a teacher told the large group of girls that they would have to negotiate a bedtime. When she asked them what time they wanted to go to bed, they all said "now"! However, they kept up quite a din until 9pm,

when the teacher said it was time for silence and reminded them they were being assessed for their ability to respect other hut users. Thankfully, they did fall silent. With the fire going, and over 30 bodies in the hut, I ended up sleeping only in my bag liner. It was cold as hell outside the hut and hot as hell inside.



*Minami, Pete, Maho, and Conan on the track to Powell Hut.*

### Fourth Report by Peter the German (age 15)

The climb to the top of Mt. Holdsworth was the toughest climb I have ever done. Although not very long, the trip turned out to be very slippery in some parts, and especially in the dark it was hard to navigate over the ridges, always trying to walk on the grass and avoid the ice. While we walked up, the sun set in the west and made a beautiful light that was kind of perfect for this mood. We tried to capture it on the digital camera, which worked, but the display froze, so we couldn't see the pictures. This problem didn't disappear until the afternoon of the next day, when the display warmed up. On the summit we both enjoyed a Moro bar. It was a proud feeling to stand up there.

On our way down from the 1500-meter peak it became dark. To make things worse, there was a strong wind coming from the south, so ice was blown in the right side of our faces. It was hard to navigate back, because sometimes it wasn't

easy to remember the way we had come, and all the peaks and valleys looked the same. There were icy slopes on the north-east sides of the ridges we climbed, and Doug told me it was easy to die falling down one of them. The wind then appeared even stronger. We knew that the rest of the family might be worried about us already but we didn't want to hurry and make wrong decisions. There was one frozen lake, the surface of which was full of little bumps, created by the strong wind. On our way up, I managed to lift up a shard of ice, at least 5 centimetres thick, and as wide and as long as a small dog. We found that shard again, so we knew we were on the right track.

Finally coming back to the hut felt great, we could already see some lights when we were still some hundred meters from the hut. By this time there was a lot of steam inside, since everyone was cooking dinner, and of course sweating. Dinner was great. The big group of girls made falling asleep easy in one way, and hard in another. Because they produced a lot of body-heat, it was bloody hot, and I woke up after about one hour, peeling myself out of 1 pullover, 2 thermals and 1 sleeping bag. But the girls also made a lot of noise, before and while sleeping.

#### **Fifth Report by Maho**

On the Sunday morning, we had muesli bars and tomato soup for breakfast. Conan, who claims not to like tomatoes, enjoyed the soup. When we asked him what flavour he thought it was, he said "grape soup," and was surprised to learn it was tomato.

We paused outside the hut to build a snow kiwi before descending. The kids were able to slide down some icy chutes, but conditions were less icy than on the previous day. Tramping below the snow line, we were surprised when Minami announced, "This is where we saw the worm yesterday." We realised she was right, but would never have noticed it had she not pointed it out.

**23 July 2011**

#### **Redefining the Circle - The City Circular Report - Anja Scholz, Photo - Richard Lockett**

This mid-winter low level tramping option drew a merry crowd of ten trampers who assembled well prepared at the Fitzherbert Bridge carpark: Raincoats and trousers were sighted, some tramping boots, hats, mittens and hearty lunches, daypacks full of the usual garb for a day out. I did not spot any gaiters, though, but still we did look somewhat odd for a city sojourn –

alas, we could have provided extra warmth and first aid to ill prepared city dwellers on the way.

A grotty forecast gave way to a very pleasant day indeed, with only short stretches of wind and a five minute spell of drizzle reminding us that even 20 swallows catching flies over the Manawatu river do not a summer make ! We set off in Easterly direction from the carpark, along the river on the pleasant walkway to the Ruamahanga turn off to Napier Road. The group photo was duly taken at the Palmerston North city entrance sign before we crossed the road and started weaving through Terrace End streets and reserves. At Pit Park – for some of us the first time they had laid eyes on this park under reconstruction – we were impressed by the work that had been done and was still underway, with a chain gang of enthusiastic (not) young men shovelling gravel.

Next Vogel Street bakery provided a pit stop to top up lunch provisions, and onwards we strolled through Milson, where the walkway along the grassy slopes of the Mangaone Stream ended in a fence. This minor obstacle was soon negotiated, leaving us to recover the road after a short building site mud splash. Craig joined us here after his morning work and along the stream we sauntered to the somewhat over half way point where Graham Peters' Engineering provided the lunch venue, and Janet's 'baked at the last minute that morning' lemon muffins were well received.



*The Palmerston North City Circular.*

Walking at a reasonable pace on mostly hard ground did give the legs a good work-out, but after lunch we tackled the final 12 or so km with newly gained strength. Pleasant walking further along the Mangaone, which from a stagnant trickle developed into a flowing little stream at last, and past the trotting club, Mangaone Park, and Awapuni Racecourse, where we watched horses in their mechanical trainer device pushing

them to walk circle after circle – cheaper than a person ?

A whiff of fresh Landfill and Sewage Treatment Air gave way to fresh views of the river and the last k's on grassy – easy on the legs – flats alongside it. Wildlife encountered en route included, but was not limited to, ducks, fantails, tui, dogs, cats, swallows, rabbits, horses and ponies.

By the time we had finished the circle at the Fitz bridge we would have done about 27 km, so the length sure made up for the lack of uphill meters! Excellent city tramping with the discovery of streets and reserves / parks I never even knew existed with the elite circlists.

Michael and Craig Allerby, Warren Wheeler, Anne and Martin Lawrence, Richard Lockett and sister Elisabeth, Woody Lee, Anja Scholz and trip leader Janet Wilson.

### **Special Report - Thursday Trampers**

**28 July**

#### **Ventura bomber crash site, Waitohu Valley Report and map by Merv Matthews**

The last time we visited this aircraft wreck was in July 1999. The remains lie close to a track which leads to spot height 877 labelled 'Mick'. This track, which begins along the banks of the Waitohu Stream, is shown on the latest Topo maps. With the exact crash site loaded into a GPS and the supposed route also loaded, we were confident of finding it, but it was not to be. There were other former logging tracks plainly visible in the area, but the one which should have led us across a gully to the correct ridge could not be found. There were 17 of us. We will try again in the Summer.



*Merv Mathew's GPS tracks (there are many) on the Waitohu valley ridge, image centre.*

Tararua bushman (and PNTMC Newsletter Editor) visited this area during December 1998, with a strong contingent of expert bush navigators. We made the same mistake. I recall a confusing array of ridges, creeks, and overgrown logging roads. Once we gained a

view from the summit of "Mick", we could see our destination, and found the wrecked aircraft. We were quite moved to see the large pieces of wreckage in a sad and lonely place for four airmen to die.

There is a long list of other aircraft crashes in the Tararuas.

#### **Tararua Wreckord - The final flight of Lockheed Ventura bomber NZ 4573, 28 February 1946.**

The sturdy aircraft Ventura bomber disappeared due to navigational error whilst on a metrological flight from the Ohakea Airforce Base. Four good airmen were lost, and the wreck and bodies were not discovered until 18 March 1949.

The authorities initially thought that the Ventura disappeared at sea, and a few people reported some sightings or possible aircraft engine sounds from that vicinity. Another aircraft stumbled on the Ventura and its crew three years later, immediately recognized it in the forest. Ground searchers were shown the site by the aircraft dropping smoke flares and circling over the wreck. The Grid Reference is S25 Levin 004-438

**31 July**

#### **Snowcraft One, Whakapapa**

#### **Report - Shoukai Yu, Photo - Tony Gates**

I am an international student, and took part in Snowcraft Programme 2011 by PNTMC. We went to one of the largest ski fields in New Zealand: Whakapapa. It is my first time to attend the Snowcraft course, but I learned much more than I expected, and experienced much less scary things than I predicted. I did enjoy it.

This trip was well planned. It was a learning adventure which generates skills for lifelong learning, and enhances knowledge of and appreciation for the natural environment. Through this trip, I achieved my goal: confidently walking on the snow and ice slopes. Although sometimes I appear to be clumsy, I overcame the fear of walking on snow slopes.

Wednesday evening, we gathered together to learn basic but necessary skills and knowledge about axes and crampons, and the overview on what to bring on a snow trip and what to expect. We had a good "ice-breaking" moment.

Our trip leader chose Sunday to do it. On that day, we have very nice weather: bright sunshine, warmer weather and the deep snow. After the informative introductions and supervised practice, I can independently and successfully fulfill the majority of the tasks (except the sliding down with the help of ice axes). I can proficiently finish the self arresting with an ice axe for different fall down positions, I can make steps to walk down or up snow slopes.

All the instructors are always aware of the safety, and they can identify the potential hazard for everyone, even before the team members realized it. Due to the lack of experience, I chose the most steep slope to start practicing, Bruce made very comfortable steps for me to safely and comfortably practice the feeling of using ice axes and crampons.

Tony showed me how to correctly fasten the crampons and how to keep safe in the snow mountain, although I was supposed to be able to do it on Wednesday.

Mark always offered the handy and precise techniques and warm smile to everyone. These instructors are always nice and patient, and always offer in time help and detailed instruction.

Thanks to everyone in this trip for making the day full of pleasant and joyful. Many thanks for the knowledgeable and friendly instructors: Bruce van Brunt (trip leader), Tony Gates and Mark. Due to the responsibility and encouragement of the instructors, everyone had a good time.

Although I have an intensive schedule for study this month, I will try my best to make the other two snow craft courses if possible. I am looking forward to them.



*Shoukai in self arrest at Whakapapa. It looks like a smile on her face.*

We did experience one incident with a tube of sun cream dropped onto the icy slope and slipping away. Woody saved it by stomping on it- whilst wearing crampons!

Katrin Jones, Sian, Shoukai Yu, Mark Smith, Rob Lawler, Dwight Swainson, Tony Gates, Woody Lee, Lauren Blume, Jenny Wilson, Dave, Bruce van Brunt.

### **13 August Snowcraft Two, Whakapapa Report and Photo - Katrin Jones**

The weather forecast for the day was, wet and windy conditions on Saturday, before the cold Southerly front was due in on Sunday. Bruce must have been studying the forecast all week, and came up with the plan, to go up Ruapehu on Saturday. It was a good plan, as we had a still day, quite warm, cloudy at times with a bit of sun in the afternoon. The snow was soft, with a firm foundation underneath.



We walked up past the Manawatu Club's hut into the valleys to the right of the chairlift. Bruce organised all the equipment for us, so with ice axe, ice hammer, crampons, snow stakes, a variety of karabiners, a harness and a helmet we ventured out into slopes to practise our placing of anchors and belaying. We also had 2 descent ropes with us. It was a great teacher-student ratio for us learners. Three teachers - Bruce, Janet and Marc, who has done all his Mountain Safety courses in recent years down South - and us four students.

We belayed, by one climber hammering a snow stakes into the snow, used the newly learnt figure 8 knot to attach ourselves to the rope, then the clove hitch to attach ourselves to the anchor and then attached the belaying device (ATC). We learnt to check all knots, and having a good stance below the stakes, and always one hand on the rope for braking. This all needed a lot of

checking and reminding by Bruce, who taught us the basics and we just had to practise it over and over again. In that way we moved in and along the walls of the gullies, then learnt to place T-slots, as the snow was very soft, and its base perhaps not solid enough for just a snow stake.

We got better and faster, every time we set one of those up, faked a fall here and there, just to see if our belaying partner was prepared and had everything in place. So we learnt heaps and had a bit of fun with it all.

It was a great one day course, thanks to Bruce for organising it and thanks to Janet and Marc for coming along to help. Also there was Katrin, Shoukai Yu, Dwight Swainson, and Brigit.

### **31 July**

#### **Atene Skyline Walkway Report - Richard Lockett**

As I write this report, (actually, I was thinking about having to write this report) it's snowing outside and it did for the next two evenings as well - odd! Mulling over the vagaries of the weather and being able to pick out the good weather days or months in advance when one puts forward trip dates onto a new trip card. I've come to the conclusion that it's a skill developed over time rather than luck. Kelly Buckle was right on the money with being up the Whanganui River on the 31st July. Clear blue skies, warm, no wind, beautiful, not even a frost. I hadn't been up to Atene for quite a few years so was keen to see if it had changed at all as one of the strongest memories was of goats, if you couldn't see them you could hear or smell them.

We started from the northern entrance, a metalled track leads from the road and zigzags up onto the ridge top and then follows a fence line further up the ridge before climbing over a stile and onto an old benched road, the result of hydro dam investigations last century. This road slowly climbs along the ridge top starting in regen farm land (Manuka etc) easing into bush making for easy travel. Our first stop for the day was a look out point up a short side track. A baby goat on its own, rudely shaken from its nap beside the wooden seat began calling out to mum who was down in the bush somewhere having a feed. This vantage point gave views to the east looking down into the old riverbed as it rounded a loop which has now been cut off and to which the Skyline Walk circumnavigates. Further along the road and views to the northwest up the Ahuahu valley and as the walk is around a circle with bush cover its easy to lose ones bearings as to which is north, south etc, so

when looking out to what I thought was west I was startled to see a snow capped Mount Ruapehu in the distance. The road stops when the ridge becomes narrow and steep sided to become a normal bush track, so a bit more undulating in nature. With stomachs rumbling, we called a halt for lunch, not realising that we were only fifty metres from the shelter and nice sunny grass flats. After another stop to enjoy the sun, top up water bottles and use the toilet we were on our way, two thirds distance covered one to go, still climbing slowly to the high point 572 metres the furthest point east on the circle. A couple of kilometres of undulating track at 500 meters of height before turning to the west and the descent back down to the Whanganui River road. A cattle beast on the wrong side of the fence on seeing us bolted and leapt back over the fence much to our amazement. Back on the road and a two k walk up river to the cars passing rural scenes of a family of pigs wandering the road and to our amazement a sheep also leaping the fence back into the paddock on sighting my stripped polyprop.

A good day out thanks to leader Kelly Buckle, Chris Tuffley, Anne Lawrence, Warren Wheeler, Daisy Bai and Richard Lockett PS Anne knows where all the good cafes are!

### **6 August**

#### **Hill 900, (Manawatu River headwaters) Report - Richard Lockett, photo - Michael Allerby**

Actually its only about 880 metres above sea level and with the Ngamoko Road end being at 500 metres its just a short climb to the top. I had noted this high point on a previous visit to the Apiti track as a good spot for an easy winter tramp suitable for beginners, as only fit experienced guys came along we were up on top far too quickly. The wind had something to do with this also with the predicted gale force westerly's being in place.

We set off up the old benched road that is the Apiti track in sunshine but heading into the gloom encasing the Ruahine's but sheltered from the wind and were soon at its end and on to single track for the final steep climb to the ridge top. Here we met the wind, gusty and cold and with it that thought, "Why are we here". Because we want to go up that hill, well I do anyway. With the wind at our backs we headed on up the final 80 odd metres getting slapped around by the gusts, the final twenty metres up a rocky scree the wind picking you up and making you run. Great until you need to stop on the top, dropping down onto all fours, clutching at grasses, beanie

ripped from head. Let the wind subside and a dash across to the actual high point and a rock cairn with enough rocks to build a stone cottage. One would be able to shelter from the wind! Hunker down on the leeward side for a spot of kai, only an hour since leaving the car far too soon to head back.

We decided to head further up the Apiti Track and check out the headwaters of the Manawatu River. A wait till the gusts abated and a sprint across the top and onto the scree, downhill headwind unsteady on ones feet, pushing forward, falling forward when the gust abated, back into the bush and shelter. We headed along the track for 40 minutes or so crossing the muddy wallows which form part of the Manawatu's tributary system until the track crossed to the exposed side of the hills so we called a halt and turned back heading for that café in Norsewood.

We Michael and Craig Allerby, Duncan Hedderley and scribe Richard Lockett



*The Three Amigos on Hill 900, Norsewood.*

## Update from Mongolia

From Terry Crippen

### 5 August 2011

Hi, Sitting around in a place called Tsetserle, getting washing done and thinking about getting into the nearby mountains for some more tramping for another 5 days. Just back from a few days camping and tramping in central Mongolia in some forested hills (up to about 3000 m) by a large lake formed by a huge lava flow cutting off a valley - the biggest extensive lava field I've ever seen, goes for miles and miles. Most things over here are generally chaotic, a 150km mini van trip the other day took 10 hours, with lots of vodka stops and minor breakdowns. Its almost too hot for tramping at the moment. Had a good fall of snow though in

the hills nearby the other day. Not as good as in Masterton I hear. Ange managed to visit one of the local hospitals, being a nurse - it was better than she expected but still very basic as far as the operating theatre went. Have spent about half the time camping - can camp anywhere, the rest of the time in various hostels or gers. Plenty of mutton and noodles or fried dumpling for eating - dirt cheap. Lots of fruit and veg if you know where to look.

### 11 August 2011

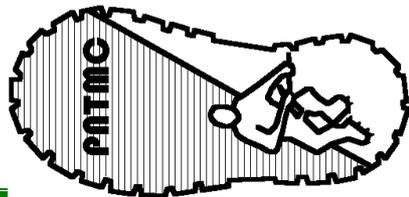
Just been tramping in the local mountains up to about 3000m, open conifer forest and very flat tops above the bushline. The occasional wolf about, but no deer seen yet. And no snow. Sounds like you will be making good use of all the snow over there. Hired a motor bike the other day for some easy access to the valleys – didn't have to sign any hire agreement or anything like showing a drivers licence. Had our fill of vodka now, its hard work tramping under a cloud of vodka. Keep up the good work PMTMC.

### 17 August 2011

Hi, well, just when we are not in NZ - all that amazing snow we have missed out on. Mumble. Number 11 Pahaitua St must have looked far better than usual - hope it will have killed off all the weeds. We better have plenty in Europe in a month or two.

After the central mountains and tramping, we have been down in the Gobi (Gobi) for a few days, went by train for some comfort for a change. Very hot and flat in most places, sparse veggy, but also some sand dunes, and stable sand and rock hills. Then headed off by taxi into the landscape, but generally being lazy, amuzing the locals with hairy legs, they like trying to talk to us so plenty of time spent sitting around with them, too hot to do much else. And they take great delight in reading the Mongolian phase book.

Back in UB now, concentrating on eating; always interesting: Lots of items on the menus, but usually only one or two items actually available. We stay clear of all the European and posh eating places. No need to speak to the staff - just point to what someone else is eating, that ensures its available (usually). Various "delectable" dishes such as steamed dumplings in weak milky? tea. And we appear to be the least dressed foreigners around the place, shorts and sandals. Most of the other foreigners seem to wander about town in longs and shoes and backpacks. Off to Germany tomorrow, so we will be in for a culture shock.



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## PNTMC Newsletter September 2011

### *What's inside this month?*

- *Upcoming trips and club events*
- *Photo Competition Results*
- *Interclub Debate and Photo Comp coming*
- *Living Legends, Conservation Week*
- *Snowcraft Reports*
- *Trip Reports Powell Hut, City Circular, Atene Skyline Walkway, Hill 900*
- *Thursday Trampers Trip Report*
- *Letter from Mongolia*

### **Articles for the newsletter**

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

**Get out and about with us!**

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