



PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217, PALMERSTON NORTH

Newsletter - December 2003 - January 2004

CLUB NIGHTS

Club nights are on the second and last Thursday of each month at the Society of Friend's Hall, 227 College Street, at 7:45pm sharp. All welcome!

At the club night: Please sign the visitor's book. A 50c door fee includes supper.

Nov 27 BYO Slides (see Nov. newsletter)

Dec 4 Committee BBQ at Janet's

Dec 11 End of Year BBQ
Warren Wheeler

Same fun format as last year. 6.30pm onwards at Ashhurst Domain, by the shelter next to the playground – wet or fine. Buffet dining with BYO food and drink. Please also bring a "\$2" gift for under the tree. If you have a BBQ to bring, or need a lift out from town, please phone Warren 356-1998.

Jan 22 Committee Meeting

Jan 29 BBQ Horseshoe Bend
Warren Wheeler

NB: Another BBQ, this time R&R at Horseshoe bend, Tokomaru (slightly SW of PN). Bring a dish to share buffet-style, and BYO something to slap on a BBQ DIY-style. Phone Warren (the MC as he is a VIP in the PNTMC [an NGO and NPO]) on 356 1998 if you have a BBQ, or for FAQs such as an ETA... Starts 6:30PM (low UV). The site has swimming holes and a WC. CU there.



TRIPS

Please contact the leader at least three days in advance. Trips leave from Foodtown carpark. A reasonably proficient tramer can be expected to do the trips in the following times:

Easy (E): 3-4 hrs

Technical skills reqd (T)

Medium (M): 5-6 hrs

Instructional (I)

Fit (F): about 8 hrs

Fitness Essential (FE): >8 hrs

Nov 29-30 Sunrise Hut (See Nov. newsletter)
Manawatu Gorge Track; River Safety

Dec 6-7 Pourangaki F
Jean Garman 354 3536

Going to Kelly Night's Hut Fri night. On Saturday we'll head up onto Whanaia Range, and over to Te Hekenga, dropping into the headwaters of the Pourangaki to camp. We'll come out down the river on Sunday. A western Ruahines tramp (Ongaonga map U22). Note: this trip is dependent on suitable weather.

Dec 7 Kaiparoro E
Liz Flint 356 7654

Wander up through the bush to a small open area atop this 800m high peak. Kaiparoro is in the NE Tararuas, just west of Mt Bruce. Meet 7:30am at Foodtown.

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

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

TRIPS contd

Dec 14 Ruapehu Crater Trip M/F, T
Warren Wheeler 356 1998

Depart 6.30am for second(?) breakfast at Ohakune, then up to Turoa skifield. After a rocky start we should reach the snow well up the slopes as we ascend to the crater via the Mangaturuturu glacier out to the west. Ice-axe will be required, and crampons desirable.

Dec 14-15 Wakelings Hut F
Janet Wilson 329 4722

Leave on Friday night to camp at Kawhatau Base. Then to Wakelings Hut via Colenso Spur and the Mokai Patea Range. Returning via Crow or McKinnon Hut on the Hikurangi Range, depending on how we're feeling.

New Year 2004 Lewis Pass-Arthurs Pass M
Warren Wheeler 356 1998

This is to be a 5-6 day trip depending on weather and preferred route to suit participants. Basically we will be doing the Harpers Pass Track from the Lewis Pass Highway (Hope River carpark) and down the Taramakau River to Arthurs Pass Highway with possible deviations to Townsend Hut, Otehake Hot Springs, and Goat Pass to Temple Basin-Arthurs Pass. Plan A is to depart late on New Years Day, and use bus, ferry, and mini-bus to get to the track and back again. Getting home may involve additional trips for those who are keen for a longer tramping holiday in the South Island. Call Warren ASAP to help finalise plans so we can make necessary bookings.

10-11 Jan Tarn Ridge Hut F/FE
Janet Wilson 329 4722

Leaving 6am. Heading in via Mitre Flats, then up Mitre and on to Tarn Ridge Hut. Returning via the tops to drop down to the Atiwhakatu Valley to meet up with (if we hurry) the day trippers to the Atiwhakatu Hut.

Jan 11 Atiwhakatu Hut E/M
Fiona Donald 356 1095

Depart: 8am from Foodtown carpark. Come and join me in working off the New Year excesses with this easy pleasant tramp in the Tararua Park, Masterton side. We will be following the stream, on a well benched track, through interesting bush to the Hut. Bring your togs for a dip or two!

Jan 17,18,19 Snowy Hector Rivers F
Jean Garman 354 3536

Saturday we travel up the main Waiotaru river, then up the Eastern Waiotaru (Snowy) river to hopefully camp up near Mt Hector (Kime hut if the

weather is not so good). This section requires a bit of wet shorts and some climbing up round waterfalls in a beautiful but rugged little river. If you are scared of heights other options are the main track to Kime or up Rae Ridge or Tregar Spur. Sunday, we head over Mt Hector and down the Neill Winchcombe ridge to Neill Forks, then about an hour up the Hector river to a nice little campsite (more wet shorts). Monday we head up the Hector River (one steep section and yes the shorts get wet but only once). At a confluence in the upper river we will head up the spur between the two tributaries. This will bring us back up between Mt Hector and Kime then its just a hop skip and a jump down the main track back to the car.

Jan 18 Sledge Track M
Doug Strachan 353 6526

9am getaway. Only a sledge hammer's throw from Palmy, up the Kahuterawa Valley. Helen Clarke laboured her way along part of this track for its inauguration on April 6th 2003. Rumour has it there are old abandoned platinum mines up there, so come join in a game of animal, vegetable, or mineral.

Jan 24-25 Ngamoko Range M/F
Graham Peters 329 4722

Via the Pohangina River to Ngamoko Hut. Next morning up onto the Ngamoko Range to try to pick up the track down to Piripiri Biv and return via the Piripiri Stream. Leaving Pohangina 7.30am.

Jan 25 Waiopahu Hut M/F
Elaine Herve 354 2499

Waiopahu hut is located near the top of a long but easy ridge line. I believe there are some good views on a clear day and we may explore a bit further if the weather is good. Planning to leave foodtown at 7:30

Jan 30&31, Feb 1 Waiohine Gorge F
Tony Gates 357 7439

This weekend river trip is a classic. Friday evening, we sweat up to Powell Hut- Mt Holdsworth. Saturday, over the hill and down to Mid Waiohine Hut. After thorough preparations there with truck tubes, wet suits, and the like, we venture into the famous Waiohine Gorge. We will float, splash, and smile with excitement all the way to Totara Flats. Sunday is a bit more relaxing, tubing the more sedate and much more voluminous lower Waiohine Gorge. Definitely not for the faint hearted. Trips continue overleaf...

**Feb 1 Field Hut E/M
Neil Campbell 359 5048**

In from Otaki Forks to the historic Field Hut. If the weather is agreeable, we could go up to the tops. 8am start.

Trip participants:

Contact the leader at least 3 days in advance. Trips leave from Foodtown carpark. A charge for transport will be collected on the day. Leaders should be able to give an estimate in advance. For general info, or any suggestions for future tramps, please contact Terry Crippen (356-3588), Janet Wilson (329-4722) or Andrew Lynch (325-8779).

Trip leaders:

Please advise a trip coordinator, as soon as possible, if you will be unable to run your trip as scheduled. This is so that alternatives can be arranged, put in the newsletter, or passed on at club night.

***** OVERDUE TRIPS *****

Enquiries to: Mick Leyland (358 3183), Terry Crippen (356 3588), or Janet Wilson (329 4722)

"As a nation we are dedicated to physical fitness and we are parking our cars as close to the sports stadium as possible."

(PNTMC Newsletter No.13, 1967)

Portal to the Past

An extract from **newsletter No. 11, 1966**: "Woolshed Dance and Bar-B-Q- extra casual dress i.e. tramping gear but no boots!"



Look at that Bird's Legs!



Back when we had the inter-club quiz, we had to listen to bird calls, and try to identify the bird. Perhaps next year, we could try to identify native birds by looking at their legs.

Joe, a college student, was taking a course in ornithology, the study of birds. The night before the biggest test of the semester, Joe spent all night studying. He had the textbook nearly memorized. He knew his class notes backward and forward. Joe was ready.

The morning of the test, Joe entered the auditorium and took a seat in the front row. On the table in the front was a row of ten stuffed birds. Each bird had a sack covering its body, and only the legs were showing. When class started, the professor announced that the students were to identify each bird by looking at its legs and give its common name, species, habitat, mating habits, etc.

Joe looked at each of the birds' legs. They all looked the same to him. He started to get angry. He had stayed up all night studying for this test and now he had to identify birds by their LEGS? The more he thought about the situation, the angrier he got.

Finally he reached his boiling point. He stood up, marched up to the professor's desk, crumpled up his exam paper and threw it on the desk.

"What a ridiculous test!" he told the prof. "How could anyone tell the difference between these birds by looking at their legs? This exam is the biggest rip-off I've ever seen!"

With that, Joe turned and stormed toward the exit. The professor was a bit shocked, and it took him a moment to regain his composure. Then, just as Joe was about to walk out the door, the prof shouted out, "Wait a minute, young man, what's your name?"

Joe turned around, pulled up his pant legs and hollered, "You tell me, prof! You tell me!"

NOTICES

From the President's PC, Put in Your 2 Cents Worth, New Members

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

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PC

Some of us recently went along to a well-attended public meeting at Te Manawa to hear DoC proposals for huts and tracks in the Ruahine and Tararua Ranges. It was an information meeting to highlight the proposals that are well summarised in the DoC information booklets "Towards a better network of visitor facilities". There is a separate booklet for each Conservancy – the Wanganui, Hawkes Bay and Wellington Conservancies cover the Ruahine and Tararua Ranges.

The hairy hunters and tremulous trampers present seemed to be pretty happy with the proposals and didn't give the DoC officers too hard a time, although some wit who shall not be mentioned, except by his initials TC, suggested that Centre Creek Biv should be maintained as a Historic Hut rather than be removed (good one Terry!).

A lot of thought and effort had clearly been put into preparing the DoC proposals and the Club Committee has since decided that we should make a supporting submission. Congratulations DoC, well done!

If you would like to see the proposals or obtain a submission form you can ask me for a copy, visit DoC in Tremaine Ave, or try www.doc.govt.nz. Submissions close on 30 January 2004. Here are some of the most significant hut changes:

Tararua Ranges

Atiwhakatu Hut – replace with bigger 12 person hut.
Dorset Ridge Hut - remove.

Maungahuka Hut – replace with bigger 12 pers. hut.
Nichols Hut – relocate to Dracophyllum Hut site.
Roaring Stag Hut – replace with bigger 12 pers. hut.

Ruahine Ranges

Centre Creek Hut – remove.
Kumeti Hut – remove.
Purity Hut – replace with bigger 6 person hut.
Sunrise Hut – double size to 18 person hut.

So, pretty much good news really, and no unpleasant surprises. Happy tramping! See you at the End of Year BBQ.

Warren Wheeler (President PNTMC)

HAVE YOUR SAY ABOUT HUTS & TRACKS

DOC has received additional funding (\$349 million over 10 years) effectively doubling its budget for visitor facilities. Consequently, DOC is taking this opportunity to devise a long term strategy for managing its huts and tracks. What new huts/tracks are required, which existing huts/tracks are to be improved/expanded, maintained as they are, ceased to be maintained or removed. To review the plans for each area and make submissions (by the 31 January 2004) you can either contact any DOC office or visit www.doc.govt.nz. Under the section "Consulting On" use the link to "DOC Recreation Opportunities Review". This page has many links to tell you exactly (and in great detail) the what when why and how of the process. The most relevant link is "My Favourite Place". This takes you to a map of NZ with all the different conservancies, from here you can access the individual "Conservancy Discussion Documents" and a submission form.

Please take the time to look through the discussion documents for the areas that are of interest to you and make as many submissions as you like both against proposals you disagree with and for proposals you support.

NEW MEMBERS

A hearty welcome to: Ashok Dahya 357 4497

Clare McCarron & David Houlbrooke 326 9006

WEDNESDAY TRAMPING GROUP

We go out every second Wednesday on easy tramps. Come and join us. For more information, please phone Judy 357 0192, Jennifer, 323 3914, or June 355 2690.

THURSDAY TRAMPERS

We go for a tramp every Thursday. If you wish to join us, contact Merv Matthews 357 2858, or Liz Flint 356 7654.

TRIP REPORTS

South Island, Stanfield Hut, Mangahao Flats, Centre & Cow Creeks, Navigation

Baton- Leslie- Karamea- Tablelands- Mt Peel- Mt Arthur. Oct 24- 28, 2003.

A six day Kahurangi Classic. By Tony Gates, in the company of Christine Cheynne, Terry Crippen, Peter Wiles, Elaine Herve, and Craig Allerby.

We flew Origin Pacific direct to Nelson, were driven by Rory Moore, of Trek Express, to the Baton River road end (south of Motueka), then were on our own. We headed up the Baton River track under a brutal sun, arriving at Flanagan's hut after five and a half hours. It was a good walk, mostly on old miners trails through open beech forest, and with a few river crossings. We even had time for a brew half way. Flanagan's is a lovely hut, very cosy, well located, and like many Kahurangi huts, it has great historic interest.



Flanagan's Hut (950m a.s.l.)

Day two dawned a bit misty. We cruised up to the Baton Saddle in an hour and a half, spending a little time pushing through a little scrub and Spaniards. This area of the Mt Arthur Range would be well worth tramping around, but preferably in the clear. It was quite rugged in places, even **with some leatherwood to remind us of home.** We enjoyed semi clear weather for a while, then nicked down the Wilkinson Track (once named "the Wilkinson Horror") to the Leslie. It got amazingly hot in the last steep section, so we paused for lunch in a shady patch. Once on the Leslie Karamea track, we hoofed it for the hour or so downriver to the legendary Karamea Bend. DOC have a large new mansion there- a great place to spend the night, despite a healthy

population of sandflies. There are bunks for at least 30 people. Some of us had a chilly swim-wash in the river. We all consumed plenty of drink. Boots and sox dried out.



Leslie River and Wilkinson Escarpment

Saturday dawned overcast, with the promise of a good day. We ambled back up the Leslie River, and soon were sweating as profusely as the previous day. The steady grind from the Leslie swing bridge to Splurgeons Shelter (more like a hut), then the Tablelands, followed another well graded miners trail. We lunched at Splurgeons, which has water nearby, and room for about 10 people. It has a canvas roll up wall on the outside, revealing a magnificent view when lifted. Once up on the Tablelands, travel was naturally much easier and quicker on the flat. We strolled into the luxurious Balloon Hut mid afternoon after a short side trip to the aptly named "enchanted garden". Later, it snowed.

The next day dawned dramatically beautiful, with rolling tussock slopes like at Rangi. Soon, high cloud drifted in, but without limiting views. We ambled up to Mt Peel (about two hours from the hut), and for a bit, were stomping on snow. This peak has great potential for skiing. From the top, we could admire the Cobb Valley, Kakapo Spur, and much of the Kahurangi heartland. Despite being less than a day's tramp into the National Park, it felt like we were in the middle of a vast wilderness. It was an easy scramble back for our second night at Balloon hut. We followed the ridge around Peel. Later, it snowed again.

For the last full day, from Balloon Hut, all we could see was mist- just like the Ruahines and Tararuas- but this was different. As we departed the hut, it cleared to reveal a beautiful day. Many

photographs were taken as we strolled along the gorgeous Tablelands. The enchanted garden was particularly enchanting, and the view down to Karamea Bend- still buried in valley mist, but with the surrounding ranges all crystal clear. We passed Salisbury Hut, and clambered up Gordon's Pyramid. We were surprised to see three fallow deer grazing a grassy clearing in the midday sun. Some mist came over the ridge from the east, so we were concerned with the possibility of missing views from the summit of Mt Arthur. After a couple of hours reasonable climbing through scree and snow, we reached the lovely summit in the clear.



Team on Arthur

Kea abounded, footprints a plenty, and great views back to Karamea Bend. Deep, soft snow allowed a short bum slide back to our packs, where our last lunch was consumed. Avocado, salmon, etc. Food supplies still pretty good. We skittered down the easy and well worn trail to Mt Arthur Hut, located just below the bushline, and within an hour of the road end. Later, the familiar afternoon snow came down.

The last day was damp and overcast. We relaxed a bit, and made it to the Flora Hut, then Flora Saddle carpark by about 11.00 AM. Rory picked us up and took us to Moutere Hills Winery, so we could finish the trip with a delicious lunch and wine. We all planned many more Kahurangi tramps.



Lunch at the Winery

Stanfield Hut, October 27

By Duncan Hedderley

(Neil Campbell, Deb Antony, Wara, Monica Cantwell, Helen Davidson, Adrienne Kavanagh and Duncan Hedderley).

The trip went well, with probably the best weather of the weekend, good company, and (almost) no excitements. As we arrived at the road end a couple of people from MUAC were setting off for Travers' (A-Frame) Hut; and as we left a family group arrived, but otherwise we only had to share the Tamaki valley with the paradise ducks and monarch butterflies.

Both of our 'excitements' took place within a couple of minutes of the carpark. Heading out, we got lost in the river-gravel and trees and missed the turn to the stream crossing; and as we were leaving, Neil's car got 'bogged' in the gravel of the car park; but ***kiwi ingenuity, international muscle and a pair of old liros solved the problem.***

We stopped at the dairy in Woodville on the way back for an ice-cream; I'm glad to report that they still do very generous, very cheap scoop icecream.

Mangahao Flats, 1-2 November

By Chris French

Trampers: Warren "The Bog Singer" Wheeler, Chris French, Martin & Anne Lawrence

In a Tararua Range not so far far away, there existed a vast valley of bog where only the bravest dare tread..... The theme of this trip report has been taken to reflect the galactic encounter of wind, moisture and mud met on the recent trip to Mangahao Flats Hut by four hearty souls. The tramp started and ended at the upper most Mangahao River dam, during which time the water level of the lake had changed dramatically.

The Bog Wars – Episode 1

The first day was remarkably warm with breaks of sunshine between overcast conditions, although a strong wind ensured that the cloud kept rolling by. Warren's 'inspiration' led us to take an alternative route of hiking up the river, since the wet weather forecast made this opportunity doubtful the next day. After approximately one hour of river crossings and walking over riverbed rocks, we reached the first swing bridge over the Mangahao.

Above the first swing bridge the river tends to gorge in places, so the best route was through the bush on the true right of the river. As an Otago and Canterbury trumper at heart, I found the bush tracks to be quite different. The varying bush types and large tree root structures through which the track meanders made for quite hard work compared with my experiences of South Island hiking (maybe I should just harden up!).

The Department of Conservation had done some major work in building and demolishing infrastructure on the track. Most notably a new bridge has been built over Barra Creek, which feeds the Mangahao River. Harris Creek Hut had been demolished earlier this year, but the site still requires some clean up.

Boggy patches were also a major feature of the track, but could be avoided with some skilled dodging techniques. ***Warren particularly saw the upside to bog, inventing a number of songs about the swampy obstacles.*** His raw talent proved that any tune could be sung using only one word (BOG), including the Sesame Street Song, Happy Birthday Tune and several classical pieces.

By mid-afternoon we had reached the hut, a splendid structure with room of galactic proportions. The running water and veranda were particularly nice features, becoming the setting for a tea break. From this point we waded the mighty Mangahao for approximately one hour to reach a stream, which Warren continually promised was JUST around the next corner. I think the just gremlin got to us first.

The best part of the day (and trip) was the four course dinner prepared by Martin and Anne. This included rye bread with cream cheese, tuna and red pepper, followed by tomato and pepper soup. The main course featured a delicate mix of pasta, bacon and red onion, which proved delightful to the palate. Rice pudding and stewed fruit provided for a perfect finish to the banquet. After struggling over a cryptic crossword helped along by hot chocolate (with a hint of toffee) and scotch biscuits, we all felt ready for a good sleep.

The Bog Wars: The Bog Strikes Back

The wet and windy weather added a more extreme element to the second day. Whilst eating breakfast after a very nice sleep, we watched the Mangahao River rise very quickly as a result of continuing rain bursts. We all knew at that point that no river crossing would be in store for the day.

Leaving the hut quite early, we meandered in a 'bimbo' style down the forest track before reaching the dry feet route which we had avoided the previous day. This included a traverse across a slip that could only be classed as dodgy, with some scrambling moments on either side.

As the title of the second day excursion suggests, the overnight and continuing rain substantially affected the spread and nature of the bog on the track. This quickly led to further bursts of singing from Warren, this time to the theme of Star Wars (also contributing to the theme of this report!) As I have quickly found out, there are no real tricks to defeating the mighty bog – one must feel mutual with it as it runs down your gaiters and boots.

The most exhilarating part of the trip would have been the return across the first swing bridge encountered on day 1. When reaching this bridge, we found the wind strong enough (aided by the channelling effect of the river) to cause the bridge to bow sideways and upwards, rather than the usual straight suspended look the bridges usually have. Anne and Martin were the first to cross, providing some entertainment paralleled to an Indiana Jones flick. When my turn came, I managed to catch a significant gust of wind that, although not possible, made me want to try and run to the other side – no such hope! Warren then attempted the obstacle between lulls in the wind, although this made no difference as he proceeded to catch a huge gust halfway through the traverse.

The last leg of day 2 was relatively calm when compared to the previous adventurous section. The bog became less, so we decided to stop for some lunch during a break in the rain. Whoever suggested we should have lunch at that point should be reminded that it always rains during such events. After lunch, there was little more than half an hour to go, although we were kept wondering if we would ever go downhill. I would like to thank Martin, Anne, and Warren for their entertaining conversation and humour during the trip, and again Warren and his friend the 'just gremlin' for all the inspiration provided during the trip.

Takapari - Centre Creek, November 16 By Richard Lockett

A crew of 11 assembled at Foodtown; a relaxed 8am start on a overcast day in Palmy. We were Neil Campbell, Warren Wheeler, Doug Strachan, Anja Scholz, Duncan Hedderley, Rohan Taunton; new to the PNTMC were Chris Maher and Lisa, and new to tramping as well were Anita and Daphne; plus our scribe Richard.

The grey overcast skies were left behind as we cruised up the Pohangina valley, dropping one car off at the paddock past the DOC field centre on the Valley East Road, and then the grind up to the locked gate on Takapari Rd.

Loosing traction on the wet grass meant an additional walk for some as the gate was not reached by two of the taxi's (200m), but what views: Ruapehu, Ngauruhoe and Tongariro clear as, about 5 kms away, a nice day trip Yeah right!

So up the fwd road to the Centre Creek track junction. I use the word road as someone's had it done up ready for sealing with hot mix, not sure why. After a stop for drinks and nibbles, we headed down to Centre Creek on a freshly hacked, progressively steeper track, over slippy rocks, loose stones, fallen trees, and finally a small creek, just before we hit the Pohangina river. Ah, lunch time. Warren found some strawberries in his pack, which must have been heavy as he was keen to offload them to everyone.

A look at the Centre Creek Biv was taken by some, with the hut book perused; occupancy rates low not a good investment, ah but what history. With a fair amount of water in the river, and with some of the crew new to this lark, the out via the track option was taken. A knee deep crossing was made of the river and off we set along the sidle track, with Warren upskilling us all in the knowledge of native flowers, which were found track side: Clematis, Rewarewa, Tataramoa etc.

After nibbles, drink, a stop to apply aid to Anita's cut hand, and a spell back in the water, it was across the farm track, up the hill back to a car. Tramp over, 5 hrs, nice day, sweet. So taxis up to Takapari Rd, pick up cars, pick up trampers, on to

The Waterford. Not. As Anja might say, ***vot is this a stricken Strachan mobile? With steam erupting, Doug's cars had expired 4 kms short of the pub. Bugger!***

With Nigel Gregory stopping to assist on way home, also from a tramp, all passengers had a ride home or to the pub etc, thanks Nigel.

(Editors note: Father Christmas, if you're reading this, I'd like a new car for Christmas please. You look like a trumper.)



Stalking the Tararuas with Coronation Street (Cow Creek 21-23 Nov)

By Lance Gray

There are some things you learn tramping that are probably better left in the hills. My fellow colleagues Tony Gates & Nigel Gregory chanced upon one of those revelatory confidences that you would only cough up in a moment of weakness. But once coughed up the Genie was out of the bottle and there was no way in hell I could stop the two of them reminiscing over 30 years of Coronation Street characters. The only tit-bit I could make any sense of was what happened to the blonde hairdresser who was married to that naff wimpy butcher whose name escapes me. Why couldn't the dastardly Richard have taken him out instead?

Oh yeah – the tramping. Well in true optimistic spirit we looked at the heavy rain warning of 50mm between 6am and midday Saturday and thought that there would be clearance and we would be well placed on Cow Saddle by that time to take advantage of it. Well it was still raining after some pleasant navigation along the less used track from Blue Range Hut where we had accommodated ourselves on the Friday. With no sign of a clearance we wandered down Cleft Creek through some boisterous side-creeks to an absolutely gob-smackingly foaming Ruamahanga. Tony asked me to stand out in the middle on a rock so he could get a photo for Wilderness Magazine but I declined. Half-heartedly we considered the route across Cleft Creek which puts you on the true right of the Ruamahanga but came to the sane realisation that one side-stream with a large catchment on the map half-way up to the Roaring Stag swing-bridge looked ominous.



Lance and Tony

So in un-PNTMC fashion we hoisted the white-flag and retreated to Cow Saddle where we talked up the weather (its going to clear any second) before accepting reality and moving on to a discussion about Gail and Rita. Tony finally got his snap of Nigel and I standing in a flooded Arete Stream before crossing the Tararua Harbour Bridge to Cow Creek Hut. The size of this structure has got to be seen to be believed. Our resident pyrotechnic had the cords of fireword well ablaze in no time while Nigel grew increasingly frustrated with the hunting magazines that never revealed anything but photos showing "mystery" spots where the largest deer in history were shot.

Tony and I had afternoon naps while Nigel recorded in great detail our sleeping behaviours.

After a lot of eating, brews and weather speculation we hit the pit. Towards dawn the rain picked up and we unconsciously shelved attempts at bowling up onto and Mitre and going cross-country. As luck would have it the weather cleared as we headed back to the car at Kiriwhakapapa giving us good views of our original intention—Arete Biv!



Nigel at the Waingawa Hilton

NAVIGATION 1

**Day 1: 8TH November 2003
By Donna Field**

As a novice tramer keen to explore the world of the ranges, it seemed only appropriate to jump on the navigation course with Terry Crippen to prevent any geographical embarrassments in the future. Craig Allerby and Wara Teeranititamkal joined me down at the Ashhurst Domain where

Terry took us through the use of a compass, estimating times and distances and the valuable lesson of interpreting information available. It was a fun morning as we all tried to navigate ourselves through the gardens of the domain on pre-plotted courses which led a few of us astray by the misinterpretation of instructions. The session concluded with a little track and clue awareness course thru the bush, which highlighted the power of observation or in my case, the lack of it. It was an enjoyable morning and good opportunity to meet some of the members of the club.

NAVIGATION 2

Day 2: 9TH November 2003

I was joined once again with Terry, Craig and Wara with the addition of my other half Nathan. We were off to put the skills we learnt during the previous day into action in the real bush called the Tararua Ranges. Before commencing our tramp to Ruapae Falls, we plotted the course we were going to take and evaluated the path, taking into considerations the speed of travel (especially during climbs), terrain, distance and estimated time of arrival at the falls. As a group, we decided the tramp was correctly rated at being an intermediate level tramp for the club. So we were off, with the compass around our necks and maps at hand, we followed the track up to Herepai Hut. But alas, the river was too high due to overnight rain and we couldn't cross the second swing bridge (its ok, in reality it was a beautiful day with water only knee deep, however the saga continues). But the tramp must go on, so the maps were out once more and a new (less direct) route was plotted for Ruapae Falls. The new route involved walking up and along a ridge and dropping back down to the river, which led to the fall. All sounds pretty easy right? Well not exactly, we had to be pretty sure we came down to meet the right river so the importance of accurate bearings, distance and time was reiterated to the group. Another challenge was knowing when we had reached the top of our first leg and when the next began on the new bearing. The change in gradient, game tracks and blaze markings soon confirmed we were on the right path and our scout (or buddy) was sent off again on our new bearing. Eventually we met up with the river which led to Ruapae Falls and did a leisurely walk (and a bit of swimming and rock climbing) back along the river until we came to the swing bridge and rejoined the track back to our vehicles. An awesome little adventure and thanks to all those who came along and made my first trip with the Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club an enjoyable one.

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