



# PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217, PALMERSTON NORTH

## Newsletter - February 2006

### CLUB NIGHTS

*Club nights are on the second and last Thursday of each month at the Society of Friends Hall, 227 College Street, at 7:45pm sharp. All welcome at the club night. Please sign the visitors book.*

**9 Feb Club Night – Colo Navosa/FIJI  
Trevor King**

Trevor is a keen photographer with a special interest in Fiji. Trevor has spent much time in Fiji with development projects and study, so can provide a fascinating insight of the region. Never short of a word or two on the trips I have been with Trevor, it will be a fun evening.

**16 Feb Committee Meeting - Anja's**

**23 Jan Doug Strachan – PNTMC is 40!**  
Doug Strachan will host a discussion reliving the history of the club from its founding to the present. Forty years' worth of newsletters have been thoroughly dissected and some real gems, often humorous, brought to light.

Articles to Lance [gray.family@actrix.co.nz](mailto:gray.family@actrix.co.nz) or post to 37 Parata Street, Palmerston North (by 20<sup>th</sup> of the month)

### TRIPS

**Feb 4-6 Waikaremoana (cancelled) M/F  
John Feeney 354-2940**

**Feb 6th (Mon) Wharite E/M  
Duncan Hedderley 354 6905**

Wharite is the hill with the TV mast on it; the view over the Manawatu is something special. Meet 8.15 at Countdown to be in for the experience

**Feb 11-12 Full Waingawa FE  
Jean Garman 354-3536**

Join Jean for what promises to be a perfect trip for this time of year. The Waingawa has its origins on the slopes of Girdlestone (close to Mitre Peak). One of the highlights will be Arete Stream as you won't have to worry about the slog that is the dreaded side track! Contact Jean for further details.

**Feb 12 Iron Gates Gorge E/M  
Warren Wheeler 356-1998**

Depart 8.30am. A classic fun-filled Oroua River trip. From the Table Flat Road-end we take the side track past Heritage Lodge for about an hour until it meets the river. After first lunch and a swim we head downstream, rock-hopping and criss-crossing the stream several times (and pack-floating pools if you like) before reaching the impressive little gorge, which involves a short but refreshing pack-float swim to get through (!). Contact Warren Wheeler 356-1998.

**Feb 18-19 Oturere TNP M  
Peter Wiles 358-6894**

A nice hut in the Tongariro National Park off the Desert Road. Provides an excellent opportunity for many interesting side trips to such delights as Ohinepango Springs, Waihohonu Springs and the obvious volcanic attractions. Given the photos from the 2003 version this looks like a great weekend away. Contact Peter for further details.

**Feb 19 Top Maropea M  
Neil Campbell 359-5048**

This is a walk in the Ruahines with the road access being from the Hawkes Bay side. We visit Sunrise Hut and then, weather permitting, continue on to Top Maropea Hut for lunch. The views are excellent in good weather. We depart from Countdown carpark at 7am.

**Feb 25-26 Rangī Hut - PNTMC 40<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary Picnic E/M  
Doug Strachan 353-6526**

Go to Rangī Hut via the Deadman's track on Saturday, and join the day-trippers on Sunday for a pot luck lunch followed by a recounting of Rangī's fascinating history. Don any retro trappers' garb you may have and step into the past. Departing at 8am.

**Feb 26 Rangī Retro Ramble E  
Dave Grant 357-8269**

Bring some tucker for a pot luck lunch at the Tardis (Rangī Hut), where our club's important historical connection with Rangī will be revealed in detail. There were some hilarious moments, such as getting a fireplace to Rangī after the helicopter deposited it a mile shy of the hut. The theme is "Retro," so leave your chopper behind, and wear gear from yesteryear. Groups leaving from Countdown from 8am to 9am.

**Trip participants:**

Contact the leader at least 3 days in advance. Trips leave from Countdown carpark. A charge for transport will be collected on the day. Leaders should be able to give an estimate in advance. For general info, or any suggestions for future tramps, please contact Terry Crippen (356-3588), Janet Wilson (329-4722) or Tony Gates (357-7439).

Trips

*Easy (E): 3-4 hrs      Technical skills reqd (T)*

*Medium (M): 5-6 hrs      Instructional (I)*

*Fit (F): about 8 hrs Fitness Essential (FE): >8 hrs*

Trip leaders:

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

\*\*\* OVERDUE TRIPS \*\*\*

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

**From the Presidents PC**

Happy 2006 everyone, I trust you have enjoyed the Xmas-New Year break, got outdoors and had fun exploring despite the dodgy weather. We avoided the snow on Sawtooth Ridge on January 6. Our party could but gaze in astonishment from our vantage point on Puketaramea to the north, on day 2 of the revised Ruahine Ramble trip.

We decided on going to Mokai Station and doing the loop via Lake Colenso-Maropea Forks, Otukota instead of the original plan into the Oroua-Sawtooth area, thanks to the heads up from the met forecast...but that's another story (see trip report by Martin

Lawrence). For those who missed it here is a summary of the Annual Awards announced at the EOY BBQ at Ashhurst Domain:

**1. Flash Goretex Award** from the St Vincent de Paul Collection – Tony Gates for his gold shorts ensemble.

**2. Snowtex Centrefold Award** – Andrew Lynch for the loo feature in Wilderness magazine.

**3. Just Gremlin Third Time Lucky Award** – Alasdair Noble for the eventful Tappy Trip, his third attempt brought fine weather, but. Firstly he just went ahead and picked a gorse route when there was a perfectly good track right nearby, secondly he just carried on up Shin Creek instead of turning right up the Hodder, and thirdly, he wore runners (just for light weight) and broke his ankle in the river bed less than 3 hrs into the trip, to spend the remainder of the weekend just sipping wine with friends in Blenheim.

**4. Most Conscientious Leader** – Heather Purdie for going three times to find and trim the Lost Track from Stanfield Hut to Takapari Rd.

**5. Seriously Screwed Award** – Ian Harding for his broken ankle.

**6. Most Considerate Trumper Award** – Ian Harding for having a nose operation to stop his snoring.

**7. Plan B Award** – Terry Crippen/Peter Darragh for turning rock climbing at Titahi Bay into a shopping spree in Wellington.

**8. Met Service Overstayers Award** – Lance Gray/Craig Allerby for being trapped at Carkeek Hut by "showers".

**9. Brown Trou Leadership Award** – Graham Peters for his understatement at the top of the right branch of Pinnacle Creek "it's OK, there's a notch up here".

**10. Intrepid Journey Award** – Terry Crippen (twice!) for leading the two epic East Coast trips, to Hikurangi and Whanakao.

**11. Moro Gutbuster Award** – Duncan Hedderley for his scorching pace up Kapakapanui leaving even Andrew Lynch behind.

**12. Dave Hodges Award for Excellence in Pursuit of Forgetfulness** – Janet Wilson for leaving the venison stew for Mid-Winter Kawhatau Base at home in the fridge.

Now for some good news, and many thanks to **Eastern and Central Trust** for donating \$1500 to help fund a digital projector - Alasdair and Bruce are now in purposeful purchasing mode. And on the conservation front, we had a very successful Contorta Slaughter weekend with an exceptional tally of 1862 pine seedlings, plus the odd Douglas fir, and willow – a big thanks from DoC's Melissa for a job well done to Patrick, Lance, Anja, Peter W, Richard, Kathy, Doug, Wyn and Warren.

It wasn't all work and the Xmas party theme for dinner, in pleasant conditions around the gas brazier, has earned us a fine reputation. No snow this year but persistent late night showers collapsed the tarpaulin in a gush and broke the DoC gas light...just after I retreated to Richard's tent...seeing pine seedlings as soon as I shut my eyes.

Special thanks to Yuko for her Xmas-New Year Parcel of Plum Wine, snacks and drunken peasant mask. There are still plenty of goodies, which will be produced to share at the BBQ at Horseshoe Bend and the 40<sup>th</sup> Party coming up at Rangī.....we miss you too, Yuko.

And yes, we are Over the Hill, the PNTMC turns 40 this year...but they say 40 is the new 30 don't they. Don't they? We remain young at heart, and have the wisdom of hindsight to carry us forward into the new millennium in stout heart and great fortitude to enhance our proud tradition (not least for turgid prose). I look forward to enjoying with you the special events planned in February to reflect and enthuse over the past 40 years of the Club. Congratulations, PNTMC.

May the skies be blue  
And the path be true.

**Warren Wheeler**  
**President PNTMC**

## Notices

**SIGG FIRE-Jet Cooker parts** If anybody who has one of these wants mine for spare parts contact me. The pump has mostly had it (caught fire), but the burner head and feeder line are still OK. Terry 3563-588

## News from DOC

There has been recent work at **Diggers hut** –which will definitely be a bit more cosy on a winters night -**Te Ekaou hut** also has received some work (piles,fireplace general tidy up) and **Ngamoko hut** we flew a light portable digger into this hut recently to sort some drainage issues associated with this site .

The Replacement **Purity hut** is now ready to go to contract and we will be tendering after Xmas ,and if \$'s permit we will be working on 2-3 other huts over the rest of the summer - new roof for **Ruahine corner** etc with our own team --its been very helpful in this area getting Lyall Goggin( qualified carpenter ) on permanent staff

The track work has progressed -good to get the trk to **Mid -Pohangina reopened** and the trk team is going to working on the track into **Iron Gate hut** after xmas(two trks that were definitely overdue for some TLC) --by the end of this summer most if not all of our maintained trks on the western side will have received ongoing maintenance --The team at Pohangina have done some excellent work here lead out in the field by Nobby Robson the field Centre Supervisor

Anyway from the team from DOC Palmerston North(including Pohangina and Mangaweka Field centres ) have a merry and safe Xmas and next year. Cheers Phil.



The effects of Yuko's plum wine

### Thank yous

A thank you to a few club members involved in activities related to PNTMC. First a thank you to **Janet Wilson** for helping out with a Gorge Walk organised through the Freyberg Pool summer programme in January. A thank you to **Andrew Lynch** for his continuing role with the Duke of Edinburgh programme as well as a congratulations for a Grand Traverse of Mount Cook with Geoff Wyatt in November! Finally, a thank you to **Richard**

**Lockett, Martin Lawrence and Lance Gray** for helping out with the Duke of Edinburgh trip to Totara Flats in early December.

**Finally, Jim Brown** has kindly donated a number of items to the club which I shall present to the committee. Jim says he has finished his days of serious tramping and was looking to gift his remaining items to a local club. Thank you Jim from PNTMC.

# Over the Hill



**PNTMC turns 40**

Our club's 40<sup>th</sup> birthday is a time to spend warm summer evenings reminiscing about the years gone by. Past, present and future members are invited to the following events:

**Feb 23 Clubnight: Over the Hill**

Doug Strachan will host a discussion reliving the history of the club from its founding to the present. Forty years worth of newsletters have been thoroughly dissected and some real gems, often humorous, brought to light. See notices for more info.

**Feb 25-26 Rangī Retro Revellers E**  
**Doug Strachan 35 36 526**

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### A note from Doug Strachan

About those photos of the cave Wetas I sent you... I wrote to R. & B. Simons who sent them, and asked if we can put the photos and e-mail message in the newsletter as an interest item, and to show club members that our website is getting hits. They wrote back saying that would be fine. Here is what they wrote about the photos: (Doug Strachan).

"Found your account of the sledge track on the web. We enjoyed the same walk, took a flash photo down the shaft and were pleased we were out of there when we saw the result. It was quite surprising to see the wetas on the computer screen later, having not noticed them when the photo was taken. They were in the small horizontal tunnel off the first vertical shaft going clockwise around the Platinum mine loop."  
(R & B Simons)



Cave Wetas in a shaft on the Platinum Mine loop

## TRIP REPORTS

**Coppermine Creek & Wharite, Sheridan Creek, Tongariro, Rangī Loop, Tokomaru River, Field Hut, Kohitere Forest, Stanfield Hut,**

### **Coppermine Creek & Wharite – 21 Aug by Pete McGregor**

It was a last-minute thing. I'd had good intentions about heading to Leon Kinvig hut for an overnight stay, but, exhausted by a hectic week, a very late night and the remains of a persistent headache, I'd failed to muster the motivation. Instead, I rang Heather on Saturday and arranged to meet her party at 9:20 in the morning at the Gorge carpark.

"I'll be there by 9:15," I said, giving myself an extra 5 minutes.

At 9:25 the next morning I drove into the carpark, grabbed my pack, boots, gaiters and

the remnants of my reputation for reliability, and climbed sheepishly into the van.

The trip had been advertised not just among PNTMC members, but also through the Outside-In programme for international visitors, so by club standards it was large—11 people. The diversity of backgrounds, nationalities and ages—from young to me—proved to be one of the particularly enjoyable aspects of the walk; that and the chance to mud-wrestle along the upper section of the Wharite track (even if the wrestling turned out to be with the scrub overgrowing the track).

The size of the party also allowed us to split into smaller groups to travel at a pace to your liking. In fact, the first split occurred where the steep, overgrown Wharite Track diverged from the gently graded valley track. There, Heather suggested to Nigel that he might like to lead the way, whereon, unleashed, he sprang upwards into the vegetation, hotly pursued by Jason. Neither were seen again by the more sedate travellers until we found them well rested and waiting for us halfway to the summit.

Although overgrown in places, particularly in the lower section, the track was straight forward; sometimes steep, sometimes undulating, sometimes boggy, often with beautiful views of the Hawkes Bay and south-eastern Ruahine, occasionally with not-so-beautiful views of the arse of the person in front, but always with that satisfying feeling that you're climbing steadily towards a clear destination.

Yes, the destination. It could have been an anticlimax, arriving at the summit to find a road, tarmac, concrete, steel pylons and a bleak, institutional-architecture building—but the building had a large vent pumping out a large volume of warm air and the wind on top of Wharite was keen and cold. We gathered around the warm exhaust to eat lunch,

making brief forays into the cold wind to check out the views.

***The iron antennas were garlanded low down by barbed wire and signs saying, “Do not climb”—words that instantly filled me with an overwhelming urge to climb.*** Having tried a few moves and having established that the climb would be too easy to be worth doing, I abandoned further climbing in favour of eating.

The descent passed quickly, perhaps because I was caught up in conversations most of the way—mostly discussions with Andy about travelling and with John about politics and movies. Well, time passed quickly for me; maybe for Andy and John it seemed interminable.

Back at the vehicles, I washed the mud from my boots and was tricked by Heather into writing the trip report. It seemed a small price to pay for an excellent walk in the hills with a great party of interesting people.

We were: Benny Dieterich, Shona Ellims, John Feeney, Nigel Gregory, Duncan Hedderley, Pete McGregor, Barbara Mare, Andy Milne, Matthew Penn, Heather Purdie and Jason Watson.



Okay – Name them legs!

## Sheridan Creek – 11 Sep By Richard Lockett

Quite a muster for this trip, some old hands, some new folk and some folk who had little idea as to what kiwi tramping is all about.

From the Waiotauru track car park at the very end of the Otaki gorge road we kitted up and headed south on the Waiotauru track which used to be a continuation of the gorge road but got eaten up by the river at various points as is happening to the track currently.

After a km of travel we arrived at the site of O'Brien's sawmill (Tararua Timber Co) on the terrace beside the river where the remains of the horizontal steam engine and boiler that powered the saws lay stripped of anything of value to the scrap man. O'Briens mill was serviced with logs via a tramway which crossed the Waiotauru river and headed up Sheridan creek for approx 2 kms to the site of a steam log hauler: our destination for the day.

A bit of humor whist crossing the Waiotauru with Chew and Mei not having previously experienced the pleasures of wandering about in cold mountain streams before, they got used to it, if not to enjoy it. So up the creek mostly in it or beside it on the old tramway track, found some lovely swimming holes before climbing out of the stream and onto the tramway as it climbed above to the hauler site.

Doc has restored some lengths of original track at this point with the last climb away from the creek being surveyed as the steepest tram track in NZ at 1 in 6 gradient. The steam hauler is a Vulcan, built by the Vulcan foundry in Napier who built their first in 1900 and their last in 1943. Now this hauler with its pre DOC NZ Forest Service shelter has properly seen a few lunches eaten over the years, fifteen on this day alone, would have eaten half a cord of wood and drank 900 liters of water each day.

With lunch eaten it was back down the creek where at one of those lovely swimming holes Anja could not resist the opportunity to partially strip off, leap into the water and shake her booty in front of an award winning photographer no matter how cold the water.

Chew and Mei could not be persuaded to follow suit.

Ounce out of Sheridan creek we stayed in the Waiotauru so we could peruse another old steam engine laying in the river bed as I wished to see if the big flood in Jan 05 had moved it, it had moved about 40 meters down stream.

One last river crossing and up the bank saw us at the schoolhouse flat picnic area and our cars, with it still being early afternoon a consensus that a visit to a café was in order being such a nice day. After much confusion most of us ended up at the Pickled Peach at Otaki beach to cap of a very enjoyable day.



**Crew:** Anja Scholz, Warren Wheeler, Shona Ellims, James and Anne Walhington, Michelle Harvey, Tony Gates, Duncan Hedderley, Trevor King, Elizabeth Ward, Andy, John Feeney, Chew Bee Goh, Dong Mei Wang and leader Richard Lockett

## Tongariro Oct – Labour Weekend by Richard Lockett

Having decided to join Warren's Tongariro National Park trip during Labour Weekend I thought a more thorough preparation was in order than for my usual Sunday day trips.

After searching under beds, sofas, chairs car seats and in various cupboards my full kit of polyprop was obtained. A rummage through my pack found an assortment of chocolate bars, muesli bars, packets of soup etc and a litre bottle of water witch I have unknown to me been hauling around in preparation for this 3 day trip.

An early start and an uneventful journey north saw us at the Whakapapa village car park by mid morning where we were advised that the Great Walk season had been

delayed so annual hut passes would do (something about gas in the huts. Too much!)

So off we set along the Waihohonu track with lunch being taken somewhere after the Taranaki Falls in perfect sunshine and little wind. Upon reaching the junction of the Tama lakes track various route options were muttered by the trip leader.

***By the time the Upper Tama lake was reached a cunning plan to go straight to Oturere hut missing out Waihohonu hut. Not knowing where I was heading to anyway I readily agreed to this suggestion with the comment "it doesn't get dark till 8 o'clock anyway".***

Upper Tama Lake to Oturere hut follow me, scoot around the lake to the south and east keeping up high and up and over the ridge coming off Tama peak into a valley which feeds the Upper Tama Lake.

Walking up this valley we are heading straight towards Mt Ngauruhoe and keeping Tama Peak to our right we turned east and swung in a great arc around the base of Ngauruhoe across the catchment of the Waihohonu Stream heading towards the Oturere valley which was just over the next ridge, the next ridge, the next ridge, you know how it is.

Anyway high up on a ridge over looking a to be crossed watercourse Warren spied a tent which had been pitched beside the stream, no sign of life. Upon reaching the Oturere valley we had to head in the opposite direction to the hut towards red crater to find a convenient scree slope to get down to the valley floor and then about a two km walk down the moonscape style valley across gravel, rocks, sand/grit and snow to Oturere hut.

Yes snow a fresh dumping had fallen on the previous two nights, "lovely snow" explained Warren myself not being a connoisseur. She was a pretty full hut by the time we arrived at

6 o'clock with four tents pitched out front as well and everyone trying to cook dinner at the same time but bunk space was found by Warren using his skills in diplomacy.

With a late get up next morning so we could breakfast in peace we were greeted with low cloud, rain and wind as we set off back up the Oturere Valley at ten o'clock. Lunch was had on the shores of the Emerald Lake sheltered behind a large rock from the wind and then up onto and across the snow covered Central Crater.

Upon reaching the Blue Lake we left track and headed east around the lake which had become visible with the cloud having lifted a few metres, "very nice" our mission to check out the Te Mari Craters. A descent was made down into the head waters of the Mangahouhounui Steam via a long rock strewn ridge, across the stream and up onto the Te Mari Crater with the wind getting pretty strong by this stage so it was decided to drop over the side and sidle around the crater which with clearing skies gave good views of Lakes Taupo and Rotoaira.

Afternoon tea was taken sheltering behind a large rock overlooking the Explosion Craters and another large unnamed crater to the north of TeMari. Ketetahi Hut could be seen to the west but how to get there, a sidle was made along the scree slopes of Te Mari and Rotopaunga peaks trying to stay high so as to pick up the zig zags of track above the hut which was reached at about four o'clock and another foolish hut at that.

After a brew and bite a tour was made of a well known piece of private land near by. Also staying at Ketetahi that night were a father and son part of a larger group from Auckland who provided the humour for the evening, they had all the gear including a GPS but not including shades for father and son both of whom were suffering from snow blindness.

This group had come up from Mangatepopo Hut heading to Oturere Hut by circling Ngauruhoe in a anti clockwise direction but in the low cloud conditions had "turned left" before Ngauruhoe instead of after it. Did we know of something to help with the sore

eyes?. I said that its probably similar to arc eye which foolish welders sometimes suffer from and that bathing ones eyes in milk or urine (preferably your own) can help. He must of been suffering because he was keen to give the milk at least a go and I couldn't vouch for powdered milk ever.

Monday dawned cloudless with little wind and by eight we were walking up the zig-zag track to where it sidles around North Crater where we left it climb straight up the side and across the flat top the crater itself ,up and over part of its remaining rim which involved the use of Warren's ice axe, across another flat then up onto Tongariro itself .By this stage I was beginning to enjoy this "lovely snow" especially with the warm sun shining directly on my back.

After enjoying the views and having a bite it was straight over the side and down onto the long ridge which descends down to the Mangatepopo road end and when opposite Mangatepopo Hut we dropped over the side, across the stream to the hut. It didn't look that far looking down but looking back up was a different story.

All that remained now was the three plus hour walk back to Whakapapa to be greeted by a flat tyre on the Renault and with a ice cream, coffee and sticky bun at the camp store, a beer at the National Park pub , pork chops and chips in Taihape our weekend was complete.

We were Warren Wheeler and Richard Lockett.

### **Rangiwahia Loop 24 Oct** **By Duncan Hedderley**

There were only three of us (Shona, Neil and me), but this was a good day out. I had planned just to go up the Rangi track to the hut and come back down again, but we got up there in good time (1 1/2 hours, which would have been good even before the latest diversion around/above the big slip), so we decided to go on and do the loop, coming down Deadman's track.

The tops were a picture - still, silent, scattered with bits of snow. You could see

Ruapehu and Ngauruhoe to the north (and some big black clouds to the south) I thought the trip was fairly straightforward, but Shona pointed out that it wasn't marked on the map, and did some map-and-compass practice before we left the hut. As it turned out, there are poles all along the route, so we just had to keep an eye on how fast the cloud was advancing.

We got down ahead of the rain, and well ahead of the '7-8 hours' the sign estimated for the trip. To celebrate we took a tiki tour through the Pohangina valley, ending up at the Waterford (which doesn't charge extra on public holidays)

### **Tokomaru River - 20 Nov** **By Chris Saunders**

We met at Countdown as usual, but Karen wasn't there. Christine had left her phone list behind, but fortunately Terry came to the rescue with his copy. In response to Christine asking her why she hadn't turned up, she replied that her alarm clock hadn't gone off and she wouldn't be coming!!

We drove up Scott's Road into mist and steady drizzle, and continued through the City Council pine forest – very pleasant for a pine forest! We walked along the fire break before heading down the track cut by the Te Araroa Walkway supporters. This track dropped through pleasant bush to No. 1 Stream. By now the weather was clearing. On the way down, Christine offered dried figs to those who wanted them. I suggested that this was the first part of morning tea, but that was just a FIGment of my imagination.

We enjoyed the Tokomaru river valley, which offers views of the fine bush on its eastern bank. I was pleased to be back here after 20+ years, when as chairman of the 'Save Tokomaru' committee, I helped campaign to make Odlins see the wisdom of preserving this unspoiled stand of native timber, which extends from the Tokomaru River to the top of the Tararua Range. When the City Council make public access available through the Gordon Kear Forest, exploring the Tokomaru will make an enjoyable day trip.

On our return, we found the mist had lifted off the tops, allowing good views over the Manawatu Plain on the drive home. We were Christine Cheyne, Terry Crippen, Neil Campbell, Peter van Essen, Simone Carr and Chris Saunders.

**Field Hut - 13 Nov**  
**By Neil Campbell.**

Field Hut is located in the Tararua Range. It has historic status having been built in 1924. The drive to the start of our walk to this hut involves leaving State Highway 1, just after passing through Otaki, and then proceeding along the Otaki Gorge Road. Much of the Otaki Gorge Road is unsealed but it is mostly in good condition.

We left Palmerston North at about 8.10am and were ready to start walking from Otaki Forks by about 10.00am. The weather was pleasant but somewhat overcast. The well-made track first crosses open country, then enters an area of re-growth, and finally enters very attractive Tararua forest.

We reached the hut at lunchtime. We did not go any further because there would have been no view due to the overcast conditions. The hut has recently been done-up (well fairly recently) and looks very nice. We returned to the cars and finished the day with some real fruit ice creams at the fruit shop on State Highway 1 just South of the Otaki Gorge Road turn-off.

The party consisted of: Neil Campbell (leader), Duncan Hedderly, Pauline Knuckey, Noelene White, John White, Silvester De Nooijer, Patrick Janssen, Karen van Os, Kathy Bennett, Shona Ellims and Michele Harvey.

**Kohitere Forest - 11 Dec**  
**By Duncan Hedderley**

This was a very pleasant morning's walk along the access roads of a forestry block behind Levin. Chris parked just beyond the Makahika outdoor recreation centre, and gave us a running commentary on the bird calls and surrounding peaks as we wound up "Stag" to "Ridge". We had an early lunch looking out on Levin, Lake Horowhenua,

Kapiti and Waiopahu; Lei talked about shifting from China, and Shona tracked a rain shower as it moved down the coast towards us. We headed down "Ridge", past a recently logged area and a patch of native bush, back to the car

**(I won't embarrass Chris by mentioning how he nearly drove off without his pack...)** (An early Dave Hodges award nomination possibly? - ED)

**Stanfield Hut - 23 Jan**  
**By Duncan Hedderley**

"Hold it, I don't recognise this bit of river"  
"Well, all this gravel looks like it's recent. The hut's probably just round the next corner"  
"That side stream we just passed looked like the stream by the hut - but it didn't have the orange triangle" PNTMC weren't putting on their most professional face for potential-recruit David.

Well, at least it was warm and sunny, and we weren't really lost, just a bit uncertain where we were. "Ah yeah, there's the hut" Richard pointed at the patch of bush we had just passed. Warren looked at his watch. "It's early; what say we go a bit further and find where all this debris came from?"

We carried on up the Tamaki, then scrambled up one of the side-streams which comes down off Takapari. Warren started musing that you could make a circuit of it, if it wasn't for the leatherwood up there. Maybe next trip card. After a bit of cross-country, we got back to the hut, and discovered why we'd not seen the track marker - the floods which had deposited the gravel and cleared the buddleia had shifted it too. We eventually passed it on the way out, a kilometre downstream.

David set a cracking pace heading back ("Have we said something to offend him?"). We reached the carpark, with its new gate to keep dogs out of the park, mid afternoon, leaving plenty of time for an ice-cream in Woodville.

(Duncan, on behalf of Warren, Richard, Neil and David).



Pat Janssen with some of the 1862 contorta pines pulled

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Club Patron	Lawson Pither	357 3033	
President	Warren Wheeler	356 1998	warren.wheeler@horizons.govt.nz
Vice President	Bruce van Brunt	328 4761	B.vanBrunt@massey.ac.nz
Secretary	Dave Grant	357 8269	gaewyn.grant@xtra.co.nz
Treasurer	Alasdair Noble	356 1094	a.d.noble@massey.ac.nz
Webmaster	Peter Wiles	558 6894	p.wiles@wiles.gen.nz
Membership Enquires	Warren Wheeler	356 1998	warren.wheeler@horizons.govt.nz
	Anja Scholz	356 6454	a.scholz@massey.ac.nz
	Mick Leyland	358 3183	marionandmick@inspire.net.nz
Gear Custodian	Mick Leyland	358 3183	marionandmick@inspire.net.nz
Newsletter Editor	Lance Gray	356 6454	gray.family@actrix.co.nz
Trip Co-ordinators	Terry Crippen	356 3588	bluesky_tramping@clear.net.nz
	Janet Wilson	329 4722	jwilson@inspire.net.nz
	Tony Gates	357 7439	kiwi@leatherwood.co.nz
Aide de Camp	Heather Purdie	354 0448	scotchthistle@hotmail.com