

Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.

www.pntmc.org.nz

P.O. Box 1217, Palmerston North

Newsletter - February 2008

Club Nights

Club nights are held at 7:45pm on the second and last Thursday of each month at the Society of Friends Hall, 227 College Street. All welcome! Please sign the visitor's book at the door.

14 February Club Night
Navigation evening with Warren Wheeler.

Bring your own compass, map and GPS for a fun night of honing your navigation skills.

21 February Committee Meeting

28 February Club night
Drakensburg Mountains with Dave Grant.

Dave will present his experiences of hiking in this part of South Africa.

Upcoming Trips

Trip Grading

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

Easy (E): 3-4 hrs
Medium (M): 5-6 hrs
Fit (F): about 8 hrs
Fitness Essential (FE): over 8 hrs
Other grades: Technical skills required (T) & Instructional (I)

Trip participants

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

Trip leaders

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

Overdue Trips

Note to partners, parents or friends of members:

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

Mick Leyland	358-3183	Terry Crippen	356-3588
Janet Wilson	329-4722	Warren Wheeler	356-1998

2-3 February

Mid-King Biv

M/F

Janet Wilson

329-4722

Mid King Biv is a small hut just below the bush line in the Eastern Tararuas. From the Pines Rd End we will tramp in to Mitre Flats and then up to the Biv. Our route on Sunday will depend on the weather and party – possibilities include loops over the tops north to Mitre or south via Baldy. There is room to camp near the Biv.. Leaving early Saturday morning or Friday afternoon/evening.

2-3 February

Napier-Taihape Road Trip

E

Ian Harding

06-376-5707

Stay Saturday night at River Valley Lodge, an idyllic spot on the Rangitikei River near Taihape. Indoor accommodation \$25.00 per person [already booked], tent sites \$11.00 per person. Meals available, b.y.o food optional. Spa and sauna facilities also on offer.

Travel to Kuripapango on Sunday morning and walk to the "Lakes" and the "Kaweka Hut". Other options too if time permits. Home via the Hawkes Bay. Depart P.N. 2pm Saturday.

2 -16 February

Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park (2 weeks) F, T
Terry Crippen 356 3588

Two weeks of climbing based initially in the Tasman Saddle area where there are a wide range of objectives - other areas also if conditions not suitable on the Tasman. This is for those who are currently climbing or who have suitable climbing experience. Prerequisites are at least Snowcraft 3. Glacier travel and crevasse extraction skills are essential. Numbers are limited and will be finalised early December when a deposit is required.

Waitangi day 6 February (Wed)

Toka M
Craig Allerby 323-7913

We will head up the Shorts Track onto the top of Toka and hopefully get some nice views. We could return the same way or we could go along the tops to Knights Track. Leaving PN at 8am.

9-10 February

Waterfall Hut M/F
Peter Wiles 358-6894

Plan to leave PN at 6 am. Route will depend on conditions, but will be via Waipawa Saddle.

10 February

Beehive Creek E
Doug Strachan 353-6526

This walkway, just past Pohangina town, is a pleasant amble if you feel like some not-too strenuous exercise or only have half a day available. The walkway opened in 1983, is 30km from P.N., and takes 2.5hrs to complete. No dogs allowed. I'll drop off my wife and 2yr old, and anyone else who wants a head start, at the bottom of the only hill, so they can climb it slowly. The rest of us will walk 3km (~40mins) along the road prior to climbing that hill (~15mins) and meeting up with the others. After that we have an easy walk along a shady stream back to the cars for a picnic lunch by the stream. Good social tramp for first-timers. 9am start.

16-17 February

Waiohine Gorge Float F, T
Tony Gates 357-7439

Deep green pools. Gentle (and some not so gentle) rapids. Spectacular Tararua scenery. Floating down a gorge in truck tubes is a great way to go, with all the thrills and spills of a river trip. We will base ourselves at Totara Flats, camping on some of the best campsites anywhere, then after lunch, walk up the Waiohine Gorge to the Hector River confluence without our sleeping bags and non waterproof stuff, and float back down. Hopefully, we can do it again

on Sunday. Wetsuits, crash helmets, truck tubes, and bravery essential. Depart early Saturday.

17 February

Iron Gates Gorge E/M
Warren Wheeler 356-1998

Depart 8.30am. This is a classic summer river trip not to be missed by anyone keen to try a fun rockhop, wade and swim. We first follow the high-level track up the Oroua River, past the new Heritage Lodge until we meet the river. After a pause for a refreshing swim and early lunch we will head down river for about 2.5 hours to Irongates Gorge and a short swim through into the papa cliff country. We will then clamber back up onto the terrace land and back across paddocks to the carpark. If necessary there is an alternative route that avoids the gorge swim.

23 February (Saturday)

Coppermine-Wharite E/M
John Feeney 354-2940

Contact John for details of this trip.

23-24 February

Waipawa-Three Johns M/F
Derek Sharp 323-3028

We will leave PN at 7am for Waipawa River road end. We plan to have lunch at Middle Stream Hut and then head onto Smith Stream Hut for the night; an area that Derek hasn't been in before so he will be keen to explore it. On Sunday, we will head up Rongiotiatua and the Three Johns for some fantastic views; then head out via the Waipawa River.

1-2 March

Waipakahi Hut, KFP M/F
Chris Tuffley 359-2530

On Saturday we'll take the Umukarikari track in to the hut, enjoying fantastic views of the Central Plateau volcanoes as we travel along the Kaimanawa tops. Coming out on Sunday we'll travel down the Waipakihi Valley, splashing our way back and forth across the river before finally taking the Urchin track back over the Umukarikari Range. Departing at 7:30am on Saturday.

2 March

Whakapapaiti Hut, TNP E
Trevor King 356-4557

Summer on the Mountain. Down the Whakapapaiti Valley off Mt Ruapehu's Round the Mountain Track from Top of the Bruce Rd. Exits at the Chateau or alternate Silica Rapids circuit. It should be a very pleasant downhill walk of medium length. Photography stops guaranteed! Leaving PN at 7 a.m.

Notices

Articles for the newsletter

Send by the 20th of each month to Anne at dahlia44@xtra.co.nz or to 44 Dahlia St, Palmerston North.

Annual Awards

From Warren Wheeler

Members who had distinguished themselves this year were recognized at the EOYBBQ at Ashhurst Domain on December 13. A good turnout of members and friends enjoyed a very pleasant and entertaining evening – the only complaint being that it finished too soon. For those who weren't there, here they are, the PNTMC Annual Awards for 2007.

High Flier Award – Duncan Hedderley for overcoming his fear of heights on Mt Egmont;

Devils Apprentice Cooking Award – Ian Harding for his devilled prunes in Coke;

Son of Tarzan Red Cross Award – Richard Lockett for his Mangahao rescue;

Duracell Award – Terry “the machine” Crippen for his acclaimed reputation with NZAC Wellington Section;

Dr Strangelove Best Excuse Award – Lance Gray for camping out by the nice river rather than face the potential axe murderer at Tutuwae Hut;

Good Keen Man Award – Murray Gifford the absent leader who completed his overnight trip to Roaring Stag as a solo Sunday day trip anyway, via Herepai;

Spare Ribs Award – Bruce Van Brunt for stoically enduring cracking two ribs on a rope pendulum then another on the edge of the bath;

Team Extreme Big Days Out Award – Janet Wilson and Graham Peters for winning the Tararua Hut Bagging Competition;

Scissors Paper Tome Award – Doug Strachan for his on-going compilation of club history from old Newsletters;

Roving Correspondent Award – Tony Gates for his articles in Wilderness magazine and being hot on the spot for the Tararua Race;

Spiderman Award – Peter Wiles for his super efforts as webmaster;

Dave Hodges Award for Excellence in Pursuit of Forgetfulness – Anja Scholz for leaving her lunch in the fridge and putting on her nice dry boots after stashing her sandals without remembering there was another creek crossing to Kapakapanui.

Tararua Trophy for Best Newsletter article – Matthew Penn for his Snowcraft reports. Highly commended was Doug Strachan for his poetry.

Congratulations to all the worthy recipients.

P.S. A special award was also given in the form of a gift to Warren Wheeler – a toilet brush inscribed with “Sock”. The story goes that Warren found some

muddy socks to clean the toilet at Cattle Ridge Hut, only to have the cleaning job interrupted by a distressed cry from their owner.

River Safety Training – Feb 9

MSC Manawatu is planning a **river safety day on Saturday Feb 9.**

Recent trials have resulted in changes to the recommended best way to cross rivers safely. If you have not attended a course recently then this course is for you. Cost **\$5 per person.**

The plan is to use the Otaki River, meeting at 10.30 at the Otaki Gorge road bridge (at Otaki) and finish by 3pm.

If interested please contact Warren on 356-1998 or directly contact Bryce of MSC for details BRYCE.MEREDITH@nzdf.mil.nz. Note that the location may change if river conditions change.

Te Araroa Trail

From Christine Cheyne

On Saturday 23 Feb 2008, the Mangahao-Makahika section of the Te Araroa Trail will be opened by the Prime Minister.

This section completes a significant length of the trail through our region, which also includes the Burttons Track section between Gordon Kear Forest (top of Scotts Road) and Mangahao (Tokomaru Valley Road end), and the signed section through Palmerston North from Te Matai Road to the top end of the Turitea Valley.

The new section starts a short distance further along Mangahao road from Tokomaru Valley Road. It takes about 5 hours to reach the Makahika roadend.

Trampers/Walkers can return to Levin via Arapaepae Forest. The Te Araroa trail is signed from the Makahika road end through the forest and eventually to Queen St East in Levin.

Further information is available from the Te Araroa Manawatu Trust and will be available shortly on the Te Araroa Trail website: www.teararoa.org.nz and a brochure will be available from the local i-Site.

In memory of Meguru

A message from the Inoue family

Maho spoke with Meguru's parents by phone when we were in Japan in October. We promised to translate a letter to club members. It is in memory of Meguru, who died on Mt Cook on January 24th, 2007. The letter was somewhat tricky to translate due to its poetic nature, but the feeling shines through. Another translation exists. This translation by Maho and Doug Strachan:

Dear Friends,

I have lived! I did my best to live honestly.

Sorrows? Regrets? None.

A life is 80 years!! Did I depart too soon?

I always said I'd try to live right.

As I tried my best day after day, I was satisfied.

I loved all living things!!

Even snakes – they were not born to be disliked by all.

Good exists in all life.

That goodness enhanced my life.

I believed in myself and strived to be a worthy person.

To become close to living things and live in harmony with them,

maths and science, which I was poor at, were needed.

I tried to get close to everything I loved.

Although that goal was not yet reached,

the grasses and insects watched over me.

The name "Meguru" and my motto were:

Meguru = circle = peace = cooperation.

Imagine all people cooperating, and caring for one another.

I, Meguru, made an effort to reach out to the world, step by step.

All the people I met in the world were peaceful.

The warmth and sincerity from people in many lands made me joyful.

A greengrocer in Cambodia, a greenstone carver in New

Zealand, and a village chief in Fiji.

All led energetic lives.

Living honestly, we can all be friends.

Meguru is with you.

Living together in nature with insects, and grasses of unknown name.

She will be a wind at the foot of Aoraki/Mt Cook, the blue waters of Lake Tekapo;

or looking down on Morioka from the top of Mt Tjate.

I go to the next world a little early.

A breeze blowing, a smiling face, jogging,

all these are Meguru's friends,

enjoying the world of nature.

Have a nice day!

Love,

Meguru

Trip Reports

Rangi - Easy and Medium

24 November

Report by Fiona Donald and Warren Wheeler

Warren had a good plan. Belinda, Marilyn and myself (Fiona) tramped up to Rangi Hut via the supposedly easy route while Nicolas and Warren took the high road and Deadman's Track. We agreed to meet back at the car about 3pm.

At the detour of the slip the route suddenly changed from gentle uphill to climbing over rocks and tree roots – it was soon apparent who had experience in uphill climbing...Marilyn had trekked a variety of tracks around NZ over a period of a few years – it's her second visit to NZ, from America, plus her first uphill climb for a while. Belinda discovered how many muscles she had in her legs and suddenly tramping wasn't as fun as first thought, while I was very pleased that the ascent had become very leisurely with numerous rests along the way to view the marvellous vistas spread out before us - Marilyn had many happy moments with her camera - and to share our nibbles.

With lots of active encouragement to each other, we made it to Rangi Hut for a well-deserved lunch stop. Again, the gods were kind to us and the landscape was there for all to see – a rare day for me to see it without clouds.

Down we came with some slippery moments underfoot until we were at the car before the guys.

Warren reports on the Medium Trip:

Deadman's Track is well named as it climbs quite steeply through mixed forest before easing off along the long ridge that undulates up above the bushline to Maungahuka, which we reached for a lookout lunch in near perfect conditions, a cool tail wind helping us up the last steep bit.

The tussock section is well marked with steel warratahs and the dry spell we have been enjoying meant that the track was fast and dry. Not many alpine flowers out yet though. We joined up with the Triangle Hut Track to loop back down to Rangi Hut, where we chatted with a few people staying that night. Two more arrived as we were leaving and we met another couple of small family groups on the way down – a popular spot for good reason.

The slip didn't slow us down much and at the appointed time we arrived back at the carpark about an hour after leaving the hut to find the ladies just taking off their boots. Yes, splitting the group into Easy Ladies and Medium Men worked out really well.

Thanks to Fiona for leading the not-so-Easy-for-some trip and to Marilyn for driving us all.

We were Belinda Camps, Marilyn from America, Fiona Donald, Nicolas Braud, Warren Wheeler.

Kaiparoro Adventure

1 December 2007

Report by John Feeney.

Keen to take advantage of a great spell of settled weather (and the 1st day of summer), seven eager trampers headed out of Countdown right on 8am bound for an “easy” tramp in the North Eastern Tararuas. Aply led by David Grant, we were soon at our destination the base of Kaiparoro Trig. A quick lesson on how to cross slippery river stones preceded a very steep walk up the main ridge leading to Kaiparoro. The climb must have seemed relentless to our three novice club members. We were soon into the bush which provided great protection from a hot sun. The prevailing dry conditions underfoot give evidence that a drought is on its way. With frequent stops (for our newcomers, of course!) the track finally flattened out after about an hour’s walking. A stop for morning tea revealed one prospective club member had left her lunch behind. In true club spirit other members contributed some of their food so she had sustenance for the day.

With the track levelling out we were able to enjoy a wide variety of native plants and beach trees and a surprising range of new growth for such dry conditions. The track was a bit overt grown in places. Just on lunch the landscape quickly changed and we found ourselves at our destination Kaiparoro trig. This is a stunning and unique clearing of about 40 hectares of red tussock with a sprinkling of turpentine plant and leatherwood. Lunch was interesting as we sought some shade and talked about stuff ranging from Fiona’s porridge-making recipe to the new Australian Government.

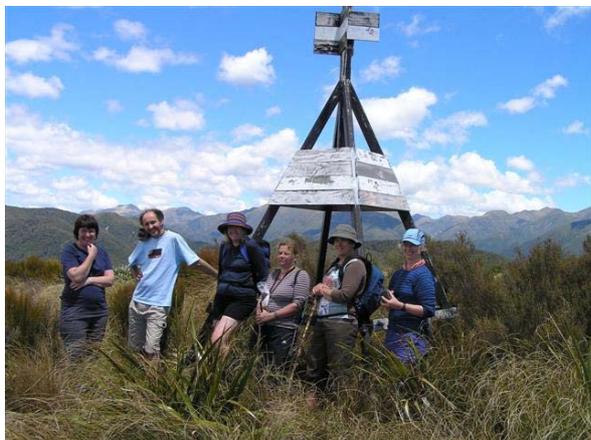


Photo by Dave Grant

Most of the group found the walk back down much easier, apart from the strain on the knees. We were lucky to have such a stunning day to escape the early pre-Christmas rush and experience a very special part of the Tararuas, not often visited by the club. Another highlight of the trip was having woman well outnumber the men for a change 5 to 2 (I wondered if Ian Harding knew about this?)

We were David Grant, Wendy Mason, John Feeney, Fiona Donald, Belinda Camps, Karen Keenan and Trish Edar.

Rock Climbing Weekend

1 & 2 December

Report by Kelly Buckle

Photo by Warren Wheeler

In a bid to introduce inexperienced members of the club to rock climbing, Terry Crippen put together a weekend perfectly suited to the beginner: an introduction to belaying at City Rock climbing gym on Saturday, then rock climbing at Titahi Bay on Sunday. The offer was not taken up by any climbing greenhorns, and thus Terry was left for the weekend with a list of the usual suspects, who already knew the basics and were raring to go climb outdoors.



Saturday was spent at the Ballance Bridge side of the Manawatu Gorge, enjoying the bolted routes put up by Matt Natti, November’s guest speaker. The day was glorious, the perfection of our riverside setting marred only by the untimely and many-days-old demise of a fetid possum, which was duly disposed of, much to the delight of downstream swimmers. Three routes were climbed, including “Outpatient”, which allowed one the extra excitement of dangling out over the river. Fun was had by all, and extra adrenaline was experienced by those who chose to lead their climbs instead of top-roping.

Saturday climbing was enjoyed by Terry Crippen, Warren Wheeler, Mike Archer, Chris Tuffley, Kelly Buckle, Dion O’Neale, and Nicola Gaston.

Sunday’s sunrise saw four sleepy participants headed out early to Titahi Bay, near Porirua. The early departure was intended to beat high tide, when some

of the cliffs are inaccessible. After a stop for caffeine in Otaki, and loo stop courtesy of the caffeine, we reached Titahi Bay. We crested the hill from the car park, and found ourselves facing a lovely seascape, complete with black-backed gulls and Mana Island in the background. The day was perfect: the clear sky, warm sun, cool breeze. All was well with the world.

Until it was discovered that a certain wallet had gone missing. A search was begun by its owner, while the rest of us made use of the low tide for climbing. The wallet was not discovered in the car, or the loo, and hope was almost given up. But fortunately, it was a homing wallet, and was discovered, after a very thorough search, in the bottom of its owner's bag.

The Titahi Bay cliffs are made of greywacke, with many cracks and fissures. The cracks offered ample chance to practice placing protective gear for traditional, or trad, climbing. Several excellent routes were climbed in two adjacent inlets. Several more climbs were off-limits due to the nesting of dive-bombing gulls on the cliffs above. As the tide climbed higher and higher up the beach towards mid-afternoon, we bid adieu to the waves and turned back towards home.

Those of us who had our wallets with us at the end of the day were: Terry Crippen, Mike Archer, Chris Tuffley, and Kelly Buckle.

Hot Mountain – Tongariro NP

15 - 17 December

Photos and report by Martin Lawrence

Warren's "plan A" for this trip was discarded in favour of camping. However when we turned up at his place on Friday evening we discovered that this plan was also an "ex" plan and we were to be staying in the Mangatepopo School Camp. This turned out to be excellent cheap accommodation that we had to our selves.

There was much discussion in the car that evening as to possibilities for the two days. I did think that sometimes you can have too much choice, but anyway, we found ourselves heading for Mt Bruce early on Saturday, with the plan (probably plan "Z" by now) to walk up to the Crater Lake and check out the damaged Dome Shelter. Ski fields can be pretty unattractive in Summer with large amounts of flotsam risen from the melting snow, so we headed left at the waterfall. Janet was worried that Warren was about to get us boxed in against a rock face, but luckily we did find a way up with a slightly tricky clamber.

We were above the cloud base in bright sunshine and headed for the Knoll Ridge complex which was pleasantly empty of people as we stopped for a rest and application of sun block.



The gunk from the 2007 eruption was very visible and rather odd to walk on being a mix of ice and grit. We sidled around to Dome Shelter which seemed a pleasant place for lunch, although there is always that small thought in your mind that the Crater Lake swirling below unexpectedly spewed onto the very place that we were sitting. The evidence of that is still around and under the shelter with the structural damage still quite visible.

We spotted climbers on the snowy slopes of Te Heuheu. As they descended and made their way towards us we realised that it was Terry Crippen and Mike Archer. After a few discussions with Terry on the odd holes made by hot rocks we headed East where Warren remembered that there was a couple of decent crevasses to view. Janet, Anne and I kept well clear but Warren managed to stand astride one of them without coming to grief.

We were now close to then beginning of the recent lahar, so it seemed logical to follow it down, back towards Whakapapa. On the way there was a fair bit of discussion on how the small pyramids of ice and grit had formed. The walk down was reasonably easy, but by the time we reached the ski lifts we realised that it had been a long hot day in the sun, and were quite grateful that the lifts were working and that they were happy for us just to jump on.



On Sunday we joined the hordes leaving the Mangatepopo Shelter, then left them to climb Pukekaikiore, where we had great views of all the mountains. Our goal was Ngauruhoe which was showing in full frontal to our West, but as we took in the views another plan was hatched. So we sidled by the black stuff of Ngauruhoe, heading for a dry valley just North of Upper Tama Lake. The valley was very scenic with interesting vegetation on the floor and great views back to the mountain. We were soon above Upper Tama where we stopped for a lunch break.

It was another great sunny day, so rather than head back on the standard Tama Lakes track we decided to try a more direct route to the Mangatepopo Track. We dropped down a ridge and found a stream bed which was very easy travel for a time. We did suspect that there might be a "bit of a scramble" lower down and sure enough found ourselves pushing through person high shrubs, then managed to reach a rather pleasant stream with which got us to the track. We headed back to car at a steaming pace to finish another long, but great day out.

Thanks Warren for all the planning(s). The four of us all really enjoyed a great pre Christmas weekend.

We were Warren Wheeler, Janet Wilson, Anne and Martin Lawrence

Colenso Loop

1-5 January 2008

Report by Warren Wheeler

Get ready for a great big little adventure into the northern Ruahine Forest Park, a loop trip from the Wakarara Roadend, north of the Sunrise Track on the eastern side of the ranges. The route was as follows. Makaroro River - Colenso Spur - Maropea Forks Hut (1) - Maropea River to Ironbark Hut (2) - Lake Colenso - Potae - Ruahine Corner Hut (3) - Totara Spur - Upper Makaroro Hut (4) - Makaroro River to Barlow Hut (5 optional) and Wakarara Roadend.

It was just Craig Allerby and myself who braved the fine weather, not foul.

Under a cloudless blue sky we headed up the wide gravel flats of the Makaroro River
Crisscrossing the shallow flow and following 4 wheel drive tracks,

Past two vehicles parked at Gold Creek until reaching the base of Colenso Spur.

After a riverside lunch with the sandflies we climbed steadily up the steep forest track

Up and out onto the tussock tops and a welcoming cool breeze

With wide clear views from Te Atua Mahuru at 1534m, almost a mile high.

Then, in accordance with Murphy's Law, the camera rewound and the battery died.

We shrugged and sighed but could have cried
As this trip was surely going to be too good to miss
So we honed our memories for several days of tramping bliss.

After heading southwards along the tops we veered right off the main range

Following the tops route onto the leading spur down towards Maropea Forks Hut.

The track was a bit overgrown and hard to follow just before entering the bush,

But with only one false start we soon found the orange track markers.

On the way down the forest track a large morepork flew by on silent wings

And perched on a branch to stare as we passed by.

It was late afternoon when we reached the stream and shortly after reached the hut

For a refreshing dip as the sun dipped below the hills and checked sore toes.

Other people had been at the hut just before New Year

But we had the place to ourselves and opted for an early night

But right on dark a couple of guys arrived after a big day from Kawhata Base

Via a side trip to the waterfall above Wakelings.

They were nice enough to cook and sleep outside on the verandah.

Another clear blue sky day greeted us next morning
And we enjoyed the river trip down to Ironbark Hut in near perfect conditions.

To avoid a swim at the first deep pool we clambered up the steep right bank

And wished we hadn't after a short grovelling bushbash.

A lunch stop was in order to restore our adrenalin levels to normal

While watching water spiders and eating crackers.

The easy rock hopping carried on, with trout spotting and a couple of deep wades.

But somehow we managed to miss seeing the track up to Otukota Hut

And after meeting three fisherman and wondering how far it was to the swingbridge

Craig mentioned that we had already passed under it.
Ah hagh.

So Ironbark soon hove into view, and proved to have welcoming sandflies aplenty.

We set up the fly amongst the long grass, and after our Backcountry roast lamb

We were too full to take up the fishermen offer of trout.

After borrowing hut mattresses for the night, again, right on dark,

The two guys turned up after a big day via Lake Colenso.

It only took them two and half hours from Colenso Hut so the 5 hours on the new sign

Is well out, as hinted at when half an hour later they arrived

At the Unknown Campsite turnoff and the old sign said 3 hours to Ironbark.
Generally they found all the old signs pretty accurate, which was our experience too.

Fine weather continued for the trip on day three, starting with a steep climb
Onto the beech forested ridge track to Lake Colenso.
At the Unknown turnoff
We dropped our packs for the climb up the knife edge spur to a lookout point
Over the green-looking lake – “needs more chlorine” as the guys had noted.
Down at the lake it looked no better, with a tentative swim ending knee deep in mud,
But a nice place for a lunch stop with the ducks, shags, tui and more.
At the hut we read the route notes to Ruahine Corner Hut
But found them a bit misleading about the route onto the spur from Potae Stream.
Fortunately the stream route had been recently cleared for the stoat control project
With orange markers, but it was still pretty steep and slow going.
Before leaving the main tributary and up Potae Stream
We came across the whio (blue duck) noted back in the hut book (we guessed).
It casually took to the water and floated on down the little rapids past us.
It didn't take any more prompting for us to take a cooling dip in the next deep pool
Before the climb up stream and spur to Potae summit at 1321m.
Suffice to say that the late afternoon views from the summit were quite splendid
With limestone outcrops adding to the rugged uniqueness of the place.
The forest blanket below abruptly stopped at the higher tussock lands to the north
With bleached trunks and clusters of mountain cedar rising above the beech canopy.
From this vantage point we could survey our route for the next day and happily
Headed the hour to the hut along an easy ridge with a wide track,
Past a dead stout caught in one of the many box traps, egg intact,
On through the leatherwood and beech, past the top lip of a huge slip face
To finally arrive out on the open tussock land and the iconic Ruahine Corner Hut.
This time no-one arrived late to dissipate the feeling of lonesome wide open spaces
Reading hut book tales of hunting and mid-winter parties until sunset.

By next morning the streaky clouds had turned to low mist so after porridge
We wandered over to the airstrip through the tussock

Following an old 4WD track and inspected a couple of the dolines,
Sink holes that form in this limestone plateau, most unusual, don't you know.

The easterly breeze meant that the cloud lifted to the west

So we had quite good views across the rolling tussock plateau to Ohutu Ridge.

By the time we left the hut the cloud was lifting and it looked like another perfect day.

We retraced our steps through the beech forest and back to the turnoff.

The track had recently been cleared and as we dropped down to the saddle

We spotted several large snail shells (Powelliphanta).

Just as it starting to get a bit hot as we climbed up onto the main range

We entered the misty cloud and met a sudden drop in temperature.

A signpost on the ridge pointed us to Aranga Hut, which we couldn't find on the map

So we figured it must be No-Mans Hut along a fast tops route.

(Wrong – it is actually before No-mans Hut).

The broad tops route is not poled so we carefully made our way in the clag

To the Boggy Land of Many Tarns where we veered left to pick up Totara Spur.

However this brought us to the edge of the bluffs nicely shown on the map

So we blundered along a bit more until Craig spotted the sign.

From there it was plain sailing, nay tramping, down one of the nicest spurs

With, yes, sizable totara trees; we also spooked a deer just below us in the beech

Which sharp-eyed Craig was again the first to see.

Upper Makaroro Hut is one of the first Forest Service huts to be built in the Ruahine,

A classic 6-bunker, well maintained and with a new wood burner.

After a refreshing dip there were a few drops of rain squeezed out of the cloud

But concerns about rising water levels came to nought and Plan A still looked good.

The log book made for an interesting read, especially about an aborted raft trip

By a couple of Australians that appears to have ended around the second bend.

Plenty of parties use the river route even in winter, avoiding the climb up Park Peak

And a long ridge walk out to the roadend.

A new DoC sign warns that the river route is for experienced parties only

But the track information in the hut only had 2.5 to 3.5 hours to Barlow Hut

A far cry from the sorry tales of 8 hours in the Barlow Hut log book.

So despite some misgivings about bashing my sore toes on the rocks

It was with some excitement that we headed off early under another perfect blue sky. We were not disappointed, the stream was low, the pools quite shallow

Or easy to get around, except for one that was chest deep - generally easy going.

The stream widens out further downstream and a large orange marker beckoned

Us out on the left bank, over a low ridge to cut out a loop.

This turned out to be little more than a marked deer track

And appears to have been put in to help negotiate a large slip

That according to a fisherman we later met at Barlow Hut

Had dammed the river downstream a couple of years ago

But which has now appeared to have washed out, so we could have saved ourselves

The little bush bash down the side stream after all.

We had lunch at Barlow Hut after chatting with the fisherman and his mate

Who had just dropped in and were heading back to their 4WD just downriver.

Another couple turned up as we were leaving, further easing our return to civilisation.

Rock hopping and criss-crossing the river was a doddle from here

But the hot sun made a swim in the chute pool below Colenso Spur a must

Although a large trout Craig spotted darting away was probably not too fussed.

From Gold Creek the wide river bed became more of a hot slog

Although interest was added by a horseman and his dog.

We were back at the car right on three, time for a lie down, and float in the stream.

Hello and goodbye to a family of three, yes its good to get out of our gear

But what a great start to another New Year.

Sunrise Loop

13 January 2008

Report and photos by Anthony Eyles

The trip description involved a bush bash; scree slope descent and some river travel which promised a greatly varied trip. The group of six gathered at Countdown at 7.30 and headed off in 2 cars. Started walking about 9.30 after some gear sharing to solve a forgotten pair of socks.

After a quick look at possibly the closest hut to a road end ever (Triplex Hut) we arrived at a supposed track intersection. Warren assured us this was the old Staircase track and off we went.

Generally the track was quite easy to follow once the scrub/bush was pushed aside although a few minor

wanderings off the track were inevitable. Some places were quite steep and a scramble but its not called the staircase track for no reason. Eventually we arrived onto the seemingly 4 lane highway of the standard Sunrise track.

From here we followed as many of the old tracks as possible and didn't end up following much of the usual track. The last part took us up higher than the hut then dropped down to the 'Sunrise Hotel' for lunch at 12.30. A few other groups were also lunching there. Warren produced a very nice juicy watermelon and shared around the group – perfect after a hot hillclimb. Left there about 1.15 and up to Armstrong saddle.



The amazing landscape was very eroded but quite fascinating and the travel was quick and easy over the tops. We had a break at the top of the scree slope and Warren gave everybody a brief 101 of Scree Travel. There were some concerns after he told the story of the last person to travel down this slope losing control but eventually everyone set off at their own pace of either flat out to the bottom or steady but cautious. This led us to the head of the Waipawa River.



It started with a narrow gut and some steep slippery rock to make our way through but eventually the river opened out for relatively easy travel down the very low water levels. Half of the party went into Waipawa Forks hut for a look (3 huts in one day!) and all

arrived back at the cars at 6.30. After a fruitless search for an icecream shop (Ongaonga and Dannevirke closed) we headed home. Thanks to Warren for navigating us round a trip a bit different to what most had done before and a great day out by all enjoying the fabulous weather.

We were Warren Wheeler, Anne Lawrence, Penny Abercrombie, Linda Leach, Nick Zepke, Anthony Eyles.

Of interest

Letter to the Editor

By William Howlett

(from *The Feilding Star*, October 1890).

Sir, I live at Makaretu, on the east of the Ruahine Ranges. Last year, I made several attempts to get across to you, but failed. One reason was that I did not know the country on your side. I now find that when I get to the top of the range, three post offices will be below, namely Apiti, Mangaone, and Pemberton. Would any one of your readers kindly send, for publication in your columns, a short description of Apiti? Is there any accommodation house? What river runs near Apiti? How far can you go from Apiti towards the ranges on horseback? Are any maps or sale plans procurable showing Apiti, and rivers and roads, near it?

In a few days, I shall have a camp situated in a bend of the Tukituki River, about 10 miles from the point where Longitude 176 and Latitude 40 intersect. This point, I conjecture, is 4 miles from Apiti. In a month more, I shall have a second camp about five miles further up the Tukituki, so as to be within an easy walk of Apiti, if we can only make out which spur or saddle to make for on this side, so as to come down to Apiti the easiest way. Perhaps by January, one or two Apiti settlers might arrange to come over and strike our camp. If we could prove that an easy track exists, or can be made, I think a road should be put through. It would not be much use at present, but as the country gets settled, it would.

My object at present is scientific, as I am after flowers and ferns. But this need not deter any of my companions from prospecting for copper or silver. I hope very soon to have a fair lot of blankets, potatoes, etc up the river, and if anyone came over, having given due notice, I would provide dry clothes etc at the camp so that he need carry nothing.

It may interest you bush readers to know that from Makaretu we go first to the Tukituki River, about 2 miles, then up the bed (shingle) to Kyber Pass, about 4 miles, then up the bed again (more shingle) to Moorcocks Flat. Here, we made the first camp, as horses cannot go further. The next camp will be

about five miles further up, where ever we can find a nice flat. The river bed is level, but too full of boulders for horses. From this second camp, I am certain a saddle can be very easily reached when once we find the way. The difficulty is that you can see nothing from the bed, and it is very hard to select the easiest spurs. I am etc.

An Ode to John Tait Hut

By Lost Bush Poets Society

September 2005

From the hut wall.

Here I sit, and drink my tea,
Content in the dark, with nought to see,
While rains they pound, upon the roof,
I sit and ponder, the meaning of truth.

In waves and torrents, a thousand bells,
Do a thousand stories tell,
Pittering, pattering, hammering sound,
From the night sky, falling down.

Outside now, the storm it rages,
Inside with me, the fire blazes,
The river tumbles, swelling wild,
While I sit, dry and warm inside,

Dancing flames a faithful friend,
To solo travellers and mountain men,
From alpine airs, I am reborn,
While storms rage on from dusk till dawn.

Book reviews

By Tony Gates

Craig Potton Publishing has put out three new books in time for the New Year. Mark Seddon's "Classic Rock Climbs" will be keenly sought after by climbers, just as "Don't forget your scroggin" and "Day Walks in New Zealand" will be by trampers. Like all of the many fine books published by Craig Potton, and frequently gracing the shelves of our book shops, all stress authors and publishers appreciation of all things outdoors and tramping.

1. "Don't forget your scroggin": A how-to handbook for New Zealand tramping. By Sarah Bennett and Lee Slater (2007) is 128 pages long, with a soft cover, and the only photograph is on the cover. There are no maps. It appears brief, but is well written and presented, with each of the seven chapters easy to follow. Each chapter has a few sub-chapters on essentials that we all should be familiar with, but may want to know more. Useful appendices of glossary, contacts (includes FMC, DoC, and the like), further reading, check lists, and index make this a nice wee book. Several quotes feature, plus three poems from our very own Tararuas and Kawekas (these were provided by the reviewer).

2. "Day Walks in New Zealand. 100 great tracks" is Shaun Barnett's latest tramping guide book. It is equally suited as a coffee table and reference book as a field guide (although it is so nice that I wouldn't really want to get it dirty in my pack).

Like his earlier (and very successful) book "Tramping in New Zealand, 40 great tramping trips", Shaun has shared preparing this book with Roger Smith, of Geographx.

You may have seen Roger's maps in Wilderness Magazine - stunning three dimensional landscape views.

Shaun's great work has been in many publications, with fine text and photographs to tempt anyone. "Day Walks" is actually quite voluminous at 180 pages, with the various walk descriptions taking each between one and two pages. Some maps display more than one track, and there is a considerable variety of walks described.

Shaun provides his own grades of easy, medium, and hard, with handy information boxes and interesting snippets. Walks close to urban areas feature, as well as several coastal walks, and some of the bush tramps that we will all be familiar with. An excellent inspiration!

3. "Classic Rock Climbing" is the latest addition to the fine series of books that includes Shaun Barnett's "Classic Tramping" (and others). Wilderness Magazine writer and Mountain Guide Mark Seddon provides another excellent coffee table book in the same format as the other books, with 82 of New Zealand's best rock climbing crags listed. There are 13 areas in the South Island and 8 in the north presented, not so much as a climbing guide, as a history of their development, and an overview of climbing there.

He writes and photographs inspirationally. You may recognise some of the stunning images in this classic book.

Recipes for tramping and eating

If you have some favourite tramping ideas or recipes you are prepared to share, please send (handwritten or photocopied is fine) to Anne at dahlia44@xtra.co.nz or to 44 Dahlia St, Palmerston North.

Damper

Damper is defined in 'Baker's Dictionary of Slang' as "bread baked in ashes in the bush or outback". It is basically a simple camp bread - the name apparently originated in Australia. Guides tend to cook it in twists but it was originally done like scones. It cooks

well in a camp oven - and loaves can also be wrapped in heavy duty foil and cooked in embers successfully.

The basic recipe is:
3 parts water (by volume) to
10 parts self raising flour with
a sprinkle or pinch of salt.

Mix everything together well.

To make small 'loaves' take a handful of dough the size of a clenched fist, make into a flat pattie about 2cm thick.

When all the patties are ready, place on heavy-duty foil on an oven tray and bake in a hot oven for 10-15 minutes or until golden brown.

They will rise to about 5 cm and sound hollow when tapped with a stick.

Slice and serve well buttered (with jam or honey or golden syrup is nice).

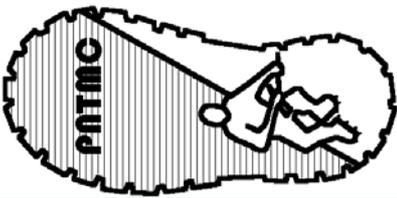
Twists are where we take a lump of the dough and wrap it around a stick in a snake like spiral and the girls cook it over a fire like they would a sausage. It should slide off easily when cooked and honey etc. can be dribbled down the middle.

Thick 'snakes' take longer to cook and the outside is more likely to burn before the inside is cooked.

One other important thing for any cooking using sticks is to make sure that the sticks are safe ones - not from poisonous plants.

Note: Self raising flour can be mixed up at the rate 2 teaspoons baking powder per cup of flour.

Sender: PNTMC
PO Box 1217
Palmerston North



Palmerston North
Tramping and
Mountaineering Club
Inc.

www.pntmc.org.nz

P.O. Box 1217,
Palmerston North

PNTMC Newsletter February 2008

What's Inside:

- Upcoming trips and other club events
 - Annual Awards, River Safety Course, Te Araroa Opening
 - In memory of Meguru – a message from the Inoue family
 - Trip Reports – Rangī, Kaipororo, Rock Climbing, Tongariro NP, Colenso Loop, Sunrise Loop
 - Book reviews and other items of interest
 - More recipes for damper
- Get out and about with us!
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