

Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.

www.pntmc.org.nz

P.O. Box 1217, Palmerston North

Newsletter August 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, Palmerston North. All welcome! Please sign the visitor's book at the door.

5 August (Tues) SC2 Evening for Applicants

7 August Leadership Evening 7.30pm at 44 Dahlia St, PN.

Chris Tuffley, Mike Archer and Trevor King recently spent a weekend being trained in leadership (see report in this newsletter). This is an opportunity to find out what they learnt.

If interested, phone Anne Lawrence on 357-1695

14 August Club Night Mt Cook Day Walks

Bruce van Brunt will show us that there's a lot more things to do from Mt Cook Village than just climb Mt Cook or sit around moping over a boutique beer while waiting for the weather to clear.

19 August (Tues) SC3 Evening for Applicants

21 August Committee (Bruce's place)

28 August Club Night Sierra Nevada Trail

Kelly Buckle spent an amazing couple of weeks just before leaving America to come and live in New Zealand. This is her story.

Trip Notes

Trip Grading

Trip grades depend on many factors, especially weather and terrain. A reasonably proficient trampler 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) and Instructional (I)

Trip participants

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

Trip leaders

Please advise a trip coordinator, as soon as possible, if you will be unable to run your trip as scheduled. 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:

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

Upcoming Trips

2 August

Wellington City Red Rocks M

Martin Lawrence 357-1695

An opportunity to get plenty of fresh air in a relatively urban setting. This trip explores the Te Kopahou Reserve on the southern coast of Wellington. We should see seals near the Red Rocks. Ring Martin to discuss transport arrangements.

2-3 August

Howletts Hut

M

Murray Gifford

357-3353

Countdown at 8.00am, Kashmir Road end, tramping through to Daphne Hut for lunch, and then on up the ridge to Howletts at 1300m for the night. Depending on weather, side trip up to Tiraha for views. Return via route in.

9-10 August

Snowcraft 2

M, I

Terry Crippen

356-3588

Bruce van Brunt

328-4761

10 August**Blue Range** E/M
Malcolm Parker 357-5203

Blue Range hut is on the eastern side of the Tararuas. From the end of Kiriwhakapapa road, a short, steep climb takes us up to where the track turns off from the track to Roaring Stag and then it is not far across to the hut. The last time I was there the hut had some quite "unique" wall coverings and signage. Hope to see some good views along the way. Depart 8.00 am.

16-17 August**Colenso Spur** F
Tony Gates 357-7439

Depart PN 7.00 am Saturday for this iconic Hawkes Bay part of the Ruahines. Wet feet in the Makarora, a fairly steep climb up Colenso Spur, then gorgeous tussock tops, most likely snow covered. Camp on the tops if conditions permit (otherwise Barlow Hut). Return via Sparrowhawk Bivvy if conditions allow.

17 August**Farm Walk** M
Malcolm Leary 06-322-8533
027 2811161

This farm walk crosses a couple of properties along Watershed Road between Ohingaiti and Hunterville. If the weather obliges, we should get some good views. There are various options depending on energy levels. Phone Malcolm to discuss transport arrangements (try the cellphone if you have no joy with the farm phone).

23-24 August**Snowcraft 3** M, I
Terry Crippen 356-3588
Bruce van Brunt 328-4761**23 August****Rangi** E
Richard Lockett 323-0948

Richard plans to go to direct to Rangi Hut for lunch and the head back to the carpark by the same route. An easy opportunity to get into the winter snow.

29 August -1 Sept**Tapuae-o-Uenuku** F, T
Terry Crippen 356-3588

Your chance to attempt the highest mountain north of the Mt Cook/Aoraki Area. Located in the Inland Kaikouras, Tappy was Sir Ed's first big mountain. Basic climbing skills (ice axe, crampons, snow awareness) are usually all that are needed. Excellent for those of you fresh from Snowcraft. (Plus a desire or otherwise to walk up the Hodder River!) We will be driving down early on the Friday morning, returning late on Monday night. You will have to do your own passenger ferry booking, and contribute to vehicle ferry and distance costs. In order for this trip to go please contact Terry well in advance for ferry details.

31 August**Takapari Rd** E
Tony Gates 357-7439

Easy day trip, depart PN 8.00 am for the Pohangina Valley, park at the farm edge, and walk up the four-wheel drive track and back. Suitable for mountain bikes. Great Ruahine views.

6-7 Sept**Tukino Climbing** F, T
Terry Crippen 356-3588

The object of the weekend is to do your own thing, possibly concentrating on steep slopes and technical climbing in the various snow and ice gullies and bluffs above the Tukino Rd on the Eastern slopes of Mt Ruapehu. This is not an instruction weekend so you need to organize your own gear. We will head up on Friday night and stay in the Desert Alpine club lodge. Contact Terry, with deposit for accommodation, by Mon 25 August.

7 Sept**Mick** E/M
Warren Wheeler 356-1998

Depart 8.00am. Mick is a high point on the low Tararua foothills east of Waiopahu, just north of Otaki. It is an easy walk over farm land up the Waiopahu Valley before a steep climb up through the lowland bush. This trip is notable especially for the remains of an old Ventura plane wreck, just below Mick.

Notices

All members should now have received a copy of the latest trip card. However, for those of you who mislay it, the trip card is available on our website.

Enclosed with this newsletter is a list of current members and their contact details.

New members

We are delighted to welcome the following new club members:

Jennifer and Kay Kitchen who have recently taken up tramping.

John Hunt who has recently moved from Wellington where he was a stalwart of the Kaumatua Tramping Club.

Upcoming events

The interclub photo competition is on Monday 22 September. It will be held at Massey University in the vet tower at 7pm. MUAC will provide snacks and beverages and of course prizes for the winners. All welcome.

News from DOC

- **Ruahine Forest Park map to return**

Unfortunately, as many will know, the Ruahine Forest Park map has not been available for sale for some time. This is because the original printing plates broke and were not replaced. However, work is underway on the drafting of a new Ruahine Forest Park map! Watch this space...

- **Backcountry users stand up and be counted**

A reminder to make sure you document your use of the huts especially in the Ruahine Forest Park. If you visit any of the huts, please ensure you record your visit in the hut book provided. They are a record of how many people visited the hut and more importantly how many people stayed and for how many nights. This information is vital! A hut book is the primary tool for tracking the amount of annual use a hut gets. If hut books show little use, it becomes hard to justify continued funding at that site. Unfortunately, a lot of hut users don't fill out hut books correctly (if at all). April this year was a great example; huts in the Ruahine were full of hunters all month but hut books showed around half had not bothered to record their visit. "I love the Ruahine Ranges and the traditional backcountry experiences they provide and I'm sure that anyone reading this does too" says DOC Pohangina Field Centre supervisor Nobby Robson, "I need your co-operation to document a truer picture of hut use so we can make informed decisions on their future".

- **Annual hut passes**

As well as selling single-use hut tickets, the Palmerston North i-SITE is now also selling annual hut passes. The usual 30% discount for approved recreation associates applies.

- **Tracks and huts**

A quick update on some of the work that DOC has done on local tracks and huts:

- The Takapari Road barrier has been installed about 1km before A Frame Hut. The reason for the gate is simple; the road is not maintained past the barrier and is dangerous. Signs advising road users of the turnaround point and time to hut etc will be installed.
- Work on upgrading the Manawatu Gorge Track has continued, and three interpretive panels (sponsored by Meridian Energy) have been installed at the Sentinel Lookout.
- New gas bottles and a fresh long-drop tank have been installed at Rangiwahia hut ready for winter.
- DOC staff walked the Mania, Diggers, Mid-Pohangina and Oroua tracks with chainsaws and cleared windfalls and overhanging vegetation.

- Rat bait has been laid in the bait stations at Te Ekaou, Forks, Piripiri, Otukota, Maroepa Forks and Kelly Knight Huts where rats are known to be a problem.

- New track direction signs were fitted at Otukota Hut, Bruce Ridge, Maroepa Forks and on Mokai Patea Range

- The broken cable winder on the Kawhatau River cableway has been repaired and a new cable run is installed. By all accounts, the cableway is working well now.

Articles for the newsletter

Send by the 20th of each month to Anne Lawrence email: dahlia44@xtra.co.nz or post 44 Dahlia St, PN.

Trip Reports

Mid Winter Celebrations – Ruapehu

21-22 June

Words and Pictures by Warren Wheeler

After turning away our only "Easy" punter there was just the four of us, so the Festive Celebrations were cancelled (no visit from Father Samxness and no Samx Feast). However with a good day forecast on Saturday and a fair amount of snow there was plenty to celebrate for our "Medium" and "Technical" punters. And the idea of a pub meal (and optional Rugby) sounded even more encouraging. As did getting home early on Sunday with the forecast bad weather coming in.

So it was that four of us went to Rangataua on Friday night in Terry's red Pajero. After settling in to the patron's lodge (thanks Sue and Lawson) we were soon in bed ready for an early start next morning. Richard and I would make up the Medium/Fit pair with the main objective to crampon up Ruapehu, while Terry and Mike were looking forward to some whack and dangle climbing on Girdlestone.

After porridge and what-have-you for breakfast we duly arrived at the Turoa car park to find the snow makers busy on the Learner slope. There was only one other car already there, with a keen pair of MUAC climbers getting ready to do some ice climbing.

After getting ourselves geared up we headed off in calm clear conditions under a beautiful dawn sky at 7.30am, no need for crampons as there was no snow to speak of. Just up the track there was another snow maker at the stream. Here Richard and I turned off and made our way up the gully and generally upslope to the Giant Chair terminal, where we put on

crampons. Terry and Mike arrived just as we were heading off as they had earlier put their crampons on to follow the snowy track up. Parting company again Richard and I headed straight up the snow slope, while the other pair headed across towards the glacier entrance and Girdlestone.

Going up was a bit icy in places but generally easy going and we were soon at the notch on the summit rim, with cloudless views across the Crater Lake and summit plateau. We had been in shade and sheltered from the northerly wind, so were rather surprised at how breezy and cool it was on the exposed rim.



Ruapehu Crater Lake

A steep rocky icy climb onto the windy summit just above us didn't hold much attraction so we carefully sidled across to the ridge on the western edge of the Mangaehuehu Glacier to see what Terry and Mike were doing. We had lunch there while spotting Terry and Mike summiting on Girdlestone. Just as the sun reached us we moved off down to get onto the glacier. Terry called us up on the walkie-talkies we had borrowed from Peter Darragh and told us they were going to carry on and climb the Gendarme. We, on the other hand, did a scenic trip across the glacier, looking into a couple of big old crevasses that were filled with snow and only about 6m deep.

We happily walked right along the 30-40m length of them, but small rocks lying about indicated that being below the Gendarme or Girdlestone wasn't the safest place to be. Sweeping flurries of ground hugging snow were starting to appear as we headed off the glacier but we were still well-sheltered from the "wind increasing to gale force later in the day".

Back at the Giant Chair we took our crampons off in the sunshine, amazed that there was no-one else about in such near perfect conditions. Well, not quite no-one. Just as we were heading off again my feet slipped out from under me on an icy bit, much to the amusement of four people who had braved the cold breeze to ride the chair up to enjoy the views. The wind was quite strong on our backs and blew us about before we dropped back into the sheltered gully.

Here we were intrigued by the ice formations over the stream, with thin sheets of detritic ice draped above the water in places. At 3.45pm we arrived at the car park café and enjoyed a coffee and cake while watching the skiers until the café closed at 4.30pm. Waiting for the others we filled in the time by practising with our avalanche transceivers in the nearly deserted car park, watching the sunset and the stars come out, and letting late visitors know that there was no more skiing until tomorrow. After Terry and Mike returned, right on dark, we were soon back at the lodge for a quick shower and change before returning to Ohakune and the Powderkeg Restaurant and Bar. By this time it was almost 7.30pm, and the Rugby was about to start, which meant that those of us non-fans who had brought togs had the heated pool to ourselves (Mid Winter Dip Deluxe). Back in the restaurant we all ordered burgers and beers – compliments to the chef.



Careful sidle across

With a lousy forecast for Sunday we were in no hurry to get up next morning and after a quick clean up we were away just before noon, leaving the wind and rain behind us, and great memories of Mid Winter 2008. Thanks to Terry for the driving, and Mike Archer and Richard Lockett for good company.

Mid-Winter at Rangataua with the climbing department

21 June

Report by Terry Crippen

After bidding farewell to Warren and Richard at the Giant Café, Mike Archer and I headed up and across the Mangaehuehu Glacier toward the southern slopes of Girdlestone. Slots were still visible in the glacier – indicating the mountain could certainly do with more snow on its upper slopes. I have been progressively working away at the various gullies on Girdlestone (although it is not always obvious which were the previous trip's routes as snow conditions can change the appearance of the gullies and rock steps). The gully we chose this time took us un-roped up and left

onto the SW ridge just below the last rock step. Snow conditions were crust over powder, not the most useful. A short rope lead took us up and over the rock step and onto the summit. No sign of the MUAC lads that had left their car the same time as us planning to head for Girdlestone as well. We had the place to ourselves.



Climbing old crevasse Mangaehuehu Glacier

We discussed a couple of options for the rest of the day over a bite of lunch when we had descended off the summit for some shelter from the wind that had started up; either some ice climbing back by the Giant Café or a go at The Gendarme on the ridge between Girdlestone and Tahurangi. Mike was keen to give The Gendarme a go; at least it would be sheltered till we got onto its top.

Mike led the main gully – a mixture of more crust and powder, and poor ice on rock which necessitated plenty of runners. I topped out into the wind, which by now was quite strong – the start of a “good” spell of fronts, lows and snow that was to continue for a few weeks with only minor breaks of fine weather – at least it would bring the much needed increase in snow cover for Ruapehu and elsewhere. We quickly abseiled off the top and headed down the mountain, with the wind getting stronger and stronger. Just on dusk we teamed up with Richard and Warren who at this stage had been evicted from the car park café on closing time. As well as the second vehicle to arrive at the car park in the morning (the MUAC lads were the first), we were as usual one of the few vehicles left in the car park at days end – a good sign of a day well spent.

Massey Walkways

29 June

Report by Graham Peters

Despite the threat of rain, four brave souls - Warren Wheeler, Richard Lockett, Janet Wilson (leader) and myself met in the Massey Business Studies carpark. First off was a tour of the arboretum. The Turitea stream was raging, which gave Warren to enlighten us on river behaviour and Marstons coefficient for the predicting thereof. In our newly enlightened state we made our way up to the Summerhill Drive Terrace and followed on ending up on Old West Road having had views down onto the flash athletic track. After crossing the road we headed NW to Turitea Rd which we followed a bit before picking up a walkway that took us up behind IPC. With views down onto lifestyle blocks plenty of opinions on what the owners had done wrong with their landscaping and what they should have done were offered. We crossed Aokautere Drive then ended up in the suburbs again. Richard offered that he had a friend that we could call in on and bludge a cup of tea. The timing of this was perfect as a heavy shower came over just as we arrived. After this break we headed off on the walkways paralleling Summerhill Drive ending up at the bottom of Massey hill. A short walk back to the cars via the main road had us arriving just as the heavens opened. A pleasant outing on a dreary Palmy Sunday.

Mt Holdsworth

5 July

Report by Jennifer Kitchen

Photos by Warren Wheeler

I checked the weather on Sky to see what we were in for Masterton showers, clearing westerly winds changing to southerly later in the day there was also a strong wind warning with gusts up to 130ks and later that day a snow warning was issued. I set off from Feilding at 6.30am to pick up mum then Warren. We spent 5mins trying to find his house (we must of gone up every driveway trying to find his car) then went on to pick up Grant. We all squashed into my Corolla hatch and headed for Masterton.

We got to Mangamaire and a hailstorm had just been thru so the road and farmland around us was white, the closer we got to Masterton the whiter it got. Mt Bruce was covered in snow. We got to Mt Holdsworth car park the weather was sunny some cloud and no wind but the car park had a dusting of hail/snow over it. About an hour into the tramp it started to snow on us, it was so cool as Mum and I have never been tramping in snow before. It snowed all the way to the Powell hut where we stopped for a quick lunch.



Coppermine

6 July

Report and photo from Graham Peters

With typical Teutonic efficiency, Anja had a backup plan if the weather was discouraging for her Kapakapanui trip planned for this day. It was, hence the more leisurely start with my meeting Anja, Warren, and Duncan in Ashhurst at the gentlemanly hour of 9.30am. Despite a bit of confusion as to exactly where we were meeting, we were soon at the roadend. Parkas and long johns were the order of the day as we headed up following the stream. With Warren on the trip the conversation is bound to take some bizarre twists and turns, and it did. After inspecting the magazine and the site of one of the mines we headed up the Loop Track and into a winter wonderland with several inches of fresh squeaky snow on the ground. The consistency was such that you could roll it up in a sheet leaving no snow behind, much like instant turf. Inevitably it brought out the child in us all - throwing snowballs, shaking snow off the vegetation onto the unsuspecting, snow down the neck etc.

Mum and I made our way down as the boys with far more energy went to the top. I was very gutted I didn't go as Warren later told me there was a proper trig on the top. It was a laugh a minute trying to get down the steep bits covered in snow I think mum spent more time sliding down on her bottom than her feet. I wrote my name with an arrow all the way down so if we got lost Warren would know where to find us. We all got down safe and sound. On the way home we stopped at Renal street dairy for an ice cream - they make the biggest ice creams I have ever seen! We got back to Palmy at 6.30pm.



Thanks to Warren and Grant for putting up with us, and Warren for showing us how to walk in the snow.

We were Warren Wheeler, Grant Christian, Jennifer and Kay Kitchen

After a rather quick lunch, all too soon we were heading down again and out on the farmland. Out here the wind was keen and cold but we were soon back at the car. On the way back we decided not to go to the Ballance Cafe and go straight home. However by some circuitous conversation the team of Anja Scholz, Duncan Hedderly, Warren Wheeler and myself, ended up at the very busy Domain Cafe for a pleasant post trip debrief.

Day tramp to not Roaring Stag hut

19 July

Report by Dave Grant

And the rain came down.

The weather looked as though it may have been improving as Etienne, Solaine and I headed out of Palmerston North. It had rained on and off during the night. The rain had stopped, but the leaden clouds, shot with red from the dawn as we reached the top of the Pahiatua Track, should have given warning. Travelling south, on towards Eketahuna, the Tararuas were shrouded in mist. However, as we donned our boots and daypacks at the Putara road end, despite the wet gravel underfoot and the occasional splash of water draining from the overhanging trees, hopes were raised by the clearly visible foothills nearby.

We set out up the valley on the track to Roaring Stag. One Kiwi, and two young French visitors on their first tramp in the New Zealand bush. The river didn't seem to be running above normal and the water was clean. Etienne and Solaine were fascinated by the swing bridges and crossed in style (one at a time of course). The luxurious undergrowth of tree ferns and epiphyte laden trees drew gasps of amazement, and introductions to giants of the forest were made – red beech, rimu, matai, and kahikatea.

And then the rain came down.

Just gently at first, light enough to carry on without putting on a coat, under the shelter of the forest. But not for long. As we climbed, the intensity increased and soon large drops were splattering down from the canopy of leaves above and there was no doubt about the need for a coat.

Runoff began and the track we were climbing started to flow with water.

By the time we reached the ridge top and the tee junction, I had already been weighing the options. Should we carry on down to Roaring Stag as planned? What about the couple of creeks we needed to cross, down towards the hut? I put the options to Etienne and Solaine. Certainly, they were enjoying the experience they said, and wanted to carry on. A lull in the weather almost convinced us that our original destination was still on, but then the rain came down again and we elected for the safe (and shorter) option, turned right towards Herepai hut, and it became the not Roaring Stag trip.

We met a young hunter and his partner heading out. They said the stove was still hot in Herepai, a fact which we greatly appreciated when we reached the hut shortly after. So we ate our lunch in comfort and listened to the rain coming down, talking about the

outdoors in our own countries, and I tried to explain why Gore-tex didn't work too well in these conditions, and Etienne said his was old and leaked anyway.

And then we packed our gear, climbed back into our cold and clammy, more or less waterproof coats and headed back down the track.

And the rain came down.

The flat parts of the track had become lakes and the sloping parts small streams and the forest glistened and ran with water. With the hoods of our coats cinched up tight we trudged along, each in a world of our own. At least it was down hill. Time passed and then we were back at the top swing bridge. No longer a gentle stream below, but a wild flow of raging tea-coloured water. On the low lying sections of track by the main river the water level didn't seem to have far to rise before reaching the track itself.

And then we were back at the road end.

Etienne and Solaine still seemed happy which impressed me greatly. As we drove back towards civilization I told them it actually does get better than this.

We were David Grant, Etienne Reynaud, and Solaine de Beauregard.

Concluding thoughts

Tony Gates sent in this contribution translated from a book about Patagonia:

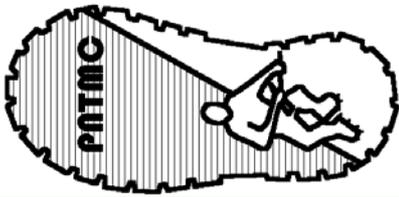
All that the mountains want are your wings **By Jack Jelinski**

If you don't go to the mountains alone
You go for the wrong reasons
For there you will find solace and refuge
And rhythms for all seasons.

If you don't go to the mountains alone
Without your sycophant shady along
You may never hear your own voice
And there will be no melody in your song.

When you finally go to the mountains completely
alone
Be not bewildered when your spirit sings
For you will discover in the flight
That solitude brings
That all the mountains want
Are your wings

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PNTMC Newsletter

August 2008

What's Inside this month:

- *Upcoming trips and club events*
- *Reports on recent trips with plenty of snow and ice*
- *Update about the work that DOC has done on local tracks and huts*

Get out and about with us!
www.pntmc.org.nz

PNTMC Committee 2008

Club Patron	Lawson Pither	357 3033
President	Bruce van Brunt	328 4761
Vice President	Warren Wheeler	356 1998
Secretary	Terry Crippen	356 3588
Treasurer	Martin Lawrence	357 1695
Webmaster	Peter Wiles	558 6894
Membership Enquires	Warren Wheeler	356 1998
	Anne Lawrence	357 1695
Gear Custodian	Mick Leyland	358 3183
Newsletter Editor	Anne Lawrence	357 1695
Trip Co-ordinators	Janet Wilson	329 4722
Snowcraft Programme	Terry Crippen	356 3588