

Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.

www.pntmc.org.nz

P.O. Box 1217, Palmerston North

Newsletter October 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.

9 October Interclub Quiz Night

PNTMC hosts the annual quiz night with fellow clubs MTSC and MUAC. Come along for a fun challenge for everyone.

23 October Committee

30 October Club Night

Godley Valley

A presentation by Peter Wiles of last summer's climbs in the Sibbald Range beyond Lake Tekapo.

Trip Notes

Trip Grading

Trip grades depend on many factors, especially weather and terrain. A reasonably proficient trapper 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

4-5 October

Ngaruahoe plus

M

Warren Wheeler

356-1998

Depart Friday night 6.00pm. Plan A is to stay at Tongariro Holiday Park on the western side of Tongariro. Saturday we will climb the snowy western slopes of Ngauruhoe for a grandstand view of Ruapehu. Sunday we will climb Tongariro and attempt an inverse traverse of the Pot on North Crater, check the depth of ice on Blue Lake, climb out of Red Crater and more! Crampons and ice axe required.

5 October

Sledge Track

M

Dave Grant

357-8269

Sledge is at the top of the Kahuterawa Valley behind Massey. An interesting valley climb of mainly easy gradient through bush into the Tararuas – we might also investigate the toi toi loop. Resuscitation options include the Tokomaru Cafe on the way home.

11 October (Sat)

Hemimatenga

E/M

John Hunt

324-0339

We will leave PN at 7.45am - will leave one car at top of Hadfield Rd, Peka Peka, (for drivers to be taken back to start point after trip), then we all drive on to Waikanae where we will meet up with a group from the Kaumatua tramping club group. Then we follow a well formed zigzag track up the hillside (through native bush) for about an hour to the ridgeline which we will follow northwards, (where the track becomes less distinct.) After another 2 hours we come to a logging road and follow the right branch for 1/2 hr. to Field Peak for lunch. The keen ones will then have an hour looking for the Lodestar plane wreck. It is then just an hour down to the car at Peka Peka so we should get back to PN by about 5pm.

12 October

Waiopahu/Gable End

M/F

Warren Wheeler

356-1998

A good long day's walk starting with a steady climb up Gable End. We should make it round to Waiopahu hut in time for afternoon tea before heading down the

always- muddy track to the car park. Leaving PN at 7.00am.

18-19 October

North Tararua Bush Bash F
Peter van Essen 355-9076

Depart 7am Saturday. This will be an exploratory trip through some of the untracked country between Harding's Park and the Mangahao River, including Arawaru Peak. There will be a lot of scrub bashing involved so thick skin, tough gear, and cool heads required. Fly camp in the scrub overnight.

19 October

Sunrise Hut E/M
Malcolm Parker 357-5203

Departing Palmerston North at 7.00 am for the road end. Expect a leisurely dawdle up to Sunrise Hut where we'll stop for lunch. We may even wander on over the Armstrong Saddle for a quick look before returning the same way. We could even make a slight diversion to stop in Onga Onga for an ice cream on the way home.

Labour weekend

24-27 October M
Richmond Range
Martin Lawrence 357-1695

This trip is already booked.

27 October

Field Hut M
Duncan Hedderley 354-6905

Apologies as this trip was accidentally left off the trip card and is also not on the website.

Duncan plans to go on the Monday unless the forecast really suggests another day would be smarter. Leaving PN about 7.30-8.00 am

1-2 November

Longview E/M
Peter Wiles 358-6894

Leave for the eastern Ruahines at 7.00am on the Saturday. There are several route options depending on weather and energy levels.

2 November

Te Atuaoparapara F
Warren Wheeler 356-1998

Depart 7.00am. This classic day trip takes us up past Sunrise Hut and around the northern ridge tops of the Waipawa Stream over one of the highest and most spectacular peaks in the Ruahine Ranges. This is a long day but not technically difficult and is rewarding for its variety of tall forest, alpine scrub, tussock tops, rocky lookouts, loose scree, boulder-hopping, and wide gravel flats. Expect to finish tired and very happy, with nice wet feet from the last hour of easy stream travel.

Notices

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 card January to June 2009

It is time to start thinking about trips you can put on the next trip card. Trip coordinators are planning the 6 month programme that starts in January 2009. If you want to get in early and book a date, please contact:

Terry Crippen 356-3588
Janet Wilson 329-4722

PNTMC website

If you have some time to spare it is worth exploring our website. Peter Wiles as webmaster is doing a fantastic job of keeping this site up to date, and ever-expanding. In addition to information about the club and its activities there are also lots of links worth following. Go to www.pntmc.org.nz

Gear for trips

Gear preferences and tips on gear is a vast topic and could fill a book, but a few comments might be useful to get started or as a reminder to jog the memory.

For day trips

Each person should have appropriate footwear, small pack, lunch and nibbles, water bottle, parka, over trousers, gloves, whistle, and woollen head gear. There must be at least one torch, first aid kit, map and compass amongst the group, plus an adequate supply of toilet paper and sun cream etc. On snow, dark glasses or preferably goggles are essential. A change of cloths available at the end of the tramp is desirable.

For weekend or longer trips

A large pack with sleeping bag and cover, carry-mat, parka, over-trousers, mittens, balaclava, long johns or a change of warm clothes, torch, with spare bulb, map, compass, eating utensils, first aid kit, sun cream, candle, matches, toilet paper, and food for appropriate number of days. Dinners are usually communal. Liaise with the leader for any specific food details and the allocation of party gear. Hut passes or tickets may be required.

Trips involving technical content

For day or longer mountaineering excursions - discuss the requirements with the leader.

For more detailed information on gear and many valuable tips, consult the NZ Mountain Safety Council's excellent **Bushcraft** and/or **Mountaincraft** manuals.

News from DOC

Below is a press release from the Department of Conservation regarding recent storm damage in western Ruahine Forest Park.

Western Ruahines Storm Weathered 18 August 2008

If you are planning a trip into the Ruahine Forest Park, be prepared for track damage, obstacles and possible delays. Fallen trees, wind-throw and other problems caused by recent storm events are inevitable.

Stephen Robson from the Department of Conservation (DOC) says it is likely that most of the tracks in the Ruahine ranges suffered some form of damage during the storm, but it is unknown what the extent of the damage is. Every effort will be made to restore the tracks but this work will be carried out along with DOC's usual workload, as resources and nature allows. The work will be prioritised according to the amount of use the track gets and the severity of the damage. "It may take a while, but we will get to it when we can" says Mr Robson.

Access has been cleared to Kawhatau Base where an out building, used as a sleep out, was crushed by a fallen beech tree and damaged beyond repair. The track to the cableway has been cleared to ensure a safe river crossing. Takapari Road, the top part of the track to Centre Creek and Diggers Hut Track has been cleared, as well as Oroua car park to Alice Nash Memorial Heritage Lodge. Rangiwahia and Kelly Knight tracks are open but care is needed and access is only recommended for people experienced in the backcountry. Purity Hut track has about 25 beech trees down but a route through is hoped to be cleared this week. Snow levels are also down to the park boundary which will slow progress even further.



Kawhatau Base sleep out, or what is left of it.

In the meantime, it is strongly recommended that Ruahine Forest Park visitors contact DOC to check the status of the tracks they wish to use before they venture in. If you come across a fallen tree or other

debris blocking a track, please do not attempt to navigate around it unless you are an experienced back-country trumper with appropriate gear. As Mr Robson commented, "the last thing we want is inexperienced trampers wandering around the Ruahines trying to find their way back onto the tracks".

DOC is keeping a record of track status. If you come across any damage, please call (06) 3509700 or email felliott@doc.govt.nz to report it, giving details of the location and the type of damage.

Tracks and Huts

In July three cars left at the Oroua car park were broken into and ransacked with petrol stolen through the bungs. This is something to be aware of: don't leave any valuables in your vehicle if you are leaving it at a road-end car park when you visit the Ruahine Forest Park.

Lambing season reminder

During lambing season some tracks are closed to the public. These include Beehive Creek and the track from Opawe hut to Maharahara. They reopen at the end of October. If you are planning a trip and you're not sure about access, contact DOC on (06) 350-9700.

Update on the Oroua valley stoat trap line

The New Zealand Deerstalkers Association (NZDA) has secured additional funding from Horizons and the Eastern and Central Community Trust. This means more traps on the ground, more dead stoats and hopefully more young whio. The NZDA are looking for volunteers to check traps and change bait on a monthly basis. Contact Andrew Mercer on (06) 355-0496 or email andrewmercer@inspire.net.nz

Trip Reports

Takapari Road from the West

30 August

Report and photo: Tony Gates

The terrible August weather eased somewhat towards the end of the month, with a few good days to herald the coming of spring. It was of course still winter in the Ruahines, with frosty bits and damp, unappealing bush. Winter scenes were evident to the north, with the Rangi, Tunupo etc tops still well plastered with snow and ice- great views. We left the car at the bush edge, then soon warmed up on our easy-ish day walk up Takapari Road from the western (Pohangina) side.

For those who don't know this area, it is an amazing feeling to ascend to the heart of the southern Ruahines on an easy road beside (but far above) the Pohangina River. You can mountain bike or four wheel drive the route. And as Bruce mentioned at club night, it

accesses the largest area of leatherwood in the world. Above the bush, Takapari Road winds gently through this vast green forest of scrub, flattish to the south, and steep to the north.

We explored an old meat hunters' trail through a part of this leatherwood forest, out to a lookout point overlooking Centre Creek, and the Pohangina Valley beyond. Clouds rolled in for a bit, chasing us back down. Back at the car, it was a glorious day.

We were Richard Lockett and Tony Gates.



Image. Tony admiring the view, Takapari Road.

Snowcraft 2: Whakapapa, Mount Ruapehu

8-10 August

Report: Grant Christian

Day One

It was the worst of weekends, it was the best of weekends. After stormy weather on Snowcraft 1 leading to abandonment of activities on Sunday we were all hoping for more luck in Snowcraft 2. An enthusiastic group comprising Andrea Coleman, Steve Crouch, Kelly Buckle and Grant Christian had completed Snowcraft 1, and were joined on this trip by Kelly Holland. The trip instructors were Bruce van Brunt and Alasdair Noble.

We travelled up on the Friday night and stopped at the Chinese takeaways in Taihape for tea. This was becoming the preferred dining place with

inexpensive, enjoyable and quick meals. We were staying at the Manawatu Tramping and Skiing Club Lodge.

We awoke on Saturday morning to sunny calm weather and were eager to get out onto the snow. After a sustaining breakfast, and putting on the casserole for dinner we loaded up with climbing gear that made us look like seasoned professionals. "I need to know the names of all this stuff," I thought to myself. After a trek of some fifty metres, we dropped packs and started with more climbing practice without crampons. With the group showing confidence at this, we had some more practice at self-arresting when sliding on snow. Everybody seems to enjoy this activity. We were introduced to glissading, also very popular and a great way to get up speed before self-arresting. We practiced self-arresting with our packs on, just for a bit more realism.

It was then time to fit our crampons and move a bit further afield. We spent time on revising and practising the different techniques of crampon use, at the same time building up our confidence and competence. We moved on to crossing a steepish slope using the crampon points with ice axe picks in each hand. This was great fun, although hard work for the calf muscles.

An introduction to snow stakes, pigs and pickets came next. We were shown these different types of equipment used for anchors, and the methods used to place them. We were then shown how to set ourselves up in a safe position for belaying, secured by the anchor, and how to belay and travel while being belayed. We followed this up with some practice at belaying. Some of us were frustratingly slow to start with, but we gradually improved. I learnt a valuable lesson as the wind picked up a little. I was not wearing gloves because it had been so warm. In no time my hands were cooling, exacerbated by holding on to the steels heads of the ice axe and ice hammer. I decided I could go on until I stopped to set up for the next belay but soon realised this had been a bad decision, as my hands became difficult to use and took some time to warm again.

After a full day out in the snow, we headed back to the lodge. Steve, who had not had enough snow for one day, spent some time making a small igloo, but he couldn't be persuaded to sleep in it. In the evening we were introduced to the use of prussic slings, and how to rope up and travel where crevasses exist. It had been a great day and I had thoroughly enjoyed learning these skills.

Day Two

After another big breakfast it was time to rope up as we prepared to traverse the dangerous crevasse strewn glaciers of the lower Whakapapa slopes (you've got

to put these pictures in your mind to add to the realism). Enthusiastically putting into practice the knots we had learnt the previous night we ventured forth. We soon learnt how to keep in time with those we were roped to. At the same time we managed to avoid piercing with our crampons the rope that our lives may depend upon. We came to some precipitous looking slopes (well, maybe not that steep, but a good spot to practice) that obviously needed the added safety of a belayer. Belays were set, and the advance up and down the slope proceeded. We moved onto a steeper slope and the confidence and skill steadily improved. Especially challenging and satisfying was crossing a steepish cornice at the top of the slope.

Our belaying efforts were interrupted by a frantic Alasdair (who had earlier disappeared up the mountain and out of site) running towards us shouting something about his friends being buried in an avalanche. At first I wondered if he was delusional, as the likelihood of an avalanche in this area seemed remote. It then sunk in that this was probably an exercise, and we should respond as if it was the real thing. The group started to head down towards Alasdair, and then a couple of us headed to our packs to retrieve the snow shovels, that we had earlier left before doing more climbing. We assembled back where Alasdair was. We all activated our avalanche transceivers -we were soon tracking a signal, and quickly moved its location. A hat was found, but no sign of a person, or an avalanche for that matter. After some wasted time trying to pinpoint the signal and frantic digging in the wrong place, Steve (must be the air force training) located the transceiver, surprisingly not attached to anybody. "Oh well, can't save them all", I thought. Alasdair debriefed us on our reaction and approach and gave out useful advice on how we could do it better.

The next session was on how to construct a snow bollard. Bruce and Alasdair showed us how it was done, and the students teamed up and gave it a go. After building a couple of impressive looking bollards it was time to test them. Some of us also had a quick lesson in how to abseil. They both stood up to the weight of a single abseiler, even when bouncing on the rope. Once at the bottom we gave them a real strength test. With seven of us pulling on the rope, neither bollard showed any sign of failing.

Time was getting on, so we roped up again to cross those perilous crevasses. Roping up was extremely fortunate because both Andrea and Kelly H fell into a hidden gully. Luckily they were saved by the others, who fell to the ground and braced themselves with ice axes and crampons, like seasoned professionals. We practised the technique of using the ice axe and prussic slings to take the weight off ourselves and on to the ice axe, enabling us to go to the aid of our unfortunate companions. After the rescues were

effected, we continued back to the lodge. It had been another very enjoyable and interesting day.

It was now time to pack up and head home. We had been fortunate with the weather, and had a great group to work with. Thanks to Bruce and Alasdair for their expert tuition.

Initially I had done the course with the intention of learning to use crampons and ice axe, so that I could cross the ranges safely in winter. I was now beginning to think that maybe this climbing game could be lots of fun, but with an element of risk. Just need to get out and practice now!

Ruapehu Turoa Side Tahurangi-Paretaitonga Col

1 September

Report and photos: Murray Gifford

Terry had us all on the road by 4.00am, clear skies and stars out, forecast great. We took a short stop at Ohakune for a bite of breakfast and arrived at Turoa ski field carpark at 7.30 am, first row of car parks but the cars were soon streaming up behind for their days skiing in the sun. We packed for the day and got ready for a long hot climb. Sun was not over the main ridge so the nip of the morning in the shade was a great start.

The snow was groomed all the way to the top of the tows, hard and crusty, great for crampons. We walked up under the chairlifts and arrived at the top café just as the skiers started to pile off the lifts at 8.45am. Time for a snack, shed some more clothes and put on the sun block, the sun just lifting over the ridge.



Onwards and upwards, beyond the last tow, a straight forward climb in crisp conditions, firm snow to the Tahurangi Col. The day was brilliant, the mountain appeared to have had a white blanket draped all over, not much rock showing. Lots of icy cliffs and knobs

to be seen. The views out over the Crater Lake were superb. The plateau was busy 20 or 30 climbers/skiers could be seen all over the mountain.

We all grouped together again for a snack and breather. The climbers opted to ascend the icy step to the top, Te Ataahuu also known as the Sharks Tooth, I skirted around to the right under the tooth and short steep pitch to the top, lots of hoof prints to walk in. Photo shoot on the top, more views, Terry gave us the summit tour of all the peaks. One skier arrived with crampons on his boots, skis strapped to his pack and proceeded to ski off the top, gone in seconds.

We headed down and along the southwest ridge. A series of small peaks and steps, straight forward with soft conditions, but a long steep slide of the west face if icy. The east face is all ice cliffs and scree slopes into the Crater Lake. The route along the ridge was fast and easy and soon we headed down a rising ridge from the Pare Col.

We stopped for a well-earned lunch. Mike and Peter headed for the top of Paretaitonga, Terry and I started the long sidle back around the eastern slopes to the top of the ski field, down the top of the Mangaturuturu glacier. A group of skiers form the plateau went by on their way to Turoa.

The snow has 9 steps crunch thru the crust and then a slippery step, so the crampons went on. The sidle is steep and the ankles get a good work out and RSI. The trick is to stay high as you sidle, go too low and you will hit bluffs on the way back around to the ski field. Terry and I went a bit low and hit the bluffs, a challenge for Terry, down the cliff he went, I climbed up and around and the two behind passed us.



Afternoon tea at the top café and a quick walk to the car, back by 4.00pm. A great day out, plenty of exercise and some wonderful photos on this trip.

Did you know that Ruapehu has six Glaciers? We could see five of them from the top - which one

could we not see? Mangaheuhu, above and south of the Turoa ski field, Wanainoa south east, Whangaehu, west from Crater Lake. Mangatoetoeu, west of plateau, Whakapapa, northwest, Mangaturuturu, west. Apparently in a long day you could ski tour all of them - a challenge for another trip.

We were Terry Crippen, Mike Archer, Peter Darragh and Murray Gifford

Tukino climbing

6 September

Report and photo: **Tony Gates**

A week of amazingly perfect spring weather gave us no excuses to stay inside, especially when Terry organised a full load of keen mountain people for this post snowcraft climbing trip. The trip had been trimmed back from two to one day, but that was fine with a 4.00 AM start, about four hours travel, and about 10 hours up at Tukino. Our pre dawn Waiouru pie stop was depressing in the wet mist. Soon, however, we climbed out of the clag and into perfectly clear weather on the Tukino Road. Terry's limousine was in fine form, and duly deposited us amidst army people conducting alpine training, and the usual Ruapehu skiers.

High climbing would have been easy, with Te Heu Heu towering above us, but we chose to practice our rope skills on some of the lower cliffs. Really good, hard snow merged into ice in the shady bits. The extensive series of cliffs immediately north of the Tukino huts, (i.e. south facing) proved an ideal practice and training ground under the expert tutelage of Terry. Much of his "whack and dangle" technical equipment was used. We each safely completed a couple of roped up ascents of the steep faces along the cliff before lunch. A quick stroll over the hill to the north took us to a sheltered lunch spot under impressive cliffs. There were a few narrow ledges and snow banks that we could follow between the bluffs, otherwise the route would have been much longer in the then rather soft snow.

After a brew and yarn with a passing skier, we continued back around the base of the cliff to another interesting looking ice gully. Three pitches for each of our two ropes brought us once again back to the ridge top leaving us tired but happy. We cramponed over to the ski field, past crowds of army people, then back to the car by 4.00 PM.

Tukino ski field is a neat place- windswept at times, with expansive scenery and good access to much of Mt Ruapehu. It lacks the crowds of Turoa and Whakapapa. Climbing possibilities are more of what we found, with several bluffs and frozen waterfalls throughout. We met a couple of jokers who reported that the largest frozen waterfall (near the top of the

ski field) was actually buried under snow at its base, and its top had snapped off. But the ice is constantly changing- there will be plenty of exciting climbing elsewhere.



Climbers were; Murray Gifford, Grant Christian, Tony Gates, and Terry Crippen.

Haurangi - The search for the lost tarn succeeds

13-14 September

Report: Peter van Essen

This was a return trip to the southern Haurangi/Aorangi Range to find the 'Lost' Tarn (known to locals as Frog Tarn) the southern most mountain tarn in the North Island.

We stayed in the shearers' quarters at White Rock Station on Friday night giving us an early start on the Saturday morning. Five of us made the trek up while Janet stayed at the station strengthening her recuperating broken bones with therapeutic doses of puaa and kina.

A short ride to the locked gate at Ngapotiki Station then it was on with packs and along the coastal vehicle track for a couple of kms until just before Ngapotiki Hut. From here we ascended a steep sweat-inducing scree/rock slide as far as we could, then scrambled up through the scrub and onto the main ridge. After lunch on the tops it was an easy scramble along the range to above Frog Tarn by 2pm. We bashed down to the tarn and scouted around for a camp-site amongst some fairly extensive pig rooting. Some old discarded bottles, cans and plastic sheeting showed others had used this as a camp site in the past. We mused on the history of the site while enjoying a leisurely afternoon brew up.

Frog Tarn (E2704732 N5957425 at 726m) was visited by botanist Tony Druce in 1955 when he took the photo below. Today the Tarn has changed quite a bit.

There is not as much open water as the margins are being colonised by rushes. The surrounding manuka, kanuka, and silver beech trees have grown a lot taller in the ensuing 53 years. This forest is secondary in origin and was probably burnt off at the time of European settlement of the area in the 1800's. Reforestation is slow as the soils are thin and the winds are strong over the range. The surrounding subalpine scrub boasts some fine examples of wind swept shrubs, some prostrate manuka were nearly two metres long but less than 30cm high making good wind vanes.

With the camp set up we reconnoitred further along the range for our next day's journey over Mt Barton. After some photos, a bit of botanising, and watching a captivating display of high speed aerobatics by two flocks of wood pigeons (25-30 birds in total) we wandered back to camp for a multi-course dinner with camembert and pate cracker aperitifs courtesy of Warren. We retired early and a calm night saw us well rested for a 6am roll out. After an easy morning scramble along the rocky ridge crest, skirting around the scrubby sections and admiring the **Celmisia spectabilis** herb fields, we reached Mt Barton for a mid morning break.

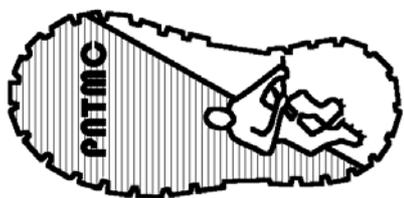
A steep descent off Mt Barton down a main spur soon turned into an even steeper manuka scrub bash and slide down a steep face until we reached the colluvial toe slopes and then the track on White Rock Station for lunch. An easy stroll over farm tracks saw us back at our quarters by mid afternoon. Cleaned up and on the road, with fish and chips in Carterton, we were back in Palmy around 8pm.

An enjoyable trip, the weather was kind, our objective was attained, and there is still plenty to do on a return trip, next time to look for the 'lost' hut.

We were Terry Crippen, Warren Wheeler, Murray Gifford, Graham Peters, Janet Paua-Wilson, and Peter van Essen.



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PNTMC Newsletter

October 2008

What's Inside this month:

- *Upcoming trips and club events*
- *Reports on recent trips with plenty of snow and ice*
- *Suggested list of gear for different levels of trips*
- *DOC storm news and more*

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

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