



# Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.

[www.pntmc.org.nz](http://www.pntmc.org.nz)

P.O. Box 1217, Palmerston North

## Newsletter March 2009

### 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.

#### 12 March California climbing

Chris Tuffley will share some of his experiences climbing in California

#### 26 March AGM

This promises to be the AGM of the Year as the members of the 2008 committee vie with each other to see who can bring along the best chocolate cake. But before the chocolate cake extravaganza you will have to digest the more substantial items on the Agenda: the Presidents Report, Treasurers Report, Election of Officers, and any General Business. Any suggestion that this is a blatant electioneering ploy will be vigorously denied!

### 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 (T)<br>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 |

#### 28 February – I March

**Mangatainoka Hot Springs E/M**  
**Tina Bishop 355 5755**

This is a delightful and relaxing trip. The track follows the Mohaka River to TePuia Lodge. Further up the track are the hot pools where if the weather permits we will camp under flies and enjoy the hot pools so brings togs and towel and a torch. If the weather is not so good we will stay at the hut. There are plenty of places to fish and swim along the way. There is the option of leaving Friday night and staying in a Hawkes Bay camping ground otherwise it will be an early start from Palmie on Saturday morning.

#### 1 March

**Egmont East Ridge F**  
**Alasdair Noble 356 1094**

This will be a long day trip, early start in Palmy (or you can meet us at the carpark above Stratford at a more manageable time if you want to drive up the afternoon before). We shall ascend the East ridge - a pleasant rocky scramble for a good part of the way - and then return by the more usual Northern side before a walk around part of the round the mountain track back to the cars. Allow up to 12 hours on the go so fitness will be important. Highlights will be the Sharks tooth, the caving down into the crater and the glorious views from the summit. The ridge is waterless so in anticipation of a long hot day bring plenty to drink.

#### 7-8 March

**Parks Peak M**  
**Peter Wiles 358 6894**

Plan is to leave Palmy at 7am and head over to Whakarara Road near Ongaonga. We will then wander up the track to the hut for the night.

**8 March**

**Irongates Gorge** E/M  
**Warren Wheeler** 356 1998

Depart 8.30am. This is a classic summer river trip in the western Ruahine Forest Park. It involves an easy 2 hours along the side track to reach the Oroua River for an early lunch and a swim (optional). We then follow the river downstream for about two and half hours to the Irongates Gorge where will pack float or swim the short length involved. This is followed by a climb up out of the steep sided valley and back to the carpark. Great fun, not to be missed.

**14-15 March**

**Turoa Climbing** M/F T

Annette is still leading this trip but has shifted it to 25-26 April.

**14-15 March**

**TNP Tramp** M/F  
**Warren Wheeler** 356 1998

Martin was down to lead this trip but is now unable to so Warren has enthusiastically leapt into the breach.

Depart 7.00am. From the Desert Road we will head for Oturere Hut, with a side detour to the amazing Ohinepango Springs and historic Waihohonu Hut. We will return across country via Waihohonu Springs and Tama Peak – hoping for great views of Tama Lakes, Ruapehu and Ngauruhoe.

**15 March**

**Burton's Track** M  
**Dave Grant** 357 8269

An interesting day walk not too far from home and a chance to walk one small piece of Te Araroa. For much of the walk we'll be in the very pleasant Tokomaru Valley where we'll see some relics of Jim Burton's farming operation. If there are enough participants we can walk this part of the Te Araroa Walkway from both ends, swapping car keys on the way; otherwise we'll go in to Burton's whare and retrace our steps.

**21 March**

**Tongariro South Ridge** F  
**Bruce van Brunt** 328 4761

We will depart early from Palmerston North and head for the Mangatepopo car park. The plan is to follow the Tongariro crossing track up to the Mangatepopo saddle and then leave the crowds at the base of the South Ridge of Tongariro. This route up the mountain generally has few people on it despite large numbers below doing the crossing. It is a fun, non technical rock scramble with outstanding views of the park. We will descend down a scree slope just off Tongariro summit and follow the ridge parallel to Mangatepopo stream back to the car park. As the route is without shelter, the trip is highly weather dependent.

**21-22 March**

**Waipakihi Hut** 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 7:30am.

**28 March**

**Blue Range and beyond** E/M  
**Peter Darragh** 353 0922

Blue Range is a gateway to the Tararuas with access to the upper Waingawa River and lower Ruamahanga River, also, with some effort, some high tops. So come along and see for yourself the excitement that is the Tararuas. We will be leaving at 7 30am Saturday.

**28-29 March**

**Orongorongo Weekend**  
**Tony Gates** 357 7439

Phone Tony for details of this trip.

**4-5 April**

**Lost Hut, Haurangi Forest Park** F  
**Terry Crippen** 356 3588

We will again head high up onto the Aorangi Range, SE Wairarapa. But now that we know where the Lost Tarn is, we will be looking for the "Lost" hut - not actually lost but we only have a rough idea where it is. Expect some good steep scrub-bashing, tops travel and fly-camping. We will depart PN Friday afternoon or evening and either stay Friday night at White Rock Station quarters or fly-camp up the Whawanui.

**4-5 April**

**The Pinnacles, FP** E  
**Trevor King** 356 4557

Contact Trevor for details of this trip.

**Advance Notice**

**Easter South Island Climbing Trip**  
**8-14th April** F, T

This will now be an extended Easter (ie about 6 or 7 days). Various possibilities depending on interest shown. Options include: Nelson Lakes attempts of Cupola, Hopeless, Travers. Another possibility, teaming up with Wtn Section NZAC, attempt of Arrowsmith via Erewhon and the Lawrence Valley.

**Contact Terry ASAP** 356 3588  
 or 027 643 3637

**Articles for the newsletter**

Send by the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month to Anne Lawrence email: [dahlia44@xtra.co.nz](mailto:dahlia44@xtra.co.nz) or post 44 Dahlia St, PN.

## Notices

### The Who's Done What List for 2008-2009

Terry Crippen (3563-588) is currently compiling the "Who's done what list" for April 2008 to end of March 2009. So if you have done any South Island, overseas or extended North Island tramps, climbs, cycle trips etc, or visited interesting places such as Uzbekistan let Terry know so it can be added to the list.

### FMC Membership discount card

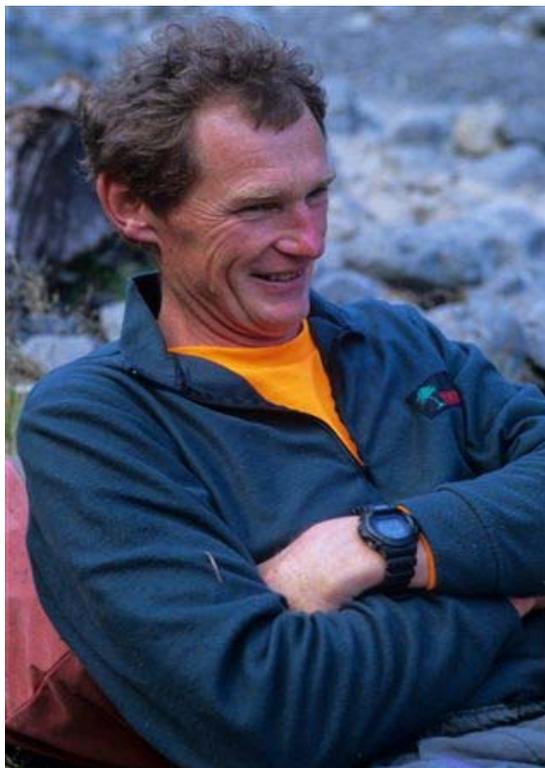
Work is underway on the 2009/2010 FMC card with a number of new providers that should be appealing. FMC encourages members to support all providers where possible to ensure their continued contribution to the card. Unfortunately, some providers are discontinuing their support for various reasons. The FMC's New Zealand Sleeping Bag line will no longer be available due to product supply; the supplier has gone overseas for product. FMC encourage your feedback on the card and also appreciate any input in providing names of potential providers for them to follow up. Feedback can be directed to Executive member, Lex Smith, via: [smithers@xtra.co.nz](mailto:smithers@xtra.co.nz)

## Obituary

### Andrew Thomas Lynch 1958 - 2009

By Terry Crippen

Photos by Shaun Barnett



Until two years ago Andrew was a dairy farmer with all the time commitments that that brings, however he was still able to undertake many impressive tramps and climbs achieving much more than some of us who had far less time restraints have been able to do. Andrew joined PNTMC in August 2000. A list of trips undertaken by him in his time with the Club would be very impressive indeed, bearing in mind that while he had always been an outdoors person, his climbing career in particular has only spanned the last few years.

He was equally at home in the Tararuas as he was on Jill's and his farm at Linton. However South Island trips were always on the agenda for Andrew. These took in most of the standard tramping routes as found in areas such as Nelson Lakes and Mt Aspiring National Parks; but also less visited areas such as Mt Richmond Forest Park and Westland's Wanganui River. His short but significant climbing career includes a Grand Traverse of Mt Cook, Mt Sefton via the North Ridge, and Mt Aspiring via the SW ridge – all impressive climbs. These climbs and some of his other ascents were undertaken with Geoff Wayatt, a professional guide. Andrew made no excuses regarding using a professional guide as this enabled him to maximize his successes in the short time spells away from the dairy farm. I expect that knowing Andrew's fitness, strength and developing expertise, his trips with Geoff soon became more than just a guide-client relationship.

Some of the rewarding and memorable trips that I did with Andrew included: The climbing trip with Lydia Bradey to the Altai Mountains of Western Mongolia; arriving at base camp before all our equipment did, necessitating a very cold night with no sleeping bags; Andrew sitting high and proud on our camel; and climbing a number of peaks including Mongolia's highest mountain Khuiten. Back in New Zealand, our attempt on Mt Whitcombe from the West Coast; spending a number of days weathering out very heavy rain at Smyth Hut then retreating down valley as the saturated terrace edges continued to collapse above us! Closer to home; our two attempts at traversing the Gendarme on the Girdlestone-Tahurangi ridge on Mt Ruapehu.

Andrew give his time to PNTMC in a number of ways; serving on the committee (long committee meetings in the evening are not the best for a dairy farmer's sleeping schedule), instructing on the Club's snowcraft programme and being on the Club's SAR callout list. He was instrumental in getting the club involved with running Duke of Edinburgh weekends for St Peters College.

Two years ago Andrew stopped being a dairy farmer, converting the farm to drystock. This being a well deserved change that any dairy farmer can appreciate.

It gave him more time for tramping and climbing, but also to spend with his family and develop new interests. He enrolled in a two year Diploma in Furniture Design and Making at UCOL. In his first year of this diploma he showed excellent craftsmanship and won a bronze in the National Woodskills Festival with the vanity table he had designed and built for Jill's birthday. During this period he also taught farm skills.

It was just over a year ago that Andrew started getting dizzy spells which was the first sign that there was something amiss. Over the following period Andrew was not going to just sit at home and wait while undergoing chemotherapy and radiotherapy. He made full use of his last few months; with trips to India with Ash (a friend, his doctor and ex-club member), a trip to Tahiti to visit his brother, a final Tongariro crossing, and trips with Jill and his family including one to the USA for Christmas.



For us urban based club members there will be no more visits to the farm out at Linton for a chat, cup of tea and trip planning. Andrew will be sadly missed by his fellow trampers, climbers and friends. Andrew is survived by his wife Jill, and the three children, Xavier, Cecilia, and Thomas.

## Trip Reports

### New Year's Eve Tramp into the Ruahines

Report: Jo O'Halloran

After much discussion about what dates would be the best to set out on to coincide with good weather reports we took the plunge and left for Iron Gates Hut on New Year's Eve in high temperatures and humidity. We shared the hut with a deer hunter and his wife. To celebrate the New Year Warren shared 15mls of some very delicious Swedish alcohol...not enough to lift your head off but v much appreciated.

The next morning saw us head off up a very steep climb towards Triangle Hut onto a saddle then veered left up ridge on to the Whanahua Range on a deer track which initially was very pleasant. The temperature had cooled today and cloud had come down. Bashing through the leatherwood at the top saw us swinging around their limbs precariously at times.

Once out of the leatherwood it was very cold and the wind had whipped up a powerful force necessitating Warren giving the O'Halloran's an on the spot education about how to LEAN into the wind, not to get bowled over by it. We climbed over Mangahua and Maungamahue with the cloud lifting at times to give us views of Te Hekenga, and Sawtooth Ridge. Finding the ridge to drop off to Pourangaki Hut was not easy and we lost some time backtracking. Having climbed all that way we dropped off steeply to the hut where we shared it with another hunter and his "missus". It turned out that Jo had been at the same high school with the young "missus" but with a 33year gap between us! Must be getting old! Our evening was topped off with some brandy soaked Christmas cake with a hot cuppa tea.



We set off early in the sunshine to tackle the steep climb out of the hut site up onto the Hikurangi Range. We wanted to get along Sawtooth Ridge but alas by

the time we were out onto the tops the weather had changed on us and soon we were in thick cloud, no view, and mounting winds. Not being familiar with the very craggy and steep terrain, where the track looked like a rabbit track, and a lack of speed and fitness on the O'Halloran's part at our lunch break it was decided to get off the tops, and drop off down Pinnacle Creek to Waterfall hut. A quick cell phone call to home to Trish Eder to let her know of change of plans and she confirmed there were going to be gale force winds and rain that day. Not good for going over Sawtooth. Some nice scree down the P. creek to get into and move down on, and lovely beech forest closer to the hut. We had the Waterfall hut to ourselves. Warren shared with us his very delicious Swedish spiced apple, and blue cheese soups – amazing how intense those flavors are in the outback.

The next morning had us out of the sleeping bag and packed up to head off to Waikamaka Hut when it started to rain steadily and river levels rise....so back into the sleeping bags for a day in the pit...what more could one ask for...dry, and warm, with many cups of tea in a hut far from the madding crowds. We found some old flour and ripe black current jam in the hut so an attempt was made to cook up pikelets w/o much luck - stories were told, songs sung and Jo caught up on FMC news from mags left in the hut.



The next day was sunny and clear allowing us to travel over Rangi Saddle, downstream to Waikamaka Hut and upstream to Waipawa Saddle where we were impressed with the dramatic erosion in the area. Our trip ended with meeting up with Trish at the Sunrise Hut road end to be treated with coffee and chocolates,

which was very much appreciated. Lawrence and Warren had to head back to Heritage Lodge road end to pick up Warren's car.

What better way to spend the New Year but deep into the outback.

*We were Warren Wheeler, Jo and Lawrence O'Halloran.*

## **Puketurua Track**

**December 22**

**Report: Doug Strachan**

Chris suggested we do an impromptu tramp from Mangahao Dam No. 1 up the Puketurua Track and along the range to Ngapuketurua peak. It transpired that it was 27 years since Chris last tramped this route, and it hadn't been maintained for three decades. We ended up bashing through leatherwood to reach peak 945 after 3.5hrs. We lunched there under blue skies and decided that as Ngapuketurua return would add about 3hrs, we would do an about turn now.

It took 3.5hrs to get back to the car, partly because at one point we lost the non-existent track. After admiring the cascade from the dam, we tried to leave. A shelterbelt trimmer had trimmed the sides of the road, and beneath the power lines, so large branches of flowering Kamahi and other natives were strewn over the road. These had to be hauled aside to get the car through. We bush bashed (again) along the dammed road half the way to No.2 Reservoir.

*We were Chris Saunders and Doug Strachan*

## **Central East Ruahines**

**31 Jan-1 Feb**

**Report: Woody Lee**

**Photos: Warren Wheeler**

This was my first overnight trip in NZ and it started at Kashmir Rd in Ongaonga. I was looking forward to this trip as my last one was almost 18 years ago in Korea.

We were greeted by a black robin when we had our first break on the hill before the junction to Daphne hut, and she stayed close to us for a while. There were some native plants I had never seen near the Pohangina Saddle, i.e., mountain daisy, spaniard (a nasty sharp plant and gave me an unforgettable impression!).

Walking down the river was not as fun but the several tiny waterfalls were great views to see. Somewhere near the Top Gorge hut we set up a fly for the night, which was big enough for three. The fly camp provided us with quite a comfortable space until the

strong winds made the fly flap continuously and noisily.



At 9am it was a windy Sunday and we headed to Top Gorge hut, which was cute (two tiny mattresses) with a good toilet and a lucrative signpost of Motel, anyway, we had a longer morning tea there reading the hut book.



On the way back we faced a challenge on the hill near the Longview hut, and it was a gale force terrifying us. I struggled to stand on the track and the speed of the gale could exceed over 100km/h. Later we got inside the hut and it looked modern, tidy and had a stunning view. There was no track from the hut so we bush-bashed down into the Makaretu Stream, the rock hop downriver and Annett's little fall that fortunately was not as bad as it could have been. Then our last break was in the Awatere hut.

The same challenge waited for us at the Moorcock Saddle after walking up a steep track, it was again a south-westerly gale and a couple of times I had to kneel down to the track, what a frustrating moment! My first trip ended at car park at 6 pm. We enjoyed Annett's beautiful pasta and I really appreciated Warren's excellent lead throughout the tramping with using his map.

## Beehive Creek

25 January

Report: Doug Strachan

Photos: Margaret Riordan

"You don't have Buzz Bars??!!" I think I made the girl at the customer service desk at Countdown feel appropriately guilty. I announced that I would just have to go to their rival "Pak 'n' Save." I didn't bother explaining to her that you need Buzz Bars on fun trips to Beehive Creek.

The 7 people in Woody's van stopped at the Beehive Creek car park, while I drove a few Ks further and dropped off Maho and Minami (age 3) at the start of the farmland section, to give them a head start. I then returned to the carpark to join the others for the walk along the road. Conan (10kg, age 1) in my backpack turned this stroll into a bit of a work out. He was delighted to see about a dozen vintage cars go past. The passage of these vehicles was also noted by pukekos and sulphur-crested cockatoos.

Reaching the track that climbs from the road up through the poplars, we were thankful for some shade. In the flowery meadows beyond, we caught up with Minami and Maho. Time for Buzz Bars and silly behaviour (by adults!).

Down in the creek we found a crayfish, sunglasses, people, blackberries, ring fern and other weeds. A yellow-flowering weed was abundant in wet patches. I looked it up; it's 'monkey musk,' going by the botanical name of *Mimulus guttatus* (*Mimulus* is Latin for 'mimic' because the flowers are said to resemble monkeys' faces, while *guttatus* means 'spotted.'



We went to the picnic spot opposite the carpark for a post-walk lunch, and found a new table waiting for us in the shade. Mia handed out chocolate Santas. Warren took a dip in the stream, which he claimed was up to his nipples. He must have been lying face-down in the water. Ben told of the joys of trying to get lost in the Atlas mountains of Morocco. Is it possible to get lost in an atlas? Mia and May made

flower chains for Minami, who turned a nearby platform into a stage to dance on.

At the end of the walk Minami, who had walked for 3hrs, announced "I LOVE tramping, Daddy." The two youngest members of the group fell asleep in the car on the way home, so they missed out on the decent-sized ice creams from the dairy in Ashhurst.



Those who survived the expedition through the Spot-faced Monkey Canyon were:

*Margaret Riordan*

*Ben Duff*

*Woody Lee and daughter May (14)*

*Tricia Eder and Mia (10)*

*Warren Wheeler*

*Strachan Family: Maho, Doug, Minami (3), Conan (1)*

## **Coppermine creek**

**14 January**

**Report and pics: Jennifer Kitchen**

Saturday the 14<sup>th</sup> is Valentine's Day - the day most people stay home and spend with their loved one. Three car loads of us rock up to Coppermine car park, out we all jump smiling and laughing as it's the first day of sun we have had all week. We were a very mixed bunch some had tramping boots some had gumboots some had walking shoes and one even had nothing on his feet. All geared up we walked on up thru the cold river around the slips thru the mud, all having great fun. The closer we got the more excited some of us that have never been up there before got. little did we know the mine shaft was all covered up and all we saw was a info plaque saying that you are standing at the entrance of the main mineshaft so we sat around for a wee bite to eat and good old Warren pulls out a whole watermelon a knife and started cutting it as he asked us if we wanted any. I don't know how he fitted everything into his pack.



We made our way down to magazine we got to the shaft some of us very keen to take our packs off and go inside to have a look at the cave wetas some of us not so keen ones lagging behind. I must admit I didn't go in far because I can't stand big creepy things like that but I managed to stay in long enough to get a photo of them lucky my camera has a good zoom so I didn't have to go too far.



As all the girls got out they got someone to check their backs to see if any wetas had jumped on for a ride out if only one had the boys would have had great fun. The only chicken that didn't go in was Rebecca. As we start to head back down and

the furry member of the team (Marty) decided that it was time for a pit spot. As he only has 3 legs, Kay was interested to see how he went - thinking he would just crotch his stump but no he balanced on his 2 front legs and lifted his only back leg to go. Kay burst out laughing - poor Marty! Dogs have feelings too!

Big thanks to Janet for taking us on this enjoyable tramp.

*Thanks to the team: Marty Croad (dog), Bethany Croad, Anna Croad, Anna Chesterfield, Rebecca Aylward, Kay Kitchen, Jennifer Kitchen, Peter Darragh, Terry Crippen, Janet Maessen and Warren Wheeler*

## The best of the best - The Waiohine Gorge

February 2009

Report and photo: **Tony Gates**

I've tubed most of the Tararua gorges in the past, and can confirm that there is no better Summer time trip than one to the deep green pools of a Tararua river like the Waiohine. Some great pools are accessible near the road end, but the best pools and rapids are in those remote and special places deep in the big gorges. The Otaki river is great, the Ruamahanga, Waingawa, Tauherinikau and Hutt gorges are pretty good, even some short sections in rivers like the Hector, Ohau, Mangahao and Tokomaru can be good. But it's the Waiohine, the longest river in the Tararuas, the largest, most rugged, and arguably the most beautiful, that is the centre of the Tararua Universe. Go prepared, with helmet, wet suit, dry bag, truck tube, and energy. Go to the Waiohine Gorge in the right conditions and you will enjoy the best of the best.

Three friends, from Wellington, Chris, Taylor, and Will, joined me to Powell Hut for the night. It's the standard route, allowing relatively easy transport arrangements, and use of tracks, huts, and bridges if the weather turns foul. Quite a contrast- crowds at Powell, then lonely wilderness at Mid Waiohine Hut. I recall hot sunshine once off the tops, fat trout in the river (they are still there), and a busy time preparing for the gorge. Taylor and Will were tubing first timers, and took to the water with courage and determination. Most sections could be floated, some needed tramping, and a few rapids were floated more than once, with the adrenalin junkies getting photographed for their efforts. Tubing white water is an amazing way to travel. It took us about four hours to reach Muir Creek, where there is a great spot to camp. Too early though, so we pressed on to Hector Forks.

We lost the sun at Muir Creek, descending into an amazing canyon that stretched almost all the way to Hector Forks. Some long still pools took time to float and paddle. Warm water. Presently, the valley opened out and swung out to the east, offering sunshine on the ridges above us. It remained just out of reach. We made a spacious camp on manuka terraces after a twelve hour day. The wet suits dried out well, so made great camp mattresses. A warm nite under the fly

Gorgeous sunshine soon hit our camp Sunday morning. There were several exceptionally cruisy bit to float to Totara Flats, where Chris departed via Totara Creek to collect the car. Taylor, Will, and I tramped through Totara Flats, then continued on down valley to the Waiohine Gorge road end. It was hot. It didn't take long however, and we made it to Sayers Hut for a quick visit. My two friends were

impressed with this old rustic hut, contrasting with the spacious modern new Totara Flats Hut. We alternated between floating and tramping from there. Some more long and easy rapids propelled us along at a good pace in a rather lazy looking mode.



At Makaka Stream, one exciting rapid had us really hanging on in the white water. Same again at Clem Creek, but all the best white water was behind us by then, and there were mostly long still pools of warm water between easy rapids. All too soon, the road end swing bridge came into view, and with it the many day picnickers. Chris met us there and swapped with me, so I could take the car down valley to the next car park, and he could have the chance to cool off in the water with the others. They enjoyed the final hour in the lower gorge while I had the chance to dry out some stuff. Out by 3.30pm - tired but happy.

## Wanderings along the Tararua Range – Ashhurst to Kaitiki

Report and photos: **Peter Wiles**

I was walking along North Range Road past some of the wind turbines north of the Paihatua Track one winter's afternoon in 2007, when it occurred to me: I wonder whether it is possible to walk the length of the Tararua Ranges? I pondered this problem quite intensively between taking in the views. I figured that I had been doing trips in the Tararuas sporadically for more than 25 years and that a large section of the traditional trampers' stamping ground of the central range I had covered. In fact, I could recall at various times completing a contiguous route from north of Herepai to Mt. Hector via Dundas Ridge, Arete, Carkeek Ridge, Nichols, Waitewaewae, Otaki Forks and Mt Hector.

Once at home I got the maps out and starting looking at the many gaps. Was it possible? Would it be difficult? What would it take? Could I be bothered? How long would it take? However there was the consolation, for day walks, at least, I could pick a fine day and go for it!

I had dealt with walking through the Gorge – both sides at various times, right to the Ashhurst Domain. The walk up North Block Road from the Balance Bridge was interesting. Initially I was in dense fog and completely calm conditions, but upon emerging above the fog about 100m below the crest of the range, a breeze arose and on the range it was quite moderate – sending the generators spinning steadily.

The key breakthrough that makes the task possible is the opening up of Burton's Track. This is the vital link from Harding's Park, via Back Track and Scotts Road through to the Mangahao Road and Baber Forks and eventually Ngapuketuru to Ruapai. I walked Burton's Track with my neighbour in autumn 2008.

Walking along Mangahao Road, south of Tokomaru Road to the top dam was a fag but it had the unexpected reward of discovering the start of the lovely Makahika track. A week or two prior to Christmas 2008, I left home shortly after 5am armed with my new PLB and headed to the end of Mangahao Road and tackled the route up to Ngapuketuru. The leatherwood was daunting (and initially covered in frost) but I managed to get to my southern target of Hines shortly before lunch. Here, some 25 years previously I had come up the old Putara track with Trevor Bissell and Peter Darragh intending to head for Dundas Ridge, but we dropped back to Herepai to escape the weather.

South Range Road is now closed but it has not always been so. It is a pity as on a fine winter's day it affords some of the best vistas of Palmy and the central North Island laid out beyond.



Emerging from the fog on North Range Road

The northern section was complete. There was still a one major hurdle – the Southern Crossing – Mt Hector to Kaitoki. I had initially attempted a Southern with Trevor Bissell in the early 1980s. It was winter and snow covered the route from shortly beyond Field's Hut. Table Top, Fields and Hector were all completely whited out. Kime Hut was a freezer box. We abandoned our trip and returned back to Otaki Forks via the Waioatauru. I did not

revisit Field or Kime for another 25y! In another attempt about 15y ago, I went into Alpha hut with Barry Scott via Walls Whare. A northerly gale and cloud saw us return the way we had come.

Just after New Year 2009 I decided to visit Kaitoki and the Marchant Ridge route to Alpha Hut for the first time. I was unsure what this route was like – I seemed to recall Trevor Bissell or someone describing it as a slog. I got to Alpha okay, but wind and cloud deterred further progress, yet again. And yes, it is a slog. Least the gap was now down to Hector to Alpha and the pressure was building to get rid of the remaining section of about 7km.



Superb clear conditions from Atkinson south over Aston, the Hutt Valley, Wellington and Kairoura Ranges beyond.

Waitangi Weekend 2009 seemed a good prospect of filling the gap with three days to work with. I got to Kime Hut on the Friday early in the afternoon. By evening the hut was filled with 24. Next morning it did not clear as I had hoped it might and the wind south of Hector was strong and the visibility nil. So back home again.

I studied the weather maps frequently over the next week. The next weekend looked like a better prospect – but only two days. Should I wait for Easter when there was more time to choose from. I decide what the hell: I must be crazy to go back to Kime only 8 days later.

This time there were far fewer people around and the wind was from the SE and expected to decrease during the day. Kime was initially quite misty when I arrived shortly before 1pm. I had a leisurely lunch and brewed up hot water for a bowl of coffee. Should I go for Alpha? There was no one around. How tired would I get? The mist seemed to be lifting a bit. For by now it was the fifth attempt. I left Kime at 1.30pm and arrived at Alpha Hut at 4.30, which I thought was a respectable time in the circumstances. Again there was no one about, but I was awoken just after 1am when a party doing the crossing at night passed through. I returned to Otaki Forks in the morning in cloudless conditions and the mission was completed!

## Lake Dive

24-25 January

Report: Anne Lawrence

Photos: Martin Lawrence

Four of us headed off to Taranaki National Park on a clear sunny morning with a promising forecast for the weekend. In fact, the weather was almost too good – when we got to the Dawson Falls car park mid-morning, the number of cars suggested that many others had taken advantage of the weather to explore the mountain too. We took a small diversion towards Wilkie's Pools where we saw lots of native fuchsia in flower (remember to read maps even when tracks start at very civilized, well-signposted spots!). This meant that by the time we were above the bush line, clouds were starting to build up. This was a relief as we had got pretty warm on the climb up.

We stopped for lunch at the intersection with the Upper Lake Dive track. This was a good spot with views out towards Ruapehu and Tongariro. Then we started the slog up to Fantham's Peak. Quite a few steps and then a scree slope which was not the best for climbing up. I was surprised by the number of other people along the track – we met a number of sensible folk on their way down after an early start, but we also saw a few other groups (some who were clearly novice trampers) heading on up. Syme Hut provided a welcome rest stop – we spent some time here enjoying the view of Mount Taranaki through the occasional break in the clouds. We were entertained by a young fellow who emerged from the mist, saying he had left his girlfriend behind as he got sick of her moaning. He admitted it was probably a little hard for her to climb with her broken arm... when quizzed about how she had broken the arm, his reply was simple: "she was drunk".



Cathy, Anne and Richard wait for the cloud to clear to snap a view of the mountain.

I had been looking forward to running down but much of the scree did not really lend itself to speedy descent, so we alternated between run, slip, slide and careful picking over the more difficult bits back down to our lunch spot where we took the side track

towards Lake Dive. This track heads around the mountain and was much easier going than the straight up and down we had just done. It was a very pleasant walk and didn't take long till we could see and the strange humps of the Beehives which initially hid Lake Dive from sight.

A bit of a descent to Lake Dive where we settled into the eponymous hut. A spacious hut which would cope well with school groups, and was more than adequate for our group of four. Cathy and I went for a swim in the Lake – it was very shallow with a muddy bottom, but it was pleasantly warm and refreshing. (Note to self: take togs if visiting Lake Dive again). The blokes were not into swimming but did some serious washing so we were all clean by tea time.



View from Lake Dive.

We were in no hurry to head out on Sunday so we spent a lazy morning doing a bit of photography, reading, etc. Lake Dive is a beautiful spot – the hut sits above the lake and affords fantastic views of Taranaki and Fantham's Peak as well as quite a bit of bird life. Around mid-morning we headed off along the Lower Lake Dive track. A very pleasant walk saw us back at the car park in time for lunch.

*We were Richard Lockett, Cathy Corner, Martin and Anne Lawrence.*

## Of interest...

### Tips for trampers From Doug Strachan

Doug is compiling a list of tips for trampers to go in a future newsletter. Doug is keen to collect any tips for reducing weight, making tramping safer or more comfortable and enjoyable. Please e-mail your tips to [doug.strachan@xtra.co.nz](mailto:doug.strachan@xtra.co.nz).

## TNP - A bit of history

The establishment of Tongariro National Park in 1887 and the founding of the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts led to recreational development in the North Island. By 1904, huts had been built at Ketetahi and Waihohonu in the national park. The completion of the main trunk railway in 1908 increased the demand for walking trails. In 1929 the government built the Chateau Tongariro hotel on the slopes of Mt Ruapehu.

The Camphouse – originally military barracks in the New Zealand wars – was moved to Mt Taranaki (Mt Egmont) in 1891, as accommodation for walkers and climbers. The mountain became Egmont National Park (New Zealand's second) in 1893, and tracks were forged around and up it.

In Wellington, locals wanting a weekend in the hills, away from their desks, turned to the Tararua Range. By 1895 there were separate track committees on both sides of the range. A track up Mt Holdsworth was completed, and Mountain House was built. In 1910 over 1,000 people climbed the mountain. Two years later a track was completed from Ōtaki Forks to Mt Alpha, forming the celebrated 'southern crossing' over the southern Tararuas. The Tararua Tramping Club (1919) intensified efforts to build a network of huts and walking tracks. In the 1920s the Five Mile Track was cut into the Orongorongo Range.

To encourage healthy outdoor activity, the Physical Welfare Branch of the Department of Internal Affairs reopened the Harper Pass track in the late 1930s and built new huts, bureaucratically named Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4.

In 1889 the newspapers reported that hikers were flocking to Tokaanu, near Lake Taupō, and that women were easily climbing Tongariro and in ecstasy over 'the marvellous handiwork of Nature'. But when Frances Beetham climbed it three years later she remarked that the group had to go without a cup of tea, as there was no wood to boil a 'William'.



## Hut wardening at TNP



Anja Scholz is enjoying her role as DOC warden at Tongariro National Park. Judging by the number of good photos she has of the area, her role allows plenty of time for exploring! All photos on this page are from Anja.



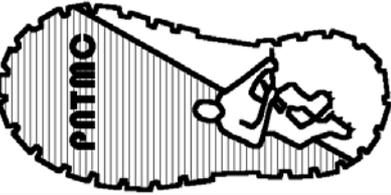
## Tramping Recipes

This recipe has the smallest ingredient list I have come across for Tararua biscuits but it still seems to work out.

### Tararua biscuits

|                             |       |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| Fine ground wholemeal flour | 500 g |
| Butter                      | 250 g |
| Honey                       | 250 g |

Melt butter and honey together and mix in flour to give a pastry consistency. Roll thinly and cut into shapes. Bake slowly for 30 minutes until golden brown. Nuts and raisins can also be added.



Palmerston North  
Tramping and  
Mountaineering Club  
Inc.

[www.pntmc.org.nz](http://www.pntmc.org.nz)

P.O. Box 1217,  
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## PNTMC Newsletter

### March 2009

#### *What's inside this month?*

- *Notice about upcoming AGM*
- *Upcoming trips and club events*
- *Reports on recent trips and events*

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