

# Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.

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

P.O. Box 1217, Palmerston North

## Newsletter September 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.

#### 10 September

**The search for the largest leatherwood leaf in the world - Nine days on the northwest circuit of Rakiura – Stewart Island**  
**Peter van Essen**

Stewart Island is home to the two southern varieties of leatherwood, *Olearia colensoi* var. *argentea* and var. *grandis*. The leatherwood communities on Mt Anglem make a Ruahine trumper feel at home but the north-western coastal leatherwood - mutton bird scrub is quite different. Come and see photos of this expedition to find the largest leatherwood leaf in the world. Scrub, wild coasts, and mud aplenty

#### 17 September

**Committee Meeting at Anne and Martin Lawrence's**

#### 24 September

##### Interclub Photo Competition

This year it is our turn to host this prestigious event featuring the best images from each of the Manawatu Tramping and Skiing Club, Massey University Alpine Club and PNTMC club photo competitions in 2009. The images will be presented by our independent judge Paul Gummer from UCOL. All welcome. Any queries, contact Warren Wheeler 356 1998.

**Note: the October Committee meeting will be held on 15 October**

### Articles for the newsletter

Send by the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month to Anne Lawrence, the newsletter editor, via the club website: <http://www.pntmc.org.nz/mail/>.

### 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) Instructional (I)

#### Trip participants

Contact the leader at least 3 days in advance. Trips leave from Milverton 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

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

#### 5-6 September

**Howletts-Waterfall Hut** **F**  
**Derek Sharp** **323 3028**

Contact Derek for information on this trip.

#### 6 September

**Atiwhakatu Hut** **E/M**  
**Malcolm Parker** **357 5203**

Nothing too strenuous on this trip! Depart at 8.00 am. from Milverton Park. Head over to the Wairarapa for a pleasant stroll up to the new Atiwhakatu Hut so we can check out the improvements/replacement. The old hut had its own character - especially when the weather was lousy. Is the new one a satisfactory replacement?

### 12-13 September

**Top Maropea** M  
**Chris Tuffley** 359 2530

There are several options for this trip in to historic Top Maropea Hut, up beyond Sunrise, including getting to Sunrise via Waipawa Forks on Saturday, and joining Warren's trip over Te Atuaoparapara on Sunday. Let Chris know what you're up for! The hut sleeps four, so spaces are limited; get in quick or bring a bedroll! Leaving Palmy 8am Sat.

### 13 September

**Te Atuaoparapara** F  
**Warren Wheeler** 356-1998

Depart 7.00am. This is a classic trip over one of the highest points in the Ruahine Ranges. We go up the well graded track to Sunrise Hut and Armstrong Saddle, just above the bush line. From here it is good tops travel on a ridge line track, past the Top Maropea turnoff, down slightly into the North Waipawa Saddle and then steady uphill to the summit rocks. After lunch admiring the views we pass a couple of tarns before dropping down a scree slope to the Waipawa Saddle and joining the rock hopping route down the Waipawa River all the way back to the road end. This is a quite a long day but very rewarding, with only patches of snow expected.

### 19-20 September

**Mitre North Buttress Climb** M, T  
**Derek Sharp** 323 3028

Contact Derek for information on this trip.

### 19-20 September

**Totara Flats/Cone Ridge** M/F  
**Murray Gifford** 357 3353

Leave PN 8.00am, Waiohine Gorge Road to start of track, approx. 5 hours, 8km, to Totara Flats hut via river valley, side trip to Sayers Hut. Sunday up early for trip over Cone Ridge to approx bush line, 1100m, drop down to Tauherenikau, Cone Hut and out to road end - a long day covering approx 12km. We may do the tip in reverse depending on weather on the tops.

### 20 September

**Mangao-Makahika** E  
**Woody Lee** 357 2390

Drive up to Mangahao Rd via Hydro Power Station near Shannon and then start a pleasant walk in the western Tararua's. There are two lookouts so we can have lunch either at Horowhenua or Archey's lookout. Depart from PN at 8am.

### 27 September

**Deadmans-Rangi Loop** M  
**Dave Grant** 357 8269

It's been in the paper again lately, and Warren Wheeler has even been writing to the editor about it. If you are not sure what "it" is all about or if you haven't been up to Rangi hut for a while, come and refresh your memory on the state of the Rangi track

slip and chew over what the feasible options to overcome this problem may be. Or just come anyway and enjoy this classic tramp into the western Ruahines. We leave from Milverton Park at 7.30am.

### 26-27 September

**Triangle-Oroua** M  
**Barry Scott** 354 0510

Contact Barry for information on this trip.

### 3-4 October

**Full Moon Ngauruhoe** M  
**Warren Wheeler** 356 1998

Depart 5.00pm Saturday. The plan is to be settled in at Mangatepopo Hut by 9.00pm, about 20minutes walk from the roadend, ready for an Alpine Start at 3.00am. Alternatively we could stay at a backpackers in National Park. We will take the normal route up the north side of Ngauruhoe to reach the summit at sunrise for a Grandstand View in commemoration of the 1996 Ruapehu Eruption. Return route depends on conditions. Crampons and ice axe required.

### 4 October

**Coppermine Creek, Wharite** E  
**John Feeney** 354 2940

Come and enjoy this interesting tramp close to Palmerston North. Starting at the back of Woodville, we take the track from Coppermine Creek and head up to the Wharite TV Transmitter. A good walk up a decent hill with some well earned views around the Manawatu on a clear day.

## Advance notice about longer trips:

### Labour weekend trip

#### 23-26 October

**Mt Patriach, Kahurangi NP** M/F  
**Martin Lawrence** 357 1695

The plan is to leave PN first thing in the morning on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> October, and return late on Monday 26<sup>th</sup>. We will complete a loop that begins at the start of the Wangapeka track and takes in Kiwi Hut, John Reid Hut and Mt Patriach. We need to have numbers shortly because of flight bookings. If you are interested in coming, please get in touch with Martin.

### Extended trip pre-Christmas

#### 5-13 December

**Clarence River /Tapuaenuku** All  
**Alasdair Noble** 356 1094

The trip will be a week long float down the river Clarence through the Molesworth property and other high country stations. The river is up to grade 3 and flows through some interesting country. Weather and conditions permitting, it is possible to climb Tapuaenuku on the way past. If the trip is to go ahead we will need to organise river craft and transport so please let Alasdair know soon if you are interested.

## New members

Welcome to two new club members:

Marco Wensel ph 353 6390 and

Peter Chamberlain ph 356 5539.

Apologies from the editor – the last newsletter welcomed Logan and Cathy as new members but omitted their phone numbers. Here they are:

Logan Westwood ph 323 9299

Cathy Corner ph 356 8186

## Promoting the club

The committee has discussed ideas about promoting tramping and the club. Dave Grant was appointed to oversee publicity. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please pass them on to Dave ph 357 8269.

## Results of the PNTMC Photo Competition

There was the usual good turnout to our club photo competition with people keen to see the range of entries, hear the judge's opinion and vote on the winners. Thanks to Udo von Mulert for the time and effort he put into judging our photo competition once again. Listed below are the top three images in each category:

### Alpine NZ

- |   |             |   |
|---|-------------|---|
| 1 | Mike Archer | Alpine-3                                      |
| 2 | Anja Scholz | Ketetahi sunset                               |
| 3 | Anja Scholz | Ngauruhoe and Tongariro from behind Blue Lake |

### Natural History

- |   |               |                                 |
|---|---------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | Terry Crippen | Red n Green                     |
| 2 | Anja Scholz   | Easter orchid on Codfish Island |
| 3 | Chris Tuffley | Natural history-3               |

### Overseas Alpine

- |   |                     |                        |
|---|---------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | Heather Noble-Young | Scottish Light         |
| 2 | Tony Gates          | Misty Patagonia Forest |
| 3 | Tony Gates          | Fungus                 |

### Overseas People

- |   |               |   |
|---|---------------|---|
| 1 | Tony Gates    | Argentina Chef                            |
| 2 | Tony Gates    | Foto of Otto Meiling, famous mountain man |
| 3 | Terry Crippen | Overseas people                           |

### Scenic NZ

- |   |                 |                   |
|---|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Martin Lawrence | Lake Dive Morning |
| 2 | Kathy Corner    | Sunset at Rangī   |
| 3 | Martin Lawrence | Richmond Range    |

### Topical NZ

- |   |                     |                      |
|---|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | Heather Noble-Young | High Country Workers |
| 2 | Terry Crippen       | The belayer          |
| 3 | Chris Tuffley       | Topicalnz-1          |

## Interclub quiz

The Interclub Quiz will be held on Tuesday 6 October 2009 at 7:30pm. MTSC will host the quiz, so that we do not have to host both the quiz and photo competition in the same year. The venue is RSA, 200 Broadway Ave, Palmerston North. All welcome.

## Trip Reports

### East Ridge Ringatoto Peak

7/9 August 2009

Report: Annett Pätzold

Photos: Terry Crippen

Leaving Friday afternoon for Ruapehu, Tukino access road, we arrived half past seven at the car park for the Round the Mountain Track from where we enjoyed a two hour moon-lit walk towards Rangipo Hut, no head lamps required.



Approaching the East Ridge of Ringatoto.

On Saturday morning we commenced climbing up the East Ridge which starts right behind the hut, initially a walk that later turned into some nice even technical scrambling requiring two tools. On top of Mitre Peak (Ringatoto) we had a belated lunch about half past one, then decided to continue to Tahurangi where we later enjoyed an amazing view onto the Crater plateau and Crater lake which looked dark with steam rising from the surface. At approx. 3pm we set off for Rangipo hut, via the Wahianoa valley. It was a long way down, with plenty of tiring sidling, and we all could feel now that it was late in the day already.

There was some interesting route finding included, but again a stunning view onto cliffs, bluffs and ice. We eventually arrived at the hut at 6:30pm. We all agreed that an almost 12 hour climb with blue sky, beautiful views and sore legs is enough for the weekend and that we will have a quiet Sunday without the planned attempt of Girdlestone North Face.



Sidling past a gendarme.

Come Sunday, we walked out to the car park and spent some time practising the use of avalanche transceivers and some rope work. Plus extracting the keys to the Big Red from within the vehicle with the help of ice axe and wire! What a relief – we didn't need to call the AA! In the early afternoon we headed back to Palmerston North with the mountains still basking in sunlight under a clear sky.

*We were Terry Crippen, Grant Christian, and Annett Pätzold.*

## Field Hut

9 August

Report: Duncan Hedderley

On a bright and frosty morning, five of us crammed into my little red car and headed for Otaki Forks. The early start meant we were the first car in the day-visitors car park.

We made good time, reaching the hut in about 2 or so hours. DoC had been doing a lot of improvements at the start of the track - with its packed gravel and carefully cut drain alongside, the first 20 minutes was

almost like walking along the road. Further up along the ridge were occasional wind-toppled trees - possibly signs of last year's big storm.

We had lunch at the hut then went in search of views. Unfortunately the haze meant we couldn't see South Island; fortunately Richard realised this from a viewpoint only about a third of the way to Tabletop. He and Kathy spent some time with map and compass identifying the peaks we could see to the north. Compared to the Ruahines, there wasn't much snow, even on the highest points.

Picking up our packs from the hut, a glider shh-ed over us. It had turned into a good spring day, and my decision to wear shorts was vindicated. Because of poor navigation, we didn't stop in Otaki for an ice cream.

*We were Richard Lockett, Kathy & Brendan Corner, Margaret McKenzie and Duncan Hedderley*

## Ketetahi Explorer

25-26 July

A Personal View by Chris Saunders

Photos: Martin Lawrence

I chose to go on this trip because it was visiting one of my favourite places – the north crater of Tongariro. I kept my eyes on the weather forecast, and when the weekend was declared fine, I phoned Warren.

Various items were almost left behind at Ketetahi Hut on different occasions during the weekend, but keen-eyed members of the group made sure they weren't – a drink bottle and a camera, for example. However, my part in this forgetfulness was not to check the time on my alarm clock when I set it for 5.40 a.m. on Saturday morning. But thinking that the clock might play up, I asked my wife to set her clock also as a back-up. It was her clock that woke me. I discovered that my clock was set two hours behind NZ time. My wife had taken it to Australia just a week before. The beginning of the trip could have been a disaster and my reputation in tatters.

We left PN before 7.00 a.m. and met up in Taihape. From there to the road end we travelled in convoy. There were perfect views of the snow-covered mountains for those who didn't have to sit behind the wheel. The cars were left for safe-keeping at the Tongariro Motor camp. We started on the track at 10.30 a.m. It is nearly 20 years since I last went to Ketetahi Hut and what a change in the track! The huge steps that climbed up through the bush have been replaced by ones of a much more user-friendly height, and the track itself follows what seems to be

an almost new route. The snow line was higher than I expected – just a few patches around the hut, though plenty more up higher, of course.

But what an outlook! The beautiful light on Rotoaira and Taupo constantly changed as the sun traced its path across the sky. After an alfresco lunch on the hut porch, we departed to investigate the Te Mari Craters. I think we all really knew where they were, but they chose to elude us, and instead we climbed up towards the top of the ridge that leads from Te Mari to Blue Lake. I found the wind very cold and was pleased to be wearing the alpine parka that Richard had caused me to buy by telling me about the Macpac clearance sale last year. I have no regrets about spending the money, Richard, so don't feel guilty anymore. Warren kept me company at the back of the group because he had a cold coming on – he assured us it wasn't swine flu.



As the trip was graded medium, we were happy to give up this interesting piece of mis-navigation when someone suggested that it was time for a hot cup of tea back at the hut. The gas heater in the hut was duly lit and provided a very acceptable level of warmth, especially noticeable when we had to “check the frost outside” later in the evening. From the verandah of the hut many photos were taken of the superb sunset.

Sunday's weather was even more glorious, without any wind, and with a clearer sky. Warren decided to stay at the hut to nurse his cold, so Richard took on the leadership role. We left the zigzag track and headed straight up the ridge above the hut towards North Crater. Once we reached solid snow, it was on with the crampons and excellent progress was made. The views from North Crater and all other high points were excellent – the ranges and mountains well-covered with snow. To the east, were the Kaimanawas and their highest peak Makorako, and beyond, the Kawekas. To the south-east were the Ruahines, with Ngaruhoe and Ruapehu close by. Taranaki to the west stood out very white against the sky.



Our route was along the western rim of North Crater, allowing for a close look at the interesting explosion crater that blemished its flat top. We headed over to the summit for lunch, giving up our position when some 12 Alpine Club members from Auckland arrived. Then we made our way down to Central Crater and across to Blue Lake. No-one was keen to descend to the lake side to check the depth of the ice, and so we made our way along the track back to the hut.

Our return to PN was uneventful. Tea at the Taihape takeaway was a very cold affair with no heating at the eating tables.

This was my first overnight for some years, and very enjoyable it was. Thanks to all their members of the party for their congenial company and interesting conversation, and in particular, for Janet for ensuring that I didn't feel that I was the oldest member of the group.

*We were Warren Wheeler, Richard Lockett, Annett Patzold, Janet Wilson, Anne and Martin Lawrence and Chris Saunders.*

## **Punga Hut**

**18 August**

**Report: John Feeney**

**Photo: Tony Gates**

We left on a murky Sunday morning at the sedate hour of 9am, heading for this mysterious “Punga Hut”. Our leader Tony gates being the only one in our group of 6 who had been there before.

Travelling to the start of the track was via Scots Road at Tokomaru. A winding narrow road leading to a logged forestry area and a locked gate, which luckily Tony had a key to. With light drizzle falling we started walking at 10am and followed an undulating muddy four wheel drive track through forestry with regenerating native bush, taking its hold back on the land. Sorry, low cloud, no views of the surrounding country side today.

Gaining altitude, we soon reached a wire fence which Tony assured us once crossed would lead to the track that would lead to Punga Hut. This section of the "track" followed a ridge and was well over grown with a mixture of natives including-tall tussocks, leatherwood and pepperwood trees. As we slid our way through the high wet under growth, the inadequacies of the clothing myself and the 2 new members were wearing became apparent, we soon got pretty soaked. With reassuring comments from Tony we followed our way along the ridge to eventually reach a large boulder, hidden by vegetation that only Tony could find which he identified was the start of this secret hunters track to Punga Hut!

A bit more pushing through tight under growth and the track became better defined, moving through more luscious native bush with some large trees also being seen. On and down we went, crossing a small stream, then, without warning we were there - Punga Hut! The very original hunters hut made from punga logs over 50 years ago by men with a passion for hunting and the bush. The hut is a tribute to their skills and a good reminder of the basic living conditions many in early NZ would have enjoyed. The punga logs are tightly fastened together to form the walls and there is a corrugated iron roof. Inside the hut there are 4 bunks made from old bags fastened between logs and ample supplies of food indicating the hut is still being regularly used. Over lunch we are entertained with Tony telling the story of the hut and Warren doing his "Sam Hunt" impression reading some poetry found in a hut book. In the hut there was a sense of a history, and a simpler life kept for those lucky to find special place.



After a group photo we retrace our path onto the main ridge and then back through the overgrown track to the wire fence. The going is easier than expected and despite track markers being scarce in places we manage to find our way back to the cars. It's very reassuring having Tony with us, with his knowledge of the local area, he manages not to get us lost.

Back at the cars we are all wet, especially myself and the 2 new people in our group... starting to get cold. A good lesson learned about bringing all the right clothing even on an easy tramp!

*Trip members were; Warren Wheeler, Woody Lee, John Feeney, Margaret McKenzie, Mike Wild and Tony Gates.*

## **Snowcraft 1**

**1-2 August**

**Report: Stephen Keen**

**Photos: Peter Chamberlain**

After hearing the weather warning of severe winds the decision was made to not drive up to Ruapehu Friday afternoon. Unfortunately there was no time to let everyone know the change of plan so most of us eagerly turned up at Alasdair's house at 5:30am to receive the grim news. The new plan now involved meeting at 5am Sunday morning.

Arriving at Whakapapa, Sunday morning turned out to be a good idea. The weather seemed pretty calm so we promptly left the car park to find some snow before the weather got nasty. Luckily the snow had a bit of hard crust so we had the opportunity of learning the basics of walking in crampons. We all enthusiastically walked up, down and across lots of varied terrain, quickly gaining confidence. On the steeper slopes it became clear how useful an ice axe can be for balance! And it became clear that knowing how to stop yourself if you slip could be useful! Although I had carried an ice axe before and knew the rough theory of what to do it, I had never actually practised self arrests.

It was a lot more fun practising than I realised! Arresting your fall sliding down on your ass feet first was the first scenario and was quickly mastered by everyone. I'm glad we were advised by Bruce and Alistair to remove our crampons though as it would have been hard not to keep catching them and somersaulting down! We moved to sliding down on our fronts, and then head first. I felt a little nervous about letting myself slide head first on my back and had some difficulty stopping myself, but with help from the others finally cracked it. After a while it seemed like everyone got hooked on trying to reach greater speeds before arresting. The finale was Marco, John, Peter and I doing some synchronized arrests after jumping in unison at the top of the slope.



The weather was getting a bit miserable mid-afternoon, and our pants were full of snow, so we decided to call it a day. We learnt a lot in one day so feeling satisfied we made our way back to Palmy looking forward to Snowcraft 2.



Over the course of the day we learnt how to setup a number of snow anchors and how to belay each other to progress up the slopes. The snow was really wet though so was not the most suitable conditions for some of the anchors but we still learnt a lot. Evening time we discussed lots about what we had learnt and even found time to practise prussiking up to the hut ceiling late in the evening. Sunday was even wetter. Wasn't much risk of slipping far down the slopes but we were here to practise so we had to pretend a bit. We roped up as if on a glacier and had a walk about to get the idea of how to negotiate crevasses. We learnt even more snow anchors and continued becoming proficient setting up belays. At the end of the day we had fun hiding avalanche transceivers and then getting our partners to find them.



*Students were Michael Allerby, Kathy Corner, Meline Kiessner, Anja Scholz, Peter Chamberlin, Stephen Keen, Marco Wenzel, and John Anson.*

## **Snowcraft 2**

**15-16 August**

**Report: Stephen Keen**

**Photos: Peter Chamberlain**

The forecast looked a bit wet for Snowcraft 2 but we drove up as planned on the Friday evening. After walking to the hut from the car park it was clear that the snow was very wet and heavy. Unfortunately, no need for crampons this weekend. Saturday morning a few of the group made breakfast for everyone in the hut. Pete and Logan took breakfast duty seriously and woke up everyone in the hut early morning with a cup of tea and a ginger nut, a good start to the day! Pete even woke the other group, skiers trying to have a lay in, so they may not have been as pleased!



Both weekends were a lot of fun and I felt like we learnt a lot of information and despite wet snow achieved a lot. The instructors Bruce, Alasdair and Terry were fantastic! Really looking forward to Snowcraft 3 on Mt. Egmont/Taranaki.

*Students were Anja Scholz, Peter Chamberlin, Stephen Keen, Marco Wenzel, John Anson and Logan Westwood.*

## Trains Hut

13-14 June 2009

Report and photos: Chris Tuffley

Finding the right road for the Waitotara Valley proved a little challenging --- it turned out you had to turn towards the coast, in order to head inland! --- but we managed it eventually, and a winding 50km later we reached Taumatatahi and the start of the track. In short order we were heading upriver towards Trains Hut, admiring the Waitotara beside us: a slow-moving brown snake sliding through the green.

The first 6k of the track was an ugly muddy bulldozed road, slippery and slow-going and with a decidedly unstable air. How long would it be before the hillside above, its support gone, bumped down a notch towards the river? We were all glad to reach the site of the old homestead at Kapara (now demolished), the end of the road and the start of a "real" track. At once the walking became both easier and more pleasant: this was what we were here for!



An old stock route, the track was very easy walking, with none of the up and down typical of so many other riverside tracks. Its smooth level progress was broken only by the many deep gorges cut into the papa by side streams. Some of these were bridged; at others, the track swung up the gorge until it could cross the stream immediately above a cascade; and at one we discovered a tunnel that was clearly the work of a human hand. This, we later learned, had been dug to divert the stream so the stock could pass, one of many tunnels dug by "Old Tombs". The only drawback to the track was that views of the river were now rarer, and as our stomachs began to grumble we pressed on, hoping for a view. In the end the search for the perfect lunch spot was ended by the dictates of hunger, as it is so often, and we settled down to eat beneath some trees.

At last, a major fork in the river and then the roar of the Terereohaupa Falls told us we were nearing the hut. I was keen to photograph the falls, and had brought a tripod with me for just that purpose; conscious we had little daylight left I dropped my pack at the bridge above the falls, Kelly joining me in

scrambling through the bush to a vantage point promised by the guidebook while Barbra and Tim carried on to the hut. A narrow ledge did indeed give a good view of the falls, but only the next day did we discover we'd passed a much more accessible viewpoint on our side of the river!



The hut was cosy, and we passed the evening in several games of "Unexploded Cow", and the morning variously in sketching, painting, reading, and finding further waterfalls to photograph. Apologies for disappearing without saying where I was going, Tim, Barbra and Kelly...not a good look for the trip leader! We then set off back the way we'd come, stopping now and then to put our jackets on or take them off as a light rain came and went. The bulldozed road hadn't improved in our absence, but it brought us at last to the car; and as we arrived we were lucky enough to meet a local farmer, out for a walk with her dogs. She happily answered our many questions about the area, then left us to wind the rest of our way back downriver to SH3 and then home.

*We were Barbra Cowan, Tim Kannegieter, Kelly Buckle and Chris Tuffley.*

## Te Matawai Hut via Gable End, Pukematawai, Western Tararuas

22- 23 August 2009

Report and photos: Murray Gifford

### Day One

The weather for the weekend was great, fine settled weather. By 8.30am we were at Poads Road end and ready to go. A quick 15 minutes over farmland to the edge of the forest park and the track up the spur to Waiopahu Hut. We took the Ohau River side track, a benched track above the river,  $\frac{3}{4}$  hr and we were the Blackwater stream swing bridge and just after the old Ohau shelter site at 180m, sun up, time for a quick break and shed our warm tops. From here it was up the Gable End ridge, steep at first, mellowing with height. 1 hr to 600m, not a view to be had in the bush, on up to Mayo Knob 670m, up, up to Gable End at 903m and our first real views out to the west, Waiopahu hut just above the bush line and east to the tops, Pukemoremore, Logan, Dundas and Pukematawai. Richards Knob could be seen up ahead far along the ridge. 2 km of ridge top travel, up/down boggy, scrubby vegetation, finally a well-earned lunch stop at Richards Knob 985m, 4 hours had passed.



Graham on Gable End, Pukematawai in the distance

From here we could look down at Butchers Saddle 250m below, and the long ridge up to Te Matawai Hut and Pukematawai. Back down into the forest and a long descent with a couple of false low points, finally a steep up to join Yeates track up from South Ohau Hut. Another descent before the final 150m climb to the hut.

At the Hut by 2.30pm, time for a hot drink and refresh, enough daylight left for a climb to Pukematawai. The top was 538m above the hut, up a long ridge thru scrub for some way. The track was clear and fast, we just had to keep going up. Slowly the views broadened to the south, the Tararua Range, Dracophyllum Biv ridge fading into the distance to Crawford. Dundas to the north and views out over the Ohau and Mangahao valleys.



Murray at South Ohau

Up, up, up, many false knobs, and finally the clear track to the top. A few markers for the Tararua ridge track and 50m to the north was the top, 1.5 hours from the hut, 5.00pm. A cold wind blew, time for photos in the evening light, Arete just behind with small patches of snow, 1 hour to get back to the hut before dark. Soon down out of the wind and into the warmth of the sun setting. A quick meal for two and a well earned rest. Into the sack by 8.00pm.

### Day Two

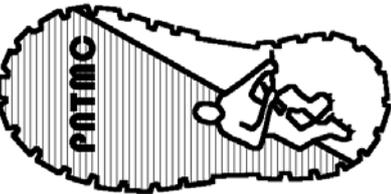
Up by 6.30am and on our way by 7.20am. A quick 1.25 hrs down the Yeates track to South Ohau Hut. The final section of track steep and would need some puff to climb. A new modern hut, one hunter in residence, time for a quick snack and break. Soon we were in the river and on our way, a good 1hr to the North Ohau branch, mostly thru gorgy river, but not too wetting, the river low and not above the boots much.



Dundas at dusk

An early lunch stop in the sun, and back into a bigger river and deeper crossings.  $\frac{3}{4}$  hour to meet the sidle track and the signpost to Gable end. We were here just over 24 hours ago, ready to begin the journey. A final hour out to the road end, just over 4hours out. All in all, a good stretch and new territory covered.

*We were Graham Peters and Murray Gifford.*



Palmerston North  
Tramping and  
Mountaineering Club  
Inc.

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

P.O. Box 1217,  
Palmerston North

## PNTMC Newsletter

### September 2009

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

- *Upcoming trips and club events*
- *Reports on recent trips and events*
- *Results of the recent club photo competition*

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