

Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.

www.pntmc.org.nz

P.O. Box 1217, Palmerston North

Newsletter August 2010

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 August PNTMC Photo Competition

Your opportunity to see some of the best pics taken by club members over the last 12 months or so. Finalists will be selected by our judge Udo von Mulert and audience vote will determine the winners in each category.

Refer to Notices for details.

19 August Committee Meeting

26 August Outback Antarctica

Murray Potter heads the Zoology Major at Massey University. He has spent six seasons studying wildlife in Antarctica and the sub-Antarctic, and is an award-winning photographer. In this illustrated talk he will provide an insight into the biological and landscape richness of this extraordinary part of the world, and describe what it is like to live and work there.

Articles for the newsletter

Send by the 20th of each month to Tony Gates, the newsletter editor, at kiwi@leatherwood.co.nz, or via <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 expect 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.

Gear for trips

Minimum gear for day trips is appropriate footwear, pack, lunch and snacks, waterproof jacket, overtrousers, gloves, warm hat, torch, toilet paper, matches or a lighter, sunblock, first aid kit, and a survival bag or space blanket. Each person needs to be equipped to survive overnight.

Trip leaders

Complete the trip intentions form and leave with one of Overdue Trip Contacts or drop into 44 Dahlia St. If you are unable to run your trip as scheduled, advise a trip coordinator as soon as possible so that alternatives can be arranged.

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

1 Aug

Yum Char Lunch

Michael Allerby

All

323 8563

Urban walks around Palmerston North, featuring sections of Te Araroa Walkway, the Manawatu River and a stylish after tramp restaurant lunch.

7 Aug

Ngamoko Hut **M**
Michael Allerby **323 8563**

Depart 8.00am. The hut is nestled beside the Pohangina River in a nice area of beech forest. Leaving from the Limestone carpark, we will climb up the Shorts track onto the Ngamoko range, turn south along the easy Ngamoko tops, following them until reaching the track descending down to Ngamoko Hut. Back this way the next day. There should be good views from the tops if clear skies are struck.

8 Aug

Mt Bruce area **E**
Anja Scholz **356 6454**

Depart 8.30am. As the track through the Mt Bruce Reserve is not accessible anymore, we will do the easy Mikimiki Track instead. Amble along the old tramway track with a bit of a grunt at the end, and retrace our steps after lunch. Coffee at Pukaha maybe to watch the Takahe. If the weather is dismal, or if interest is expressed, the trip could also be a day at Pukaha/Mt Bruce itself where there is much to see and hear - entry is \$15 (or \$12 for groups of 10 or more), and there is a walk to the lookout from within the centre.

11 August (Wed) Snowcraft 2 evening

For participants only.

14- 15 Aug

Snowcraft 2 **I**

Applications are now closed.

15 Aug

Mt Holdsworth **M**
Anja Scholz **356 6454**

Depart 7.00am. Have your crampons and ice-axe on stand-by for a trip into the Eastern Tararua snow. Up the newish track to Mountain House and on to Powell Hut for 11ses, and hopefully good snow and other conditions for the wander up to Mt Holdsworth. Retrace your steps, and maybe a hot cuppa on the way back.

21- 22 Aug

Kime- Mt Hector **M, T**
Warren Wheeler **356 1998**

Depart 8.00am. This trip takes us up the highest point of the Southern Crossing of the Tararua Ranges. From Otaki Forks it is a steady 2 hour uphill climb to historic Feild Hut, then about another 3 hours in snow up to Kime Hut. After a candlelight dinner we will go for a full moon stroll to Mt Hector (1529m). BYO Mills and Boon for romantic bedtime stories. Ice axe and crampons almost certainly required.

22 Aug

Manawatu Gorge Track **E**
Kathy Corner **356 8186**

Depart 10.00am. An ever popular local (approx) 4 hour track through good forest. Lunch en route, afternoon coffee at the café at the end.

25th August (Wed) Snowcraft 3 evening

For participants only.

28- 29 Aug

Snowcraft 3 **I**

Applications are now closed.

29 Aug

Kapakapanui **M**
Anne Lawrence **357 1965**

Depart 7.30am. Located at the bushline in the western Tararuas behind Waikanae, Kapakapanui is a bit of a climb, but we may be rewarded with a touch of snow and some stunning views. There are also a couple of good choices for refreshment stops on the way home.

4- 5 Sept

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

Located in real Ruahine heartland, Waterfall Hut is a gem that is not always easy to reach. But when you do, it's worth spending time in this cosy forest hideaway, and exploring the upper Kawhatau River. Several alpine tops are within easy reach from this hut, so Derek will guarantee an interesting route both to and from Waterfall Hut, hopefully to meet up with the group below on Sunday. Full alpine and warm equipment essential. Depart PN Friday night or very early Saturday morning.

5 Sept

Sunrise Hut **E**
Peter Wiles **358 6894**

Depart 8.00am for this popular eastern Ruahine bushline hut. It's a good track all the way to the hut. We will have lunch on Armstrong Saddle if the weather and snow conditions allow.

Notices

Leaders and Prospective Leaders Evening

Tuesday 10th August, 7pm, at Terry's place, 11 Pahiatua St. PNTMC will hold an evening for leaders and prospective leaders of Club trips to discuss how the club currently expects club trips to be run, and leader's responsibilities. It is also a chance to discuss how people think trips can be better run for the safety and enjoyment of all involved. All interested club members are

welcome to come along, even if you only intend to be a trip participant and not a leader, as your views are just as relevant.

PNTMC Photo Competition 12 August 2010

Rules:

- Only digital images will be accepted.
- Entries must not have been entered previously - in the PNTMC Photo Competitions.
- Images must be related to tramping, trekking or climbing.
- The limit is 3 images per category, and each image must be clearly labelled with name and entry category.

Categories:

Alpine NZ: alpine scenery in NZ
Scenic NZ: Scenery below the bushline
Natural History: NZ flora or fauna;
Topical NZ: people shots on your trips
Overseas Alpine: overseas alpine scenery
Overseas People: climbers or people met while tramping or climbing overseas.

Deadline:

Entries are due on club night **Thursday 29 July**. (This is so they can be given to the judge to study.) The images can either be e-mailed to Martin Lawrence at

martin.lawrence.nz@gmail.com

Alternatively, a CD of the images can be given to Martin, again at least two weeks in advance.

Notes:

Entries submitted after the 29 July will not be accepted. It is anticipated that the winning images will be entered in the Interclub Photo Competition. In addition, some of these images may be used to promote the competition and the club. Please indicate if you do not want your images used in these activities. The images remain the property of the photographers.

Also, the Interclub Photo Competition and Interclub Quiz will be held sometime during September or October. Details of these fun events will be advertised soon.

FMC Competition Photos for Sale

Federated Mountain Clubs has a CD of images for sale, \$10.00 per copy. These are entries of the 2010 FMC photo competition, with the winning images published in the latest FMC Bulletin. Contact Dave Grant for further information.

DOC Hut Fee Increase

The Department of Conservation has completed its annual review of hut fees for backcountry walks and Great Walks such as the Heaphy, Routeburn, Kepler and Milford tracks. Some increases were required to offset the rising cost of servicing huts and facilities, including transport costs. The cost of Great Walk huts will rise \$5 a night, but will continue to be free for under 18s.

The annual hut pass for backcountry huts will increase to \$120 (discounted price for FMC members is \$84) and the six-month pass has increased to \$90. Fees have been held since March 2008, but increases are needed due to rising costs. Fees still only cover a proportion of the costs of maintaining DOC's hut network. They still represent only a modest portion of a trumper's costs and they have been set at a range that should have little impact on affordability. Fee increases took effect from 2 July 2010.

Editorial: Ruahine Wreckord

The sometimes dramatic Search and Rescue events in our local mountain ranges do not always have fatal consequences, as we have seen recently in the Pohangina Valley. Aviation accidents in the mountains have instigated some very extensive searches in the past.

Thanks to modern technology, the Piper Tomahawk that crashed in the Ruahine Ranges near Takapari Road on 12 July 2010 was promptly located, and the crew rescued. And luckily well placed vegetation cushioned the impact and held the aircraft from falling into a deep ravine. The Square Trust rescue helicopter winched out the injured pilot and crew a few hours after the accident. Helipro recovered the wreck a few days later for salvage.

Your Newsletter Editor has studied and written about aircraft accidents in the mountains, and is particularly interested in non fatal events. There have been many aircraft crashes in the Tararuas, whereas the Ruahines have thankfully seen relatively few. Here are some interesting facts about some other Ruahine aircraft crashes.

ZK ABM Tiger Moth crashed on 24 July 1935 near the present day Sunrise Hut. Despite an extensive search, pilot Hamish Armstrong's body was never found, and he became part of Ruahine legend. Armstrong Saddle is named after him, and Triplex Hut named after a shirt believed to be his.



Hamish Armstrong's Tiger Moth crash, Armstrong Saddle, July 1935. Te Atuaoparapara behind. Photo by Ian Powell, courtesy of Heretaunga Tramping Club.

Air Force NZ 2127 Oxford Airspeed crashed on 30 November 1948 near Howletts Hut with three fatalities. There was another extensive search and body operation, with considerable publicity.

ZK DJB Cessna 205 crashed near the Lester Masters Memorial Cairn (near No Mans hut) on 16 February 1980, on a flight from New Plymouth to Napier. The aircraft just skimmed the top of the range, and apparently very nearly made it across unscathed. The pilot and two passengers were killed. Wreckage is still visible.

One RNZAF Skyhawk on training manoeuvres crashed into the tussock near Ruahine Corner. I believe that this was during the 1980's. The wreck was removed, and a friend told me of seeing a large dent in the ground at the site.

Not far from the July 2010 Piper crash site is the final landing place of Piper Cherokee Echo Charlie Romeo, on 22 July 1988. The flight from Dannevirke to Palmerston North was caught in a blind gully with limited power. The aircraft was wrecked and the pilot and passengers were seriously injured. The tail light was flashing, so the aircraft was visible both from Dannevirke airfield and the soon to arrive Helipro helicopter. With his 400 000 candle power spotlight, pilot Rick Lucas illuminated the scene and delivered a Doctor, Policeman, and two bushmen to the scene down a somewhat precarious chain *mounted from the centre of the aircraft!* They secured two patients, and by midnight, were winched into the Rescue Helicopter (flown up from Wellington). However, the least injured of the passengers had departed the scene because he could see the lights of Dannevirke from the crash site. The SAR bushmen set off urgently, following his footprints by torchlight, to find him lying injured in the stream some distance away—after midnight in the depths of winter, in a grotty Ruahine side creek! Rick Lucas returned in deteriorating weather about 2.00 AM to effect the second medivac of the night.

Trip Reports

Mitre Flats Hut, 5 April by Nicola Wallace

On Easter Monday 5 of us headed down to Masterton, then along Upper Plain Road to "The Pines", the start of the Barra Track. This is named after Bert Barra, a former local hunter who spent his final days living in a hut beside the nearby Waingawa River.

The morning was overcast, and by the time we had walked the lengthy farm track and entered the bush, a light drizzle was falling. The track to Mitre Flats Hut is of a good standard, but quite tree rooty, so not a track to hurry on. After about an hour, we arrived at a small clearing, a good place for a morning tea stop. The Waingawa River was visible from here, far below. Soon after leaving this spot, we entered the "wasp zone", as indicated by DOC signs warning of wasps.

Somewhere just on the other side of this zone the last trumper in our line of 5 got stung several times. (Exactly the same thing happened on the way out too, with both Malcolm and Christine getting stung through being the last in line – how unlucky!) After a short, sharp climb, we came across 2 hunters who said that the hut was only 20 minutes away. Yeah right! Track markers became a bit scarcer as we neared the hut, then a substantial DOC sign, followed by a steepish descent, then over the beautiful new bridge over the Waingawa River, past the turnoff to Mitre Peak, and we arrived at the hut.

Mitre Flats Hut is a good looking and well appointed hut. It has a large veranda around two sides, three gas cookers, and sleeping room for 16. It also has a long poem, which I didn't have time to read, gracing one of its walls. *[refer below]* There's also a large and lovely clearing outside, which would be good for camping. Lunch was eaten on the veranda, as it was raining lightly. The sandflies were abominable, and I put on my rain leggings to prevent getting bitten.

After lunch, we returned the way we had come, the only noteworthy occurrence being the wasps working their magic once again on the last in line. By the time we were walking back along the farm track, under watchful bovine eyes, our feet were hurting. It had been a wonderful trip, and I am looking forward to staying overnight at Mitre Flats Hut one day soon.

After we got back to the car, a stop was made at the Solway Store in Masterton, where several of

the crew bought themselves enormous ice creams. Many thanks to Malcolm for his congenial leadership, and the rest of the group for a very enjoyable day.

We were: Malcolm Parker (leader), Daisy Bai, Christine Cheyne, Duncan Hedderley, and Nicola Wallace. As I'm writing this in late June, I apologise if anyone has been missed out!

The Mitre
By Ted Esler, 1953
From the plaque at Mitre Flats Hut

*It is Easter Thursday morning, of the year 1945
Men gather around Mitre Hut
Like bees around a hive
Some have gear all shiney new
Some have billies grimey
Some have no gear at all
Only a rifle shiney.*

*They spin the yarns of yesteryear
Of many a blood stained fray
They tell the story of the mighty stag
The one that got away*

*And soon they roll up their blankets
And are fast asleep so soon
They are up and about by 3.00 AM
And away by the light of the moon*

*Some bound for Mitre Peak
Some for the bushline grey
Some to Mt Holdsworth
Some to far away.*

*Now its Monday evening
Men came down the tracks
With many a hard earned stag skin
Strapped upon their packs*

*And so into the old Waingawa
Some of them seem to lag
But they'll come again next Easter
To stalk the old red stag.*

*And the mists settle down on the Mitre
As they did since time began
And the red stag roared out his challenge
A challenge to man and his gun*

Number One Line, 23 May
Report and photo by Richard Lockett

My previous visits to this area have involved walking up the marked track until it peters out and then dropping off the ridge, down into the Matanganui Stream and following the stream

back to the road end. Having eyed the top of the Ruahine Range from the drop off position and thinking that it wasn't much further up in height (200m), a trip up here with that aim in mind should be done. The challenge of course was the Leatherwood, which is prolific up here in the southern Ruahines.



On the leatherwood track.

A team of five assembled for this challenge, consisting of; Isobel Holdaway, Michael Allerby, Janet Wilson, Daniel Ward and instigator Richard Lockett. 17 year old Daniel, being my nephew and having ambitions of joining the army, was brought along to demonstrate his current level of unfitness, having tramped with the club in his younger years.

Off we set with Daniel in front and quickly burning off the sugars from his piece of toast that comprised of his breakfast, heralding the first of many stops for a breather as we climbed the muddy track. The vegetation was soaking wet with no wind to dry it.

Good views were afforded out to the volcanic plateau, the peaks poking out from a band of cloud, north along the Ruahine Range; cloud low in the valley's and south towards the high point called Ross. Upon reaching the end of the marked track and since my last visit DOC had cleared the shrubs to form a viewing area looking out to the south across the Matanganui Stream.

The track continues along the ridge for a while before the horopito closes in removing the track from the ridge line - but we pushed on undulating along for a couple of hundred metres before reaching a clear area on the southern side of the ridge defined by a couple of dead felled tree

trunks. This is the point at which one would drop down into the stream if doing the loop trip.

From this point on, it was a bash through the shrubs looking for the route offering the least resistance, looking for an old track perhaps? Janet scouting a few metres to the north of the rest of us made good progress before we picked up a faint cut route amongst the Leatherwood, branches cut at waist height which we thought a bit odd and which led to the questions of who, why, when and the most important one of how long is this going to last.

As it happened, not long at all, as we had missed its start back at the clearing and had picked it up about half way along its length. It had got us through a band of leatherwood.

We pushed on, with Janet finding a digital camera hanging in the branch of a shrub looking a tad weathered. We certainly were not going where no man has been before. Pushing on upwards our goal in sight we crested a leatherwood covered knoll which presented us with a small clear spot with a view to the north and up onto our destination- point 1011m. With somewhere to sit and with views we decided to take lunch at this point and reflect on our efforts and to study map, GPS data, and what our eyes were saying as to where exactly we were.

The route ahead meant dropping into a hollow and a steep 70m climb in Leatherwood onto the high point so we decided that we had done enough good work for one day, and that a coffee or beer at the Waterford at Raumai would cap the day of nicely. So being fed and watered and a change of pants for Daniel (soaking wet and muddy) it was a retrace of steps back down.

This sounds easy, but requires careful work to keep on track, particularly as the ridge split in two at the 850m mark. We needed the southern one and as the track route ran on the southern edge of the ridge at this point we automatically were positioned for the right (left) one no problems (a tip to remember).

Once back on the track proper, it was a quick descent to the car park, passing two couples making hard work of the track up.

Thanks team, a good days work and I'll pick a nice summer's day to have another crack at it.

Postscript: Janet has had the memory card from the camera read to maybe identify the owner. Only two pics on it one of a lady with large multi day pack on amongst the leatherwood, not a local we think.

Castlepoint Midwinter Feast, 26-27 June By Kathy Corner

The weather forecast was not the best for our midwinter feast weekend but that did not matter as I knew that most of the weekend would be spent eating drinking and chatting. Warren, Jennifer and myself arrived in pouring rain, followed half an hour later by Graeme. But where was Janet? Well he had dropped her off to run the last 10km in the rain and wind. When she finally arrived she admitted the wind was too much for her to run up the hill.

Following a lovely lunch of homemade pumpkin soup (thanks Kay), we then debated the mystery of the disappearance of Janet's black bra. Had it been dropped by the side of the road for some passing farmer to pick up? Had a sheep eaten it? Was it draped over a fence post for all to view? Just as Warren was keen to drive back to look for it, Graeme found it!!

The rain stopped allowing us to walk to the lighthouse and clamber over the rocks. Watching the spray suddenly emerge from over the rocks was a spectacular sight, a bit like watching fireworks. The magnificent scenery at Castlepoint never ceases to amaze me each time I go there.

The serious business of eating and drinking began at 4pm with starters of a selection of cheese, caviar and dips, followed by roast vegetables, Waldorf salad and barbequed meat, and apple and blackcurrent cake and carrot cake for dessert, and Jennifer's amazing creation. All this was washed down with copious amounts of wine!! We still managed a walk to the light house at 10.30pm which was quite a sight.

The next morning after a leisurely breakfast we set out in the drizzle to admire the new houses in the subdivision. The weather fined up so we walked around the headland and then down to the beach. Warren did not brave the sea for a midwinter dip which was most disappointing. I thought it was a club tradition?

After a delicious lunch that included smoked salmon, we left Grant and Kay in peace, and set off home. Ahead we could see a hired camper van driving on the wrong side of the road. We tried to catch up with it and must have driven for at least 10 mins along a very widey road. As we got closer to them, Warren was telling Jennifer to keep flashing her headlights, but they still continued to drive on the wrong side of the road. So I started shouting "poop your horn" Finally they twigged and moved over. 3 seconds later a car came around the corner!! What a near miss.

Thanks Kay and Grant for allowing us to stay at your wonderful bach. It was a great weekend.

Punga Hut, 4th July **By Janet Wilson**

This turned out to be a great winter day trip! The 5 of us set off from Milverton Park at 8am in Tony's vehicle. The weather was overcast and the clouds low. After a short drive south to the top of Scotts Rd, we were there. Tony had a key to the locked gate so we didn't have to walk the first few kms.

We started off gently uphill on a good forestry road (could have still been driving!) but it soon became muddy and steeper. We arrived at a clearing and by now we were in the clouds. Here, Tony suggested we put on coats and overtrousers. He then led us over a fence, through some thick, tall, wet tussock, to a well cut and well hidden track. We followed this to the high point "Scrub", just in the leatherwood. Tony's local knowledge helped for the next bit and then we were soon back on a well cut and marked track, which took us down to the valley floor, a stream crossing and very soon Punga Hut.

At over 50 years old, this very well made hut is obviously a favourite hunters hut. We perused the hut library and had an early lunch in the sun, as by now the cloud had burnt off and it was a wonderful winters day. Graham and Tony couldn't resist climbing the lookout tree.



PNTMC at the Punga Hut, Patupairehe Stream. Note hut construction and antler collection.

The plan after lunch was to complete a circle back to near "Scrub". We started off on a marked track in the bush, then headed across gullies and ridges in open scrubland until finding the "Banana" track on a ridge that took us back up the hill, completing the circle. We then retraced our steps to the car, finishing at about 1430hrs.

Thanks Tony for showing us some interesting "hidden" places.

We were Graham Peters, Nicola Wallace, Holly Yang, Janet Wilson and Tony Gates.

Cow Creek Hut, 10-11 July **Report and photo by Woody Lee**

This hut was one of my favourite places to go tramping last year and I made a last minute decision to go there again as I was prepared for the chilly winter night with a new duck down sleeping bag. I quickly packed my backpack with extra warm clothes, food and the sleeping bag straight after calling Graham on Friday. It was a great compact sized sleeping bag which fit into my backpack nicely and was lighter than the old synthetic one.

Four of us piled into Graham's yellow car and departed at 8am where we saw changeable weather; blue skies, light showers and cloud, but luckily no wind. There were no cars in the camping ground and I discovered that some changes had been made to the area. There was a huge picnic table with concrete underneath and a flash DOC signpost with campsite information near the toilet block.

We enjoyed the morning walk with occasional sunlight on the snowy track which had an altitude of 800m. At the junction of Blue Range Hut, we dropped off our packs on the snow as we felt like food and had a late morning tea. Then I saw a hunter wearing orange clothes, carrying a rifle on his right shoulder. He followed us up and started talking to us. It was Tony, what a surprise! I never saw Tony looking like a hunter before. We all agreed to visit the BR hut on Sunday for lunch, which was a good plan.

After lunch at the top of the hill (960m) we started descending the steep track to the Waingaro River and walked along the river. I smelt smoke and then saw blue smoke billowing from the hut chimney from the middle of the swing bridge. Tony was already in the hut and had lit the fire for us.

That night, I did not feel cold as heat from the stove remained for an hour and my sleeping bag provided me with warmth until the next morning.

Tony was busy cutting off some dry logs, piling them beside the stove for the next visitors before leaving the hut and we left a new candle and some newspaper. I did not use my drink bottle all morning as there was frozen snow everywhere on the ground and it tasted clean and fresh. We traced back the same track to the BR hut for

lunch. The hut was a great place for a lunch stop.



PNTMC on the Blue Range track.

We were Graham Peters, Anja Scholz, Grant Christian, Tony Gates and Woody Lee

Manawatu Gorge Track, 17 July 2010 By Fiona Donald

Peter, the esteemed leader for Herepai, had to be somewhere else on Saturday so John organised an alternative trip to the Manawatu Gorge. John and Duncan arrived at my place for a quick discussion about whether to take two cars and which end to start from. I suggested starting from the Ballance end so we got the stairs over and done with.

It was a calm day, not too cold and we walked up at a steady pace all those stairs; we suddenly startled two wood pigeons and as they flew away we could see the rain settling in on the Eastern hills of the Wairarapa. It was impossible to estimate how soon the rain would arrive in the Gorge and I hoped it would be towards the end.

Shortly after this short stop, we met a variety of people on the track: spritely men and women striding along with their walking sticks and at times this group was so spread out that it was hard to say how big the group was? Further on we met other people with all sorts of shapes and sizes of dogs.

The ferns looked particularly lush. The 3 wind turbines were not working at all and the Gorge was oddly quiet without the murmur of those turbines. We stopped for a short break at the Windy Look-Out and we saw the clouds roll in; the rain was not far off!

Soon, the light faded making it difficult to see the stairs going downhill and as we trudged towards our destination, the rain started to fall with a pitter patter of a restful rhythm. By the time we

got out to Ashhurst the rain was drenching; we were thankful we had packed our raincoats.

There was a lot of talk on this trip and it was good to catch-up with each other and find out what was happening in each other's lives.

We were Duncan Hedderley, John Feeney and Fiona Donald.

Black Stag to Longview Hut, 25 July Report and Photos Tony Gates

As if planned, terrible winter weather evaporated as we drove north through Norsewood. The snow and ice clad Ruahine tops looked amazing, with sunny tussock and bush ridges where we were going. It was a good frost in the shade.

From the Kashmir road end, we nicked along an easy and open track to the Awatere Hut, on the banks of the Makaretu Stream. Great views en route. We explored downstream to find the Black Stag Hut, and ageing but cosy bush residence in need of a good tidy up. We wondered about its history - probably a hunters whare from the 1940's.

The Makaretu Stream offered good travel, but we returned to Awatere Hut, took an early coffee break, then set off up the big hill to Rocky Knob. Two and a half hours of bush and scrub travel saw us on the top, with most of the route being relatively easy. Dave had checked this ridge out during the previous summer, so we knew that even the much vaunted leatherwood belt wouldn't present too much of a problem for us.



PNTMC at Black Stag Hut, Makaretu Valley.

Rocky Knob is a special place, with completely open rocky scree ridges and easy tussock, then a straight forward DOC track to Pohangina Saddle. The alpine flowers would look good here with a low deer population. Intermittent mist came in on us, then thick mist past

Longview Hut. The descent from near Pohangina Saddle was surprisingly easy and quick, so we were soon returned to our vehicles about six hours after leaving them. An excellent day circuit.

We were; Dave Grant, Richard Lockett, Anja Scholz, Lance Gray, Tony Gates, Jo and Lawrence OHalloran.



On Rocky Knob- a special place.

Book Review

High Misadventure.

New Zealand mountaineering survival stories. By Paul Hersey (2009). New Holland (NZ). \$29.99. 166 pages. Soft cover. Reviewed by Tony Gates.

Great British mountaineer turned writer turned movie star Joe Simpson is a name your should know. His best selling mountain disaster book and movie "Touching the Void" from the late 1980's presents an emotive and informative near death story. Simpson went on to write several books about the mountains, the mountaineers- and some mountain disasters. Indeed, he has become a sort of consultant on the matter, with

his no nonsense British working mans attitude. Simpson has proven to be a fine writer.

"High Misadventure" succeeds in taking a Joe Simpson style look at a series of incidents in the New Zealand mountains. Eight chapters of events from 1966 till 2005, from various well known mountain areas, cover several fatal, and (more importantly) non fatal incidents. They are well researched and written stories, obviously added to by the authors own not inconsiderable experiences in the mountains. Interviews, literature, and media reports were researched, so that this book in turn will be useful for future research into the somewhat morbid but vital topic of mountain accidents. Hersey adds quotes from various poets to his text to (partially) reason mountaineering, and a helpful mix of geology, Maori nomenclature and meaning, metrology, and medical notes to add to the stories.

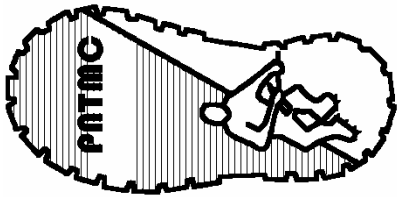
One chapter is of particular interest to PNTMC members, when members Keith Margrain and John Williams were killed by an avalanche from the slopes of Aoraki Mt Cook. Other PNTMC members were involved, as was Phil Doole. The sad drama of this incident, then the following rescue of Phil Doole and his climbing partner Mark Inglis some three years later from the nearby "Middle Peak Hotel", forms the basis of this chapter.

This is the author's second book, hopefully not his last. He is an active mountaineer, and his writing has featured in various outdoor publications. There is a useful preface and introduction (both really further chapters), and glossary, selected references, index, and "about the author" to offer credibility to any non mountain person (or for that matter, any non New Zealander reading the book). Each chapter has a simple map, but I grabbed topographical maps to clarify my own knowledge of the respective areas. There is a sprinkling of black and white photographs, with a colour section too.

Quote of the Month

Lewis Pass- Hamner Springs, January 1949. From "Land Uplifted High", by John Pascoe

The sun retired behind the gauntness of high sheep country, and the long shadows and twilight made ideal conditions for swagging. We plodded along, and stopped occasionally for a munch at something. When dark made the track hard to follow, we lit my miner's lamp, whose carbide flare saved torch batteries, and eventually bedded down at Fowler's Hut. What an affair of corrugated iron, incredibly dirty inside, with a door and two windows as though designed by a kindergarten child. I preferred to sleep outside in the frost, and met the first rays of the morning sun feeling as fresh as if I had slept for six days instead of six hours.



Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.

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P.O. Box 1217,
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PNTMC Newsletter

August 2010

What's inside this month?

- *Upcoming trips and club events*
- *Leaders Evening*
- *Reports on recent trips*
- *Editorial - Ruahine Plane Wrecks*
- *Book Review – High Misadventure*
- *Bush Poetry – Mitre Peak*

Articles for the newsletter

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

Get out and about with us!

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