



PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217, PALMERSTON NORTH

Newsletter - January- February 2003

"After fording water so many times, the logical post-tramp activity was to go to the Waterford Café, where people indulged their alcohol, caffeine, and chocolate addictions."

Doug Strachan, 2003.

Trip Reports; Honeycomb Rock, Tongariro, Tararua Forks and Flies, Stanfield Hut, Mikimiki, Mangatera Catchment- Lake Colenso, Matanganui Stream (Number One Line)

News; From the President's PC, Search call outs to Tamaki and Blue Range, Report on PNTMC web site, DOC news from the Tararuas.

CLUB NIGHTS

February 13	Club Night, Rock Climbing, City Rock	Terry Crippen
February 27	Navigation	Warren Wheeler
March 6	Committee Meeting	Peter Wiles' house
March 13	South Island road trip	Harley Betts
March 27	Annual General Meeting	Committee

Club nights are held for all club members and visitors on the second and last Thursday of each month at the **Society of Friends Hall, 227 College Street, Palmerston North**. All club nights commence at 7:45 pm **sharp**, winter or summer. The PNTMC Committee meets on the first Thursday of each month.

At the club night: Please sign your name in the visitors book. A 50c door fee includes supper.

UP AND COMING TRIPS & EVENTS

Trip Grades

Trip grades depend on many factors, especially the weather. A reasonably proficient trumper can 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): >8 hrs

T refers to technical trips requiring special skills.

February 13. Club night. City Rock, with Terry Crippen, 3563-588

A chance to practice or learn some climbing skills in preparation for the two rock climbing trips coming up. Instruction and gear supplied, just come in suitable clothing and foot wear (you can hire climbing shoes). An enjoyable evening, costing you \$7.00. City Rock: 217 Featherston St, phone 357-4552, behind Phil Turnbull Motors just along from the Rangitiki St intersection.

Feb 15 (Sat) Coastal walk E
Jim Jones 356 2670

A pleasant walk along one of the wide open western coast beaches. Swimming possible.

Feb 14- 15 Waiohine Gorge Tubing F, T
Tony Gates 357 7439

This trip is a classic Tararua river tramp, heading initially into Totara Flats to a good camp. We will then walk up the gorge with day gear only (and tubes, wet suites, and helmets), where we can tube back down some of the very best rapids in the world. Gorgeous country (pun intended).

Feb 16 Rock Climbing M, T
Pete McGregor w356 7154

There will be plenty to offer the adventurous athlete here, probably in the central North Island. Come prepared.

Feb 20 Thursday Trampers
Lorraine Green 354 6158

Feb 22- 23 Ngamoko Range M/F
Peter Darragh 358 8774

You can often see the tussock tops of the Ngamoko Range from Palmerston North. There are good access tracks to the tops, and some excellent tramping and views offered here.

February 21- 22
Kaweka Challenge.

February 27. Club night. Navigation, with Warren Wheeler.

A fun night, with map and compass, plus an introduction to GPS's. Where am? where do I want to be? Where is the treasure?

March 1-2 SAREX 2003 M, I
Terry Crippen 3563-588

This years annual Search and Rescue Exercise will be hosted by Levin SAR. PNTMC will send one or two teams. Friday night to Sunday afternoon. For club SAR peoples only. Contact Terry for details if he hasn't got you listed already.

March 1- 2 Porongaki Hut
Barry Scott 354 0510

A good western Ruahine river, and hut, with the opportunity to climb up onto the tussock tops, and maybe meet up with the day trippers below.

March 2 Purity hut and beyond
Jo O'Halloran 353 0300

Great views from here.

March 6. Committee Meeting, at Peter Wiles' house.

March 8- 9 Te Matawai Hut M/ F
Martin Lawrence 357 1695

This large DOC hut at the head of the Mangahao, Otaki, and Ohau catchments is often passed when traveling through to the high central Tararuas. A good spot, with plenty of options for different tracks.

March 9 Athene Walkway M
Laurence Gatehouse 356 5805

This day walk is located up the Wanganui River, so you will get to see some of the big river, and its impressive landscapes and forest.

March 13 Club Night South Island Road Trip, by Harley Betts.

Harley is a talented photographer, who will be presenting a photographic tour of some recently visited parts of the South Island, including the West Coast.

March 14-16 Rangi Howletts F/E
Jean Garman 354-3536

Friday evening to Rangi hut, hopefully with a new track across the big slip, Saturday to the lovely Howletts Hut via the tops (some interesting stuff here), then Sunday back out to the car. A Ruahine Classic.

March 15-16 Pouakai Hut, ENP E/M
Harley Betts 357-0132

(Note; this trip has been brought forward and swapped with Elaine's which is now on 22 March. A northern Taranaki tramp to show you possibly the best views of the mountain.

March 22 (Sat) Coppermine Creek E
 Elaine Herve 354-2499
 (Note; this trip has been swapped with Harley's which is now on 15-16 March)
 Close to town, and a pleasant stroll along a good track. It is however quite steep off the track.

March 23 Takapari Mt bike M
 Richard Lockett 323-0948
 Takapari Road winds into the heart of the Ruahine Ranges south of the Pohangina valley. By mountain bike, you can get to see neat areas. The road is locked for four wheel drive vehicles, but still has long lengths of really good riding.

March 27. PNTMC Annual General Meeting
 Refer notices.

Trip participants:

If you are interested in going on a trip, please contact the leader at least three days in advance. Trips usually leave from the Foodtown carpark in Fergusson Street with transport provided by car-pooling. A charge for transport will be collected on the day of the trip, the amount depending on the distance travelled and vehicles used. Leaders should be able to give an estimate in advance. For general information or any suggestions for future tramps please contact one of the trip co-ordinators Terry Crippen (356-3588), Janet Wilson (329-4722) or Andrew Lynch (325-8779).

Trip leaders: Please discuss with the trip co-ordinators, as soon as possible, if there is any doubt that 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 ***

Enquiries to: Mick Leyland (358-3183), Terry Crippen (356-3588), or Janet Wilson (329 4722)

NOTICES

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES can be Emailed to tony.gates@horizons.govt.nz, or stuff can be delivered to him at home or work.

c/- horizons.mw

11-15 Victoria Ave, PN

If you're e-mailing, please include your article as an attachment (Microsoft Word Version 7.0 or Rich Text Format), unless it is a small article, which can be typed directly into the e-mail.

EMAIL ADDRESS LIST

Committee members who are connected to Email are listed below. Please note that changes to this list may occur from time to time, so we will try to keep it as up to date as possible.

warren.wheeler@horizons.govt.nz

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B.vanBrunt@massey.ac.nz

gaewyn.grant@xtra.co.nz

Preliminary notice regarding the 2003 Annual General Meeting.

It is proposed that the PNTMC constitution be amended. The winding up clause needs minor rewording to secure our status as a charitable organization, and ensure our eligibility for funding from Eastern & Central Trust. Also, the financial year needs to be moved to March, so that the AGM can be held during late April, to avoid the Easter break. More details in the March 2003 edition of this Newsletter.

WEDNESDAY TRAMPING GROUP

We go out every second Wednesday on easy tramps. Come and join us. For more information, please phone Judy 357 0192, Jennifer, 323 3914, or June 355 2690.

Note from Hokitika.

Hi all!, the weather down here continues to impress (favorably). Please note my new address: Kevin Pearce
167 Jollie Street, Hokitika
Phone (03) 755 8559
kevin.pearce@xtra.co.nz

One spare bed, floor space, space in my garage and camping space is usually available to passing trampers. Directions: From highway 6 turn east into Park Street, then after 900 metres, left into Jollie Street. Number 167 is on the left.

New postal address's

Charlotte Sunde
Orrs Road, RD 1
Aokautere, Palmerston North

Harley Betts

307 Kahuterawa Road, RD 4, Palmerston North,
Ph. 357-0132.

Missing- By Terry Crippen.

I'm on the hunt for a missing compass from the club set of six. Somebody borrowed it at some stage for further practice. (My usual tight controlling of lending things out failed!) Let me (3563-588) or Warren know if you find it amongst your bits and peices. We need it for Warren's navigation exercise at Club night 27 Feb.

Web Site update. By Peter Wiles and Martin Lawrence.

By now many will have visited www.pntmc.org.nz. We are up and running and making steady progress. We are attending to the important issues first where possible and learning as we go. We have all the essential software to do the job at last. (Having PHP, MySQL, Apache Server, Homesite, FTP and Internet Browser all in memory concurrently drains resources on the PC a tad, so a memory expansion was called for - to 512 MB does the job nicely!) An unexpected benefit of this is my PC shuts down cleanly now!

We have got the events up to date – the whole series to June. We can make changes to them as required.

We have got the Contacts page organized and updated; also the newsletters for last year have been added. How far back into the archives past newsletters might go is yet to be decided.

We have got a set of photos from a past trip onto the site. The images can be selected by clicking on the thumbnails at the bottom. I am interested in getting series from others' trips. Perhaps anything from 4 to 12 would be fine; they can be

supplied in electronic form (desired) but slides or prints can be scanned. Shots with people doing things especially preferred.

The hut info page(s) needs much work – some of the info is purely hypothetical. More details of huts and images would be useful. Send them in.

We plan to change the images on the home page to include people.

Watch this space. Thanks to Jack McKenzie and his group for getting this together – for free. Thanks also to Inspire for providing free hosting. Without these generous contributions of time and resources, we would never have had the means to get onto the web.

DOC Notices from the Tararuas.**1. Totara flats Hut.**

The Department of Conservation is about to commence construction on a new 26 bunk hut in at Totara Flats. The sleeping capacity at the existing hut will be reduced as trades-men will be living there continuously throughout February and March 2003. If you are intending to visit the a Flats region then please carry your own tent or fly, as there may not be room for you inside the hut.

2. Tararua track tidy-up.

The Department of Conservation is advising trampers to make their presence known to contractors clearing vegetation along the main range track between Nichols and Te Matawai Huts, on the Gable End track, from Richard's Knob to the old Ohau Shelter site, and the top of the Girdlestone Track down to Dowling Falls junction. Warning signs will be erected at both ends of the tracks.

"People using the tracks need to make sure they are visible to the contractors," DOC Kapiti Area programme manager Wayne Boness said.

This is part of the department's track maintenance programme, and will take about two to three weeks to complete, weather permitting.

3. Hut Painting.

At some time during the period 23rd January to 31st March 2003 the following huts will be undergoing external painting: Kime, Field, South Ohau, Te Matawai, and Waitewaewae Hut.

We will be putting this notice up at key entry points to the Tararuas.

4. Hut Closures.

Waitewaewae, South Ohau and Field Huts will be closed for maintenance on the following dates. (Inclement weather conditions could cause some changes to this schedule).

Waitewaewae Hut will be closed for maintenance work from 9am Thursday 23rd January to 3pm Saturday 25th January 2003.

South Ohau Hut South Ohau is unlikely to ever open again in that spot [it was closed last week]. The bank behind the hut has dropped into the river and the hut now sits 1m from the edge. The door is nailed shut.

Field Hut will be closed for major upgrade work from 9am Monday 17th February 2003 until 4pm Friday 28th February 2003.

5. Removal of Harris Creek Hut.

Harris Creek Hut (at Grid Reference S25, 185571), on the western side of the Tararua Forest Park, is to be permanently removed, and will close to all visitors on Friday 14 February 2003 at 4pm. The hut will not be replaced. Alternative accommodation is available at Mangahao Flats Hut approximately 1 ½ hours walk further up the Mangahao Valley. (Grid Reference S25, 158543)

For further information concerning the western side of the ranges, please contact: Wayne Boness, Kapiti Area Office, 10 Parata Street, Waikanae (Ph 04 296 1112), or Liz Paton Recreation Planning Assistant Wellington Conservancy, Wellington DDI (04 470 8430).

Or for the eastern side, contact Mark Townsend, Masterton Area Office, 06 377 0700.

NZ TOPO ONLINE, by Merv Matthews

Members with access to the Internet will be pleased to know that Topo Maps for any part of the country are now available online from LINZ. This means that you can print your own map of a proposed tramp in any scale desired. The maps differ in appearance from the familiar NZMS 260 series in that they are built in layers of topo data, so more and more detail is displayed as you zoom in. You can do all sorts of interesting things with the layers, such as turning on or off the NZMG Grid, the Lat/Long Grid, descriptive text, or any of the other 130 or so layers. You can even select the orthophotos layer to have aerial photography superimposed over the map, or print just the photo by turning all the other layers off. (Photography is not available in certain areas) The system is in 'beta' testing and comments or

corrections are invited. The address is <http://www.nztopoonline.linz.govt.nz>

Read through the information in the opening screen, then select "New Zealand Mainland Only NZMG". Accept the terms and conditions and you are in business. When accessing the site for the first time, an ArcIMS Viewer program will be downloaded on to your computer. This may take a few minutes. Map displays are slow because a tremendous volume of data is coming down the telephone line, so you will need to be patient! Note the vertical column of buttons on the left side of the screen. Passing the pointer over each one will give a brief description of its purpose. More details about each one can be obtained by clicking the Help button (2nd from bottom). Try the zoom button (the 4th button down). Use click and drag to draw a rectangle over the area you wish to examine. Repeat to zoom in closer. Try the Pan button (the 8th button). A click and drag will move the map in any direction. Examine the Layer List (the 2nd button). After checking or unchecking any layer you must 'Refresh the Map' to see the new result. You will find this button as the last item in the layer list. Using the Search button (the 9th one) will zoom you directly to a geographical feature at a convenient scale. However, the search is not very clever. For example, it cannot find St Arnaud, but will find Saint Arnaud. For practice, try a search for "Wharite" with orthophotos turned on in the layer list. You will see the road to the Wharite TV transmitter superimposed over an aerial photo of the locality. Look closely and you will see the Coppermine track snaking its way northwards. At this stage of development you cannot specify a scale in the format 1:50,000. However, a 'scale factor' is given at the bottom of the screen. A factor of 14.3 is approximately 1:50,000.

Enjoy!

New PAPER topo maps.

I saw some new double sided Terralink maps the other day, and was quite impressed. At a similar price to one map (I cannot recall the actual price), they represent excellent value compared to purchasing two single maps. They are 1:50 000 maps that I assume we are all well used to, and are supposed to be the latest and best. But they are shaded darker than I prefer, having an almost dirty look to them.

Popular areas, such as the Tararuas and Mt Ruapehu are currently covered. Some other popular South Island areas will already be available, or should be shortly.

Cooker Fuel For Sale.

For all your tramping trips; Terry has got bulk white spirits (Shellite/ Pegasol/ Calite- various names) available for your cookers. At \$3.50 a litre, it is much cheaper than up to \$8 when you have to buy it in the one litre containers from a garage. Contact Terry 356 3588. Bring your own container if you have one.

From the Presidents PC

School is back and the sun is dropping off the side of the planet a little earlier each evening – prime-time for tramping, possums. Not that it has been all bad so far – certainly the Forks and Flies Trip (both part 1, and part 2 a fortnight later) I led across the Tararua Ranges provided some perfect summer tramping (see Trip Report in this edition). And the BOYBBQ (Beginning of Year BBQ) at Horseshoe Bend, Tokomaru ended all too quickly for all those enjoying the balmy breeze and warm (almost) water. It was good to catch up with at least some of the goings on since the EOYBBQ at Ashhurst Domain, when the weather offered light “dristy mizzle” to push our Rave into the green shelter and kept Mister Snow away this year. No shortage of gas BBQs at either event, thanks everyone.

Of course the EOYBBQ is infamous for the Annual Awards. I had the honour of again presenting the awards and since 2002 was “The Year of the Mountain” an “Over The Top” theme predominated (so what else is new, right?). Awards were presented randomly according to what prize came to hand from my make-shift Santa-bag. So here in no particular order are the winners and their “prizes”.

- Mt Cook or Bust Award - Malcolm Leary, for three unsuccessful attempts due to poor weather (balloon);
- Winston Peters Instant Kiwi Award for Excellence in Pursuit of the Kiwi Lifestyle - The Gregorys, (Concentrated Fresh Up juice - its got to be good for you);
- Eveready Award - Megan Gregory, keeps going and going despite snow, cold and wet feet (key-ring light);
- Golden Glove Award - Graham Heap, always willing to offer a helping hand (rubber glove);
- Uri Geller Bent Spoon Award - Peter Darragh, concentrating so hard about the safety of a slow party member that he got a headache (bent plastic spoon);
- Snow White and the 12 Dwarfs Award - Fiona Donald, leadership to Powell Hut in a gale (apple);
- Annual Gucci Award - Yuko Watanabe, most snappily dressed (Pixie Caramel bar);
- Naked Chef Award - Sue Galbraith, best cooking on Snowcraft 2002 (lemon, adds zest you see?);

- Die Another Day Award – Janet Wilson, leading successful Searches...its such a buzz (Honeycomb Chocolate bar);
- Humpty Dumpty Award – Neil Campbell, put himself back together after fall on Waipawa scree (Kinder Surprise);
- Blarney Award for Excellence in Composing Concise Prose for Public Consumption on Matters Pertaining to Recreation in the Outdoors – Terry Crippen and Tony Gates for Wilderness magazine articles (small stones);
- Broken Axe Award for perseverance in the face of Insurmountable Obstacles – Duncan Hedderley, broken arm just before Snowcraft 1 but still made crampon protectors and returned gear straight away (twig);
- OTT and Far Way, for experience overseas – Terry Crippen and Christine Cheyne (France/Italy), Harley Betts (South America), Pete McGregor (USA etc), rewarded enough, no prize necessary;
- OTT and Out of Sight Award - Richard Lockett, returned another day and found crampons fallen off pack at head of Waipawa North stream (packing straw = hay...as for needle in, OK you get it);
- The Dave Hodges Award for Excellence in Pursuit of Forgetfulness – two winners: Richard Lockett , left his cooker at Standfield Hut (only one prize each sorry) and Monica Cantwell for forgetting what her lunch pack looked like in the freezer and grabbed steak instead (sorry I forgot a prize, but at least she’s found a best mate in Chopper the dog);
- Pullitza Award – Tony Gates for several articles in Wilderness magazine (wine).
- The Tararua Trophy for the Best Newsletter Article, 2002 went to Lance Gray (wine magnum)

Thanks to Liquor King for sponsoring the wine.

After the Awards it was time to open our Xmas presents. It was a pleasure to randomly hand out all the \$2 gifts that everyone had brought (thanks to Megan for helping as a gift elf) and I am sure that the delighted expressions on everyone’s face made the effort that everyone had made all the more worthwhile. Without being too precious, this end-of-year tradition really shows that we all appreciate one another.

I hope you are all making the most of the season, and look forward to seeing you out in the hills some time.

Warren Wheeler

Book Review, by Peter Wiles.
Canterbury Foothills & Forests – a walking and tramping guide, by Pat Barrett

I was given this handy little book as a Christmas present. It is a joy to browse. There is a lot of country from Mt Oxford – Lees Valley in the north to Mt Peel in the south and extending as far west as the Arthurs Pass region. Trips range from short walks through to full long weekend tramps or climbs. Descriptions are clear and well illustrated with maps.

If you are heading south, take the inland route through Canterbury and escape the traffic and consider some walking options. If the tramping/climbing areas on or near the Divide are washed out due to a Nor-west storm, then the Canterbury foothills are the place to go for a few days. Many routes are over private land. The routes include the contact phone number of the landowner concerned. Take you cell phone.

The Canterbury foothills are not necessarily gentle rolling hills: they rise up to 2300 m. So there is much scope either summer or winter for almost everyone. I wish this booklet had been around 25 years ago!

Search and Rescue.

Two recent SAR activities involved club members. The first one occurred on December 16- 17, in the

TRIP REPORTS

HONEYCOMB ROCK (East Coast, Wairapapa) Dec 8, by Doug Strachan.

Awoke at 5:30 to the sound of a torrential downpour. Thought "bugger, we're going tramping in this." The rain stopped long enough for me to walk towards Foodtown with the song "Honeycomb" stuck in my head (could be showing my age here)."Honeycomb won't you be my baby? Well, Honeycomb be my own. What a darn good life. When you got a wife like Honeycomb." Fiona, leader of us 7am-ers, was well-organised and gave out maps and geological info pertaining to the Honeycomb Rocks. We buckled in for the 2 and a half hour drive. At one stage Fiona announced, "you'd be a lot less safe with me if I was driving alone." My brain couldn't make sense of that, gave up, and reverted to playing the "Honeycomb" song. From Masterton, we had about another 65km to drive out to the coast. The topography was fascinating, with verdant, Egmont-shaped hillocks. We thought the scenery worthy of a Lord of the Rings film set.

The Honeycomb Rock Track starts out by crossing farmland to reach the sea. The bulls that Fiona had assured us would be placid weren't even there. No bull. The track mostly followed the fence line, with styles and orange arrows leading us across paddocks. At times we also walked

west Tamaki valley, near Dannevirke. Tony Gates, Peter Darragh, Mick Leyland, Lew Pritchard, Janet Wilson, Graham Peters, Alan Bee, and Lance Gray were involved. There was a considerable number of other people (Police, Air Force, etc) involved also.

During the second, on January 2003 to Blue Range (Tararuas), two teams from Palmerston North were called up. They went over to Masterton to back up Wairarapa and Wellington teams in a ongoing operation searching for two teenagers overdue from an afternoon walk in the Blue Range area. Just as we arrived in Masterton a message came though that the subjects had been located in a stream bed to the north of their intended route. They were evacuated successfully by helicopter. The day was not altogether wasted for the vanload of us from Palmerston North as we were able to check out the SAR facilities and methods used by Wairapa SAR. The PNTMC team consisted of Alan Bee, Jean Garman, Lance Gray and myself. Thanks Alan, Jean and Lance for giving up your time.

along the seashore. To God's credit, the feared thunderstorms never eventuated, but the wind was knot funny. Our legs were sand-blasted. The blasted sand even hit our faces a couple of times.

The Canadian contingent was excited to see a pair of Canadian Geese, or Canada Geese as they call them. Must have lost their way. That's probably why Canadians need to carry a GPS. Actually, Nigel's GPS wasn't treated with the contempt that the GPS's on last week's navigation trip received. A GPS is good insurance. What if we'd lost our way walking along the beach?

We reached Honeycomb Rock. Like the weather, it was poxy, only in a positive sense. The pits were of all sizes and depths, and sand-blasted smooth inside. Some were small caves. One hollow contained a nest with baby birds. Geologists reckon that the porous sandstone becomes wet with sea spray. The water later evaporates and the salt expands as it crystallises, prising the sand apart. The wind then gets in there and rolls the sand around, creating the hollows.

We didn't dare climb up Honeycomb rock in the gale. It was said that we would be blown off and die. Wave action would dash our corpses against the rocks, tenderising them for the seals' meals.

Yes, seals. Earlier on we had come across two decomposed seal carcasses, alerting us to keep an eye out for live ones. Well, around Honeycomb Rock we saw a number of live seals, and they were quite composed. Some of them even frolicked in the surf.

Next, we found a safe zone for lunch, a happy compromise between the wind of the beach and the seal-stench behind the rocks. At this point we must give Fiona, who already is recommended for a no-bull prize, commendation for bringing strawberries, and chocolate goodies along to make things feel Christmassy. I was very pleased because earlier that morning I had checked off my luggage list (coat, check. lunch, check...) but had forgotten to write "eat breakfast" on it. After lunch, we explored the rocks further, and also a wreck on the beach. By examining the extent of corrosion, and performing some calculations based on the rate of oxidation of iron in salt water, I was able to determine that the ship had run aground in 1967. The hull construction and position of the mast holes are almost certainly indicative that it was a Fijian trader. Someone please consult the literature and see if it concurs.

We returned the same way we came (except for where the track was "sealed" off). We, especially those group members from England, Canada, and Japan, felt lucky to have the chance to watch sheep being driven down from the hills with dogs. One sheep ran all the way to the sea and refused to come back. A dog went into the water behind the sheep and barked besirkly, but the sheep wouldn't budge. Then it started walking out to sea! In the end the farmer and dogs left it alone rather than drive it out any further. The last we saw, the sheep was standing on some rocks in the sea. Looked quite silly really. Was THAT farming NZ style? Things always go wrong when you have an audience.

Driving home, we stopped at a shop in Masterton - the one with the giant plastic icecream on the roof. "Gold Rush" is quite a nice flavour. It has hokey pokey in it, with it's crunchy honeycomb-like structure. Honeycomb won't you be my baby...

Combers: Suzanne, Nigel, and Megan Gregory; Hilda & Graham Heap; Matthew Round; Jo, Fabian O'Halloran; Liz Morrison, Duncan Hedderley, Yuko Watanabe, Fiona Donald, Doug Strachan.

Craters were are you? 14– 15 December 2002 By Florence Fraise

We left Palmy on Friday evening to Eivins Lodge (NW side of Tongariro National Park - for more

details about this lodge, refer to November newsletter). We were eight on this trip but no one except Warren was part of PNTMC. The real members had probably thought: oh no another trip with Warren, something is going to happen again. And they were right.

On Saturday morning we got up at 6.00 to give us enough time to do the long trip through the Tongariro craters. First bad surprise when we wanted to take the cars; Jamie's car had a flat tyre. "Oh it doesn't matter, we'll change the tyre. It will only take 2 minutes". But what a surprise, when we tried to change it, the spare tyre did not fit on the car - it was a different size. OK, the next option was to go to Turangi to fix the puncture. Jamie and Karla went there, while the rest of us enjoyed a cup of tea and played cards.

We finally headed off at Mangatepopo car park and started the tramp at 10.30 with the rain. Then the wind came as well. We met people coming back due to strong wind, but never mind we still carry on, we want to see those craters. We started to climb Red Crater and had to brace each other in pairs, holding each other's backpack, in order to avoid the big fall into Oturere Crater. It was really hard to be able to stay on your feet. After a while we did not really enjoy that any more and so decided to turn back. Well, not exactly - we just dropped straight off and down the scree into South Crater. We had never been so fast going down and even had the opportunity to see a deer jumping down the hill (that was Warren). We had lunch on the sheltered west side of the South crater and decided to go back to the lodge, instead of trying to climb Tongariro.

We were really happy to have a hot shower and a drying room after being soaking wet all day. Jamie and Karla went back to Turangi to pick up the tyre while the others exchanged tramping stories and started cooking dinner. Well, the dinner was already pre-cooked as we planned to have a Christmas party: melon as a starter, roast lamb with tomatoes, carrots and potatoes. We had three deserts: two cakes and some fruits with yoghurt. As people asked me the recipe of my chocolate cake, I thought it would be a good idea to give it to them through this newsletter, as some other people may like to try it.

The plans for Sunday to climb Ruapehu were cancelled. Instead we went to the other end of the Tongariro crossing, at Ketetahi car park. We went up in fine weather and had Xmas cake with an early lunch at Ketetahi Hut, deciding that it would be too windy and unpleasant to carry on to the cloud-covered tops.

This trip was an Easy instead of a Medium but was not without incident or injury. Warren fell off a rock backwards while trying to straddle it for a picture - missed major injury but dented his pride. Karla retreated off Ketetahi with a sore knee (old injury) and I somehow tore my Achillis tendon on Saturday (progressively swollen and sore on Sunday). Thankfully I was still able to walk to return to the car park, after some good taping technique from Matthew and some anti-inflammatory pills.

So this trip was not the most successful in term of weather and scenic views, but it was good experience and great fun with a good Christmas party.

Chocolate cake recipe- Ingredients:

6 eggs

250 g sugar

250 g black chocolate

100 g coconut powder

250 g butter

Method: Stir the yolk with sugar

Melt the chocolate (microwave or saucepan) and add to the yolk and stir.

Add the coconut powder and the melted butter.

Separately shake the white of the eggs and add carefully to the main pastry.

Cook in the oven for 25-30 minutes.

We were Jamie, Karla Withers, Nini Ripandelli & Matthew Peters, Craig Allerby, Yuko Watanabe, Warren Wheeler (sole PNTMC member & leader), and Florence Fraisse.

Tararua Forks and Flies Trip 3-7 January 2003. By Warren Wheeler.

This was to have been 1-5 January but it suited more of us to go a bit later. It turned out, six was a good number for this fly-camping trip. Campsites for our two flies and one small tent were easier to find, and transport only involved two cars at each end.

Day 1, Otaki Forks to Waitewaewae–Otaki Forks. Fine hot morning. Heavy packs. Toby: "I can't wait to get there for a swim". Lawrence managed to remain Best Dressed in white long johns for 3 hours before stripping off at lunch. Straightforward along the well-marked track and a nice shallow wade up the river to YTTY Hut. Met two or three small parties coming out, a couple staying the night. We carried on across the swing-bridge. Lawrence picked up Yuko's bedroll from the middle of the bridge where it had been knocked off, fortunately the netting saved it from a swim. Soon after leaving the main track we got into

trouble on a rough old sidle track which left us clambering down to cross the river. Famous Last Words (FLW) Lawrence: "I think I'm going to...slip". Another crisis was also narrowly averted when his neckerchief was recovered from mid-stream by Craig. We had come a bit too far and should have crossed at the big bend just upstream from the bridge.

Excellent campsite on inside of bend complete with hammock rolled up against a tree, but crossed over again and carried on 400m to the Forks. Good campsites for both flies; tent on the river shingle. ("Not very comfortable" says Toby next morning). Enjoyed a refreshing swim. Toby: "I won't go in, I can't swim". Freeze-dried meals get the thumbs up. Sandflies and mozzies bothersome overnight.

Day 2: YTTY-Otaki Forks – Park Forks.

Dawn chorus and early start. Fine. Departed at 8.00am, criss-crossed back downriver to rejoin the track up to Junction Knob. Toby found that the plastic connection holding a shoulder strap to his pack harness was broken. Repaired by wrapping with duct tape. (Macpac later fixed for free. Design now superceded). Slow steep climb through cool forest. Warren: "Try baby steps, Toby". Lunch above the bushline in tussock. FLW Toby: "I never get sunburn on the legs". Great views from Junction Knob and along the tops to Nichols Hut at 2.45pm.

VUWTC guy arrived to sign in at the Hut, traveling light from Arete Forks via Carkeek to YTTY today. He took 45 minutes up from Park Forks, it took us 2 hours to go down. Track overgrown, has old discs but well-marked recently with blue tape. Two other guys crossed over Waiohine River from Dorset Ridge as we arrived at Park Forks. "Track overgrown and not well-marked" – took them 3 hours from bush edge. Good campsites despite general bogginess nearby. Surprisingly no mozzies, must be too deep in the valley and not sunny enough. No swim, a bit cool and late in the day. After a 10.5 hour day is this really a medium trip?

Day 3: Park Forks-Arete Forks.

Cloudy. After some dithering decided it would be better to follow the blue tape up Carkeek Ridge rather than try Dorset. FLW Warren: "It might be a bit windy on top". Drizzle started as we left camp and crossed Park River. FLW Warren; "It could be a good idea to put on the polypro". Overgrown track up Carkeek Ridge with old discs, but was easy to follow with blue tape. Long stretch through goblin forest to Carkeek Hut on bush line. Arrived wet and cold. Early lunch. Two friendly hunters ensconced there, complete with deck chairs. Had

helicoptered in, but seen no deer in 5 days: "Wind wrong". Departed about 11.00am into wind-blown drizzly showers. Great to be up in the clouds. No sunburn problem. Well-trodden ridge track through tussock with cairns. Slow ups and down, mostly up. "Are you taking baby steps, Toby?". Carkeek emerged impressively from the cloud with steep slip faces dropping straight off the tussock ridge line. "Hold onto each other against the wind, here!!!" Showers eased, but still very windy. Yuko's pack cover got blown off, never to be seen again. Hard to find non-precipitous places to shelter from the westerly wind for a rest. Jelly beans: the great restorer. Smelled the flowers, not. Reached Thompson at around 2.00pm and after some compass dithering turned right on course for Lancaster before we all got too cold. Tail wind, good. Some interesting rock knobs to get around. All happy to reach the steel warratah marking the route off the ridge down Pinnacle Spur. Good rest stop. Cloudy but sheltered out of the wind.

"Looks a bit steep, but well, this must be it." Not as bad as it looked. Several impressive rock pinnacles to sidle and cross over with some trepidation at times. Middle Earth territory. Care required to follow cairns to keep on right ridge. (Carkeek Hunters: "Do not go to the left, its very steep, off to the right is OK. You can easily go down the stream"). Came out of cloud above the bush line – quite spectacular in a moody kind of way. Big orange marker on bush edge to head one uphill, but would take care to spot. Arrived at swift-flowing and slightly discoloured Waingawa River at 6.30pm. FLW Warren: "We'll have something to eat first and let it drop before crossing to Arete Forks Hut". Yeah, right. After a quick recce Toby easily crossed at the Forks just 50m downstream and we all safely followed. Slept well in Hut despite soft beds.

Day 4: Arete Forks-Ruamahanga Forks (well, not quite).

Beauty fine day. Early start but after some dithering we retreated from the stream route. Looked a bit swift. And deep. And discoloured. And slippery. Probably wouldn't be as quick as the 1.5- 2 hours Warren had hoped. So we took the notorious sidle track from behind the hut which would guarantee that we would miss Heather who was hoping to meet up with us for the next couple of days. No worries though as we had already agreed contingency plans. Nice orange markers. Soon lost track via a windfall and found the old ridge track instead. Dropped back down again through the bush. Who wants to lead now? Track generally in quite good condition but quite up-and-down and in-and-out; and watch out for ongaonga - oops too late. The track nearly claimed a broken nose from Lawrence slipping on an

innocuous-looking rock (a Pope's Homage to the Bastard Track?) but scored against Jo with a lense flicked out of her specs by a branch she was gallantly clearing off the track. A rare karearea (bush falcon) screeched at us from nearby trees. (Yeah, yeah. Just moving though – keep your feathers on.) By lunchtime we were still only 2/3 of the way along, so Plan B kicked in. Exit down the Ruamahanga to Mt Bruce. We tried the cellphone and amazingly were able to contact our transport.

Arrived at Cow Creek Hut after 6.5 hours of cruising along. Only Warren not numbed by ongaonga. Heather had waited until 2.00pm before deciding to visit Mitre Flats Hut. Nice day for it. Cow Creek Hut too hot. Excellent old campsite surrounded by tall beech trees. Mossy. Goodbye hut. Hello flies. Swim nice and refreshing. Does it get any better than this?

Day 5: Waingawa River – Blue Range (Kiriwhakapapa Road).

Another really nice day. So, which way shall we go out? How about Plan C? Blue Range has nice views back to Pinnacle Spur and is in nice bush all the way. Most pleasant. Mt Bruce route involves less climbing but is quite a long boring walk downriver and through farmland. FLW Toby "I'm not climbing another big-arsed hill". After reaching mutual agreement we crossed the river and headed downstream to pick up the Blue Range track. The old cableway site has been thoroughly cleared on both banks to make way for the replacement soon. Warren displayed solid leadership skills: "Keep your %#@! feet moving" (to rock hop the river.) "Just follow the markers here" (picking up the sidle track down river and promptly heading back down to the river at a slip). "Just dig your feet in..." (coming down a short steep slip, after a rock knocked down). "Ahh, there's the real track marker for up the hill. See, just like on the map." (so we could've gone downriver instead of following the first set of %#@! markers which are obviously for when the river is up a bit). marvelled at lack of undergrowth on uphill grunt (500m) – too dry perhaps? Warren (who had obviously been out in the bush too long by this stage): "It's like dancing with diva's... you can see right down the slope through the bush...". Smelt the flowers, played with map and compass to spot Arete and Mitre Peak and figure out where we were. Pinnacle Spur looked very innocuous so far away. As predicted by our compass stop we were barely 5 minutes from the top of the climb and the track junction amongst the goblin forest. Yuko's altimeter needs recalibration by 100m. Toby: "Baby steps really work, Warren". Easy going trough nice beech forest along this flattish ridge with a couple of nice lookouts to Mitre etc. Just a couple of little ups brought us to the Blue

Range Hut turnoff. Toby felt robbed that the track had sidled under the high point on Blue Range. Why go up unless you arrive a top? Yes, well if its any consolation the top is in bush and there are no views anyway. We dropped our packs at the junction and wandered down to lunch in the sun at the hut. Smelt the sub-alpine flowers. Amazingly no cellphone reception, even from a rock outcrop with good views to the Wairarapa and Mt Bruce. Oh dear. Shaky legs after the steep downhill to the carpark. Lawrence hitched a ride to the main road and made contact with our transport (apparently cellphone coverage is possible from the camping area, just by the stream behind the toilet block.) They had decided that we must be coming out to Kiriwakaapa because there was no real road where Warren had carefully described over the phone. All's well that ends well. Meanwhile some of us took turns to have a quick dip and wash-and-rinse in a wee "private" swimming hole just downstream on the bend.

Thanks for the yummy goodies provided by our drivers and the nice surprise party to end the trip. We finished off with dinner at the Eketahuna Pub in the salubrious (?) atmosphere of the Mellenskov Lounge. Ask for the PNTMC Special – Steam pudding with icecream on top. FLW Yuko: I think it was not "Medium".

Yuko Watanabe, Craig Allerby, Toby Bunn, Jo and Lawrence O'Hallaran, and Warren Wheeler.

Tararua Forks and Flies- Part 2, 18-19 January, by Warren Wheeler.

Only 3 of us were able to complete the missing section through to Ruamahanga Forks this weekend. We headed in over the Blue Range and reached Cow Saddle in 4 hours. From there we had no problems getting down the well-marked track down the slip ravaged stream to above the big right angle bend in the Ruamahanga River. Here the track shown on the old maps is not marked, (there is also no wire as also shown on some old maps) and in backtracking a little we missed the big sign heading down into the river (a couple we met later told us about this ...we also missed the chest deep pools in the first 500m of gorgy section upstream). We dropped into Clef Creek and scrambled up onto the high terrace where the old track was supposed to be and found easy going through the forest with some old campsites. We eventually dropped down to the Ruamahanga River after 3 hours from Cow Saddle. The river was relatively easy travel, crossing back and forth and occasionally making our way through the bush on low river terraces. After 2.5 hours we reached Roaring Stag Hut. It was 7.30pm. After a brief hello to a fisherman there we carried on upriver to the Ruamahanga

Forks and decided that it would be nicer to fly camp at the small hidden lake about 500m upstream. We found it quite easily via a well-trodden track up from the bend in the river, just downstream of the lake itself, which is in a hollow down off the high old river terrace. A bit after 8.00pm we set up camp above the river amongst the crown fern – no sleep walking tonight. After dinner and with darkness falling a faint shout was heard and Yuko was rescued back to the camp after getting lost coming back up from the river. Before turning in we watched the moon rising over the peaceful lake, with a lone morepork away in the distance. No sandflies or mozzies. Does it get much better than this?

A fine dawn chorus had us up early and after packing up we crossed directly to the Ruapae Stream through the tall podocarp and beech forest. Easy travel up the stream to a side stream that took us up in mossy steps almost all the way to the Roaring Stag track, just 50m from the track junction to Herepai Hut. The ridge would've been quicker but we had plenty of time today. Quite windy and cloudy further up on the tops. After dropping down the track towards the Putara roadend we stopped off for a swim in some nice cascade pools, with clouds occasionally blowing out the sunshine. Flushed with success after the enjoyable completion of Part 2 of our Big Trip, we arrived at the roadend at 3.00pm just as Michael our driver was about to put his boots on and walk up the track to meet us. Instead we left and checked out the café culture in Eketahuna – the café next to the old Post Office is recommended.

We were happy that we had not gone out to Putara Roadend in Part 1, two weeks before – it was overly optimistic to call the Arete Forks-Ruamahanga Forks a "medium" day and overall the grading for the original trip should have been at least Medium-Fit. A really nice route though with plenty of variety into parts of the Tararua Forest Park that we seldom explore. Thoroughly recommended. May it become a PNTMC Classic.

Craig Allerby, Yuko Watanabe, and Warren Wheeler.

Mikimiki Track - 12 Jan. By Fiona Donald.

Drove: via Mangamarie- more freshly laid seal than road! We noticed, at 30km/hr, how good the country looked that day.

The day: cloudy, warm with a slight humidity. Walked: at a steady, leisurely pace.

Lungs: got a good workout up the ridge.

Viewed: rata trees – rich red flowers; lush bush and rifleman birds flitting from branch to branch.

Discussed: philosophies, Film Society, Japan, the latest films etc.

Unusual sight: two mountain cyclists.
 River dip: Monica, Hilda and Fiona.
 Acoustics: excellent! All those at lunch clearly heard how cold the water was...
 Returned: steady rain.
 Oops: the sole and upper of one of Monica's boots parted company- Solution: Fiona's spare shoelaces and Neil's handy assistance = fixed boot.
 Eketahuna: adjourned for a late afternoon tea.
 Superb: variety, refreshing, relaxing, enjoyable and snoozing after lunch.
 People: Hilda and Graham Heap, Barbara Mare, Neil Campbell, Doug Strachan, Monica Cantwell and Fiona Donald (Leader/ Scribe)

Stanfield Hut, Jan 20. By Duncan Hedderley.

Four of us walked into Stanfield on Wellington Anniversary Monday. Though the weather in PN had been hot over the weekend, Monday was overcast with a bit of blustery wind. The forecast was for 'patchy rain', but the only patch we had was while we were at the hut.

Coming down the stream the water was not cold, Doug spotted several sights, like white lupins, and several patches of shattered black rock. We were back at the car by 1.30, much earlier than I had expected; so Neil suggested we drive back via Dannevirke's State of Art cafe. A good day out.

We were Neil Campbell, Doug Strachan, Monica Cantwell, and Duncan Hedderley

N.W. Ruahines trip report. (Jan 18-20) By Nigel Gregory

We met up at the Mobil station in Ashurst and piled into Graham and Janet's wagon for the trip up to Mokai Station. The group was Janet Wilson (trip leader), Graham Peters, Ben Allott (15 yrs) and Nigel Gregory.

Janet had graded this trip as fit and so was surprised when young Ben Allott called to ask if he could join her trip for the weekend!! Not wanting to discourage what was obviously a motivated young man, she called a few people, and after good references decided to let him join us. We really enjoyed having Ben with us and I was impressed with his motivation and fitness.

The weather report looked really good and I think everyone was eager to get tramping. We parked in the car park at Mokai Station and headed out over the farm towards a small dip in the side of Mokai Patea. Permission had been given for us to head straight for the track down to Iron Bark hut, making for a much straighter route. We tramped quite high up Mokai Patea to avoid scrub and gullies and as the park came into view we

could see the high points we would be heading for. The country looked quite beautiful and we were in good spirits, chatting as we headed to the start of the track.

The tramp down to Iron Bark was straight forward, with only a few small patches of stinging nettle to worry about. The day was warming nicely and there was just a hint of a breeze to cool us. At the hut Graham and Ben had a swim in the Whakaurekou River to cool off a bit. Afterwards we had our morning snack and Janet filled out the hut book. The inside of the hut has been completely lined with plywood and a new woodstove sits on a "flash" looking concrete pad. All in all a pretty nice looking hut.

We set off down the river to pick up the track up to Ohutu Ridge. We turned up the Mangatera River and found the DOC orange triangle. The track start is not at all apparent and we had to head up into the bush a bit before finding it. Perhaps there has been a slip or something. It was a hot grind up to the top of the ridge, pretty steep and stays that way. The track has been cut quite wide, almost road wide at places, but with quite a bit of nettle around to keep us awake.

The day was clear and the views were very impressive from Titapu. I thought Aorangi looked really beautiful. We also had a good view of Potae, where we would be heading the next day. After wandering along the top of the ridge for a bit we came to a well-marked sign indicating the track down to Waikotore Bivouac. The track down to the biv is very steep in places but well marked and quite pleasant.

It was our plan to camp at the campsite near the Biv but we had trouble finding it so ended up staying at the Biv site. We were all ready for some food and, speaking for myself, quite tired. The hut book at this Biv dates from 1991 and is not even 1/3 full. I guess it's a bit out of the way.

The next morning, Sunday, we were ready to leave at around 8:30am, not too early; we thought it was just right. The weather was good, a bit of morning cloud but nothing threatening. Everyone was in good spirits and ready for another full day of tramping, so off we set up the track to Potae. The track doesn't go all the way to the top so we left our packs on the track and went up for the views. The track down to Colenso hut is fairly well marked and was a comfortable and pleasant tramp. At Colenso hut we took a break to read the hut book and fill the water bottles for the reasonably steep climb ahead. On the way we detoured to go and see Lake Colenso, not a large lake but quite picturesque. The track between

Colenso hut and Unknown campsite is very well marked with the DOC orange triangles. The track starts out flat but soon becomes quite steep, and I was thankful for the many handholds provided by tree roots. The climb is only around 300m so is not that long. Before we knew it we were in the stream again and at Unknown campsite. This is a pleasant place with a really nice camping area just downstream from the Unknown. We were joking about a name change to The "not so" Unknown campsite, too much sun I guess. Janet and Graham prepared a great meal for us, with the cheesecake deserving special mention, it was really good cheesecake!! In fact Ben and Graham saved themselves a bit to eat for breakfast!! The next morning was to be a bit shorter day for us down the stream to Iron Bark hut, so we slept in a bit, and had an extra cup of coffee. It was a beautiful morning and we were in no hurry.

As we made our way down the stream Janet and I took the opportunity to practice some navigation, trying to determine where we were all the time.

There are two waterfalls on this stream. Heading down from Unknown the first one is quite easily traversed but the second requires a detour up a sidetrack. It is well marked going upstream but easily missed heading down. Sometime before the detour around the first waterfall I was initiated into the world of falling into a nettle bush, ouch! Definitely not recommended. Oh well, stuff happens.

As we made our way around the second waterfall up the sidetrack Graham told us that he had jarred his back. Being a staunch Kiwi Bloke he didn't seem to let it bother him, although I know that it must have been painful. Our easy tramp down the stream on the last day ended up having the most drama. The rest of the trip was rather uneventful with the last bit out over the farm seeming longer than coming in. All in all I think it was a great trip into a beautiful part of the Ruahines. We all had a great time. Good choice Janet.

Matanganui Gorge, Sunday. 26 Jan., 2003 by Doug Strachan

Rather than walking the Manawatu Gorge walk as scheduled, we took advantage of low river levels and walked up the Matanganui Stream instead. This was probably the first club trip to this location but, being a mere 38km from P.N., it won't be the last. From the end of No.1 Line (Pohangina), 10 of us descended a very steep track for about 5 minutes down to the stream. Then we splashed our way upstream through quite cold water. Sewoong's long trousers soon became wet, and I wanted to turn them into shorts with a Swiss army knife. He wouldn't let me, just because he bought

them the day before. We stopped for a lollie break, and Terry pointed out some possum damage on the black tree ferns. Elaine's legs also appeared to be suffering possum damage, but it was just a skin reaction to the cutty grass. We continued on, and the valley turned into a gorge, with some impressive cliffs. The going became tougher until our progress was checked by a waterfall. We had reached our goal after 2hrs. We then "back-paddled" to a sunny spot for lunch. I've taken some photos with a digital camera, so I hope to put one or 2 on the PNTMC web site. One shot shows Fiona with her hands in the air gesticulating. That was her explaining how she came to be wet from head to toe. I thought her falling in the water was funny until I did the same. Fortunately the day was warmer now, and the water refreshing. Monica's dunking was voluntary. Coming out, the time seemed to pass quickly. After fording water so many times, the logical post-tramp activity was to go to the Waterford Café where people indulged their alcohol, caffeine, and chocolate addictions. The Waterforders were: Sewoong An, Neil Campbell, Monica Cantwell, Christine Cheyne, Terry Crippen, Fiona Donald, Duncan Hedderley, Elaine Herve, Doug Strachan, Yuko Watanabe.

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