



PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217, PALMERSTON NORTH

Newsletter - May 2003

“Hill.’ Yes, that was it. But it is a hasty word for a thing that has stood here ever since this part of the world was shaped.” Treebeard (Lord of the Rings)

Portal to the Past: (Newsletter No1, Feb 1966)

Back in 1966, members were instructed to bring the following for weekend trips: “½ lb mince or stewing steak; 1 each potato, onion, carrot; small tin fruit; 4oz butter, ½lb bacon; sweet biscuits; cheese, porridge, 4d. loaf, vegemite, jam, sweets.”

CLUB NIGHTS

- May 29 **Glowworms & Waterford Café**
- June 5 **Committee Meeting**
- June 12 **Video evening**
- June 26 **Club Photo Competition**
- July 3 **Committee Meeting**



Club nights are on the second and last Thursday of each month at the **Society of Friends Hall, 227 College Street, Palmerston North**, at 7:45 pm **sharp**. All welcome!

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

**June 12 Club Night
Video Evening**
"Mountain Safety-River Safety" video. Please keep your feet off the seats in front of you, and refrain from throwing jaffas.

June 14-15 Maketawa Hut (Egmont NP) M
Elaine Herve 354 2499
Depart 7am. Weather permitting, the plan is to start at Dawson Falls and take the alpine route via the ski field, and then on *down* "The Puffer." The hut is large 'n' comfy. We'll return by Curtis Falls Track & Mountain House.

June 15 Waiopahu Hut M
Llew Prichard 358 2217
A gentle gradient up to this new hut in behind Levin. 7am start.

16 June User Group meeting
7pm Milson Community Hall
Come along to the Milson hall (part of the Milson Shopping Centre) on Monday, 16 June. There will be a broad and colourful rundown on what DOC is up to this year, and you can get answers to any questions you may have. Eh, What's up DOC?

June 19 Thursday Trampers
Liz Flint 356 7654

June 21-22 Midwinter celebrations
Kawhatau Base for all
Kawhatau Base, DOC. Depart 7.30am to see the return of our Mid-Winter Fest - including the infamous Mid-winter Dip on Sunday morning. On Saturday we will check out the ice thickness on the tarn at Colenso Trig (Easy, but steep) before the Feast. Camping is an option, but the house accommodates 12 comfortably and has its own generator. Contact Warren, 356-1998.

June 26 Thursday Trampers
Bev Akers 325 8879

June 26 Club Night
Annual Photo Competition
See notices for details.

June 28-29 Arete Forks M/F
Derek Sharp 326 8178
A Taranua tramp going over Dundas, and back via Cattle Ridge. Hopefully there will be snow. Going to Herepai Friday night may be an option.

Trip participants:
If interested in going on a trip, please contact the leader at least three days in advance. Trips leave from Foodtown carpark. A charge for transport will be collected on the day. Leaders should be able to give an estimate in advance. For general info or any suggestions for future tramps please contact Terry Crippen (356-3588), Janet Wilson (329-4722) or Andrew Lynch (325-8779).

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 ***

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

SUMMIT DAY **By Doug Strachan**

As you're tucking into a meal at the Waterford on May 29, or marvelling at glowworm bioluminescence, spare a thought for Hillary and Tenzing who reached the summit of Everest on this day exactly 50 years ago.

What does one do when one reaches the highest point on earth? Well, Hillary offered Sherpa Tenzing his hand but got a hug instead. Tenzing buried some confectionery in the snow to keep the Buddhist Gods sweet. Perhaps they had a glance around for the body of George Mallory (who attempted Everest in 1924), but that wasn't found until 1999.

The actual height of Everest is under question, but the number 8848m is the easiest to remember. The Himalayan range is uplifting up to 10cm each year. That means YOU still get a shot at being the first person to reach the highest point on earth!

The Tibetans call the mountain Chomolungma, while it goes by the name of Sagarmatha in Nepal. It seems almost sacrilegious that early surveyors named it "Peak XV." Thankfully it was renamed Everest in honour of George Everest, the then Surveyor General of India.

There Everest sits in a batter of snow, frying in the high altitude sun, with mountaineers drooling at it. Over a thousand people have climbed Everest now, and by this time last year 180 had died in the attempt. There is an ever-growing list of firsts, such as the first to climb it without oxygen, and the first to climb it without eyesight... but it was Hillary and Tenzing who stood on the roof of the world on the 29th day of May, 1953.

GLOWWORM ENLIGHTENMENT

By Doug Strachan

Once upon a time my brother was stumbling through the bush at night when finally he saw the bush open out ahead, and stars all around. When he went to step out of the bush, he actually stepped smack into a cliff face with glowworms on it. This developed within me a liking and interest for these sticky little stars. Glowworms are actually the larvae of flies, and are not worms. Possibly they evolved from fungus gnats. The NZ species is called *Arachnocampa luminosa* and we can recognise a similarity to the words "arachnid" and "luminous." Presumably the arachnid bit alludes to the fact that, like spiders, glowworms catch prey on sticky threads. A quick search on the web (pardon the pun) reveals that it is also a fitting genus name because bludger spiders sometimes hang around glowworms and catch insects that the glowworms attract.

Glowworms emit light to attract prey. Flying insects are drawn to the light, and get stuck in sticky hanging threads that the larvae produce. The lines are hauled in and the trapped insects eaten. You will be able to see both the worms and their threads when we visit the glowworms. The larval stage lasts about 9mths, then they form a pupa which hangs from a long thread. This stage lasts about 12 days. Winged adults hatch out, mate, lay eggs, and so the life cycles continue. Interestingly, the adults have no mouth parts so only live a few days.

There's something about light emission that fascinates us, spawning sun-worship, TV addicts and arsonists. Like moths, humans are drawn to the light, and there will likely be a good turnout on the 29th. If glowworms could just evolve to capture larger human prey... but let's not make light of this natural marvel of biochemistry. For the budding biochemist and entomologist within you, an explanation of bioluminescence (or "why do their bums shine anyway?") needs to be given. Basically, the waste product luciferin is acted upon by the enzyme luciferase, and the luciferin releases energy as light when it oxidises to oxyluciferin. That just means that it's a chemical reaction and, incidentally, not the same thing as phosphorescence. The fact that glowworms know all that chemistry just proves that they really are "bright sparks."

There are 5 habitat requirements to be met in order for glowworms to survive. See if you can identify them on your visit.

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

I've decided to make cryptic crosswords for the next few newsletters. If they prove popular, they could become a regular feature. As this is the first one, I'll keep it very simple. Ed.

Clues Across

1. A club.

Clues Down

1. Trampers do this in the mountains.
2. Trampers like fish __ chips.
3. Often drunk on tramps.
4. Said when eating scroggin.
5. Sometimes seen from mountain tops.

1	2	3	4	5
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Answers in next months newsletter.

DARWIN AWARDS

The Darwin Awards website is:
<http://www.darwinawards.com>

"The Darwin Awards honor those who improve our gene pool by removing themselves from it." The website has all kinds of stories, like the one about the terrorist who didn't put enough postage on the letter bomb and it got returned to sender. He opened it. The story below relates to climbing, although its authenticity awaits verification.

Worst case scenario: rappel "training."
 (original title: "Tied Off")

(Iowa) Several years ago, an adventurous pair decided to take their ropes and rappel off the Boone Scenic Valley Railroad train over the Des Moines river. Words can't describe how breathtakingly high this narrow train bridge is over the river valley. The open train ride over the abyss is both stunningly beautiful and somewhat nerve-racking.

Our adventurers had to be completely fearless, because they walked to the middle of this narrow railroad bridge, tied off their ropes, and began to rappel down. When the train came by on it's daily tour of the valley, their one mistake became apparent. They had tied the ropes to the sturdiest support possible: the steel train tracks...
 (Source: <http://www.darwinawards.com>)

NOTICES

Subs are Due! , New Members, Snowcraft, Photo Competition , Howlett's Hut

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES can be e-mailed to doug.strachan@xtra.co.nz or delivered to 1 Worsfold Lane, PN

NEW MEMBERS

Judith Kidd	W
Ph 354 8829	E
	L
Jenny McCarthy	C
06 376 8838	O
	M
Wara Teeranitamkul	E
354 8726	!!

COMMITTEE MEMBER E-MAIL ADDIES

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SNOWCRAFT INSTRUCTION 2003

Its time to think SNOW, and the clubs yearly snowcraft instruction programme. This programme is designed to equip club members and other trampers with basic and intermediate skills so they can safely get out into snow on winter trips, and alpine trips down south over summer: from straight forward walking on snow slopes to simple snow climbing and aspects of technical mountaineering. A progressive approach is used beginning with Snowcraft 1 assuming nil or only minor previous snow experience. Numbers are limited, so be in early.

The instruction consists of three weekends away, a fortnight apart, two at Mt Ruapehu and one at Mt Egmont, and three week night evenings (one prior to each weekend).

Snowcraft 1
 Weekend: 2-3 August (evening: Tues 29 July)

Snowcraft 2
 Weekend: 16-17 Aug. (evening: Wed Aug 13)

Snowcraft 3
 Weekend: 30-31 Aug. (evening: Wed Aug 27)

For further info, details on fees, and registration form: contact Terry Crippen 3563-588

NOTE FROM EDITOR

I, Doug Strachan, of arguably sound mind, am officially having a whirl at being editor of the club newsletter. This is my first effort. Do have a "propa-ganda."

REMINDER; SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE

Subscriptions for 2003/04 are due now. The fee is the same as last year.

\$30 adult
 \$35 family
 \$15 junior.

A junior subscription is available for donation to a needy person by our club Patron, Lawson Pither, if so required

ANNUAL PHOTO COMPETITION

It's time to sort through your slides, pull out the crème de la crème, and bring them along to the club's annual photo competition on Thursday, June 26. The usual rules for the competition apply:

- Entries must not have been entered previously.
- All entries must be related to tramping, climbing, or the natural environment.
- All slides must have a cross on the bottom left-hand corner of the mount (ie. top right-hand corner when loaded into the carousel).
- Slides and photos labelled with photographers name and entry category.
- Limit of 3 slides per person per category, but no limit on prints.

Categories:

1. Alpine (NZ). Predominantly alpine scenery in NZ (ie. Above the bushline)
2. Scenic (NZ). Pictorial interest in NZ hills etc. (ie. predominantly below the bushline)
3. Natural History (NZ). NZ flora & fauna or detail, eg. geology, ice formations, etc.
4. Topical (NZ). People in tramping, climbing, or skiing related activities in NZ.
5. Overseas Alpine or Scenic. Related to tramping, etc. overseas or Scenic.
6. Overseas People. Climbers or people met while tramping, climbing overseas.

The formats are; slides, b/w prints, and colour prints. Prints can be digital images, and do not need to be mounted. The system for judging winners is a democratic one – a show of hands, after the guiding advice of our guest judge, Murray Woodcock of Extraeye Photography.

There will be another interclub photo competition later this year, between MUAC and MTSC to think about. Consider yourself warned.

HOWLETT'S HUT

Howlett's Hut has recently had a new porch added to it. Although the hut is administered and maintained by the Heretaunga Tramping Club, DOC had funds to do the job. I'm sure that it was expertly built, and has made Howletts even better. At the same time, they helicoptered in the 500 KG of coal that the PNTMC has donated (thanks Derek for organising that, and thanks for the financial donations for it), and installed Tony's new Hut Log Book and Log Book holder.

SLEDGE TRACK OPENED

On April 6, the Sledge Track in the Kahuterawa Valley was officially opened by our PM, Helen Clark. Those of us who didn't make it to the opening can always join Terry's trip on June 1, and follow in our leader's footsteps.

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.

THIS LAND OF OURS

Population: 4 million

Land Area: 268,670 sq km

Latitude/Longitude (P. N.) 40° S, 175° E

Highest Point: Mt. Cook (3,764 meters)

If you dug a hole from Palmerston North right through the Earth, you would not come out in China, but in Spain.



TRIP REPORTS

Wharite, SAR X3, Hunterville Hills, Nelson Lakes Climbing, Oturere Crossing

Wharite Peak 2 March 2003 **By Fiona Donald**

Jo O'Hallaran's day trip to Purity Hut was cancelled so I offered to lead a tramp up to Wharite Peak.

Wharite looked magnificent against the clear blue sky. I stopped to collect Monica along the main Ashhurst road. We looked across the paddocks to see shrouds of cloud swathing the hilltops. Above the cloud we saw the blade tips of the wind turbines rhythmically slicing through the misty air thus making an eerie sight.

A leisurely 45 minute drive and soon we were at the Coppermine carpark. We commenced with an easy 30 minute walk along the main track; at the turnoff we met a deerstalker who warned us the track was slippery in places.

In fact, the track is very overgrown in numerous places, which is great if you want to use your observational skills to navigate your way upward. On this particular day the foliage was very wetting and scratchy. Watch out for the Toi-toi here - there's lots of it and it's renowned for cutting unsuspecting trampers' legs and hands. It's preferable to wear trousers. Along the way we saw glittery dewdrop gossamer spider webs, large dragonflies and

shy native flowers were often seen peeking out from under the flowing toi-toi skirts of grass.

We also saw beautiful views towards Dannevirke.

We reached the leatherwoods just in time to see the cloud rolling in and completely obscuring the view. We waited a while and it became obvious any view would be nil. We decided it wasn't much fun continuing onwards especially when Monica knew of an excellent swimming hole back near the car.

Monica's classic comment "I'm dying for a swim" sped us on until we were having a refreshing dip. Even I enjoyed my wallow and found the water cool for a change.

The trip's aim was to leisurely cruise along for 2 hours and return in about the same length of time. At 3.30pm the clouds parted to reveal the Peak again. If we had still been up there then we would have only waited 4 hours to see the stunning views. Monica Cantwell and Fiona Donald (Leader/writer)

SAR Training 29-30 March **By Derek Sharp**

I went on the Search Methods Training Course in Wanganui. After getting lost in Wanganui on the way there, I ended up being a little late. But to no worry. With Nick Coyne as the instructor, and with 10 enthusiastic participants, we had a very busy and enjoyable weekend.

We were quickly signed up to the Diploma in Search (Land) course run by SARINZ Ltd through the Tai Poutini Polytechnic. To qualify for this diploma, a person has to complete: Track and Clue Awareness, Tracking, Search Methods, Suburban Search, Search Team Leader, and Management of Land Search Operations. So this weekend was Search Methods.

We were soon busy learning about "lost person behaviour," "the 300m circle," and passive techniques for sealing the search area and attracting the lost subject. For this I understand Mr Whippy and fire engines are excellent ways of attracting young children! Then it was on to "sound lines," "sound light lines," and "sound sweeping." This proved quite a blast - earmuffs recommended! Later, it was off to the reserve at night for fun and games. Further studies looked at "purposeful wandering," and "critical separation" for contact searching (when all else fails).

Overall, a well worthwhile and informative weekend with great company and excellent food, cheers to the cook! And thanks to Nick.

TCA training report for Sat., 5th April. **By Nigel Gregory**

Present from PNTMC were Nigel Gregory, Janet Wilson, Graham Peters and Nigel Green and Richard Lockett.

Chris Hurring of the N.Z. police SAR, up from Christchurch, got things moving at 8:00 am sharp. There were around 25 people present, give or take from the local area.

Chris gave a well-presented PowerPoint lecture on his system for tracking people, TCA. Although this course could have been spread out over a longer period of time I found it to be really well thought out and enjoyed it a lot.

This part of the day was to be about 4 hours long.

The Police provided a delicious lunch for everyone, after which we traveled out the Balance Reserve on the other side of the Gorge for the practical part of the day.

We were divided into two groups and led to a roped area into which man made articles had been placed. The idea was to be able to tell the difference between bush and man made things. We were given some hints as to what to look for etc. For the most part it was pretty easy, but some objects were surprisingly hard to see.

For the second part of the exercise we were divided into groups of three or four and tasked to follow a track laid by one of the instructors. The group I was in, with Richard, was trying to follow a trail laid by Janet. She figured she had left quite a definite trail but I personally found it really difficult to follow in places.

All in all we had a great day.

Search & Rescue (Sun., April 6) **By Doug Strachan**

30 bods, including the PNTMC's Nigel Gregory, Graham Peters, Janet Wilson, Doug Strachan, turned up on the Massey Ring Road near Tiritea stream to learn "low angle rope and round robin training." I had no idea what that meant, but figured that low angles had to be safer than high ones, so agreed to participate.

"Low angle" simply means that the ground isn't very steep, but if you were to lose hold of a stretcher, it would take off down hill. Therefore, a rope belay is necessary. After seeing a demo, we split into groups and set up belays. First we had to find a solid anchor. This would normally be a tree but, being a group of hydrophobes, we chose carport poles. 5 carabiners, 2 prusik knots, an Italian hitch, and 4 figures of 8 later, we had a person secured in a position to belay a stretcher.

The set-up looked very Heath Robinson but appeared to work. The knots themselves were surprisingly simple to learn. Phase 2 was to try moving a real person in a real stretcher up and down a real slope. In an eyeblink, experienced members volunteered to be the injured party. They knew that

if you are actually in the stretcher, you don't have to carry the thing uphill through blackberry.

After practicing carrying a real person, we used an empty stretcher and all had a go at being the belayer. The stretcher carriers enjoyed "accidentally" dropping the stretcher to surprise the person belaying.

The round robin aspect of the training referred to learning about radios, and using a GPS (global positioning system). We programmed coordinates into the machine; a fiddly, exasperating task until you get the hang of it, and I heard the devices being abbreviated to 4 letters instead of 3. Once the GPS knew where we wanted to go, it was a simple matter to follow the arrow to each way station.

We can't end this report without mentioning the smoke bomb we let off. There was a lot of speculation about what colour the smoke would be. Green? Orange? Pink? Purple? Well, it turned out to be cloud-grey in colour, not the ideal hue for attracting an aircraft. We were, however, quite satisfied with the quantity of smoke produced.

I think we all caught the SARs bug today, thankfully not the viral version.

Huntermville Hills, April 13th **By Malcolm Leary**

With a cool morning and a fine day Edith, Terry, Shona, Kirsty and I headed for Otairi Station leaving two vehicles for the end of our tramp, then into Huntermville to meet the rest of our walkers - Warren, Craig, John and Michael. Leaving Huntermville by 8.30 a.m. we headed north to Watershed Road and our starting point. Departed from the cars at 9.00 a.m. we climbed uphill on a rough bulldozed track through open bush to the highest part of our tramp - Tauporae Trig at 776 metres. From here we had views over many hills to Mt Ruapehu to the north and Mt Taranaki to the west. Our travel was mostly on farm track following a main ridge, apart from one section of about 2kms where we cut around the

side of the hills by Earnslaw's Te Namu Forest. From here we were able to see the outstation of Mangapapa House, about 12kms from the front of Otairi Station. After passing the old airstrip we continued for several kilometres to a main bend in the ridge at the back corner of Otiwhiti Station where we found a spot for lunch. Having passed the halfway mark of our tramp in 3 hours a leisurely lunch break of almost an hour was had. We followed on along the ridge in Otairi beside Otiwhiti and eventually came to the metal road that goes out to Mangapapa at the top of Lake Hill - (where the stock take a steep shortcut) and soon after the station buildings and our cars came into view at the bottom of the last long hill known as Long Gully. Out of Terry's wagon we got our hot drinks and biscuits and sat down at the Shearers Quarters to enjoy it. There is some doubt about the length of the tramp that I thought was 24 kms. Warren had a pace counter on his trouser pocket that said 17.9 kms or 20,000 STEPS!! Terry referred to the map and said 18 kms. Some time I'll have to check it out on the motorbike. Whatever the distance it took just over 6 hours. We travelled back to Hunterville in about 20 minutes, had an ice cream and then the drivers went back to Watershed Road to get our cars. As well as Terry Crippen, Warren Wheeler, Craig Parker, Edith and Malcolm Leary we had Shona and Kirsty Purves, Michael Truebridge and John Gee-Taylor from the farmers tramping group.

Nelson Lakes Climbing, 23 – 27 April **By Bryan Nelson**

Group leader: Terry Crippen

Attendants: Elaine Herve, Heike Hahn, and Bryan Nelson.

Our group of four departed St. Arnaud by means of a water taxi across Lake Rotoiti at noon on Wednesday, the 23rd of April. After being dropped off at the Cold Water Hut, we shouldered our packs and started the tramp up the Travers valley to John Tait hut. A good track led through grassy meadows and forest. The afternoon sun hid behind the western mountains making for ideal temperatures. We reached the hut in four and a half hours in the shadows from the surrounding mountains. Heike produced a meal of spaghetti, followed by a desert of pudding from Elaine.

The morning of the 24th dawned over cast. The group departed the hut after breakfast to make the short walk to the Cupola Basin Hut where we would base ourselves for the next few days. The track started at a moderate grade with a short steep section right before reaching the hut. After two and a half hours, we were unpacking to settle

in as the clouds decided to give the landscape a drink of its own. Terry found the hut's water supply had been depleted, most likely from a spicket that had a very small margin of closure. We enjoyed a brew and snack in the comfort of our new temporary home. Then Terry and Bryan went to investigate the area for an additional water source. The area to the west proved not to produce any running water. To the south, some springs fed a basin with fresh water, but nothing within half an hour from the hut. The two returned with a squish in each boot as a step was taken. Elaine and Heike gathered extra firewood to ensure comfortable evenings. The remainder of the evening was spent in conversation and a relaxed atmosphere. Mt. Hopeless (2278) seemed to glow in the last few rays of sun that peaked through a sky that wanted to show off the heavens.

A quick breakfast was eaten before we struck out for the lofty goal of Mt. Cupola. A blanket of red crept down the mountain that seemed to welcome us. We worked our way to the south over tussock and up scree slopes to the base of the standard route on the north face. A series of steep ledges were negotiated to reach an intermediate scree slope. We followed the slope up to the left and then onto better rock prominent spur. This spur led us to a short easy summit ridge. At ten thirty in the morning,

we sat under a deep blue sky taking pictures and having a snack on the summit.

The precipitation of the previous day had dusted the mountains to the east with a thin veneer of snow which added to the beauty of the ranges. A slow decent was then made along the same route that was taken up. The rope was used to down climb the steep section before the scree at the bottom of the face. After eight hours, we returned to the empty hut for another evening of food and chatting.

Saturday morning started at half past five with muesli and a brew before setting out in the direction of Mt. Hopeless' south ridge. Heike and Elaine elected to play around on the scree slopes before the ridge while Bryan and Terry would try to complete the more technical ridge to the summit. Good progress was made onto the south ridge. The route then proceeded over a small steep step, where the ridge became more exposed. At this point an exit to the left that avoided a step down was missed. We decided it easier to abseil the fifteen meters to easier ground below. The pyramid of Hopeless kept us in

shadow as a slight breeze blew across the ridge. The ridge then turned slightly to the east. The right side of this part of the ridge proved easier than the ridge proper. We then encountered the crux of the route, up a steep chimney section on good rock. The rope was not used which added an element of mental composure for the fifty meters of exposed climbing. The ridge proper was then gained again, and led us to the summit. We shook hands at 10:15am in recognition of a morning well spent. The northern ridge led us to a steep gully down into a snow basin on the Hopeless Creek side. From there, cairns were followed down a series of steep ridges to the Valley floor. We had lunch and then continued the slog out to the main Travers Valley, back up past John Tait Hut, and on to Cupola Basin. We arrived before dinner in a little over ten hours after our departure. Once again we had the hut to ourselves after another fantastic day under a blue sky.

We arose at six and departed at seven on the last day of trip. A six hour walk back down the Travers valley was made under a cool overcast sky. The water taxi arrived as we finished lunch to take us back to civilization. A great time was had by all on a very successful trip to the scenic Nelson Lakes National Park.

Oturere Crossing, TNP, April 25-27 By Warapong Teeranititankul

Day One: Friday 25 April.

We departed Palmerston North at around 7 am in the morning on Friday. We went to Fielding on the way to pick up Richard. After stopping for breakfast at Waioru, we left for TNP. In from the Desert Road car park, at around 10 am, we (Richard, Yuko and I) followed the marked track to Ohinepango Springs, while Warren organised for his car to be stored in Turangi rather than leave it unattended in the car park. We were later joined for lunch at Waihohonu hut (1120 m asl.) by Warren who got back from Turangi just before we headed north to our destination. From Waihohonu hut, at around 1 pm, we followed the marked track north through open country, skirting the eastern flanks of Ngaruhoe and climbed up to Oturere hut (1360 m. asl). We arrived at Oturere hut at about 4 pm. The hut was quite full with only a few spaces left for us. A few minutes later, after we dumped our packs, we all went off for a rock climbing session. We all had good fun with the rock climbing, not knowing what Warren had in his mind for the rest of the trip, nor why he insisted we should all have a go with the practices. The weather was fine for the day except for the chilly

SW wind. We ended the day with a very nice dinner together with very tasty creamed rice. *We rounded off our dinner with a cup of cocoa and ANZAC biscuits.* Many thanks to Warren who prepared all the meals for the day. We went to bed around 9 pm.

Day Two: Saturday 26 April

We woke up around 7 am. After breakfast we left the hut around 8.15 am to explore the volcanic landscape around the Oturere Crater, including doing a circuit around the crater rim. Instead of following the marked track from Oturere hut to the crater, we agreed on an alternative option of climbing up the ridge, which took us 4 hrs instead of 2 hrs to reach the crater. Yuko and I started to realise the reason behind the rock climbing lesson the day before, as we had to use our hands pretty much all the way up the crater. From this point, we could see beautiful "blue lake" and nearby "emerald lakes" with an uninterrupted stream of people who were on the Tongariro Crossing on that day. Yuko was telling me that with so many people walking the crossing it was just like in Japan!! It was so beautiful and fascinating, the weather was fine, clear sky and not so cold like the day before. It didn't surprise us at all to watch someone have a swim in the Emerald lakes near the place where we had our lunch. I ended up taking so many photos, including the team photos. After lunch near Emerald lakes, we also did the cross country option. We dropped down from the crater, followed Warren's suggestion for the direction, and finally got back to the hut at around 4 pm.

We all had a very nice and yummy dinner. We owed much of the credit to Richard who kindly prepared all the meals (including yummy pudding) despite being the birthday person. Happy birthday Richard!!



Warren, Yuko and Richard posed for team photos with Ngaruhoe in the background.

Day Three: Sunday 27 April

Being the last day, I felt rather active compared with the day before, and woke up around 6 am in the morning. I was ready and was able to enjoy the sunrise at around 7am. After we had our breakfast, we packed our packs and left the hut at around 8.15 am, ready for another challenging day. Much the same as the day before, we chose the cross country option instead of following the same marked track back to the Desert Rd, as we had several hours to spare before we had to be back at the car park around 4.30 pm in the afternoon. After several hours of two steps up one step down, we reached Waihohonu Spring where we stopped for our lunch. Warren had a swim to refresh himself here, while the rest of us choose to wait until we got home for a shower. After several hours of cross country walking, we finally got back on the track just west of historic Waihohonu hut. We spent a few minutes checking out the historic hut which was completed in 1904, almost a century old from today.



Warren, Richard and Yuko at historic Waihohonu hut.

After a comfort stop at the new Waihohonu hut, we headed back to the car park and finally reached it at around 4.30pm. We stopped at Taihape for dinner and got back home at around 9 pm.

Thanks to Warren who kindly spent a lot of his time giving me a lesson on rock climbing and how to use the Southern Cross to tell the time. Although I have to confess that I only understood

about only half of what you told me due to language difficulty.

Many thank again to Warren, Richard and Yuko for this wonderful escape from city life.

Members: Warren Wheeler, Richard Lockett, Yuko Watanabe and Warapong Teeranitamkul

NASTY WEED IN NATIVE BUSH: *Tradescantia*

Tradescantia also goes by the common names of “wandering willy” and “wandering Jew.” The latter name is still common, but may go out of use in time as it is politically incorrect, especially as the plant needs to be exterminated. Better to call it *Tradescantia*. *Tadescantia* is a royal pain in the bush, and is named after John Tradescant, who looked after the gardens of Charles I. The full botanical name is *Tradescantia fluminensis*. *Fluminensis* means “from Rio de Janeiro.” Dogs often have a bad skin reaction after coming into contact with this plant down by the Manawatu River, where it is abundant. The weed is also common in native bush remnants. It forms a carpet that smothers ferns and tree seedlings. It is extremely difficult to eradicate as the succulent stems snap readily into sections, with roots forming at each node. You have to weed the same area repeatedly to eliminate it, whether you are weeding by hand or using chemicals. The only consolation is that the plant doesn’t form viable seed in N.Z.

Tradescantia has dark green, shiny, pointed leaves. The leaves have parallel veins. The white flowers have 3 petals. Novices sometimes confuse *Tradescantia* with Periwinkle (*Vinca major*). The latter also forms a mat, but on inspection is quite different, having rhizomes, and leaves that are opposite rather than alternate. The difference is most obvious when the plants flower. *Tradescantia* has white 3-petal flowers, whereas Periwinkle has mauve flowers. You can find both plants growing together near the Te Matai Rd end of the bridle path along the Manawatu River.

If you have *Tradescantia* in your garden, don’t compost it, and don’t dump it anywhere. It has to be burned or buried deeply. It’s smothering our forests, and must be getting spread by the activities of humans, road machinery and animals. Don’t get bits of it on your pack, boot laces etc...



Photo source: The NZ Garden Weed Book