



PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING AND MOUNTAINEERING CLUB INC.

P.O. BOX 1217, PALMERSTON NORTH

Newsletter - November 2006

CLUB NIGHTS

Club nights are on the second and last Thursday of each month at the Society of Friends Hall, 227 College Street, at 7:45pm sharp. All welcome! at the club night: Please sign the visitor's book.

9 Nov Club Night
Richard Heerdegen
Weather or Not

We have had a look at the stars, now it is time for the weather. Given our obsessive weather map watching prior to the week of a long dreamed of trip; this presentation gives club members an excellent opportunity to seek further knowledge about this key component of any adventure.

16 Nov Committee Meeting

30 Nov Club Night
BYO Slides & Epics

As we head into the Xmas rush this is your opportunity to show us some of your favourite slides and epics. If you have yet to use the club digital projector this is your chance. An informal evening to reminisce about some of the great trips of the year.

Articles to Lance gray.family@actrix.co.nz or post to 37 Parata Street, Palmerston North (by 20th of the month).

TRIPS

Nov 4-5 Kawekas M
Pat Janssen 021-516-966

The Kawekas lie to the west of Napier/Hastings with access from the Gentle Annie Rd. Providing distinctly different terrain from that of the Tararuas and Ruahines with much broader tops. The scene of the Kaweka Challenge this area has good and not so pleasant memories for PNTMC members! Contact Pat for further details.

Nov 5 Toka Trig E/M
Peter Darragh 353-0922

Accessed from close to Sixtus Lodge, just north of Apiti, the summit of Toka can be reached by looping the Knights and Shorts Tracks making this a particularly interesting day out. Contact Peter for further details.

Nov 11-12 Herepai Hut E
Warren Wheeler 356-1998

Join Warren for an easy overnight trip to the Tararua Forest Park's most northerly hut accessed from Putara Road in behind Eketahuna. Walk in does involve one stiff climb but the views from just above the hut will make this a distant and delightful memory by trips end. Contact Warren for further details.

Nov 12 Ruapae Falls M
Richard Lockett 323-0948

Has often been talked about, but now there is finally some action. This will make a fascinating day trip as this area has often been used for navigation practice by club

members but because we spend so much time playing with maps and compasses we never actually got around to walking further up Ruapae Stream to have a look! Join the others for a cup of tea at day's end.

Nov 18-19 Maropea Forks M/F
Graham Peters 329-4722

Maropea Forks is generally accessed from the Sunrise Hut roadend with the route first to Top Maropea Hut and then dropping down to the stream all the way to Maropea Forks Hut. Guaranteed numerous cups of tea on Sunday morning so contact Graham.

19 Nov Sunrise Hut E
John Feeney 354-2940

A great hut to visit in the Ruahines with so much to see on the way to the hut and just as much fun, depending on conditions, to explore just past the hut. Accessed from the Wakarara Rd north of Dannevirke this is always an excellent day out. Contact John for this popular trip.

25-26 Nov Totara Flats E/M
Tony Gates 356-3588

Totara Flats Hut is one of the newest additions to the comfortable Tararua Huts on offer. If you have been to the new Roaring Stag Hut you will know what we mean. Totara Flats is an easy weekend trip with plenty of things to look at should you choose to fossick around. Contact Tony for further details.

Nov 26 Atene Walkway M
Mary Crow 06 327 4556

Join Mary for a visit to one of the few truly accessible tracks near the Whanganui River National Park. Potential views of Mt Ruapehu as well as an old "Oxbow" of the Whanganui River. The track itself is a half circle that climbs then follows a ridge before descending to the road again. A full day out that is distinctly different from the typical Ruahine and Tararua fare. Contact Mary for further details.

Trip participants:

Contact the leader at least 3 days in advance. Trips leave from Countdown 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 Tony Gates (357-7439).

Trips

Easy (E): 3-4 hrs *Technical skills reqd (T)*

Medium (M): 5-6 hrs *Instructional (I)*

Fit (F): about 8 hrs Fitness Essential (FE): >8 hrs

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)

NOTICES

PNTMC's FIRST 40yrs

The task of dissecting 40yrs worth of newsletters, and organising the information, is coming along well. However, the goal of finishing the project this year is impossible to attain. After hundreds of hours of work, I am perhaps 80% of the way there. A sustained effort over the summer should see a final product (on disk) ready early next year.

You will, for example, be able to find files containing all Coppermine Creek trip reports, or all interclub debates over the last 40yrs. With over 400 newsletters, there are a lot of trip reports to cut, paste, reformat; and read to find highlights. Now, if you will excuse me, I have to get back to a virtual tramp up the Orongorongo.

Doug Strachan

"Saddle – Up"

3-6th January Ruahines Trip

Early notice for a trip in the Ruahines to get you back in the right frame for a return to work. This trip intends to visit the Pohangina Saddle, Sawtooth Ridge, Rangiwahia Saddle, Waipawa Saddle and Armstrong Saddle. Contact Warren Wheeler to secure your position in the team ph 356-1998.

Interclub Club Photo Competition Results

The Annual Interclub Photo Competition was hosted by PNTMC on 28 September.

NZ Scenic

1. Ruakituri Wilderness
– Martin Lawrence (PNTMC)
2. Oroua River – Tim Swale (MTSC)
3. Dundle Hill – Alla Seleznyova (MTSC)

NZ Alpine

1. View from Esquilant Bivy
– Bethany Heppner (MUAC)
2. Ruapehu Crater Rim – Tim Swale (MTSC)
3. First light, Mt Cook
– Bruce van Brunt (PNTMC)

NZ Natural History

1. Powelliphanta snail
– Alla Seleznyova (MTSC)
2. Mt Cook Lilies
– Bruce van Brunt (PNTMC)
3. Native Slime – Travis Holman (MUAC)

NZ Topical

1. Blowhole – Vincent Romaric (MUAC)
2. Dang! 90 mile beach (abandoned car)
– Bruce van Brunt (PNTMC)
3. Snowboarding
– Caroline Freissinet (MUAC)

Overseas Scenic

1. Cerro Torre – Tony Gates (PNTMC)
2. Everest – Andy Gifford (MUAC)
3. Allgauer Alps – Terry Crippen (PNTMC)

Overseas People

1. Bolivia Badlands – Kay Dennis (MUAC)
2. Chef at the Refugio
– Tony Gates (PNTMC)
3. Sign Reader -Terry Crippen (PNTMC)

Overall Medal Tally

Place	PNTMC	MUAC	MTSC
Gold	2	3	1
Silver	3	1	2
Bronze	3	2	1
TOTAL	8	6	4

Our guest judge Paul Gummer from UCOL selected the winners and explained the technical, aesthetic and emotional reasons

for his choices to the small but attentive audience.

The competition was based totally on 21st century digital projection, with Prints and Slides now going the way of the Dodo....at least for group viewing and competition purposes, where the easy portability of digital images and low cost have distinct advantages.

However a “Skite Gallery” of some winning prints from PNTMC showed that for sheer viewing pleasure it is still hard to beat a real image, which one can admire, discuss, and contemplate at leisure over a post-mortem tea or coffee.

Thanks to our sponsors for the Prizes, which included a book on North Island Tramping from Mountain Equipment, a couple of Beanies and some chocolate bars from Swazi, boxes of Rose’s Chocolates from Melodies New World, and gift vouchers from Bivouac, E-pics Photo and Digital, Foto First, and Bruce Watt Photography.

Check out the winning images on our website www.pntmc.org.nz

Request for new (or recycled) Newsletter Editor

It has been nearly two years looking after the PNTMC newsletter so it is time for a change. Anyone who is interested should contact President Wheeler for a person specification and job description. Remuneration package not available at time of writing. I will continue till someone is ready to give it a go or is press-ganged.

Cheers

Lance

Notices from Janet

1. Contorta Slaughter is not looking like a “goer” this year so please don’t plan for this event this December.
2. Janet will be unable to lead the Triangle Hut trip on 9-10 December. Looking for a volunteer to lead this trip.

DOC Volunteers – Mt Taranaki

Sign up for a summer holiday with a difference !

The Department of Conservation is offering volunteers two week's free accommodation at two prime holiday destinations in the Egmont National Park - Holly Hut (4-8 Dec 2006) and Lake Dive hut (12-16 Feb 2007). Volunteers will get first hand experience at hut and track maintenance.

Previous experience with a paint brush and outdoor work would be an advantage. You will also get to experience the magic of monitoring kiwi calls at night and surveying for a threatened plant found only on Egmont.

Volunteers will need to provide their own tramping equipment, wet weather and sleeping gear. You will be supplied with food, tools for the job and supervision.

From the President's PC

Spring has sprung and many migrants have returned from their northern sojourns in Norway, Ireland, Siberia, Holland, Japan, or Korea.

With summer fast approaching we need your help to fill the January-June 2007 Events Card. Janet and Tony will be chasing you up for trips if you don't get to them first. Please contact me with any suggestions for club nights.

It is pleasing to report that we won the Interclub Quiz hosted by MUAC at rather short notice on Monday 9 October. Those without email regrettably may have missed out on the opportunity for a fun night out at AgHort 1 lecture theatre – MUACs normal meeting venue.

MUAC got everyone into teams of 4 or 5 so that meant there were three MUAC teams against the one from MTSC and PNTMC (who actually had six or seven members). There was a good mix of written and oral questions using Powerpoint, and a couple of "practical" sessions involving changes of

clothing, and tying boots different ways. Well done PNTMC (The Motley Crew).

We also did well in the Interclub Photo Competition back in September (see Report in this Newsletter), although it was a near thing with MUAC actually taking more Gold. Check the PNTMC website for the prize winners.

Looking forward again, there are some changes in the wind. Lance Gray is looking to stand down as Newsletter Editor in the New Year so if you would like to have a go let me know. Alasdair Noble is off to the UK for 6 months at the end of November and Martin Lawrence has kindly offered to stand in as Treasurer.

Sadly we note the tragic death of Brian Lawrence recently. Many older members will remember Brian, who for many years hosted the End of Year BBQ at his place in Penny Road. On a brighter note I gather that Doug and Maho are expecting a sibling for Minami.

Also, the Club has received \$250 from St Peters College for services towards helping students achieve their Duke of Edinburgh Awards, thanks largely to Andrew Lynch's leadership.

Meanwhile the Committee has decided to donate \$100 to the Beetham Hut Trust in Mt Cook National Park. And we are supporting half the fee for four members to attend and FMC Leadership Course shortly. This was already heavily subsidised by FMC so the total club contribution was only \$160.

We hope to have the FMC membership cards shortly so you will be able to replace your discounted Annual Hut Pass in time for lots of summer tramping.

May the sky be blue
And the path be true.

Warren Wheeler
President PNTMC



Meguru takes time out for a bit of skiing in the Ruahines courtesy of a certain Mr Gates!!

TRIP REPORTS

Ngauruhoe “Snowcraft Four”, Rangiwahia Hut, Howletts Hut, Sunrise Daytrip, Stanfield Hut, Tongariro Circuit, Waterfall Hut, Ins & Outs of Huts.

Mt Ngauruhoe – “Snowcraft Four”

9 Sep

By Meguru Inoue

For some reasons we changed our first plan of Tappy in the South Island to Ngauruhoe.

It was like a snowcraft course 4 because five of us; Alasdair, Murray, Barbra, Tim and I all had taken part in the snowcraft course.

Being greeted by the bright moon we; Alasdair, Murray and I left PN at 4:30 am. Not to oversleep the morning I prepared 3 alarm clocks. I was looking forward to climbing Mt Ngauruhoe. That shape reminds me of Mt Iwate in the northern part of Japan where I lived for ten years before coming to NZ.

We departed the car park at 7:30 and headed to the Mangatepopo Hut where Barbra and Tim were waiting for us. At that time we could see Ngauruhoe but when we arrived at the hut the mountains were covered with clouds.

After walking along the Mangatepopo Stream we started climbing up step by step. The higher we climbed up the weather was getting worse. It was getting foggy and started snowing. The visibility was about 30m so Alasdair advised us not to be far away from each other. We just kept climbing zigzag.

My first peak in NZ! Mt Ngauruhoe became my real first peak in NZ I think. Actually my first peak was Mt Holdsworth. Last year

when I visited to NZ for two weeks where I took part in the mountain running race with my friend. The weather was rainy and foggy. I was not sure where was the top so I asked the man who was standing around there "Is this a top?". And then I just kept going ahead.

We also couldn't see anything from the top of Ngauruhoe. It was windy and snowing. After staying there for a couple of minutes we started descending. The snow was so sticky that we had to knock it off our crampons with ice axe every ten steps.

We had lunch near the junction of the way to Mt Tongariro. After that we headed to the carpark and arrived there at 16:30. We had a good time. Thank you for organising our tramping to Ngauruhoe, Alasdair.

We were; Alasdair Noble, Murray Gifford, Barbra Cowan, Tim Kannegieter and Meguru Inoue

Rangi Trip
10 Sep
By Malcolm Parker

The weather forecast was quite grim. It did not sound pleasant at all. When we assembled at Countdown we accepted the possibility that we may simply be going for a drive to the Rangi carpark only to turn around and come home again. But it was worth going for a drive anyway.

So we headed off. And it wasn't pleasant when we arrived at the carpark. But worth a crack! So we all threw on the wet weather gear and headed off. The small diversion around the slip was a little larger than the last time I was here a few years ago. It's a bit of a scramble up and around and down. But at least we were out of the wind. There has been a bit of work down on the far side of the bridge since I was here last too.

As we plodded up we discussed the options DOC is considering ie move the hut or not move the hut. Fortunately we were out of the wind most of the way up although the last little stretch at the top from the stream across to the hut was quite unpleasant when we were actually exposed to the wind at its worse.

And on to the hut for a bite to eat and a brief discussion on the merits of heading on further. The longer we stayed in the hut the more convinced we all were to simply head on back down again

And it didn't take much more convincing to make a slight detour and finish the day off with a coffee at the Waterford. We were; Warren, Duncan, Barbara, Malcolm and a couple of guests from England, Tom and Hillary.

Howletts Hut
16-17 Sep
By Meguru Inoue

This tramping was my first Ruahine tramping. Now I can tell Ruahine from Tararua ranges but 4 months ago I couldn't (5 months has passed since I came to PN). I'm really enjoying my PN life. Thanks PNTMC!

Because of the weather, we changed the first plan of Syme Hut, Taranaki to Howletts Hut, Ruahine.

Day1: P.N - Kashmir Road - Daphne Hut - Howletts Hut

Day2: Howletts Hut - Tiraha - Howletts Hut - Daphne Hut - Kashmir Road - P.N

I found that we need a special technique to go through the Kashmir Road. On the way to a carpark a steep gravel road prevented my car going ahead. "It's Warren's turn!" Experienced driver Warren cleared the difficult point and brought us to the carpark.

We departed the car at 10:00. The weather was much better than I expected except for a strong wind. I often feel that the first 1 hour walking is the hardest time in a day because of overspeed and not being ready for tramping mode. 2 hours walking brought us to the Tukituki river side. We had a lunch there.

My first time river crossing in NZ! I'm gradually understanding why the people in NZ wear shorts in the mountains. It's good for crossing rivers. Wearing trousers, I had to roll them up. On the way to Daphne Hut we saw

a big trout! In Japan we can see two kinds of trout in mountain rivers, but I have never seen any that size.

After taking a rest at Daphne Hut we headed to Howletts Hut. The way to Howletts was so steep that I could easily understand the reason why animals live in a mountain with 4WD. I followed their way.

Warren told me some kinds of plants, one of them was a leatherwood tree. Its amazing brown leaf looks like real leather. I took some brown leaves home to my friend's boys as a souvenir. One week later I would know the real meaning of the leatherwood tree when I was tramping with Tony Gates in Hikurangi Range.

A very lovely hut was waiting for us. We arrived at Howletts Hut at 16:30. The day was a Warren's birthday! We enjoyed a cup of sparkling wine, a bottle of Tui beer, foods from Norway and Sweden (Warren's souvenirs), talking and night view of towns below. During the night the sounds of strong wind and hail woke me up a couple of times but I was happy because I was under the roof and in a warm and comfortable sleeping bag.

Next morning everything seemed well except for strong wind. After having blueberry and ginger porridge (original porridge a la Sweden, it was good!) we left the hut for Tiraha.

A wind was blowing so strongly that we had to lie down often on the ground not to be blown away. Near the top of Tiraha was covered with snow but there was no need to use crampons.

Because of fog and strong wind we decided to turn back from near the top.

On the way back to the hut when I was amazed at the depth of the valley Warren told me the name of the ridge, Black Ridge.

After enjoying a cup of soup at Howletts Hut we left there at 11:00. We had lunch at the river side again. By the time we were back down at the car, Warren had to stop and wait for me several times because his legs are longer than mine. Thank you for waiting

Warren, and for arranging this tramping! It was very windy but lovely early spring days.

We were Warren Wheeler and Meguru Inoue.

Sunrise Daytrip **17th Sep** **By Peter Wiles**

A decision was made while traveling through southern Hawkes Bay to change the destination from Longview to Sunrise. The westerly wind was strong enough on the plains, but on the exposed ground climbing up to Longview we would be blown about something else and frozen as well. With Sunrise, the bush provides protection all the way except for the last 50m to the hut.

We left the DOC carpark around 9am, crossed the style and headed over the initial farmland in bright sunshine. Soon we were into the bush and climbing up the well graded track. After passing a couple of people on the track and a hunter and his dog who had managed to get out of Top Maropea (with difficulty in the wind), we stopped for morning tea about 10ish.

Tina kept worrying that she was going too slow, but Peter had his work cut out keeping up.

We arrived at an empty hut about 11am and tackled an early lunch. There were a few patches of recent snow amongst the bush. Another couple arrived a few minutes later. After lunch and a short snow shower, we decided to briefly sample the full extent of the wind on the exposed ridge behind the hut. A few minutes was more than enough and trying to take a couple of photos was a challenge to remain half steady even on the leese side of the ridge.

After thawing our hands back at the hut, we headed down. We had not gone far before we ran into a group of about 25 (busload) of folk from Hastings – average age about 65. Not a bad effort.

Lower altitudes meant warmer temperatures and less wind. We were driving back down the road by 3pm and stopped at Onga Onga for a coffee.

Tina Bishop & Peter Wiles.

Stanfield Trip

1 October

By Malcolm Parker

It was nice to go on a tramp where I didn't have to use my raincoat. Made a great change. I hope I get used to it!!

We had all remembered to adjust our clocks for day light saving too. I hadn't been in to Stanfield for some years – or is it Standfield – so it was quite a shock to see how much the carpark area had changed.

We wandered up the ridge track initially. Stopping frequently to play with, I mean, undertake training on the use of the new GPS. Makes map and compass work really come alive!!

We continued playing with it all the way to the hut where we had a leisurely lunch.

We headed off down the river after lunch. What a difference this was too. The flooding has really made a mess of it.

But we were back at the car in reasonable time and made our way back to Woodville for an ice cream and a brief look at the antique shops.

We were; Malcolm Parker, Warren Wheeler and Duncan Hedderley

Tongariro Circuit

8 Oct

By Warren Wheeler

This was supposed to be the Ngauruhoe Trip but forecast high winds made a change of plan rather attractive. Our Tongariro Circuit started with a 6.00am departure (its actually daylight then, despite Daylight Saving), breakfast stop at the Angkor Wat in Waiouru (the old Highway Robbery - recommended),

clear views of the mountains as we drove the Desert Road (hmmm...maybe we should have gone to Ngauruhoe after all...), turned off at Rangipo to Ketetahi Carpark on north Tongariro (hard to spot the sign low down on the grassy verge – we drove right past), up the good track (some rather giant sized steps,

but a lot of new money spent on what looks like a conveyor belt) to Ketetahi Thermal Area (hissing steam and boiling pools), straight up through the tussock and exposed scoria rock patches, then off the edge and across a gully of snow (to try out our ice axes, no crampons required), up to lunch out of the wind just below the rim of North Crater (views out over Lake Taupo),

across snow in North Crater and an Inverse Traverse of the 75m deep (ex-GPS) explosion crater, a bit icy near the top (dig in, Richard, use your edges....Got no edges, the soles are too old and rounded...use your heels, Richard..), quite spectacular ice build-up on the windward edges of bare rocks, snow patches in the base of the crater, sinking slightly in the soggy scoria just-melted, kicking steps up the snowy side slope until it got a bit hard near the top again, stepped off onto convenient rock, across to south rim of North Crater (apparently the crater is so flat because of one big welling up of lava that set solid)

and another kick up (anyone else want a go?...no..no, your size 16's are doing a great job...yeah, right..well), carried on up to Tongariro Summit mostly on the exposed rocky ridge at a pretty gentle grade, enjoyed views of Ngauruhoe clearing light cloud,

followed a few footprints along the poled rim route and dropped off into Central Crater on the steepest snow slopes we could find (yee-hagh!!),

plodded across the snowy crater and up onto the rim to Blue Lake, checked out the thickness of the ice on the lake (maybe 300mm – it was definitely more than the 200mm we chipped out with our ice axes), spelt out HELLO in the few cm of snow on the ice, departed downhill on the Tongariro Crossing Track at about 4.00pm,

peeled off wind jackets at the top of the zigzags to the hut, met a weary looking AUTC group resting at Ketetahi Hut (yes, Ngauruhoe was very windy and extremely cold on top), cruised on down to the carpark chatting with the odd AUTC person we passed on the way, arrived at 6.30pm back to the Pajero (all in one piece still - us too,

except for one blister – first time for everything Richard),

rubber-necked the fiery clouds between Ruapehu and Ngauruhoe as the sun sunk slowly in the west, dined at Waiouru at the Dining Rooms beside the public loos, lights on as dusk settled into dark and home by 9.30pm. Jolly good trip.

We were Meguru Inoue, Terry Crippen, Pat Janssen, Richard Lockett, Warren Wheeler :-)

Waterfall Hut 23-24 Sep By Meguru Inoue

"It's a beautiful day!" our trip began with a morning call from Tony and the day became really beautiful day like he said. "Beautiful!!" I wonder how often we used this word in this tramp, maybe more than 100.

We enjoyed not only tramping but also skiing in the middle of Ruahine Range (my first time skiing in New Zealand!!). This tramp was filled with lots of fun and adventures.

Day1: P.N - Purity Hut - Wooden Peg (skiing) - Iron Peg (skiing) -Iron peg Creek - Waterfall Hut

Day2: Waterfall Hut - Pinnacle Creek - Iron Peg (skiing) - Purity Hut - P.N

After chatting with a farmer for a while we departed the car at around 8:00. Not to scare mother sheep and lambs, we went through a farm carefully before arriving in the new Purity hut at 10:00 and had a break there.

We head to Wooden and Iron Pegs for skiing and a cup of coffee at a mountain cafe. We enjoyed skiing there for 3 hours! We just enjoying like a child. A cup of coffee at the top of the mountain was great!

Down the Creek

Iron Peg Creek wasn't too difficult to tramp down, with lots of avalanches in the gully making it like a wide road over the rocky creek. We saw some Rannunculus flowers- beautiful yellow flowers and shiny green leaves. There was a little leatherwood to

tramp through, and a few plants known as "Spaniards" to tramp past. Mostly, the creek was pretty easy, and soon, we were at the Kawhatau River. A little up river, and Waterfall Hut awaited us- a cosy hut with an open fireplace. We made a good fire, good dinner, and slept well.

On Sunday, we left a Waterfall hut at 7:00 and head up to the Pinnacle Creek. The weather was foggy and windy. From about half way up the creek we walked on the snow. We could walk without crampons. Tony found a dinosaur egg on the way to the ridge (a perfect round stone!). An hour and a half of walking brought us to the ridge.

We kept walking along the ridge to Iron Peg. Windy and foggy weather made another world and view. We could see a patch of blue sky sometimes. Beautiful! On the way to the Iron Peg we checked the place where we were not to miss the "V-notch". After we passed the V-notch we found our foot prints on the snow we left yesterday. We had to feed some food to our stomach. We found porridge lasted about 3 hours.

Skiing and coffee time again! We enjoyed a cup of coffee at a mountain cafe on the top of the Iron Peg and enjoyed skiing to our heart's content. We could see more patch of blue sky while we were staying there. We went for a walk to Mt Mangaweka and we found a small blue lake on the way, we named it 'Lake Tony'.

After enjoying skiing 3 hours, we packed our bags and headed to Purity Hut. We stopped at the hut to have a coffee break and went our way home to Palmerston North.

At Tony's house a cup of nice coffee and two lovely cats were waiting for us.

Thank you very much for arranging this tramping and skiing, Tony.

We were; Tony Gates, Meguru Inoue

The Ins and Outs of Huts **By Anon.**

Courtesy of Doug Strachan

Let's start from the top. The ROOF functions as an opossum pissoir, channelling the urine to a septic TANK. The septic tank is located above ground, usually on a stand at the side of the hut.

The tank seldom overflows as trampers have the habit of opening a cock at the base of the tank to release the urine/rain mixture.

They believe this liquid has restorative powers after a period of sustained activity.

After imbibing the precious fluid, the hut is entered via the DOOR.

The door mainly serves as an entry point for opossums seeking (a) shelter from foul weather, or (b) food offerings left behind by trampers.

Trampers have the habit of leaving the door ajar upon departure from a hut. Occasionally a party of trampers do pull the door closed, which is rectified by wind and a faulty lock.

In the rare event that the door jams shut, possums have an emergency access route known as the CHIMNEY.

The chimney is situated above the FIREPLACE, but is constructed in such a way that only about 5% of the smoke from the fire leaves the hut via this route. This smoke serves to alert opossums that humans are still in residence. The remaining smoke fills the hut and serves to keep the humans in the habit of leaving the door open.

A trip report in the May 1997 newsletter describes a pot belly fireplace that is operating well: "we had to use some No.8 wire to make a grate, then on lighting the fire,

plumes of smoke came billowing out the back. Windows were opened but proved useless against the quantity of smoke produced by the burning leatherwood, eventually we evacuated, unable to return for about 15mins."

Trampers sit around the fireplace reading, and writing in, the HUT BOOK, which could equally well be called a brag book.

It generally contains comments like, "we got here in 1 hour 23 minutes and 2 seconds," or "I shot 15 deer on my way to the bog."

The hut book is actually a cunning device introduced by one Mr Ress, an unsung hero who single-handedly prevented the demise of tramping.

He was greatly concerned that trampers were becoming lazy, plodding along slowly, and getting out of bed later and later.

In introducing the hut/brag book, Matt (his first name) introduced an element of competition to tramping.

Matt's other great achievement was to introduce sleeping devices that make one's overnight stay in a hut far more bearable. These sleeping aides, now known as MATTRESSES, in honour of Mr Ress, demonstrate Matt's utter genius.

Superficially they appear to further demonstrate that tramping is in decline, with trampers being softer than ever.

However, thanks to Matt, trampers are moving faster than ever, and have even been known to depart early for tramps, solely in order to secure one of these much-sought-after foam sleeping aides before somebody else beats them to it.



Meguru & Alasdair atop Mt Ngauruhoe

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