

Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.

www.pntmc.org.nz

P.O. Box 1217, Palmerston North

Newsletter - March 2008

Club Nights

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

13 March South Korean National Parks Bruce van Brunt

Bruce has made several study trips to Korea. He will talk about his visits to different areas.

20 March Committee Meeting at Anja's

27 March AGM & Show and Tell

The Annual General Meeting will start promptly at 7.45pm and will feature a report on club activities by the President and a fiscal report by the Treasurer. Nominations for the Executive and Committee will be accepted on the night. Following the AGM you are invited to give a short "show and tell" about a favourite item of gear (see Notices on next page).

Trip Notes

Trip Grading

Trip grades depend on many factors, especially weather and terrain. A reasonably proficient trumper should be expected to do the trips in the following times:

Easy (E): 3-4 hrs
Medium (M): 5-6 hrs
Fit (F): about 8 hrs
Fitness Essential (FE): over 8 hrs
Other grades: Technical skills required (T) & Instructional (I)

Trip participants

Contact the leader at least 3 days in advance. Trips leave from Countdown car park. A charge for transport will be collected on the day. Leaders will give an estimate in advance.

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

Note to partners, parents or friends of members:

If a club trip is late returning, please do not worry unduly as there is probably a good reason for the delay. If you are in any doubt, please phone one of the Overdue Trip Contacts or Trip Coordinators:

Mick Leyland	358-3183	Terry Crippen	356-3588
Janet Wilson	329-4722	Warren Wheeler	356-1998

Upcoming Trips

1-2 March

Waipakahi Hut, KFP M/F
Chris Tuffley 359-2530

On Saturday we'll take the Umukarikari track in to the hut, enjoying fantastic views of the Central Plateau volcanoes as we travel along the Kaimanawa tops. Coming out on Sunday we'll travel down the Waipakihi Valley, splashing our way back and forth across the river before finally taking the Urchin track back over the Umukarikari Range. Departing at 7:30am on Saturday.

2 March

Whakapapaiti Hut, TNP E
Trevor King 356-4557

Summer on the Mountain. Down the Whakapapaiti Valley off Mt Ruapehu's Round the Mountain Track from Top of the Bruce Rd. Exits at the Chateau or alternate Silica Rapids circuit. It should be a very pleasant downhill walk of medium length. Photography stops guaranteed! Leaving PN at 7 a.m.

8-9 March

SAREX M/F
Warren Wheeler 356-1998

This is the annual Search and Rescue Exercise for the Region. We will have at least one team of four so if you wish to hone your existing skills or become involved as a SAR volunteer please give Warren a call to find out more. Participants may be deployed to the search area by helicopter, and will have a chance to learn and practice search skills including radio use, track and clue awareness, search methods and first aid. Come prepared for camping out overnight.

8-9 March

Triangle Hut M
Barry Scott 354-0510

This medium grade trip into the Ruahine Ranges takes us up onto the tops and down into the headwaters of the Oroua River. We will be going in via Deadmans Track and Mangahuia (1583m) and returning next day by a direct route back up onto Mangahuia from saddle at 1037m that bypasses the gorge downstream of Triangle.

9 March

Makairo – Coonoor E/M
Fiona Donald 356-1095

Depart 8 am from Countdown supermarket carpark to Makairo road end. It's a closed, abandoned road that we will walk on towards Coonoor. Mainly easy travelling with some boggy patches. Great views, bush and wildlife. Depending on interest levels we may have two groups for an easy or E/M trip. Please phone Fiona by Thursday 6th March.

15-16 March

Tutuwai M
Anja Scholz 356-6454

Leaving Countdown at 8 a.m. Many tracks lead to Tutuwai Hut in the Southern Tararuas. Depending on participants' fitness and wishes, we'll make our way to the hut from Wall's Whare and back via one of the approaches to Mt. Reeves.

16 March

Island Range Circuit M
Andrew Lynch 325-8779

For details contact Andrew.

21-24 March

Easter Egmont M
Warren Wheeler 356-1998

Leaving PN at 7 a.m. for the carpark at Dorset Falls Visitor Centre. Plan A is to take the high level route to Waihua Gorge Hut, then around to Holly Hut, over to Pouakai and around to Maketawa Hut (or direct via the high level track), and on day four back to the carpark (with an optional early morning moonlight summit ascent). Other options may arise depending on the weather and group consensus.

19-25 March

Easter South Island Climbing F, T
Terry Crippen 356-3588

Two possibilities: either Paske etc, at the southern end of the St Arnaud Range, up the head of the Rainbow; or Una and Duessa (with the only permanent snow patch on the M31 sheet) on the Spenser Range via Lake Tennyson. We will head down in the Pajero Wednesday morning, crossing on the Bluebridge, returning late Tuesday. A total of four persons are essential for this trip to go, so contact Terry ASAP for ferry booking details.

29-30 March

Retaruke E/M
Edith Leary 06-322-8533

Leaving PN at 8 a.m. This is a great opportunity to explore one of the historic farming areas along the Wanganui River that were abandoned about 70 years ago. On Saturday we will go to a lodge at Whakahoro, inland from Owango (\$30 per night, camping also available). In the afternoon you can go canoeing to see blue ducks on the Retaruke River

(\$60) or just explore the area around Wades Landing. On Sunday we walk about 3 hours up the valley along the Kaiwhakauka Track to the remains of Cootes' house, passing other abandoned farm sites along the way. We return back the same way. To confirm bookings please contact Edith as soon as possible.

30 March

Tramway Creek E
Richard Lockett 323-0948

Leaving PN at 8 a.m. we will turn off at Shannon and head up the winding Mangahau Road, past the power station and hydro lakes to Tramway Creek. Easy going up the picturesque creek, which was used to haul logs out. At the head of the stream we follow a new section of Te Araroa Trail along the ridge before dropping back down a spur to our cars. Ideal for those wanting to try an easy off-track trip.

5-6 April

Roaring Stag Combo E
Barry & Christine Scott 354-0510

This is a combined trip with the MTSC. The idea of this overnight trip is to make full use of the weekend by mowing the lawn and weeding the garden on Saturday morning (yeah, right), walk into Roaring Stag Hut in the afternoon, have a very pleasant evening meal at the almost new hut, sleep it off and then return to Palmerston North on Sunday morning. It is a 3- 3.5 hours from the Mangatainoka Rd end (also called Putara Rd) into Roaring Stag Hut in the northern Tararuas. We will leave Palmerston North at mid day.

6 April

Botanical Tramping - Keebles Bush E
Peter van Essen 355-9076

Leaving PN at 8.00 a.m. for an interesting morning exploring the bush remnant and restoration plantings in this private scientific reserve, located just south of Massey.

Notices

Articles for the newsletter

Send by the 20th of each month to Anne at dahlia44@xtra.co.nz or to 44 Dahlia St, Palmerston North.

From the Presidents PC

What a great run of marvellous weather we've had this summer (with apologies to all you drought stricken farmers out there). There has certainly been a lot of bright blue sky, as you can see in the photos in this newsletter and others in the Photo Gallery on our website (Godley Trip). Still a bit of surprisingly cool weather about, with snow in the South Island and cold cloudy weather defeating a trip up to Toka in the Ruahine Ranges (see trip reports in this newsletter). *Note to self – must pack warm clothes, hat, gloves, raincoat and overtrousers for all trips...well, most.*

On Saturday 23 February a few of us tramped through with the Minister of Conservation (Ms Steve Chadwick) and had a cuppa tea with the Prime Minister at the opening of the 15 km Mangahao-Makahika section of the Te Araroa Trail. I am pretty sure that none of our club members were involved in the actual track work, but Christine Cheyne has been involved with the organising on the local Trust. Congratulations go to all those involved for the success of their volunteer efforts on what is a very nice medium grade trip in a previously under-developed portion of the Tararua Forest Park. Brochures are now available with details of the track.



Meeting the PM at Makahika Photo Doug Strachan
Left to Right: Chris Saunders, Craig Allerby, Doug Strachan, PM Helen Clark, Anja Scholz, Christine Cheyne, Warren Wheeler.

Annual General Meeting

I look forward to seeing you on 27 March, all keen to do the business after successful Easter Trips. Once again I will be standing for President, and most of the current Committee Members are keen to carry on too. New Executive and Committee Members are welcome so if you are keen (or know someone who could be) then now is your chance.

If you would like to know more about what is involved then contact me or one of the other committee members (listed on the back of the Newsletter).

Nominations will be accepted at the Meeting or may be forwarded to the Secretary beforehand. Nomination forms will be available at the AGM – nominations require a seconder, and the signature of the person being nominated for the stated position (President, Secretary, Treasurer, Committee).

The evening will conclude with a “show and tell” – this is your opportunity to give a short presentation about a favourite item of gear – prizes will be awarded for the best story.

Discount at Bivouac shops

In order to obtain the discount on gear purchased at Bivouac shops make sure you have your up-to-date FMC card available - otherwise: No card no discount!

This is to ensure Bivouac staff that you are a paid up bona fide member of PNTMC, or similar organization that is part of FMC (such as NZAC).

Trip Reports

Roaring Stag Day Trip

2 December 2007

By Peter Wiles

A lovely fine day saw us arrive at the Putara car park and prepare for the walk ahead. We were glad of the bush canopy to protect us from the sun as we walked along the Mangatainoka. After crossing the second bridge, the pace slowed a little as we began the climb up to the ridge crest. The reward for the effort up the hill was morning tea at the track junction at the top. Then we continued along the ridge and finally dropped down to the hut beside the Ruamahunga River.

We arrived at the hut for a well-deserved lunch. While eating our lunch, Tim and Barbra emerged from a spot of fishing in the pools a little downstream. After a chat and the consumption of our comestibles, it was time to return up the track. It was rather cloudy now, but with no sign of a shower, we returned along the track in pleasant conditions to the car park.

Team: Sandra Roland, Margaret Westlake, Nicolas Braud and Peter Wiles.

Godley Campaign - Sibbald Revisited

4-12 January 2008

Words and Photos by Peter Wiles

After spending a relaxed evening at Nigel Green's Ashley Forest home, a team of six plus dog departed in a convoy of three vehicles for Tekapo where the team reassembled briefly under punishing blue skies and heat for an early lunch and refueling the vehicles for the long crawl up the Godley Valley. After crossing the Macaulay River (low and easy) we began the 25km plus 4-wheel drive route up the Godley riverbed, initially making for Red Stag Hut.

The three dedicated hunters and dog unpacked and took up residence in the hut, while Nigel, Peter and Terry sorted gear and drove another couple of km to McKinnon Stream where they heaved substantial loads onto their shoulders for the walk in the blazing mid-afternoon sun up McKinnon Stream. We arrived at the campsite that we had used several years

previously, after about 2 hrs of staying on the true right.

After a comfortable night's rest we were up at 4.30am and away about 5.30 for an attempt on Sibbald (2811m), the major peak on the dividing range between the Godley and the Macaulay Valleys. Peter, Terry and Nigel Scott had attempted it a few years ago.

We initially used our headlamps and after about 30min crossed the McKinnon before climbing up a grassy rib then sidling up over scree towards the ridge north of Sibbald. We made sufficiently good progress staying in the shade for most of the time to the ridge. At the ridge top (about 2400m) we reached the snow. Then crampons on firm frozen snow for a climb of about 300m. We reached the northern summit (about 2800m) about 11am in perfect conditions for a well-earned lunch. For Terry & Peter this was déjà vu, we both had done it all before on our previous attempt.



Approaching Sibbald from the north at about 2300m

Standing on the northern summit, one is confronted with a precipitous drop of about 50m into a notch before the ridge rises up to the true summit mass to the south. It was this notch that had thwarted our attempts last time. This time, based on how Don French and Dave Henwood had overcome it, armed with the correct gear, time at hand and superb conditions, it was the intention to overcome the notch and attain the high peak. The solution is to leave a fixed rope for the return scramble.

An abseil was a strong possibility for the descent into the notch. However, there was a problem that we had not planned for – there was a lack of reliable anchors. So Terry went exploring, attached to a belay of sorts secured with a combination of 3 anchors, and reported that after climbing down about 20m, we could scramble down scree for the remaining 30m.

Nigel opted to stay put, but Peter and Terry headed down and over to the main summit. Once on what we thought was the true summit, we became unsure exactly which was the highest, as there was a series of

towers of similar height. Never mind, the middle one would do and after summit photos we returned via our fixed rope to rejoin Nigel. Then it was time to return to camp, taking a slightly different snow route that yielded a good glissade. We were back at camp in good time for dinner.

There was no hurry the following morning, although a walk down to the vehicle before it got too hot was preferable. We caught up with the others who had had successful days shooting thar. We also managed to get a weather forecast on the vehicle radio, which confirmed that the weather was deteriorating. So back to Red Stag, where Nigel joined the others, leaving Peter and Terry to reorganise their gear and head by vehicle up valley to Separation Stream.

With light packs containing overnight gear and a couple of days food and cooker we then tramped up to Godley Hut in about an hour. The hut was empty (not frequently visited nowadays) but had a useful library of climbing mags and issues of Time that were dated post our previous visit in 2003. It rained and blew a good proportion of the night. The hut has a mountain radio which we hoped would provide the weather situation, but alas we could not get it to receive or transmit. Indeed, it was so old that we were not sure that they still use that band! We spent a restful day mostly reading.

Mid the following day, in clearing conditions we packed up and headed back to the vehicle. We repacked our gear, and got the forecast from the vehicle radio. Again in mid afternoon and blue sky and carrying a substantial load Peter and Terry set off up Separation Stream. Again we made use of the true right and after about 2 hours we had made sufficient progress to warrant looking for a possible campsite.

As this was new territory for us and as one gets further up the valley, it becomes progressively more rocky as the glacier is approached, we were a bit apprehensive of our tenting options. When in doubt – do a recky. We found a possible site, then another, then another, then the dream site – flat mossy ground, no engineering or gardening required and a stream of cold clear water less than 2m from the tent. Choice spot, and as it turned out, only 30min walk from the base of the Separation Glacier.

We were away next morning at about 5.15am in cloudless conditions up the valley to the glacier, which was an imposing sight in the morning gloom.

We had expected a messy endless pile of rubble, but rather the complete opposite – a wall of ice 30-50m high looming up and spanning across the valley, with the stream (river?) pouring out a gaping opening in its base.

We worked our way up the rock gully beside the ice and the lateral moraine until we could get onto the ice

proper. Then we contemplated the icefall ahead and the south face of D'Archiac towering over everything. The route guide suggests keeping to the true right. This was in fact the only option and there was essentially only one feasible but slim route around the mess. Before long we were in the neve and much relieved to get the access problem behind us.

We now focused on Mt Coates (2400m) directly opposite D'Archiac across from Separation Col. Near the top of the snowfield, we got onto the rock ridge and scrambled up the last 50m to the summit. It was just 9.15 am. We had all day to spare to enjoy the scene.



**Approaching Separation Glacier.
Summit of D'Archiac on left, Mt Coates on right.**

We now took particular note of the route planned for the following day to Mt Forbes (2583m) which is located between the heads of the McKinnon and Separation Streams. We needed a route across the moraine covered bottom section of the glacier.

We dropped down to Separation Col where we rested up for awhile, had lunch and a sleep. Then back down the glacier, but near the bottom we again did some reconnaissance for the best way to cross the moraine, which we cairned for the morrow.

Next morning was a bit different – we were immersed in fog and low cloud which delayed our start briefly until it was a bit lighter. We managed to cross the stream while it was still low, very close to the base of the glacier without getting our feet wet and headed up the valley amongst the rocks. The cloud hampered our route finding. Which was the correct gully to take? We thought we were about right and headed upwards but came to bluffs.

While waiting for a possible clearance, Terry had the smart idea of scrolling back through the photos we had taken the previous day to see whether we could recognise where we were. This tended to suggest that we were a little too far west i.e. had not gone quite far enough, so with hints of lifting mist we detoured and

resumed progress upwards. This proved correct and before too long we emerged from the rocks onto gentler snow slopes and clearing sky. We cramponed up about 600m of snow before the summit of Mt Forbes was fully evident. (Once again numerous towers with similar heights.)

Disaster very nearly struck out of the blue only 2 or 3m from the top when the narrow section of rock ridge Peter was straddling suddenly collapsed and he tumbled over the side along with the rocks. And this was at an elevation of over 2500m. Terry said *buzzer* and contemplated his emergency locator beacon. However Peter luckily fell only about 3m before somehow stopping and announced he was OK apart from a substantial bruise and a couple of grazed fingers!

With the drama out of the way, we had a leisurely lunch on the summit out of the wind as the remaining cloud gradually evaporated. The descent was straightforward and at the bottom we made use of the cairned route across the glacier to reach our camp.

Next day was again fine, which we could have used to climb. Why not D'Archiac? We had both climbed it back in 1981, so there was no urge to do it again. We opted for the lazy approach by heading back to the vehicle; dumping all but overnight gear and walking back again to Godley hut. Although a lovely sunny day, the westerly wind had returned.

We walked back to the vehicle the final morning and drove back down valley. Again sunny but with a strong wind bringing up clouds of dust lower down the valley near Lake Tekapo. At Lillybank Station we turned east and headed up the Macaulay Valley to get an idea what that route (road?) was like. We gave it away about 3km short of the Tekapo Trust hut, when the route became too vague and rocky to follow. Local knowledge required, perhaps? Next time? After lunch we rolled back to Tekapo.

The climbers and/or hunters: Nigel Green (and Jack the dog), Terry Crippen, Peter Wiles, Aaron, Phil, Keith.

Upper Otaki Camping 19-21 January By Graham Peters

The genesis for this trip was Janet's having been in the middle Otaki and coming back waxing lyrical about a bounty of idyllic campsites beside the crystal clear, trout filled river. This three day summer weekend seemed the ideal time to check this out. As well as Janet and myself, Warren (keen as mustard as usual) signed up, and Tony Gates arranged to meet us after going in and staying Friday night at Nth Ohau hut.

The plan was a reasonably early start from the Poads

Roadend to head up the long and dreary Waiopahu track then via the old Oriwa biv site down into the Otaki arriving just upstream of Murray's Creek. We had a bit of an early lunch at Waiopahu hut before heading up to Waiopahu. Here, helpfully, were some bits of twine leading through the scrub and leatherwood into the bush.

Once in the bush there was a groundtrail of sorts leading down to a saddle then along the ridge to the old biv site. Here there is now a small watertank and a similarly small roofed structure to catch the water. A bit further on, from Oriwa, we were to head down the ridge heading SE into the Otaki. When we arrived at that high point there was some pink tape leading in a direction we didn't expect so didn't follow. About one minute later we decided to check the compass and changed our mind and followed the tape that led us onto the spur we wanted.

When we hit the Otaki we checked for any sign of Tony's passage - nothing. We were just discussing when we would see Tony when we heard a shout and looked back to see an orange blob approaching with funny branch-like appendages by its head. Yes it was Tony and the funny bits were the antlers of a deer he had shot a wee way back upstream.

We were going to camp just around the corner on some broad flats and were just making our way onto them when Tony acted like a Pointer - there was a hind with fawn. The wind was upriver hence they didn't get our scent. Just as we were about to do our bit for pest eradication, the wind changed, their noses went up and they briskly trotted off into the bush leaving us to find a very nice campsite just in the bush edge, overlooking the river. After dinner, Tony wandered downstream with his rifle seeing another three deer, shooting one.

The plan for the next couple of days depended on the weather and as it was good we decided to head up river and spend the next night at the headwaters bend. Heading up river it was idyllic - the river low and often sun dappled through the overhanging bush with reflections that gave budding photographers plenty of chances to attempt arty farty photos.



Upper Otaki River Reflections (Tony Gates)

When we reached where Tony had shot the deer the previous afternoon, we found he'd stashed it in a nice cool crevice so took the opportunity to harvest some meat off it.

Seeing as it was lunchtime, it was suggested that we build a fire and have venison kebabs for lunch. And so it was and they were very, very nice.



Venison kebabs coming right up

At the headwater bend, we found a good campsite on a terrace just above the river and a spa pool 20m upstream. Later in the afternoon Janet and Tony wandered off on another search and destroy mission. We thought we heard a shot then about 15 minutes later Janet came back carrying the head of Tony's latest kill. Never being one to miss out on free food, I went back with Janet to harvest some more meat.

Next day we decided to head up the stream opposite our campsite and intersect the Te Matawai track at Butcher Saddle. There had been some talk of going down Butcher Creek but we understood there was enough waterfall sidling to discourage us from this. With a stroke of luck we intersected the track about 10m east of the Yeates track junction. Perfect. A late morning tea when we hit the Ohau then lunch when we met the Nth Ohau and quite a few people. A few spits of rain as we walked across the farmland and then a superbly refreshing swim in the Ohau by the Poads Rd bridge.

Thanks to the team of Warren, Tony and Janet for making this a particularly enjoyable trip.

Totara Flats 26-27 January 2008

"My Tararua Addiction" By Tony Gates.

It seems that I can't get away from the Tararuas these days, despite the lure of the Kawekas, Ruahines, Rimutakas, and elsewhere. My club trip planned for

the Rimutakas wasn't well subscribed, and I wanted to photograph the Jumbo Holdsworth Trail Race, so the trip was altered at the last minute. After watching competitors rushing the Holdsworth trails, Tricia Eder (and Petra), and myself enjoyed a pleasant overnight tramp into the Tararuas instead.

The trail race was exciting to watch, with James Couborough smashing all speed records by zipping up to Jumbo hut in 59:10, then continuing over Mt Holdsworth to complete the tough circuit in 2:16:15. Fleur Pawsey, a Coast to Coast 2007 winner, broke the woman's record time in 2:58.

Our tramp was undertaken at a somewhat more leisurely pace! Totara Flats was reached in about 4 hours, which was probably about half the distance that James had run (and twice as easy too). We had plenty of time for a swim in the big river there. We met Richard Lockett at the hut, with his Duke of Ed pupils.



Ready to leave Totara Flats Hut (Tony Gates)

Sunday was a bit damp. Gloomy forest only added to the mystique of the Tararuas. We ambled back out Totara Creek in good time, and were soon again back in sunshine. A cuppa tea with the Holdsworth Lodge caretaker ended our easy tramp.

Toka Trig **6 February 2008** **By Craig Allerby**

We headed off at just after 8am from Countdown carpark with the five of us fitting comfortably into Trish's double-cab ute with her german-shepherd Petra on the back. The weather was looking okay, but on reaching the carpark at the end of Limestone Rd the cloud was hiding the tops with a brisk south-easterly breeze blowing.

With our boots and packs on we headed off with the stile proving to be a bit of an obstacle for old Petra to get over. We crossed over Coal Creek without getting wet socks, due to its low level. It was then up to the track junction and the decision was made to take the Knight's Track up. With a second crossing of Coal

Creek it was then the start of a steep grinding climb. A few rest stops and drinks were needed, with a nibbles and drink stop on one of the very few flat sections on the track through the beech forest. We climbed on moving out of the beech forest into the cedar and then into the leatherwood.

The temperature was starting to drop as the higher we went and the more exposure to the cold south-easterly we received. A light misty rain had started to fall so just before leaving the leatherwood we put on our raincoats. As we left the partial protection of the leatherwood behind and moved out into the tussock grass and scrub our hands started to freeze with the full exposure to the chilling wind! Anja who had succeeded only once in five attempts to reach Toka Trig was keen to carry on. I was happy to go on as well.

Wisely, Warren suggested we leave it for another day, as it wasn't really that very inviting further on. So we decided to head back down to Coal Creek for lunch. After a satisfying lunch, Warren suggested we could go down the creek instead of taking the track out. Warren having travelled down the creek a good 10 years previously, tried to recall whether there was any obstacles of note! A big log jam or maybe a waterfall? Duncan preferring to keep his socks dry said he would take the track option while Anja, Trish, Petra and myself decided to go with Warren's suggestion, down the creek.

The travel was good with the lower level of water flow than usual. We then came across a band of smooth rock with a little bit of a drop off down to a deeper section of water below. Anja sliding down off the rock managed to land in the water in a squat position, unfortunately getting her shorts wet! She was then able and willing to go into the deeper water to help Trish get Petra down who wasn't so keen to jump.

Further on, oh no! the crux, a waterfall. Warren found a way down by sidling around and then down the left side of the waterfall. After a bit of deliberating, Trish decided it wasn't a go for Petra and with Anja having a feeling of maybe not today (!) headed back up the creek to take the track out. So I headed down the waterfall and carried on with Warren, a bit of a log jam to clamber over the only obstacle en route. We finally arrived where the track crosses the creek to find Duncan patiently waiting. A little wait then Anja, Trish and Petra arrived and it was a short walk back to the carpark.

With another suggestion from Warren we decided to stop off and check out the Glow-worms Track. We had a short, steep drop down to the stream, then we followed it passing through several wonderful chasms with the odd trickle of cold water down the back of your neck sensation! Eventually we came to a track with a gradual climb through the bush, popping out

just below from where the track had started. A worthwhile loop track, only about 600m long.

So into the ute and off we headed for yet another suggestion from our diverse (perverse?-Ed.) President, London's Ford for a look and a swim. A nice spot for camping with a good swimming hole, although the cliff here has had a small collapse and left blocks in the nice deep parts. Anyway, with the cold south-easterly wind a swim didn't appeal to anyone apart from Petra retrieving sticks and pieces of wood tossed into the river by Anja and Warren. It was then on to the Cheltenham Dairy for a yummy ice-cream and back home. Thanks to Trish for driving us around and Warren for a bit of variety.

We were Anja Scholz, Warren Wheeler, Duncan Hedderley, Craig Allerby, Trish Eder and Petra.

Waikamaka Hut
9-10 Feb 2008
By Tony Gates

Our plan to visit the gorgeous Waterfall hut and Weka Flat was somewhat curtailed due to a recent injury. Waikamaka Hut was chosen as a suitable and easier alternative destination, still giving us a chance to breathe good Ruahine air and taste pure Ruahine water. It was obvious that the big draw card for the area, Sunrise Hut, was popular on this weekend as we ambled up the track.

We took the Waipawa Chalet track from the saddle, then straight up the Waipawa River. It was a move from pleasant forest shade to harsh Hawkes Bay sunshine and wide open boulder fields, and a fair sweat up to the saddle itself. We ambled down to Waikamaka Hut to relax there for the afternoon under grey skies. A good spot.

Sunday was a bit overcast and damp. There was a neat rainbow (with it's own reflection in the sky) down valley. We departed the hut about 7.30 am, and strolled back up to Waipawa Saddle, then Three Johns. Sunshine appeared for a while, with storm clouds not far away. They held off till after we had finished our tramp for the day. There was some easy scree to descend into Middle Stream, which we followed as it wound steeply down. A prior trip had confirmed the lack of waterfalls in an at times steep valley.

At one open section, we noted the old hut site. DoC had removed this a few years ago due to its limited use. This corner of the Ruahines felt fairly remote.

Near the farmland (well, reverted old burnt off and logged forest and seldom grazed pasture), we met two trampers heading out from Smiths Stream Hut. This too was due to be removed, but DoC had a change of heart, so it remains. It's quite historic, being in near original, 1950's condition. DoC have ensured that the

track from the Waipawa River to Smiths Stream hut is well maintained and signposted.

We skittered along the last few paddocks, arriving at the car just after mid day. A pleasant medium tramp.

We were Peter Wiles and Tony Gates.



Middle Stream *(Tony Gates)*

Beehive Creek Walkway
Sunday 10 February
By Doug Strachan

At one point 17 people had their names down for this trip. Monica's and Noel's dog ate rabbit poison, so they stayed home to nurse it. Three more pulled out, leaving a dozen of us: Jessica Leberman, Michael Hudgeson, Emma Doyle, Tricia Eder, Mia (9yrs); Mio, John and Emma (2yrs) Petch; Maho, Doug (Leader), Minami (2yrs) and Conan (8mths) Strachan.

The day before, my family had participated in the Mayoral Cycle Challenge. After the ride, various spot prizes were given out. This was followed by prizes of \$200, \$100, \$50... and the grand prize of a new bicycle goes to... Jessica Leberman. Unfortunately, she was no longer there, not realising prizes were to be given out. The bike ended up going to a little boy.

I met Jessica for the first time on Sunday and demonstrated my psychic abilities by telling her I knew that she a) took part in the cycle challenge and b) left early after the ride.

Driving into Ashhurst, we saw a procession of Minis. Later, at home, I was to ask Maho "There were about 6 or 7 Minis weren't there?" "There were five. A red one, a yellow one, a blue one, a brown one, and a sky blue one," came the response. Crikey!

Anyway, we dropped Mio and Maho off at the start of the track with the two 2yr olds, Emma and Minami, to give them a head start. The rest of us started walking from the car park, at the other end of the track, along the road. Another car club passed us – a number of big 4WD type vehicles. It was hot walking along the road, and thank goodness no cars passed us on the dusty unsealed section.

We climbed the farmland part of the walk, and met up with the others. As we carried on, the kids negotiating their way around poo and thistles, the rain began. The prolonged drought that had farmers so worried chose our tramping day of all days to break. At first it was refreshing, but soon we took shelter under a large pine and ate Xmas cake. There were a few more showers during the trip, but nothing too serious.

Splashing along Beehive Creek, we found some blackberries. “Probably sprayed,” I said, popping one into my daughter’s mouth, which did not impress Tricia. Towards the end of the track we found more blackberry patches and had a feed, even collecting a punnet-full to have with our lunch.

Lunch was at the picnic area across the road from the car park. The rain held off till we finished. After we’d had a couple of rounds of berries, I pointed out that some of them had little caterpillars on them, and that people unwittingly consume about 1.6kg of insect parts each per annum.

No one seemed interested in finishing the berries, so we headed home. Some of us were going to stop at the Waterford Café, but they had live music, so the carpark was overflowing. We carried on to Ashhurst for ice creams instead. We ate them in a park until the heavens opened and the real rain began.

Trip to the Iron Gates

17 February

By Fluerine Barre-debilly

We left Palmerston North around 8.45am. And arrived at the carpark around 10am.

It was very cold at first, so started walking enthusiastically to warm up.

We quickly arrived at a hut (*Heritage Lodge – Ed*), where two women were staying. We stopped for a bit to use the bathroom, drink and eat a little. It was still very low cloud but we had a little glimpse of the river below before we started to walk again.

We walked down the track for a bit, but then we had to follow a temporary track because a slip had left the old one impossible to follow.

This track was very steep and I had to climb very slowly, because I was not used to it, but the others were quite comfortable with it.

Anyway, I was quite proud of myself when I finally made it to the top. The rest of the track was quite easy. The main problem was that I didn’t have proper

tramping shoes, and because of the earlier rain, the fallen leaves and the slippery rocks, I had to be very careful not to fall down.

When we arrived at the river, it was a relief for the feet. The water was cold but not too much, so it was quite easy to step into the river.

Even though it had rained the day before, the river wasn’t very much flooded. But still, we had to use crossing techniques (crossing in groups, parallel to the border, and the strongest one in front) a few times, when the current was too strong to cross alone.

The weather started to clear up a few times, but it was changing very quickly, and we had some rain as well.

We ate around noon, but didn’t stop for very long.

In the river, we came across a deer carcass and later an eel very much alive which we stalked for a while. Tony must have taken at least 40 pictures of that eel, some under-water pictures were surprisingly good, given how quickly the eel was moving.

When we arrived at the Iron Gates, we wondered whether to swim and cross through or to climb up hill instead.

In the end we decided to climb because the current was quite strong and the water quite cold. Moreover, we had backpacks, and it wouldn’t have been very practical to swim with them (*Sigh - so much to learn, so little time – Ed*). But with a stronger sun and a little less current, it would actually have been very enjoyable to swim through the Iron Gates.

Maybe another time ☺

The track we climbed was even steeper than the first one, and it was very old. so we were pretty much climbing in the bush. But it was quite fun, and surprisingly, I struggled less than at the beginning of the trip... I must have got used to it, a little.

At the end of the trip I was very tired and my feet hurt, but I was very happy I had come; it was a very good trip indeed ☺

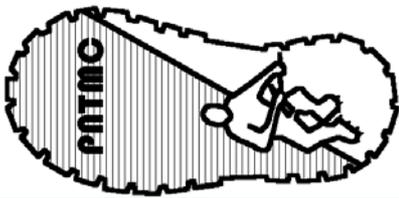
On the ride home we bought ice creams, and I tried the Hokey Pokey flavour, which Warren told me is typical of New Zealand. It was very good, and a very good way to finish the trip ☺ !

Overall I had a very great time and I will surely come to other trips. I’m waiting with anticipation to see the photos, there was some veery beautiful features and views all long the trip.

Other party members were Tina Bishop, Tony Gates, Anja Scholz and Warren Wheeler (Leader).

Note from the Editor

This newsletter was edited by Warren Wheeler on behalf of Anne Lawrence who has been away with Martin at their son’s wedding in India.



Palmerston North
Tramping and
Mountaineering Club
Inc.

www.pntmc.org.nz

P.O. Box 1217,
Palmerston North

PNTMC Newsletter

March 2008

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- Upcoming trips and AGM
- Trip Reports – Godley, Upper Otaki, and much more
- PM meets PNTMC at Te Araroa Trail Mangahao-Makahika Track Opening

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