

Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.

www.pntmc.org.nz

P.O. Box 1217, Palmerston North

Newsletter - April 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.

10 April Club night

John Cockrem

John has made three trips to India and has travelled from Sikkim in the mountains in the North down to Kanyakumari which is the southern most tip of India. He will talk about his visits to different areas with their varied cultures within India.

17 April Committee meeting

24 April Club night

The Ruahine Stoat project

Rebecca Lewis from DOC

In the North West corner of the Ruahines there is a rare biodiversity hotspot. Within this area you can find a large number of rare and threatened plant and animal species including kiwi, kaka, falcon, bats, kakariki, whio, Wainuia and Powelliphanta snails, Dactylanthus and mistletoe, adding to the rich biodiversity. In 2007 your local DOC office in Palmy were offered the opportunity to become involved in a research project looking at the effect of using bait in stoat traps. With the chance to focus more work in this unique landscape we jumped at the idea and suggested the North West Ruahines as one of the research sites. I will be taking the opportunity to introduce you to the area and tell you more about this research and how you can be involved.

Subs are now due

At the AGM, the decision was made to keep membership fees at the 2007 rate.

Please mail your cheque to:

PNTMC, PO Box 1217, Palmerston North
or hand it to Martin or Bruce at club night.

Normal subs:	Individual \$35	Family \$40
E-subs:	Individual \$25	Family \$30

Trip Notes

Trip Grading

Trip grades depend on many factors, especially weather and terrain. A reasonably proficient trapper 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

Advance Notice

Queen's birthday weekend

30 May – 2 June

Janet's Coastal Classic

Janet Wilson

329-4722

Janet's Coastal Classic is to Arapawa Island. Early stages of planning as yet but the trip will depart on Friday May 30th, (you will need the day off work), returning on Monday, 2nd June. Expressions of interest now please so that Janet has a rough idea of numbers to book accommodation for.

Articles for the newsletter

Send by the 20th of each month to Anne
email: dahlia44@xtra.co.nz or post to 44 Dahlia St, PN.

Upcoming Trips

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 to 3.5 hours from the Mangatainoka Road end (also called Putara Rd) into Roaring Stag Hut in the northern Tararuas. We will leave Palmerston North at midday.

6 April

Botanical Tramping II E
Peter van Essen 355-9076

Depart 9am. An easy morning jaunt to Keeble's Bush, a private scientific reserve just south of Massey. We will have a look at the remnant 15ha podocarp-broadleaved forest and the 5ha of restoration/revegetation plantings downstream. Hear about the history and management of the reserve and maybe learn a few plants as well.

12-13 April

McKinnon Hut M
Murray Gifford 357-3353 or 021-774290

Start 9.00am at Countdown carpark headed for Northern Ruahines. Kawhatau Base, graded ridge from 600m to 1600m, McKinnon Hut for the night, sleeps 6 at 1500m (approx 3-4 hours) so great views, feel like an eagle, bring a book. Next day options are Mt Hikurangi at 1700m if weather worthwhile, (2 hr trip), or drop to Kawhatau river, and steep climb out from Crow Hut back to car park (5hr trip).

13 April

Field Hut E/M
Malcolm Parker 357-5203

(This is a change from the trip advertised for this date on the trip card)

Departing Countdown at 7.00 am. We will head into historic Field hut at a leisurely pace. Depending on the weather we could go on a little further before returning the same way. This is one of the earliest huts to be built in the Tararuas with the timber being cut on site and pit sawn. Always a good trip!

19-20 April

Haurangi Range Crossing M/F
Peter van Essen 355-9076

Depart 7am. This is an opportunity to do a one way crossing of the Aorangi/Haurangi Range. Terry has kindly offered to ferry our vehicle to the other side during his trip in the area. Our likely route is from Haurangi Road, on the eastern side, to Putangirua Pinnacles in the west, via Mt Ross (981m) the highest point on the range. We will have some untracked

bush navigation and stream travel on the western side of Mt Ross for interest, and a fly camp on Sat night.

19-20 April

Haurangi Range E/M
Terry Crippen 356-3588

A chance to visit the forested ranges and coast of Southern Wairarapa for an easy to medium overnight tramp, (as against the longer M/F route). After checking out the amazing Putangirua Pinnacles and some of the coast, we will head up one of the valleys for the night (tent or hut). On Sunday we can also check out Kupe's Sail, the seals and Cape Palliser. We will leave Palmerston North early and probably help with transport for the M/F group.

ANZAC weekend

25-27 April

Mangaturuturu, TNP E/M
Martin Lawrence 357-1695

We'll stay a couple of nights in Mangaturuturu Hut, which is in a great location near Lake Surprise with excellent views of the mountain. On Friday we'll walk to the hut from the Mangahuia campsite. There are a few options for mountain wanders on Saturday, then on Sunday we'll walk out via the Horopito Track.

23 (or 24) -27 April

South Island F
Terry Crippen 356-3588

(This trip has been re-scheduled from Easter.)

A number of possibilities up the Wairau Valley beyond Blenheim, depending on who is keen: A climb of Mt Paske (St Arnaud Range) or Scotts Knob (Raglan Range) hopefully with some snow; or a circuit in the Lake Chalice Mt Rintoul area of the Mt Richmond Forest Park. Heading down Wednesday or Thursday, back Sunday. Contact Terry ASAP for ferry times to book. Minimum numbers required.

27 April

Totara Flats M
Anja Scholz 356-6454

(This is a change from the trip advertised for this date on the trip card)

This is a lengthy medium, but not difficult, daytrip along the Waiohine River in the Tararuas behind Greytown, return tripping to the hut from Wall's Whare. Leaving PN at 7am (to ensure we'll get a fancy coffee after the trip!!)

3-4 May

Pouakai Circuit ENP E/M
Christine Cheyne 354-6387 or 021-2467095

We start and finish this two day tramp at North Egmont road end (approx 3 hours drive from PN). We'll go via Holly Hut and cross the Ahukawakawa Swamp to spend Saturday night in Pouakai hut, continuing on Sunday via Maude and Henry Peaks to return to North Egmont. Depart PN on Saturday 6am.

4 May

**Dawn windmills
Warren Wheeler**

**M
356-1998**

Depart 4.30am. We will drive to the top of the Pahiatua Track and start our stroll along North Range Road by torchlight, with the towns to the west and east twinkling like far off constellations. As we reach the first windmills the full Moon will rise, followed an hour or so later by the Sun in hot pursuit. Our stroll along the road, which is closed to public vehicular traffic, will end at Ballance end in time for an early lunch at the Beyond the Bridge Café. BYO torch and breakfast goodies.

AGM

At the AGM on 27th March, Warren was thanked for his committed service to the club as president for the past 10 years.

Elected office-holders for 2008 are:

Club Patron	Lawson Pither
President	Bruce van Brunt
Vice President	Warren Wheeler
Secretary	Terry Crippen
Treasurer	Martin Lawrence

In addition to these office holders, committee members are: Mick Leyland, Janet Wilson, Anne Lawrence, Penny Abercrombie, Tony Gates, Anja Shulz

State of the PeNTium Nation Address 42nd President's Report - 27 March 2008

"We may be small but we are big on the outdoors".

Ladies and gentlemen - by your leave, I give you the Year that was.

Population Growth

Our net population is now 65, with 20 females and 45 males including 3 honoured Life Members. The dynamic nature of our small community was again high-lighted this year with immigration of 9% being offset by emigration of 12%. I wish all those departed a safe return and trust they will fulfil their cultural ambassador roles with pride.

The small net population loss in these difficult times is a credit to our policy of open immigration and in no small part to our hard-earned reputation as a centre for excellence in our traditional areas of tramping and mountaineering pursuits.

Cultural Affairs

We have celebrated our unique identity this past year with a diverse range of activities centred around our bi-monthly Thursday Club Night Programme at the Quakers Hall as well as the traditional end of year

Barbeque at Ashhurst Domain, and the beginning of the year barbeque at Horseshoe Bend.

The annual Mid-Winter festivities were again celebrated in fine style at the patrons lodge in Rangitaua although the poor weather restricted outings to exploration of the lower levels around the mountain with a foray into café culture being thoroughly rewarded in Raetehi.

To avoid our culture stultifying we embraced a wide range of trans-cultural experiences thanks to presentations by guest speakers from both inside and outside our number. We enjoyed hiking in the Sunmore Alps in Norway, traversing Mt Cook, rafting in Patagonia, hiking in the Japanese Alps, climbing in Nepal, rock-climbing in and beyond the Manawatu, trekking in the Indian Himalayas, exploring southern Africa, living for conservation with the QE2 Trust, trekking for women in Nepal, an introduction to Snowcraft, and two BYO slide evenings.

In addition we have actively promoted cross cultural exchange by participation in the Interclub Quiz and Interclub Photo Competition, which were hosted by MTSC this year. The degree to which these activities are valued is reflected in the excellent support received, with up to 50% of the population attending, as well as many like-minded souls from the wider community.

Tourism

Excursions this year have, as in the past, catered for all levels of fitness and experience. Both the Ruahine Ranges and Tararua Ranges attracted 22 trips. A further 29 trips went to other places near and far including a Mangaweka farm walk, night walk in the Manawatu Gorge, Titahi Bay rock-climbing, Taihape-Napier Road Trip, the Queen Charlotte Walkway, Tongariro National Park, Egmont National Park, Kahurangi National Park, Mt Cupola in Nelson Lakes National Park, and the Godley Valley in Mt Cook National Park.

The average number on day trips was 5.0 and on overnight trips was 3.3. Of all the programmed trips some 30% did not go (20% of day trips and 42% of overnight trips) due to lack of participants, poor weather, or other reasons.

I commend trip leaders for the experience you offered and the safe return of participants, although in somewhat damaged condition at times. Nevertheless the benefit of first aid and risk management training was highlighted by the good result for an injured party member who had fallen down a steep bank on the Mangahao Track .

Education

I am pleased to say that Continuing Education is more than just a catch cry, with Instruction Courses and

activities being well-attended by people ranging from novice to expert. There were 7 pupils on Snowcraft I, 8 on Snowcraft II, and 6 on Snowcraft III. Thanks to our instructors Terry Crippen, Bruce van Brunt, Andrew Lynch and Peter Darragh.

Two people attended a Mountain Safety Council course on River Safety, two attended a Mountain Safety Council First Aid Course, and five also attended a Track & Clue Awareness course as part of SAR training. Regular monthly SAR training has been held locally, although poor attendance from PNTMC members has been disappointing. However 7 people took the opportunity for up-skilling at the recent SAREX. This on-going level of commitment to enhancing and developing skills is a vital ingredient for optimising our safety and enjoyment.

Finance

The state coffers are in robust condition and together with some grant funding has enabled us to replace and extend our gear for hire, particularly for our Snowcraft Instruction Courses - we now have sufficient for 5 pairs of trainees on the more advanced SC2 and 3 courses.

Broadcasting

Promotion of our small state and the rich and rewarding lifestyle which is freely available to all has primarily been sustained through our Newsletter, which is now available on the internet. Our website regularly receives plaudits for excellence thanks to our webmaster Peter Wiles. We have also received promotional support from NZ Post for delivery of the Newsletter to schools. Information on Club Night activities is put in the Whats On section of The Tribune. In addition we advertise on public notice boards in supermarkets and elsewhere. Special thanks to Monica Cantwell and Richard Lockett for their services in this area.

Search and Rescue

This year our highly trained rapid mobilisation force was called upon a couple of times to assist Police, although those involved in a search along the Oroua River near Feilding were rather bemused when the missing person was found in the grounds of Parliament Buildings(!). Special thanks to our representatives Terry Crippen and Peter Darragh on the local SAR Committee, and to Janet Wilson who serves as the main point of contact for callouts.

Foreign Affairs

Diplomatic relations have been sustained without any significant incident this year. A highlight for many was the opportunity to engage with the Prime Minister and her Minister for Conservation as well as other dignitaries of Godzone at the opening of the Mangahao-Makahika section of the Te Araroa Trail.

Our policy watchdog department made submissions to DoC on the installation of a radio mast at Mt Cone

in the Tararua Forest Park, and to the Manawatu District Council regarding the closure of Umutoi North Road.

Where appropriate these submissions included endorsement of the stance taken by our global partner, the Federated Mountain Clubs.

Several volunteers have offered their services to the DoC Stoat Monitoring Project in the northern Ruahine Ranges, but the opportunity to participate has been somewhat limited by the large numbers of other willing workers.

Internal Affairs

Routine administration matters have been competently dealt with by our dedicated team of officers and efficiency targets have been met in all departments resulting in once again a nil pay increase being negotiated to the satisfaction of all concerned. Officers dispatched a wide range of behind the scenes tasks required to maintain our PeNTiuM Nation at optimum efficiency and vigour. Thanks to the high level of involvement the work-load has not been unduly onerous for those concerned. Indeed we have about 15% of our population involved in administration duties - a proud statistic which highlights the value placed on ensuring we operate effectively for the benefit of all.

For those not familiar with them I would like to mention some of the duties involved. No doubt there will be many who aspire to be involved and others who can rest back and assess our present performance against that which they have come to expect on the basis of their own past service. Duties include supper, setting up the hall, door hosts, contacting guest speakers, maintaining the library, archives, photo album and scrap book, map orders, hut passes, calendar orders, membership enquiries, maintaining membership records, newsletter distribution, advertising, grant funding applications, phone tree, overdue trip contacts, gear custodian, FMC contact, Search and Rescue representative, Mountain Safety Council contact, Trip Convenor, and instructors on Snowcraft, Rock-climbing and Navigation.

On behalf of everyone I thank all those officers and helpers involved in the provision of services this past year.

My personal thanks go to our Treasurer Martin Lawrence, Secretary Anja Scholz, and Newsletter Editor Anne Lawrence - I have enjoyed working with you in this, my tenth year as President. I also thank Vice-President Terry Crippen for his invaluable support and guidance.

I look forward to the future with confidence and a safe and exciting year ahead.

Warren Wheeler
President PNTMC

An evening with Craig Potton

Report by Tony Gates

Craig Potton recently (Tuesday, 11 March) gave a slide show and talk about some of his life and work. He must be New Zealand's best known outdoors photographer, with numerous books, calendars, posters, and the like to his name. He kept the packed house enthralled for an hour and a half with tales of photographing wildlife such as albatrosses, Orangutangs, and kakapo, and of course more than a few New Zealand native forest scenes. The presentation was arranged by the Forest and Bird Society, as part of their 50th celebration in the Manawatu and Rangitikei.

Trip Reports

MSC River Safety Training

9 February

By Anja Scholz

Some 25 participants and 4 MSC leaders met at the Otaki Gorge road bridge and then went on to the training spot somewhat further up the Otaki River. The morning programme consisted of river safety theory – discussing different types of rivers, what to look for in a good river crossing spot, what to be wary of, and what to avoid. Further subjects included how to pack a tramping pack for a crossing and pack floating, judging the speed of rivers, and then we started on the various crossing methods – in the dry for a start.

Single person crossing with the help of a “big stick” – it should be noted that walking sticks might not be adequate here – the new method is to have the stick upstream for more strength – whereas holding it downstream (the old method) was acknowledged to give somewhat more balance.

Multiperson “crossings” were done in the dry, with groups of four or five people linking up and trying to cross uneven terrain **WITH THEIR EYES CLOSED** – and then **BACKING UP WITH THEIR EYES CLOSED**. This actually worked very well, except that our group backed up rather un-straight...

A not quite earned lunch (as all the hard work was yet to come), and then a bit more theory on pack floating, and how best to swim / paddle out of the current using the ferry glide. And then came the fun bit: the day and the water were warm enough to make this quite comfortable ☺ We trialled the single and multiperson crossings, and while the Otaki flowed lazily along, the crossings were deep enough – some of us lost their footing on the multiperson ones – and the current strong enough for us to struggle with balance on the single person crossings.

Although I had done river crossings before it was a really good experience having to rely on the team mates when I lost my footing, and finding that the “chain” was very strong. Also practicing the “caterpillar”, where a multiperson team turns itself around to retreat, was an interesting new skill. Last but not least, floating down some benign rapids, and paddling out of the current was hard work – at least for those with no arm muscles ! It didn't help that my pack liner had leaked and my fleeces in the pack had soaked up an extra 5 kg of water or so... out for some dry clothes and wrap up around 3pm.

All in all, good practice, fun day, new skills, and real fruit ice cream.

We were Warren Wheeler and Anja Scholz.

Wharite Peak

23 February

By John Feeney

Taking advantage of yet another pristine summer's day, four eager trampers set out from Palmy at 8am bound for that prominent local land mark Wharite. Picking up Trish and her dog Petra in Woodville we were soon at the Coppermine track car park. We have a welcome first-time tramper (Martin) with us.

The bush is very dry and with the first part of this walk along such a flat and faultless piece of bush it's easy to be complacent. After 30 minutes we are into the realities of a challenging (for some) uphill walk on a hot day. No problem to Petra on her four legs; she follows along without wavering from the path.

The track up the hill is well defined, but initially very steep, then settles into a more sedate uphill pace. Opening out on the tops with such a clear day we are treated to spectacular views over to Ruapehu and into Southern Hawkes Bay. Although it's hot and one of our female trampers is “glowing” it's a relatively easy walk through a prominent patch of leatherwood to the Wharite tower. What a spectacular place for a long lunch, we are well entertained with good conversation.

Revived we head back to the car park and notice what a lot of uphill ground we had covered! Trish on the way back down is relieved to find her “Leki Pole” left behind at morning tea stop. We completed the trip in a sedate 6 hours (with lots of rests of course). Hope our new boy Martin comes back!

We were Duncan Hedley, Fiona McDonald, John Feeney, Trish Edar, and Martin Walker.

Waipakihi... make that Mangaehuehu

1-2 March 2008

Report by Chris Tuffley

On Wednesday the weekend forecast was for rain with heavy falls possible, and checking it again the next day and the next day didn't make it any better. Not what I wanted for a trip I'd picked for its views, going in along the tops and coming out down a river! But there was still plenty of interest in the trip, and in the end seven of us headed north for Waipakihi Hut on Saturday.

Or so we thought...the weather held until we were north of Waiouru, where we suddenly found ourselves driving into the dark of rapidly descending cloud. No-one objected to a change of plan, and in short order we were back in sunshine, bound for Ohakune. The southern side of the mountain was looking much more sheltered, and we decided to do a leg of the Round-the-Mountain Track, from the mountain road to Mangaehuehu Hut.

After a stop at a cafe to fortify ourselves we set off through a mix of mountain beech forest and open wetlands. The elevated boardwalk snaking past the Rotokawa Tarns was a little tricky to negotiate in the gusty winds---woooah!---but it soon delivered us to a Waitonga Falls decidedly devoid of water. From there we carried on up to Blyth Hut, where we felt we'd gone far enough to earn our lunch; then on again, through misting drizzle now, over numerous sturdy swingbridges to Mangaehuehu Hut.

Dinner was a multi-course potluck, culminating in a dessert of chocolate (Kelly) and berry (Warren) fondues. We then settled down to the serious business of playing cards---Mangaehuehu lacking the extensive library of Reader's Digest and other books found at Blyth. After many hours Anja emerged triumphant, narrowly beating out David and Nicola in the final hand.

By morning the rain had cleared, and the mountain was visible above us. Admiring the view we set off back the way we'd come. Stopping on a bridge we spied a waterfall upstream, and went up to investigate, finding more than we'd bargained on---a lovely series of cascades, but also a nest of wasps that stung me once and Kelly three times. When further wasps came to investigate her, she understandably hightailed off down the track, leaving her pack behind.

We stopped for lunch at Waitonga Falls---now full of water---then a short while later were back at the car, and heading home. An enjoyable trip, but Waipakihi still awaits!

We were Kelly Buckle, David Gaston, Nicola Gaston, Dion O'Neale, Anja Scholz, Chris Tuffley and Warren Wheeler.

Makairo

9 March

Report by Fiona Donald

This trip was great! There were lots of diverse people, from overseas and within New Zealand, with a wide variety of occupations and studying towards interesting careers. This meant at lunch-time we learnt of Ian's recent cheese-making attempts that were so successful that we longed to taste some of the mozzarella he had made. Other topics included whether texting and driving a car at the same time was banned in New Zealand and if not, why not.

Before the trip started I had telephoned John and Ian to see whether they wanted to come on the trip because already there were lots of people coming but only one car to transport them. Fortunately, both guys said they would come so at least there was back-up car if one pulled out.

Nine of us met at Countdown Supermarket. One never arrived – now, I know what happened to Matt – he ended up going out with the Uni. Alpine Club and had a great time on the K loop. I'm sorry I put off a young woman who rang up on Saturday afternoon but at that stage 2 cars were full to the gunnels but how was I to know that Steve was going to phone and he had a car.

After a bit of a late start in getting petrol money and getting transport organised...we got to the back of Tui Brewery and was almost in time to get tangled up with the huge Bush Cycle race that was starting at the Brewery. In the nick of time we met with Ian, Tricia and Mia and drove off to the end of Makairo Road.

The wind was cool and there was a threat of rain however no-one required putting on their raincoats. Everyone had a great time being able to walk and talk along this gradually ascending closed road. It turned into an Easy tramp because by the time most of them reached the top the weather looked and felt very unfavourable on the other side of the Waewaepa Range.

We were: Fiona Donald (leader and scribe), Andree Wallace, Robyn Laherty, Jan Parsons, Jeanette Peterson, Marty Walker, Simone Steiner, Steve Schechterman, John Feeney, Ian Harding, Tricia Eder and her niece Mia.

Whakapapaiti Hut

2 March

Report and photo by Simone Steiner

At 7 o'clock we met at the Countdown carpark to head off to the Tongariro National park. On our way we picked up Wendy in Bulls, and so the multicultural French-Japanese-Kiwi-Austrian-group was completed, comfortably fitting into Trevor's car.



Three hours later we arrived at Whakapapaiti village and realised, that our pre-booked taxi to the departure point had already left. No problem...Trevor offered us a plan B, C, D,...but finally we decided to ask someone to give us a lift. Fortunately we found a German couple who dropped us off at the end of Bruce road. Before that, Trevor made sure, that we all had the perfect set off equipment for this tramp and he offered us almost a whole outdoor store out of his boot: fancy looking woolly hats, raincoats, warm socks, just everything – and off we go!

From the top of the Bruce road it was a pleasant downhill walk. Sometimes it was quite muddy and slippery, because of all the rain in the last few days. The crossing of the river was a real challenge and good fun too. The five of us built a human chain and struggled our way through the stream. We all ended up with soaking wet shoes and trousers, but we continued our walk with Wendy in front and Trevor in the back...well, in the very back... not because of his fitness, but because of his camera 😊

In total, we walked for approx. 5 hours, which did include a well deserved lunch break. We were very lucky with the weather and didn't need any of the wet weather gear. Trevor and Wendy came into their own by explaining the NZ flora to us foreigners. It was a great walk through a very changing landscape!

Sometimes we also felt like supermodels, because Trevor indulged in taking many pics of the flora and fauna, which included us on a few occasions. I wonder, how he could walk with his lens in front of his face all the time, without having an accident – amazing!

After an enjoyable day we headed back to Palmy and arrived around 7.30 at the carpark – ready for bed ;)

We were Wendy, Fleurine Barre-Debilly, Ayaka Kadowaki, Trevor King and Simone Steiner

SAREX 8-9 March

Team 3's report

by Martin Lawrence

PNTMC had a good turnout at the search and rescue training this year, with 2 in the management team and 7 other “Indians”, split into two teams. Graham Peters and Janet Wilson spent the weekend in the hot seat at PN SAR Base.

The rest of us met at 8am at Motorimu on Scotts Road which has nice flat paddock suitable for the first exercise which was a helicopter winching exercise held at Motorimu on Scotts Road. Many of us, including myself, had not done this before. I found that it wasn't so hard or tricky after all, and I certainly would feel comfortable if we were to be winched up or down for real one day.

The “missing party” had left their car in the Gordon Kear Forest and gone hunting. My team was tasked with working up one of the forest roads, checking for clues at various decision points. We spotted two sets of footprints on and near the track. The second of these turned out to be two of our hunters going the opposite way on the track, and then entering the bush at some stage. We could not be sure of any tracks in the bush, so after reporting what we had found we carried on towards the beginning of Burton's Track. Not long after we heard 3 rifle shots, which we duly reported, and were told to head in the direction of the shots. Later, other teams were also re-directed into this area and eventually two of the missing party were found.



The injured party is stretchered out (Photo: Peter van Essen)

After a pleasant night camping, our team's task on Sunday was to return to the location of the missing

hunters and assist with a stretcher carry. The bush was a bit thick but with a large number of searchers and a great cooperative spirit the “injured man” was carried quickly and efficiently to a helicopter landing site.

An excellent weekend out and a great opportunity to learn and refresh skills.

Team 3 was made up of Richard Lockert, Peter van Essen, Mike Archer and Martin Lawrence.

SAREX Team 4’s report

by Anne Lawrence

Our team’s first task was to search around the last known point (the lost party’s car) – the aim was to establish their direction of travel. However, this proved nigh on impossible – not only was the ground very hard, but cattle had been through the area that morning.



Team 4 survey last know point (Photo: Warren Wheeler)

Our next task was to search a nearby river, and then we were choppered off to Tokomaru River where we did some more searching. Again we found nothing, but we did find a pleasant camp sight for the night. The next day we were choppered back up to help carry the injured party out.



Anne climbs into the chopper (Photo: Warren Wheeler)

I was pleased because I felt that I used some of the skills I had picked up on a SAR course on track and clue awareness, I had lots of helicopter experiences

which were all new to me, I got plenty of practice using the radios to communicate, and I helped with a stretcher carry which I hadn’t done before.

Team 4 members were Terry Crippen, Warren Wheeler, Anne Lawrence all from PNTMC and Brian Webster from MTSC.

SAREX - From the Other Side of the Radio...

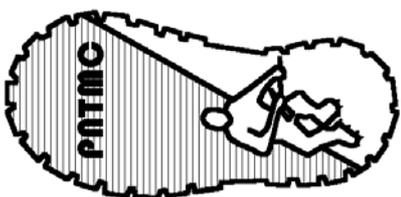
Report by Graham Peters

The Police want their cops to be big and strong, so feed them extremely well at the Police College. When you're there on the 5 day MLSO course, you're fed just as well. The downside of all this taxpayer funded banqueting is that at some stage you might be expected to help manage a land search operation. Hence we were at the Police Station on the Friday night at 1830 (copspeak for 6.30pm) presented with a missing/overdue party scenario. Janet was there officially as an observer but can you imagine her keeping her mouth shut? The rest of our team was Kim Blanchard (cop, Incident Controller) Howard Nicholson (MTSC, Operations) myself (Planning and Intelligence) and Richie Kelly (cop, Logistics). The night was spent trying to wheedle as much information as possible out of family and friends of the overdue people and any other relevant sources. In that regard our Terry was a little gem and was willing to be dragged away from a romantic evening to share his extensive knowledge of the Scotts Rd/Burtons track area. This extended to providing a printout of many lesser known tracks and huts. With thirty odd and keen people and a RNZAF Iroquois at our disposal we also had to have taskings for most of the teams sorted out. When we finished at 2.00 am Howie kindly offered a bed at his place.

0700 saw us back in the Operations room at the Police Station gathering more information and fine tuning our planning. People from AREC (Amateur Radio Emergency Corp) came in to man the radios. From their initial taskings teams were re-deployed on the basis of information coming back in from the field and any intelligence that was still being gathered. There are always glitches. This time part of the HF radio system had failed and then later the VHF (the main radio used) in the Ops room failed. Our shift ended at 3.00pm when the 2nd management team took over.

Sunday mid-morning we wandered into the Ops room to see how things had panned out before heading out to the BBQ and debrief. I know it sounds odd but despite the fact that at times it's reasonably stressful and there's quite a bit of paperwork to deal with, we both enjoyed it. This was helped by the fact that the rest of the team was equally inexperienced but very co-operative.

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PNTMC Newsletter

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