

Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.

www.pntmc.org.nz

P.O. Box 1217, Palmerston North

Newsletter - July 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, Palmerston North. All welcome! Please sign the visitor's book at the door.

10 July Garden of Eden

Barry Scott will give a presentation on a climbing trip into the Garden of Eden, a broad snow filled basin surrounded by numerous peaks in the heart of the Southern Alps.

NOTE: 10 July is the final date for Snowcraft applications!

22 July (Tuesday)

Snowcraft 1 instruction evening

For snowcraft participants only. See notices in this newsletter for details.

24 July Committee

31 July Photo Competition

Time to sort out those pictures from your trips over the past 12 months. This year only digital images will be accepted for the competition. See notices in this newsletter for details.

Coming up in August: Leadership evening

7 August 7.30 pm

Chris Tuffley, Mike Archer and Chris Saunders recently spent a weekend being trained in leadership. (see report in this newsletter). Come along on the 7th August to find out what they learnt – they are keen to pass on their new knowledge.

Venue: Martin and Anne Lawrence's place.

Trip Notes

Trip Grading

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

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:

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

Upcoming Trips

5 July (Sat)

M

Mt Holdsworth

Warren Wheeler

356-1998

Mt Holdsworth is one of the highest points in the Tararua Ranges behind Masterton. We are on a good track for the 3 hour walk up to Powell Hut on the bushline and possibly fresh snow. It is a little further to the summit where we hope to enjoy snow capped views of the ranges and the Wairarapa below. We will then drop down via the old track on east spur to the easy track back along the river to the carpark. Depart PN at 7.00am.

6 July

Kapakapanui

Anja Scholz

M

356-6454

We will leave PN at 7.30am and head for Waikanae. Located at the bushline in the western Tararuas

behind Waikanae, Kapakapanui is a bit of a climb, but we may be rewarded with a touch of snow and some stunning views. There are also a couple of good choices for refreshment stops on the way home. Depending on weather forecast, this trip could be swapped to 13 July to get the best Tararua views.

12 July (Sat)

Mt Tongariro M
Bruce van Brunt 328-4761

We will make an early start from Palmerston North and go to the Mangatepopo valley. The plan is to go up to the summit of Tongariro via the redirected/ repaired Tongariro crossing track and use either the tourist track off the crossing or the infinitely more interesting South Ridge route. We shall return back to the carpark along the ridge above the Mangatepopo valley. The choice of route depends on the weather and participants. There may be some snow/ice, so some experience with an ice axe and crampons is required although the climbing will not be technical.

13 July

Coppermine E
Anja Scholz 356-6454

A short drive and easy tramp in the South Eastern Ruahines could see us at the Bridge Café for late lunch/early tea! The plan is to check out the historic mines and work up an appetite completing the loop track with good views to the east. Meet at Countdown at 8:30am. Depending on weather forecast, this trip could be swapped to 6 July.

19 July (Sat)

Roaring Stag M
Dave Grant 357-8269

Join me on this day trip into the eastern Tararuas. From the Putara road end behind Eketahuna we will hike into Roaring Stag hut on the banks of the Ruamahanga River for lunch and then retrace our steps. Leave Countdown carpark 7.30am.

20 July

Purity and beyond M
Peter Darragh 06-363-0922

This is a Saturday trip into the high spots of the Ruahines. With luck there will be plenty of snow about and 360° views. Otherwise there is a nice hut to retreat into, and recount past experiences of the area.

26-27 July

Snowcraft 1 M/T
Terry Crippen 356-3588
Bruce van Brunt 328-4761

First of the Snowcraft programme weekends. See Notices in this newsletter for details.

27 July (with possible start on 26th)

Waihohonu/Tama E/M
Peter Wiles 358-6894

The plan is to either leave Palmy at 6 am on Sunday,

or leave on Saturday evening and stay overnight at Waihohonu Hut (an hour or so walk from the Desert Road). The evening option gives more time to explore around Tama.

2 August

Wellington: Red Rocks M
Martin Lawrence 357-1695

An opportunity to get plenty of fresh air in a relatively urban setting. This trip explores the Te Kopahou Reserve on the southern coast of Wellington. We should see seals near the Red Rocks. Ring Martin to discuss transport arrangements.

2-3 August

Howletts Hut M/F
Murray Gifford 357-3353

Howletts Hut sits in a sheltered hollow on the Daphne Ridge just where the tussock ends and beech forest starts to lap over the ridgeline, giving great views on a good day. Contact Murray for details of this trip.

Club Notices

A reminder about trips

People who leave contacting trip leaders too late in the week do put unnecessary pressure on trip leaders.

If you want to go on a weekend trip then please be considerate and contact the trip leader by the Wednesday night. It is actually useful to contact the trip leader earlier than this to let them know that you may be interested in going.

If you want to know more about leading trips, come to the trip leadership evening on 7th August. Included with this newsletter is the guide for trip leaders and trip feedback forms

Events card for July- December 2008

The new events card is out (included with this newsletter). Thanks to Janet for organising such a full trip card and to trip leaders for offering some very interesting trips – there should be something to suit everyone.

Note that for several weekends during the winter months, the club is running two separate day trips rather than an overnight trip. This is a trial response to the number of overnight trips that tend to be cancelled at this time of year... and it does have the advantage that at least you get 2 chances to pick the weather!!

Wilderness Magazine & other reading material.

Each month the Club receives a complimentary copy of the Wilderness Magazine. Lots of useful reading in it, often with up-to-date stuff on what DoC has been up to in other areas (eg re-cutting the track onto the

Lambert tops. Good - won't have to use the chopper next time).

All the Wilderness Magazines, other club newsletters and a range of books, pamphlets etc. are available for all members to read and borrow - check out our Library bookcase at Club night.

Snowcraft Instruction Programme 08 Final Notice!!!

The Club's comprehensive snowcraft programme has two aims: Firstly, to equip you with the necessary skills for safe tramping in snow, be it on winter trips, or summer trips above the snowline. Secondly, to pass on the fundamental skills for snow climbing and mountaineering.

The programme consists of three weekends (Friday night departure to Ruapehu or Egmont) and a Tuesday session prior to each weekend.

A progressive approach is used, with Snowcraft 1 assuming little or no previous snow experience and SC 2 and 3 building on the previous levels.

Most participants enrol in the complete programme, while others just in one or two of the weekends depending on their previous experience or ambitions.

Numbers are limited, so enrol now to confirm a place.



Snowcraft 1	Evening: Weekend:	Tuesday 22 July 26-27 July
Snowcraft 2	Evening: Weekend:	Tuesday 5 August 9-10 August
Snowcraft 3	Evening: Weekend:	Tuesday 19 Aug 23-24 August

Fees cover weeknight venues, transport, weekend accommodation, most food, group gear hire, and instruction. Individual gear hire, if needed, is an additional cost for non PNTMC members.

	PNTMC Members	Non- Members
Snowcraft 1	\$130	\$135
Snowcraft 2	\$145	\$150
Snowcraft 3	\$135	\$140
One-off payment for all 3 courses	\$395	\$410

Applications close Thursday 10th July.

For further information and registration forms, contact Terry Crippen 356-3588 or Bruce van Brunt 328-4761. Alternatively, pick up a form at Club night, or visit the Club web site: www.pntmc.org.nz

PNTMC Annual Photo Competition Thursday 31 July (Clubrooms)

Rules

Only digital images will be accepted for the competition. (If you have prints or slides, you will need to get them scanned)
Entries must not have been entered previously and must be related to tramping and/or climbing activities. Images must be labelled with name and entry category.
Limit of 3 images per person per category.

Categories

1. Alpine NZ – alpine scenery in New Zealand
2. Scenic NZ – scenery below the bushline
3. Natural History – NZ flora and fauna or detail
4. Topical NZ – the people shots on your trips
5. Overseas Alpine – overseas alpine scenery
6. Overseas People – climbers or people met while tramping, climbing overseas

Deadlines

All photographs must be submitted at least one week before the photo competition, so that our judge can have time to study and comment on them. Please indicate the category for each photo.

Images can be e-mailed to Bruce van Brunt:
B.vanBrunt@massey.ac.nz.

Please keep the size of the digital photographs small so that they can be easily downloaded via e-mail.

Alternatively, you can give a CD to Bruce on a club night before 31 July.

Entries made on the night of the competition will not be accepted.

Articles for the newsletter

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

Trip Reports

North West Ruahines: McKinnon Hut and Kawhatau River

12/13 April

Report and photos from Murray Gifford

9.00am start, leisurely. I picked everyone up and we had a long backup in the car to get an extra pot from Warren's place. The start was a beauty in PN, cool, crisp and clear, but as we headed for the Hills, those thick white clouds were rolling in like a blanket over the highest tops from the East. A two hour car journey to the start of the track, 120km. A good chance to chat and get to know Mathew who was studying Ecology at Massey and is only to be in NZ for 6 months. He was keen to spend a night in a backcountry hut and see some of our forest and the tops.

Kawhatau base was busy, three good keen men camping in the paddock and hunters in the lodge. We were on our way by 11.00, down the steep bank of the gorge to the river and the trolley on a wire. The pulley was broken and the trolley sat disabled midway, wire ropes dangling in the river. The river was a small one, didn't even get the feet wet crossing. The first pitch was steep, really gets the blood flowing. We spent two hours heading up the long ridge to the bush line, stopping for lunch on the way and enjoying the shade from the beech etc.



The mountain cedar starts and then straight out onto the grassland tops, hardly a leatherwood to be seen from the track. Warren related a few of his leatherwood stories as we spied them below us on the distant flanks.

Mathew really enjoyed the views out to Ruapehu and the Rangitiki river country, great to be out on the tops. It took us another two hours to make it to McKinnon, a long ambling walk, via a large tranquil tarn to the top of Mt McKinnon 1625m. The mist was at about 1500m, so no views of Hikurangi. Finally a steep descent to the east, down the spur and back to the bush line.

The hut was welcome sight about 3.30pm a six bunker with stove. With no one at hut, we made ourselves at home, a brew, sat and read in the late evening sun. I made early dinner, which we had just before dark at 6.00pm. An early night for all.



The next day we were up and away by 8.00am, the cloud still hanging about the tops, so still no views of Mt Hikurangi. Warren was keen to try the river route out and make the trip a round trip. The track dropped steeply thru very pleasant bush and we were at the river by 9.30. The track had been recently cleared and was in great order.

The river looked good, easy to wade thru. Half an hour down river to Crow Hut and a short chat with three hunters who had had no luck and had a helicopter coming at 12.00, 10 minute trip out for them \$1200 round trip. We donned the packs and headed off down the river. Plenty of crossings and we took our time to safely negotiate all those boulders.



The trip was pretty straightforward, generally with crossing up to the knees, the odd one deeper and wet trou, and one spot was a launch over a pool. Mathew managed to land on all fours and got a little wet. The journey down the river from Crow was a good four hours at slow pace and we finally found the bulldozed track back up the gorge to the base hut, Warren

recounted the story of a mid winter swim near the base, but couldn't remember which pool.

A most enjoyable trip had by all, not too strenuous as we hadn't travelled that far, 6 km up and 8 km down the river. The river was at a record low after nearly 5 months with no rain, so guess we had as good conditions as could be expected. Definitely not a trip to tackle after heavy rains.

We were Murray Gifford, leader (first time for all things) Warren Wheeler (how about a doddle down the river) and Mathew Young (the American perspective).

FMC Leadership Workshop

19-20 April

Report from Chris Tuffley

Mike Archer, Trevor King and I joined over twenty others from throughout the North Island at an FMC leadership workshop, held at the Taranaki Outdoor Pursuits Education Centre, just outside New Plymouth. The workshop was organised by John Wilson of the FMC, and was facilitated by Ray Goldring, an expert on outdoor safety. Those present represented clubs from Auckland to Wellington, Taranaki to Hawkes Bay, and a wide range of ages (30-odd to long in the tooth), leadership experience and styles (fresh faces to old hands, do-as-I-says to do-as-you-wills), and a not too far from even gender balance.

The weekend opened with Ray, John and two of the support staff acting out a total breakdown of leadership -- a party of four winding up separated by a river two were too wise to cross, and two far too keen -- and then we got down to the serious work of learning how to keep this from happening to us. Much of this was spent brainstorming in small groups, sharing our ideas and experiences, then reporting back to the workshop as a whole. These sessions covered topics such as the roles, attributes, duties and responsibilities of the leader; the pros and cons of the main leadership styles; decision making; trip planning; risk assessment; and dealing with conflict.

To keep things lively the brainstorming was interspersed with various role-plays and practical exercises -- welcome opportunities to get up, move around, and flex our creative muscles, while still keeping on with the learning. The role-plays variously gave us a chance to have another go at dealing with a situation we hadn't handled well in the past, or to stake out our ground on the best form of leadership: my group's portrayal of an autocratic leader ended in near mutiny, while another group sent up group decision making with a group hug and chant of "Con-sen-sus" as they settled down for a lo.o.ong discussion. Of the practical exercises, the most memorable involved moving a patient with a broken leg under, over and around assorted obstacles;

fortunately I was considered too big to ever have to take a turn as the patient!

The workshop culminated in each group planning and running an activity around the camp -- and dealing with things as they went horribly wrong. Given an opportunity to act up we were all too happy to do so! So Trevor and I found ourselves trying to control a milling crowd while we treated Mike for a possible head injury...and then it was Mike's turn to try to keep us all in one spot while a missing walker was located. Luckily for the last group, Ray let their tug-o-war go off without a hitch, telling us afterwards that "sometimes things do just go as planned".

On the Saturday night we'd gone around each of the twelve or so clubs represented, comparing notes on how each chose and trained leaders. Unsure of the inner workings of the PNTMC, the three of us were forced to admit we didn't know what, if anything, our club did...It turns out it holds leadership workshops too -- and if you come along to the one next month, Trevor, Mike and I will pass on what we learned in April!

For details of the Leadership Evening, see page 1 of this newsletter.

Tunupo

11 May

Report from Jo O'Halloran

On Sunday 11th May, the weather forecast was for showers later in the morning. With that in mind we set out at 0700 and headed for the Iron Gates Road end. The sky definitely looking overcast and cloud low. Only one or two cars in the car park - did the rest of the Manawatu know something that we did not?

It was a very pleasant walk into and up through some of the most beautiful bush in the region - lush, green - and a recently maintained track. Lawrence and I had not been out regularly for a couple of years so the climb up hill had those thigh muscles stretching. Even though the temperature was cool and getting colder with each step upwards I did work up a sweat. My "urban" Gortex coat capability to keep me dry was under suspicion.

The rain did start but gently without any real intent but the temperature had plummeted. Nearing the top of Tunupo views were not available but there was a little bit of snow still around from that very cold snap at the beginning of May. A quick lunch out of the wind had us refuelled for the downhill home run. My fingers had lost circulation on the tops, as we descended the warmed up hands, became extremely painful ...this I had forgotten about winter tramping delights! We again appreciated the green delight of the bush and headed out and stopped for the obligatory ice cream at the Cheltenham Store.



Photo: Warren Wheeler

We were Warren Wheeler, Jennifer Kitchen and Jo and Lawrence O'Halloran, Bridie (the German Shepherd).

Central West Ruahines: Triangle Hut

17/18 May

Report and photos from Murray Gifford

We were only a party of two and the weather forecast was great so an early start 8.00am, collecting Craig from Feilding on the way. The clouds were rolling in over the hills from the east, so maybe not as good as forecast.

Travelled up thru Rangiwahia and onto Renfrew Rd, 80km from PN. The weather was clearing all the time and clear skies over Mangahuaia as we arrived, excellent. We were on our way from the road end by 9.30am. Craig was keen for the Deadman track route. This track was in great condition, well formed, dry and clear. A steep ascent to start, just to get the blood stream going, up thru the Red Beech. The track then is steady up a long ridge with a few views out over to the ridges hiding Rangī Hut. The forest turned to leatherwoods, mountain cedars and pink pine, quite expansive as a broad band in rolling hills. The ridge drops a bit and finally we left the bush and hit the high grass country, time for a breather. The track climbs steadily from here to a false peak, Mangahuaia behind. Finally we see the top, again a bit of a drop and steep final pinch to the top. 2 ½ hours to the top, so an excellent fast trip to the tops.

We met a few hunters roaming the tops, all of whom had had no luck, but plenty of sign on the track, which must have been frustrating for them. Stopped for great views, to the south Tunupo and Toka, Rangī saddle in the mist, Iron Bark Hut somewhere way below and to the north Maungamahue and Te Hekenga, a bit in the clouds.

The track falls to the Rangī ridge turnoff some 300m ahead. We traversed the ridge and sidled around the side of 1635, the track marked with poles. Triangle hut is visible way down in the river from just below the Rangī turn off but we miss the view on the way down. East of 1635 we turn east and take a spur

heading rapidly down to the leatherwood zone. The long grass and steepness make for slow travel and the odd slip. The track thru the leatherwood is steep and narrow, very rough but well formed. Again the ridge flattens as we entered the cedar zone and a great walk thru sub alpine forest takes ½ hr, finally back into the red beech, the track steep now and a final plunge down to the Oroua River, the hut visible only at the very end.

The route down from the top had taken 2 hours, it was now 3.00pm. We crossed the river with ease and up a small bank to Triangle Hut. The hut hadn't been left that tidy, so a bit of a clean up was needed. Someone had dragged a dozen tins of spaghetti in, half a dozen sitting empty at the door, but a plentiful supply of firewood on the deck. Craig cleaned up the fireplace and set the fire. Early dinner while still light, fire going as the sun went down, clear night very chilly soon after dark.

The next day we were on the track by 8.30am, heading back up the way we had come down. 1 hr 20 and we were back up on the side of 1635; the peaks all clear, great for a sortie. We headed north for Maungamahue, sliding around to a saddle and tarns. A gentle ridge rises up from the southeast and there was a well-formed track from here to the access ridge to Te Hekenga. Half an hour later we were on the top, what a view, Egmont, Ruapehu, Mangaweka to the north, Te Atuaoparapara, Rangiateaue, Te Hekenga and Tiraha to the east.



We sat and enjoyed for an hour, time for lunch. With the mist starting to roll in from the Northwest, we thought it was time to get off the tops and headed back to the Rangī turnoff. We meet some day walkers, but by now the clouds had rolled away again and clear afternoon ahead. We followed the well-formed and poled track down the long ridge to Rangī Hut, 1 hour from the tops.

A break at Rangī for the rest of lunch, a chat with two-day walkers with their two dogs. The trip down from Rangī Hut was much steeper than remembered; although the track is well graded it is in very steep

country. We crossed the arch bridge, and we slugged our way up and over the detour and back to the car by 4.00pm.



We were Craig Allerby (leader and provider of brownie and custard) and Murray Gifford (photographer for the trip)

Tama Lakes

25 May

Report and photo from Peter Wiles

A team of seven met up as arranged at Taihape in overcast conditions. At Waiouru the cloud was near ground level with hints of drizzle but no wind. This did not look promising for a trip to Tama Lakes. However, beyond Ohakune we emerged into bright sunshine, the ground white with frost and an air temperature of -1°C . At National Park, it was $+8^{\circ}\text{C}$ with an easterly breeze but still nice and sunny. The same conditions held at the Chateau, but we could see that the saddle area around the lakes was on the divide between sun and cloud. Clearly it was going to be a walk in a cold breeze.



We set off and as we headed further north-east there was less sun, but dry conditions. After a stop for morning tea in a sheltered spot we reached the lower lake - A rather bleak place with the cloud layer not far above. The stream off Ruapehu that normally feeds the lake was dry and probably as a result, the water

level seemed rather low. Despite the cold wind we reached the rim above the upper lake and sidled to a sheltered spot for lunch. Some patches of snow were nearby. A couple of light showers brought the parkas out.

We arrived back at the car park about 3pm and headed around to Ohakune for a coffee and some indulgent repast at an eatery that was open (the preferred place had closed a couple of hours earlier).

Team: Jennifer and Kay Kitchen, Anne and Martin Lawrence, Selena Edlington, Christine Cheyne, and Peter Wiles

Takapari

Queens Birthday, 2 June

Report from Alasdair Noble



John and Alasdair prepare to head off after lunch
(Photo by Tony Gates)

A small but very experienced group met in Ashhurst and in a slight drizzle headed out to the eastern side of the Ruahine ranges. The weather forecast was not very hopeful but we carried on anyway. Departing from the car park at 9.15am we set off up the hill towards A frame (Travers on the map) hut. One of the group mentioned an occasional irregular heart beat but the pace was good. The weather was not however and we put on jackets pretty quickly. It was that annoying rain when it is hard to know whether you get wetter from sweat or from the rain – at least the sweat is warm whilst you are moving. An hour and three quarters later we stepped into the hut which was in a pretty disgusting state. The rain was setting in and a cool breeze was blowing. We had a brew, two had brought flasks and the other had a stove so we were warm and well fed.

After a break we geared up again, the rain was steadier now and we decided to head back down. The forecast southerly seemed to have arrived. The trip down was quick and the weather actually improved a little but we were glad to be back at the car. Tony decided a spot of fishing was on the cards on the way home so we checked out a few sections of river. He claimed to have hooked a nice one but we didn't see

it. Back in town by 4.00pm was an early finish but we had at least got out.

We were Alasdair Noble, Tony Gates and John Hunt.

Arapawa Island

Queens Birthday Weekend

Report and photos by Janet Wilson

A trip to Arapawa was an idea I had had for some time, carrying on the theme of coastal trips at this time of the year. This weekend has enjoyed mostly good weather in the Malbrough Sounds and Nelson region for a number of years now, when other parts of the country haven't had it so good. Was my good luck going to hold?

Most common question asked - where is Arapawa? It's the big island that forms the division in Queen Charlotte Sound at the Cook Strait end, making it the land on the western side of Tory Channel (where the ferry goes as it enters the Sounds.)

A group of six of us piled into a people mover borrowed from Warren's brother, and headed to Wellington to catch the 9am ferry. We had a lovely calm crossing and most of us stayed outside for the trip. A highlight was a very large pod of dolphins we saw in Cook Strait. As we entered Tory Channel, you could see our destination, a house on a headland with great views out towards Cook Strait and the North Island.

Sadly, the ferry wouldn't drop us off right there and so we carried on to Picton. Just as well we realised that we hadn't collected the 2 big fishing rods off the ferry and Graham and Craig had to run back for these. We had some lunch and picked up last minute provisions and at 1.30pm, caught the Mail Boat. This is a regular service to Sounds residents, delivering mail and groceries and also providing an informative trip for tourists and a taxi service for groups like us. We got to Arapawa in about an hour and were met at the wharf by our host, Antonia Raddon. The Raddons have a steep cattle farm and a paua farm, as well as letting out holiday accommodation and taking in "Woofers" to help them out with all the work. Our packs were delivered to our house "Gunyah" up on the headland.

This turned out to be easily as good as I had hoped, a very comfortable and well-equipped house with lots of firewood provided, not to mention the stunning views. Antonia gave us 2 dozen eggs and I swapped with some home grown apples. We settled in and then had a look at around an interesting WW2 gun emplacement and observation bunker that were close by, before it got dark. We shared the cooking for the weekend and so Anja and Warren served up dinner for the first night. Several ferries passed by.



The forecast was really good for the next day so we planned for a decent tramp up the hills on to the main range top. Antonia arranged permission for us to walk through the neighbouring property, belonging to the Hedderley family, who are descendents of Cook Strait whalers. They farm very fine-woolled merino sheep on the steep hills. So we walked on farm tracks over to the next bay and then up on to the headland right near The Heads. We were hoping to walk right down to the sea here but couldn't find the track that we thought we could see from the ferry. Warren did a bit of gorse bashing but with no luck.

So we had a look at the recently completed DOC whale watching hide (where they watch for Southern Right Whales migrating through Cook Strait during the winter) and then carried on up the ridge. The whole farm was very well tracked and walking was easy but quite steep in places. For a while we had a fairly strong wind coming over from the North West. We had a quick look into a patch of bush near the top, where strong winds have had an interesting effect on the tree shapes, before having lunch at a spot with great views.

A little further on, we split into two groups, with Warren and Richard heading up further and eventually reaching the high point "Arapawa". The rest of us were keen to do some fishing from the wharf late in the afternoon and so headed back down another track, which did turn out to be quite a long way home. The fishing team caught one terakihi and lots of snags. Not a lot to supplement dinner but it did find its way into the nice fish stew, created by Richard for dinner that night.

Next day, we walked for about 20 min along a coastal track to the South to the old whaling station. DOC have recently turned this into a coastal reserve, with plenty of signs explaining about what used to go on there. Quite a bit of it still remains. I got all excited when I spotted some paua but we had nothing to get them off the rocks with. It looked to me like an ideal spot to go fishing from too. We carried on along the track, but before long I decided I didn't want to do the

climb up the hill and would rather go back and go fishing. Craig and Anja thought this was a good idea too and so we split up with the others carrying on to the next bay, where they found some old graves and some interesting local characters. Richard managed to sort out a problem they were having with their GPS. Team fishing had more luck at the whaling station, taking home a bigger terakihi and a blue cod, and throwing back quite a number of small fish. Later that day, most of the team went for a tour of the paua farm, which was fascinating, and fed the tame eels on our fish and bacon scraps.



By Monday morning the predicted southerly had started to blow and the sea out in the strait was getting progressively rougher. We had our third breakfast of bacon and eggs, watched more ferries go by and slowly packed up. Antonia came up to say goodbye early - she was off to Picton with some baby paua to send away! Her husband Mike came to pick our packs up when we heard the water taxi arrive and we were soon on our way back to Picton. The water taxi dropped us right at the ferry, and soon after it had left, we realised the fishing rods had once again been left behind! Graham and Craig went off to retrieve them. The trip back was a bit rougher and we all stayed outside to avoid the sea sick types. Got back to PN at 7.30 and had fish and chips at Anja's place, with an entree of paua thanks to the generosity of the Raddon's. Thanks to the people who came along, helped me carry things and made it a memorable trip.

We were Janet Wilson, Graham Peters, Warren Wheeler, Craig Allerby and Anja Scholz.

South East Ruahines: Cattle Creek

6-7 June

Report by Murray Gifford

We were only a party of two and the weather forecast was for a storm to pass overnight. A start from the West Tamaki Road end (just west of Dannevirke) at about 9.30am, weather bright, with blue skies and some views of the lower tops. We decided to go the Holmes Ridge route to Stanfield hut. A short steep uphill thru the bush, to an old farm road, which we

followed up the ridge and along. Finally the road deteriorated into a track and headed down hill towards the river. The river was low and a short jaunt up the river to the Hut, only 1½ hours. The riverbed was very active with piles of river scree near the hut. A short break for a bit to eat and onwards to the north.

At a river confluence we headed up the ridge, thru bush again, a good 45mins up and up. As we neared the top, misty rain set in and we donned our wet weather gear. A sign was reached to the cattle ridge hut via the ridge, but a vague track headed off to the west, a lost track to the summit of Mt Takapari as I understand, we had time on our hands and opted for the route to the top of Cattle creek. We followed the opening in the bush, thru tall overgrown grasses, most attractive and dense. I was thinking an hours bush bashing down the gully to the creek was ahead, but lo and behold within 15mins we had dropped down to the creek, a open creek deep in the bush with a sign up the hill to indicate we were on the right track. A most scenic creek, easy walking for most of the way. 1 hour down to the hut. For the last ½ hour, the rain set in, we were getting wet and cold, not so much fun.

Finally we caught a glimpse of the orange hut on the true left up on a fan in open country. Good to open the door, a clean but cold hut, a few sticks of firewood only. Warren did some roof repairs, a large log on flapping transparent sheet on the veranda. Inside for a brew, soup and end of lunch. The weather really set in, wind and rain, great to be out of it. We both headed for our bags and an afternoon kip. Dinner at 5.00 and back in the bags by 7.00, only to listen to the winds howling for much of the night. Must have gone calm as I feel asleep and woke to quiet and 10mm of hail snow of the ground.

The next morning after a warm breakfast, we were packed up by 9.00am and out the door, weather much brighter, had turned to the south, sun in the east but not the hut. We had to climb the ridge to get to the sun. 20 minutes up the ridge east of the hut, good views to be had out to the Central Hawkes Bay and back down the Pohangina River.

We headed back along the ridge, one hour, cold and icy; back down the ridge to Stanfield. By now it was 11.00, the sun was warm, we decided to make a day of it, home via Takapari Road and A Frame hut. Up the spur behind the hut we went, a bit overgrown but OK, the hail snow thickening as we got higher, too cold to thaw. Up to the leather wood zone, and then on the tops a wide-open track heading south thru the leatherwood and fuschia. A good half hour along the ridge, the sounds of motors from Takapari Road. Rimu track marked with a DOC sign, back down to the river and finally out to the road. The road was well-formed and 5 metre wide expanse of gravel. Motorbikes, 4 wheel dives and quads went by, felt like a highway, guess they had come to find some

snow. A half hour along the road to A Frame, the wind cold, the clouds rolling in. We had lunch and a family in the hut shared hot soup, which was great.

A hunter type suggested a quick route down the scree slope of the creek to the south of the hut. Warren was a goer, so down the road and ridge we headed, 15mins and look over the edge into an erosion gully, Quick route down yes, but the first 100 metres down the top of the gully was steep, not for the faint hearted, risk levels greatly elevated. Warren slithered down, a bit grassy and soft, the alternative down the edge was solid leatherwood, and so I followed Warren. Whilst we enjoyed some scree and rapid travel, most was very bony rock and hard, so slow going. The scree piles on the way down were huge; the stream surfaces in places and dives underground. Finally two hours back down to the car, no quicker than the track I would conclude.

We were Warren Wheeler (leader and provider Swedish blue vein cheese soup) and Murray Gifford (chief cook and napper).

Mania Track

14 June

Report from Kay Kitchen

For those of you who have forgotten what it is like to be new to tramping this may bring back memories. We set off at 8.30 and by morning tea stop Anne came to realise that this wasn't going to be a brisk walk to the top but a leisurely stroll for her and a huff and puff for the mother and daughter straggling behind. Mind you, it did have its advantages because on one of her waits for the others to catch up stops she and Anja were surprised by the number and variety of birds you could see and hear if you just stood there.

This being my first venture up into the Ruahines on foot opened my eyes to a whole new world of plants,. Thankfully we had Craig Allerby with us for he has a power of knowledge. I had never seen spear grass before let alone plonked my hand right on top. 3/4 of the way up the cloud closed in and we all stopped to put another layer on but oh when we got to our destination we were on top of the world with not a breath of wind, a blue sunny winter's sky and just a few remnants of snow dotting the place.

The view was better than you get from a plane with Ruapehu & Tongariro just floating above a rim of cloud and with just a little hint of imagination we could make out a sleeping dragon in the valley below which answered the question we were all asking - what was that strange noise we heard every so often like a distant cannon or a truck crossing a bridge.

After lunch and a lie back in the sun (my WELL earned rest) it was now for the easier part I thought-downhill. Oh my legs they felt like jelly and got the spastic wobbles for a part there and who hid those

roots in the undergrowth just waiting for me to stumble over and straight onto spear grass. Crikey, I don't know how you guys walk in thick muddy conditions because we were so lucky with the track only having a couple of wet spots. Thankfully the final leg of the track is really easy going so all the hard times had been forgotten by 4pm when we got back to the car then stopping off at the Kimbolton café for a well earned beer (someone told me it was good for you after a tramp so I took their word) A few bruises and by Tuesday I could walk with not a hint of stiffness so perhaps I am getting fitter and will put my name down for another "medium" trip if a leader is willing to take me on. Thanks to the team - I had a memorable day.



Photo: Martin Lawrence

We were Jennifer and Kay Kitchen, Craig Allerby, Anja Scholz, Anne and Martin Lawrence

Burn Hut Loop

15 June

Report from Dave Grant

Dawn was breaking with a clear blue sky and no wind. Was this really wintertime? I picked up Terry as arranged and we headed out of the city. John was supposed to meet us at the bus stop outside Massey but there was no sign of him. "We'll give him another five" I said to Terry. "Who is he anyway?" "A guy I met last night" I replied. "Said he was keen to come". My cell phone buzzed. John was texting to say he was running a bit late. Lucky. He arrived at high speed on his bike soon after and we loaded him into the Mazda (including his bike – he'd forgotten the lock !!) and headed on south to Shannon and the Mangahao road. Conversation on the way was animated as we caught up with each others' recent activities and found out a bit more about John. He'd been up until 2.00am rebuilding his website which explained his late start.

The trip up the Mangahao road was uneventful apart from the enjoyment of driving a torturous track through bush clad hills. The first section was obviously being used by logging trucks extracting timber from the adjacent pine forest. Making the same journey during the week days could be full of surprises. Just after the first dam we spotted the sign

marking the start of the newly completed Mangahao – Makahika section of the Te Araroa trail. There were a couple of vehicles parked at the second dam when we arrived at about 9am, but no sign of people, so we carried on donning our boots and daypacks to start the tramp.

As we crossed over the dam headwall the view up the lake reflecting the surrounding steep bush clad hills illuminated by the oblique winter sun was superb. On the other side of the dam the track plunged into the bush clad slopes of the Mangahao valley. We sidled along in an easterly direction, brushing through the forest undergrowth with occasional glimpses of the boulder filled bed of the river below. No tourist trail this, as we picked our way over tree root and rocks jutting out from the steep hillside.

“Hello, what have we got here?” We had just finished clambering out of a side creek when a couple of dogs come bounding down the trail towards us. “Hmmm, flat wide heads on them; hunting dogs. I wonder if they are aggro?” No worries, they were more interested in other things, and were closely followed by two Swannie clad hunters. “Gidday, howzit goin? Ahh not bad. Nice day eh. Any luck? Nah, we came in last night and camped just above the next creek but these couple of guys came thru just before so we decided to give it away and head home. Oh, bad luck. Yeah, well we better keep goin. OK, see yah.” We carried on, leaving the slightly disgruntled hunters heading off in the opposite direction. On a little flat above the next side creek fern frond bedding and the remains of a campfire confirmed what the hunters had said.

Now it was a steep climb out of the river valley up to the ridge above, then continuing eastward along the undulating ridgetop. Here we paused beside some stunted Miro and gazed into the valley to the south. The creek far below looked deeply entrenched and we wondered what it would be like to travel. Steep slip scarred faces covered in scrub led up to a belt of vegetation where scattered Rimu lifted their khaki-coloured crowns above the canopy. Further along as the ridge gradually rose, the trees we were travelling through became more stunted and finally gave way to subalpine scrub –the varied form and colour of the leatherwood, dracophyllum and horopito, mixed with Astelia, mountain flax and tussock along the track. At the top where the track curved to the south it was time to pause again. Panoramic views stretched to the horizons. The snow clad slopes of Ruapehu glistened on the northern skyline and following the curve of the land along the coast to the west, there was the cone of Taranaki. The Manawatu river snaked across farmland in the mid distance.

On a clear spur to the south below the main ridgeline, Burn hut could be seen. The track along the ridgetop followed a channel cut through the now dominant

leatherwood. Cut stumps hidden below the flax and Astelia made effective “tank traps” to trip you up just when you wanted to lengthen your stride on the easy going. A brief glimpse of northern Wairarapa farmland appeared off to the left and we debated whether that area of trees with a few houses showing was Eketahuna.

We arrived at Burn Hut at 11.30am. This was the new Burn hut, (sleeps 6 and has an enclosed porch) built about 5 years ago as a combined effort by the Horowhenua Hunters Club and DOC to replace an old NZFS hut on a dead-end track to the north. We decided that although it was a bit early, it may as well be lunchtime. Heads bobbed past the window and in clomped a couple of hunters also seeking a lunch spot. It turned out these were the guys who had disturbed our earlier contacts close to the start of the track. Good keen men, these. One had left Akatarawa at 4am that morning and picked up his mate on the way. And they planned to hunt their way back to Mangahao No 2 dam via the deeply entrenched gully we had gazed into earlier in the morning.

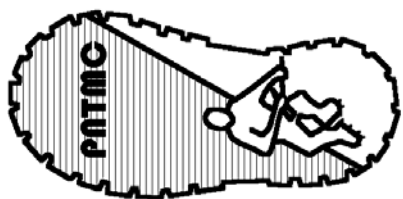
Packing up our lunch gear it was time to head off up onto the ridge above. A native falcon drifted overhead. As we made our way west, the previously dominant leatherwood gave way to mixed subalpine shrubbery again. To the south, Ngapuketuru ridge leading up to Dundas ridge could be clearly seen, and to the west, Island ridge with the upper Mangahao valley behind. We dropped steeply south off the ridge through trees heavily laden with moss and filmy ferns, down past sizable Rimu trees to the creek below. A solitary whitehead flitted among the branches on the way.

This was College creek and we crisscrossed our way down the bouldery stream bed reaching the top Mangahao reservoir in about half an hour. The lake level was down and the trunks of drowned tree lifted forlornly through the water. Leaving the damp flats of the lake edge we sidled around through bush to the dam wall, arriving at about 3 o'clock.

Depending on your point of view we had saved the worst to last. Now there was a 40 minute trudge down the access road back to our vehicle at the No2 Reservoir. The walk was made easier by views of the bush clad slopes over the other side of the valley highlighted by the late afternoon sun. And then we were back in our vehicle winding our way down to the lowlands. Another satisfying day in the hills.

We were Terry Crippen, John Liewes, and David Grant

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PNTMC Newsletter

July 2008

What's Inside this month:

- *Upcoming trips*
- *Reports on recent trips and events*
- *Details of our 2008 Snowcraft instruction programme*
- *Details of our upcoming photo competition.*

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