



Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.

www.pntmc.org.nz

P.O. Box 1217, Palmerston North

Newsletter February 2009

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.

29 January

New year BBQ

Horseshoe Bend from 6.30pm

Join us for a pleasant BBQ evening and a chance to rave about all the trips you've done over the holidays. 6.30pm start, or come earlier if you want more time for a swim. BYO food and drink. Turn left in Tokomaru and follow the road to the end (about 2 km). Contact Warren 356-1998 for a ride out there.

12 February

Navigation Made Easy

Warren Wheeler will help unravel the mysteries of traditional map and compass work and introduce the wonders of GPS technology. With his "hands on" approach you can expect a fun night out. BYO compass, map and GPS if you have them

26 February

Cape Reinga Walkway

Penny Abercrombie will give a presentation on the coastal walkway at the northern tip of the North Island. More than just white sand and surf, blue sky and sea.

Trip Notes

Trip Grading

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

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

31 January-1 February

Central East Ruahines

F

Murray Gifford

357-3353 or 021-774290

From Mill Rd road end, we head up the Tukituki river to Daphne Hut, and up the Daphne spur to Howletts. Sunday is a long day, as we head up and over Tiraha (1668m), along Sawtooth Ridge to Ohuinga (1686m), down black ridge to Tarn Biv, and then out via Rosvalls track. Start 7.00am at Countdown carpark.

1 February

Whakapapaiti walk

E/M

Trevor King,

356-4557

Enjoy summer on the Mountain! This trip heads down the Whakapapaiti Valley, off Mt Ruapehu's Top of the Bruce Road. Exits at the Chateau for coffee. A very pleasant and picturesque downhill walk of medium length. Leave Countdown 6.00 a.m. Sunday.

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.

Waitangi Weekend

6 February (Friday)

Roaring Stag M
Duncan Hedderley 354-6905

In the hills behind Eketahuna, Roaring Stag used to be an old deer stalkers hut alongside the Ruamahanga river. DoC replaced it with a new one about 18 months ago, so come have a look. Depart PN at 8am.

6- 8 February

Waiohine Gorge trip F
Tony Gates 357-7439

The Waiohine Gorge is a classic Tararua river, with fantastic tube floating and scenery. We start with climb of Mt Holdsworth, then descend to Mid Waiohine Hut, and then float down to Totara Flats, where we can meet the other trip and give them a turn on the tubes. Definitely a fit trip. Wet suits, helmets, and dry bags essential. Depart Friday evening.

14 February (Saturday)

Coppermine All
Janet Maessen 353 0922

Contact Janet for details of this trip which is suitable for a wide range of fitness levels.

14 – 15 February

Cattle Creek/Pohangina F
Graham Peters 329 4722

Graham describes this trip as a “goody”. Up the Tamaki and along the ridge overlooking Cattle Creek. Dropping down into the stream that goes past the Duck Pond we'll end up in the Pohangina where we will camp for the night. Next day past Mid-Pohangina hut and up Cattle Creek to join in at the bottom of the Lost Track then back down the Tamaki.

22 February

Makairo Track E/M
Fiona Donald 3561095

This is a delightful trip, easy or easy/medium, and one of my favourites for those of us who enjoy beautiful views at the summit. We will leave at 8am from the Countdown Supermarket and drive to the Wairarapa. Not far from Pahiatua, at the Tui Brewery in Mangatainoka, we turn and drive towards the hills for about half an hour, some of it is on gravel road. We leave the cars and follow an easy ascending. It's originally a closed road; it can be also be muddy. We return the same way. Please phone Fiona no later than 19 February. Spaces are limited because it has been a popular trip in previous years and she will need drivers and vehicles.

21-22 February

Arete Forks (Fly Camp) M/F
Warren Wheeler 356 1998

Depart 7.30am. This trip takes us to a lovely campsite in the eastern Tararua Forest Park. There is a 2 hour climb up onto Blue Range from the Kiriwaka Roadend then a couple of hours through the goblin

forest and down to the fancy new swingbridge over the Waingawa River to Cow Creek Hut and our hidden campsite in a mossy clearing amongst the beech trees. We can then head off upriver to spot blue ducks and visit Arete Forks Hut or simply relax and enjoy a sunny afternoon by the swimming hole. On Sunday we head out the same way, with a short side trip to Blue Range Hut.

28 February – 1 March

Mangatainoka Hot Springs E/M
Tina Bishop 355 5755

This is a delightful and relaxing trip. The track follows the Mohaka River to TePuia Lodge. Further up the track are the hot pools where if the weather permits we will camp under flies and enjoy the hot pools so brings togs and towel and a torch. If the weather is not so good we will stay at the hut. There are plenty of places to fish and swim along the way. There is the option of leaving Friday night and staying in a Hawkes Bay camping ground otherwise it will be an early start from Palmie on Saturday morning.

1 March

Egmont East Ridge F
Alasdair Noble 356 1094

This will be a long day trip, early start in Palmy (or you can meet us at the carpark above Stratford at a more manageable time if you want to drive up the afternoon before). We shall ascend the East ridge - a pleasant rocky scramble for a good part of the way - and then return by the more usual Northern side before a walk around part of the round the mountain track back to the cars. Allow up to 12 hours on the go so fitness will be important. Highlights will be the Sharks tooth, the caving down into the crater and the glorious views from the summit. The ridge is waterless so in anticipation of a long hot day bring plenty to drink.

7-8 March

Parks Peak M
Peter Wiles 358 6894

Plan is to leave Palmy at 7am and head over to Whakarara Road near Ongaonga. We will then wander up the track to the hut for the night.

8 March

Irongates Gorge E/M
Warren Wheeler 356 1998

Depart 8.30am. This is a classic summer river trip in the western Ruahine Forest Park. It involves an easy 2 hours along the sidle track to reach the Oroua River for an early lunch and a swim (optional). We then follow the river downstream for about two and half hours to the Irongates Gorge where will pack float or swim the short length involved. This is followed by a climb up out of the steep sided valley and back to the carpark. Great fun, not to be missed.

Notices

PNTMC Annual Awards

The following awards were presented by Vice President Warren Wheeler at the End of Year BBQ at Ashhurst Domain. Thanks to those who nominated recipients for consideration by the Committee.

Ritz Award – Ian Harding for the surprisingly deluxe accommodation at River Valley.

Eureka Award – Mick Leyland for finding the long lost fly under the ropes in the gear room.

Some Dumb Come Award – Trevor King for the best gear check by a leader.

Fool Moon Award – Warren Wheeler for mistakenly timing the windmills on North Range trip under the full dark circle of a new moon.

Off Track Award – Janet Wilson for a nice long recovery after a racing motorcycle accident.

Jamie Oliver Wild Food Award – Tony Gates for his pork, trout and venison.

Over the Top Award – Martin Lawrence for another MTB handlebar excursion.

Little Toot Award – Fiona Donald for steady progress on the Tongariro Crossing.

Return to Sender Award – Terry Crippen for using a named envelope to allow the speedy return of the money that the Treasurer dropped on his way home.

Little Lucifer Firelighters Award to Murray Gifford for fine wood preparation on the Richmond Range trip.

Fly by Night Award – Tony Gates for being forced inside a full hut by snow collapsing his fly.

And our most prestigious award...

Dave Hodges Award for Excellence in Pursuit of Forgetfulness – John Hunt for forgetting the well marked track turnoff on the Hemimatenga to Field Trig trip.

The Tararua Trophy 2008 - awarded to Dave Grant for his report of a day tramp to Burn Hut. This story had plenty of flora and fauna interest, route guide information, and of course human interest. He reminded us that those medium day tramps close to town, even during winter, can take you to so many interesting places. And the report was of a trip to the Tararuas - birthplace not only of Tramping in New Zealand, but also of the Tararua Trophy. Well done Dave!

News from DOC

Ruapae and East Peak

A section of route between Ruapae and East Peak, northeast of East Peak on the tops between Herepai and Dundas huts, grid reference 543214, has eroded on both sides of the ridge. Roots and branches only are holding the ridge top track together. Please take care when tramping in this area.

Access to Diggers Hut

Due to a major upsurge in visitation, the landowner has closed access to Diggers Hut through private land. Access is available via Makawakawa Stream (Diggers Creek) on Pohangina Valley East Road, or from the Diggers Track on Takapari Road. Both these routes require normal river flows and take 2-3 hours depending on fitness. Please respect all access to the Ruahine Forest Park that crosses private land; ensure prior permission is obtained where required and leave property as you find it (e.g. gates). Failing to do so could result in agreements for access being withdrawn.

Tracks and Huts

A quick update on some of the work that DOC has done on tracks and huts about the place:

- Waterfall Hut was painted a lovely orange shade by volunteers. A new meat-safe has also been installed.

- The following tracks have been cut/cleared:

- Mokai – Otukota Hut track,
- Bruce Ridge track,
- Otukota – Maori clearing,
- M aori Clearing to Swingbridge track,
- M aori Clearing to Puketaramea track,
- Puketaramea to Maropea Forks Hut track,
- Maropea Forks Hut to Main Range tops,
- Iron Bark Hut to Colenso Hut track,
- Colenso Hut – Unknown Campsite track,
- Unknown Campsite – Puketaramea track.

- The DOC team are chipping away at the Manawatu Gorge track upgrade as usual, with metal being flown in to 58 dump sites along the track over the coming month. The track will remain open during flying times, but walkers may be asked to wait for a few minutes while loads are being dropped.

Hut passes

DOC has introduced a six-monthly hut pass to make it easier and more viable for “seasonal” trampers. Six-monthly hut passes cost \$60 for an adult and \$30 for a youth. Associate group discounts do not apply to six-monthly hut passes. For an annual backcountry hut pass (i.e. for 12 months), members of the following associate groups are entitled to a 30% discount:

- Federated Mountain Clubs
- NZ Mountain Safety Council
- NZ Deerstalkers Association
- NZ Alpine Club
- Council of Outdoor Recreation Associations
- LandSAR

Please note that only one discount per membership card can be given. For example, if you have a family membership with the Federated Mountain Club with only one membership card, only one member of the family will be able to purchase an annual hut pass at the discounted price.

Sad news

Andrew Lynch passed away on Monday 12th January after his long battle with cancer. Andrew has been an active club member for many years and he will be sadly missed by all of us at PNTMC. An obituary will be in the March newsletter. This photo of Andrew was taken in 2007 on the Gendarme between Girdlestone and Taurangi on Mt Ruapehu.



Trip Reports

Pureora Bike and Hike

8– 9 November 2008

Report: Richard Lockett

Photos: Martin Lawrence

A Friday evening departure from Palmy for our cabin accommodation at the Pureora field centre saw Anne and Martin and myself up early and wiping the heavy overnight frost off the saddles of the bikes.

Our destination for the day Piropiro flats an old logging town now a Doc camping site in the southern part of the forest park and the start of the Waione tram mountain bike track. A family camping here were able to provide a bit of local knowledge about the area we would be traversing as the dad, a keen hunter had GPS'd all the tracks and junctions using a motorbike covering some 85 kms of old logging tracks in this area.

We headed out of the flats riding south on the Totara Stream road then turning right into Maramataha road for another km to reach the clay quad bike track known as the Panhandle which saw the bikes being pushed up a steep 80 metre climb, then a pleasant ride through bush before heading steep down hill to the Maramataha River.

It was at this point that Anne decided that the conditions for bike riding were becoming well on the wrong side, re the zone of her comfort and that a return to the Piropiro Flats with some bush walking thereabouts would be a more comfortable activity for the day. Having agreed on a rendezvous time of 3.30pm back at the Flats Martin and I carried on to the river which if it wasn't for the presence of a steel wire rope slung across just above the water level we may well have joined Anne back at the flats. Flowing fast but clear and a slippery bottom to boot carrying ones bike across without the wire rope was only going to end in an even colder bath than the one we got. The steep climb out of the river valley required an initial bike push of 150 metres height gain before the track leveled off enough for cycling to resume gain another 50 metres in height over the next 2kms.



We stopped for a breather at a private hut (pungas and tarps) just up a sidetrack, as we were pretty well stuffed at this point and a look at the watch told all, we ain't gonna knock this off in six hours at this rate. There was a shorter loop option available to us with bypassed the main loop, which we decided to take wondering as to whether we'd be able to find it. We kept meeting a couple of hunters with dogs who were staying at the punga hut and walking the track hoping to sniff out a pig, our squeaking brakes probably not helping their cause at all. A quick lunch was taken at the southern most extremity of the ride, in the sun beside the Waione River having just crossed it. Only knee deep this time - no worries! A short bike push saw us up on a ridge above the river, which we followed for about a km before a nice descent to the Waione again and only an ankle deep crossing this time. Our loop track option was found no problem so we left our hunting companions in peace and were

soon back at a familiar junction we had passed about an hour or so earlier. A look at the watch and we were good for our meeting time with Anne.

In no time at all it seemed and we were back at the steep descent to the Maramataha River confirming that its quicker riding down hill than up. On the descent to the river I positioned myself to get a good shot of Martin on the tricky descent with my camera, anyways Martin heads towards me at speed and totally out of control before tripping over and landing facedown just in front of me and he wasn't even on his bike having decided to dismount when faced with a tight downhill bend. I didn't get the shot, being concerned with the possible consequences of the events unfolding before my eyes. Martin picked himself up shaken but remarkably unhurt from the forest floor. Another off the bike and onto the ground excursion and Martin wisely decided to walk the rest of the way to the river.

The dip in the river didn't seem so cold second time around but it still raised a laugh from us both as we each took photos of the other whist mid stream. A short bike push up onto the ridge top and we were soon back on good flat quad bike track with the odd large muddy puddle thrown in, which unbeknown to Martin would present him with the opportunity to go for the elusive hat trick. Being parked around a corner from said large puddle pausing to have a drink, I didn't see it but I heard it a perfect rendition of the classic trip over the handle bars. Ounce again Martin emerged unscathed but somewhat wet and sporting that grin which must come with frequent small shots of adrenalin.

With 3kms of easy downhill quad track and gravel road in no time at all we were back at Piropiro Flats about an hour early for our meet time with Anne who had disappeared with the car. The camping family's dad turns up on his motor bike "you boy's like a cold beer". Martin had actually earned one so we spent the next hour or so chewing the flat about the great outdoors and with Anne turning up from her walk exploring the road ends north from the flats as advised by the campers we headed back to Pureora Village.

A cup of coffee and some pre-dinner nibbles then a trip around the Totara walk, a short walk from the cabin was done before dinner. Anne's meal being so big that a bike trip down to the old steam logging hauler a couple of km's down the road was undertaken to make some room for dessert.

Sunday saw us head into the northern Pureora Forest and the Okahukura Loop track consisting of 14 km's of old logging road and gravel roads a more cruisey ride as graded as beginner. The first half of track grassed over gravel road climbing through good forest with had us working hard, a short middle muddy quad bike track and then onto gravel road with some good

down hill stuff one of which had a washed out culvert at the bottom with a 5 metre drop into the stream below, the red tape warning draped across the road catching our eye just in time. The last 3km's all good fast downhill with another culvert washout nearly catching me out this one not completely taking the whole road out, a wild moment trying to slow up.

I got back to the car first then Martin, looking more bashed up than before having been pitched off his bike on the last downhill, nothing too serious his helmet doing its job in protecting the face from serious gravel rash. It still being only late morning another activity in the form of a walk to straighten out the legs was called for so we headed back towards Pureora and a loop track through forest at the end of Gully Road which filled in an hour before lunch nicely. A leisurely trip home with a coffee stop in Taihape finished off an enjoyable weekend.



We were Richard Lockett, Martin and Anne Lawrence

Tongariro Crossing - the male perspective

29 November 2008

Report: John Feeney

Photos: Fiona Donald

With the Christmas rush nearly upon us it was a relief to get small group of trampers together to take part in this stunning walk. John and co-leader Fiona were both very keen for this adventure, discussed in March, with Fiona in training since June.

Our well organized leader had the 5 of us squeezed into his car and underway about 5.30pm on the Friday night heading for National Park. Prior to our meal break, Fiona tempted us with an appetizer of home-made pizza. This was followed up with a visit to a whole food restaurant in Taihape. We then continued on with our leisurely drive to reach our night's accommodation, Mangatepopo School Camp. Surprisingly the camp was empty and we had the choice of numerous bunks.

We were off to bed early anticipating a big day's walk. Up about 6.15am, the simple forecast for the

day said fine weather and we were not disappointed! There was time for some conversation (more Warren Wheeler advice) over breakfast and then off on the "Discovery Adventure Shuttle". We were keen to get a head start on the predicted numerous other walkers we expected would also be completing this walk on the same day.



Although it was only 7.30 am when we reached the start of the track we were astonished to find that 8 bus loads of walkers had already gone before us. (Later we find about 24 bus loads of walkers have been on the track this day!)

We take our spot in the trek and are quickly immersed in the atmosphere of the volcanic terrain. There is a continual stream of people which detracts only a little from the impressive surrounding- old lava flows, mountain tussocks, daisies and snow moss, extensive views right across to Mt Taranaki.. The peaks of Tongariro, Ngauruhoe, are clear with smatterings of snow still remaining. We take a break and queue for the toilets at the "Soda Springs". The track from here up to the South Crater has been renewed and is a fair "zig zag" grade. Up on top of South Crater, its flat and "moon-like." Into another stretch of steeper walking to Red Crater. Reaching the high point is a bit of a grunt, but the views across Red and Central Crater provide easy diversions. Its tricky going down from this high point, Janet gallantly helps an Israeli woman down and Fiona is pleased she has her walking poles for this bit!

Our lunch is taken by the lakes. We spend the time people watching...this is a main highway of people. We are very impressed when we meet a father from Auckland walking his 5 year old son the full 19.4 km length of the crossing. By now its getting very hot and we are pleased we took the advice about bringing that extra water. We follow along past Blue Lake. Still streams of people, down to the Ketetahi Hut. We are treated with clear views right across Lake Taupo.. Further down we reach the bush line with its very welcome shade. The track is freshly cleared and it is easy going right back to the car park.. A great

effort we finish the walk in about 8 hours. A short wait and our shuttle whisks us back to our car. It's off home with the compulsory stop in Taihape...This walk has lived up to expectations, such a lot of contrasts over a short distance, the track is really well looked after (and litter free for such a high use area). Janet is right with her comment: "This is as good as it gets"!

Tongariro Crossing - the female perspective

29 November 2008

Report and photos: **Fiona Donald**

After a couple of months, I'm still buzzing about walking the Tongariro Crossing; it is one of the most enjoyable and memorable trips I have ever completed with fellow trampers. I had spent a lot of time reading this book and visualizing walking along the route; it is a well recommended read -"The Tongariro Crossing: an amazing journey".

We had barely started along the Mangatepopo Valley and Warren said to me "that he would give me a chocolate fish if I spotted a native flower". Little did I know those flowers are tiny, about half the size of 5 cents and they shyly tuck themselves beside low mounds of grasses near the track. Just after Warren mentioned it, his sharp eyes immediately saw one of these flowers and he kindly pointed them out to me. It took me a long time before I saw one of these flowers on my own.



At the Mangatepopo Hut turn-off, I opted to stay and wait for the others and so I discovered it was a great area to people watch. A lot of people walked past in groups and then there was a pause and you got the experience of being at one with the landscape. Suddenly, one woman did a full-length face plant in front of me; she had tripped over a protruding rock right by the turnoff. I made a mental note to avoid that part of the track, if there was a next time. It happened so quickly and her family didn't miss a beat - they kept walking and didn't even offer to help her

up or ask her whether she was all right. I didn't see that group again.

The contrasts in rock, light and shadow, the clear air, the sound of water tumbling down rocky streams all added to the atmosphere. Warren was very busy taking photographs and demonstrating to all and sundry the textures of the plants... "rough" and "smooth". A Dutch guy paused and reached out his hand to feel the smoothness of the plants.

The others gave me a head start for the first zig zag route, from Soda Springs to South Crater, and it was an awesome uphill climb; by this time of the morning, about 9-10am, many people were on the Crossing. All were respectful and didn't push by others. Janet found a pair of discarded socks and sweatpants on this steep section. Also there was a phantom used-tissue dropper that kept Janet very busy because she picked up all the tissues and put them into her pack., particularly when we reached South Crater. It was just like the Hansel and Gretel story except every 10-15 feet there was another dropped white used tissue.

South Crater is an uncanny landscape filled with volcanic dust, graffiti in the snow, tiny patches of bristly plants, Mt Ngauruhoe dominates the right side; we stand by the large brown lake and look up to see a delicate wisp of smoke drifting up into the blue sky. Just as we enter into South Crater there are piles of rubble. Any moment, now, (I watched far too many cowboy/Indian movies in my childhood) we were going to be ambushed by blood thirsty Indians on their horses. Those horses are going to power down the rubble...on closer inspection, no self-respecting horse would have coped with the boulders; it is still an impressive landscape.



On to Red Crater and that was a difficult climb on loose scoria. There is a short pause, for breath, where you can look eastwards over the Rangipo Desert. There, Janet and I saw a woman using tissues. Janet said something like this "it is you! who's dropping the tissues along the track because I have been picking them up"; the woman reckoned she had been putting

the tissues in her pack. We did not see any dropped tissues after that. It was a relief to get to Red Crater and have an obligatory photo with the vent in the background.

The descent to the Emerald Lakes is very steep. I was very grateful that Warren helpfully explained how to step down onto the loose scoria. I was scared that it would be a long slide and a quick tumble into the nearest Lake.



Shortly after lunch, we trekked across mushy snow, saw clumps of mountain daisies and at the Ketetahi Hut-pipits.

The major highlights for me: The company, thanks everyone, it was great to go in a group; a warm clear day; making your own pace up the steep sections; and a pair of trekking poles.

We were co-leaders, Fiona Donald, and John Feeney, plus Warren Wheeler, Janet Wilson and Sue Johnson.

In the footsteps of Janet, Graham, and Warren (Upper Otaki) ...

5 - 7 December 2008

Report: Tony Gates

The Upper Otaki tramp of January 2008 saw Janet, Graham, Warren, and myself enjoying some of the best off tramping that the Tararuas have to offer. This time solo, I followed some of that trips' footprints, and continued with my enjoyment of the Tararuas. In this vast forested area of the Otaki (and surrounding catchments), there is just so much for us to enjoy, and the terrain and vegetation, if you study it, is not difficult. Who needs tracks in open forest and pleasant grassy river flats? Who needs huts when the weather is perfect? And who needs to carry food when it is already there "on the hoof" as it were. And if I were to live off the land (I include the river in that meaning), then what more could one ask for than a handsome trout to supplement the prolific Tararua venison.

Day one started as a bit of a disaster, being caught in the South Ohau gorge by a pathetic rain shower that somehow produced a sizeable flood. I was awestruck with the speed of the flood coming. I was faced with a steep 300 metre climb up onto Deception spur, which luckily was mostly fairly open punga forest. Depressing in the rain and mist. I didn't want to continue with off track bush navigation in the thick mist, and knew that the North Ohau Biv would offer me a suitable haven. It did. I awoke after a brief siesta to brilliant sunshine, and views down valley of Gable End ridge and Deception Spur. The flood would soon go away. North Ohau biv was so nice that I decided to stay the nite there, just relax and dry out properly, and do a little exploring.

Day two could then begin before 6.00 AM. A good climb back onto Deception Spur, sidle, and so down to the Ohau River just upstream from the new South Ohau hut. Mostly good bush, with several views out and about to aid navigation. The new hut is very nice. I knew that I had time, energy, and a light pack, and I could investigate Butchers Creek, from where the flash flood had originated. It has a vast open gravel river bed, and raw erosion scars that lead to immediate rainfall runoff. Good bush too, and some great views. I hauled myself on up to the Dora Ridge track, then the view that I really wanted- the Upper Otaki.

Navigation was successful down a prominent ridge to the Waiopahu Stream/ Otaki River confluence- not that it really mattered if I missed the ridge. Plain sailing down the familiar river, sunny conditions, delightful forest shade, and endless great campsites. I reached our campsite from January 2008 by 4.00 PM, and before I even had time to make a brew, I spied two young stags opposite. They posed for the camera, then the rifle, so by the time I had my camp made and much deserved brew in hand, I had all the venison I wanted. This upper Otaki is seldom visited, which is surprising because of its obvious beauty as well as numerous deer- and other creatures. On my evening stroll down river, I disturbed two more deer sitting in the middle of grassy flat. Droppings and hoof marks made the place look like a farm yard.

It's a neat feeling to be alone in the wilderness. Warm summer weather, easy terrain, and a cosy camp to return to. At my chosen turn around point, something lured me down river- "just one more river bend" I thought (and probably the best camp sight of them all. "just one more". A black bottomless pool signified my turn around point, but not before I tossed in my fishing line. I hardly had time to commence the reel in, and something solid tugged the end. I had a firm footing, but this was a solid pull, from a heavy creature living deep underwater. I figured that it must have been a giant eel. It required some strength to reel him over to my side of the river, where the best water was still about waist deep- not an easy location

to land then release this creature. It flicked and danced about the water surface for a but, pulled out my line, and I pulled him back. It was very exciting. Still thinking it was an eel, I brought him to the knee deep water near my feet before seeing that he was a large and heavy trout. Wow. Even more exciting. These moments make tramping just so rewarding. I've shot plenty of deer, but am really only a novice fisherman.

Lacking a net, I wasn't sure how to land this monster from the bottomless black pool, but sure didn't want to loose him. He obviously tired, but still had tremendous strength. I played him for maybe three or four minutes, then gently eased my legs into the water. ***I recall Andy Lynch telling me how to secure your fish- slide your fingers along its body, back to front, lock into its gills, and don't let go.*** You try any other way, and a tired but pissed off fish will simply slip away. First time, and he was mine, in the air, a pretty heavy boy to pick up with one hand, flicking and wriggling. I hung on tight, fought to keep my footing, then I was back on solid dry ground with my trophy. My 3 kg brown trout was duly despatched, photographed, and cleaned out, much to the interest of an even larger creature.



An eel of possible twice the trout's weight slithered up some gentle rapids to within a metre of me. He peered at me as if asking for a slice of fish, then disappeared back to the black depths of the Otaki River awaiting his share. Both trout and eels are carnivorous, and at times will attack one of the other's species. I saw three more trout, but none either as large or co operative. I slept well that night.

On the last day, a 5.30am departure from camp was soon followed by a steady and pleasant two hour climb up onto Oriwa peak, then the old Oriwa Biv site. There were occasional views out to other Tararua peaks. I descended into the Makaretu by an old hunters trail, and found myself following fresh deer hoof marks all over the place. There were more in the Makaretu stream, which had plenty of easy tramping terrain and lots of great looking forest. The valley features a long string of grassy flats, more like

farmland, before the final hour through a nano gorge (no crossings deeper than my waist). It was lovely in the forest shade, and brutally hot once back at the car. There, I witnessed a spider from one car wing mirror drag a struggling little insect from his web back into his recess behind the mirror. Another successful Tararua hunter.

Wharite

19 January

Report: Duncan Hedderley

Well, that was a sobering reminder that conditions in the hills can be quite different from in town - what was a bright but breezy day in the carpark at Countdown was cloud-swathed, with occasional showers and a steady cold wind up top. Fortunately right at the top the leatherwood is high and thick enough to give shelter to the path; that meant we could concentrate on not ending up shin-deep in the mud.

We reached the tower in about two and a half hours and had an early lunch there. By the time we had finished eating, the cloud had lifted a bit, and we could see the North Range Road windmills, Woodville, Palmerston North, and the top of the tower. Coming down, Woody talked about some of the tramping he had done in Korea, and Nicola and Warren told stories about the much-worse conditions they had been up Wharite in. Back down at Coppermine Creek it was a completely different day - we met a couple of families with small kids taking the bush walk there; and the icecream shop in Woodville was doing good trade when we stopped there.

We were Woody, Nicola, Richard, Warren and Duncan.

Of interest...

Two book reviews

By Tony Gates

- **North Island weekend tramps (revised edition) by Shaun Barnett (2008)**
Craig Potton Publishing (Bird's eye guides)
174 pages, soft cover.

Well known writer and photographer Shaun Barnett has revised and updated this popular local tramping guide book. Along with several of his other similarly sized and priced books (shorter trips, longer trips, and more difficult trips), trampers will find this revised and updated edition extremely useful. 50 tramps from throughout the North Island are presented on about three pages each, in a user friendly and informative manner, and with a handy information box. There are many great photographs and three dimensional 'bird's

eye" maps from Geographx. For us at PNTMC, we should be happy to see the Tararuas and Ruahines featuring often, and even the occasional PNTMC member featuring in the photos. The author is obviously skilled at researching facts of history, botany, maori legend, and the like, as well as the latest news about DoC huts, tracks, bridges, and camp sights. Indeed, many of the tramps feature DoC (and other) huts in the trip title as the trip destination, much the same as PNTMC features these destinations. Well done, Shaun!

- **Nelson & Marlborough Foothills and coastal regions. A walking and tramping guide by Pat Barrett (2007)**
Longacre Press. 192 pages, soft cover.

Pat Barrett is a regular contributor to several outdoor publications, and has written numerous tramping guides to his beloved South Island. In his latest book discussed here, he lists tramps that many of will probably be familiar with, each consuming between half and three pages. Photographs and information boxes are provided as well as copies of topographic maps. These maps were of variable scale, which I found a little confusing. I heard of one or two errors in the text, but I couldn't find any. It is a nice book, useful as an introduction to some tramps and walks in the area, and useful as a reminder about trips already completed.

Tips for trampers

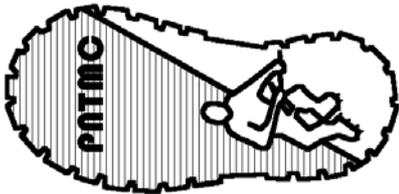
From Doug Strachan

If people e-mail tips to doug.strachan@xtra.co.nz I will compile a list to go in a future newsletter. Any tips for reducing weight; making tramping safer or more comfortable and enjoyable are welcome.

Here are half a dozen to get you started:

1. Keep a written check-list of what to take tramping so you never forget anything.
2. A square foot of closed-cell foam makes a good seat at rest stops.
3. Used pill bottles can be obtained free from pharmacists (or new ones bought from "The Plastic Box") to carry butter etc in.
4. Carry a small container of sunscreen, not the original bottle, to save weight.
5. Cut your toenails before a tramp.
6. Keep salt, pepper, sugar sachets from aeroplane meals.

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PNTMC Newsletter

February 2009

What's Inside this month:

- *Upcoming trips and club events*
- *Reports on recent trips and events*
- *PNTMC Annual Awards for 2008*

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