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# Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.

[www.pntmc.org.nz](http://www.pntmc.org.nz)

P.O. Box 1217, Palmerston North

## Newsletter September 2010

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### 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.

#### 9 Sept

##### Geology of Lake Colenso

Lake Colenso lies in an unusual and dramatic limestone setting and is a favourite destination for trampers in the northern Ruahine Ranges. Tonight our guest speaker is Amanda MacDonald-Creevey, a geology student at Massey University, who will share her insights from recent study of this fascinating area.

#### 16 September Committee Meeting

#### 30 September Essence of the South

Peter van Essen is an ecologist at Massey and keen solo trumper who tonight will enlighten us on the wild country to be discovered in Southern Fiordland and the Southern Circuit of Stewart Island.

#### 5 October (Tuesday) Interclub Photo Competition

The venue is Rose City Aquatic Club Rooms, 50 Park Road, Palmerston North (Next to the Lido Aquatic Centre), start 7:30pm. Refer notices.

#### Articles for the newsletter

Send by the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month to Tony Gates, the newsletter editor, at [kiwi@leatherwood.co.nz](mailto:kiwi@leatherwood.co.nz), or via <http://www.pntmc.org.nz/mail/>

### Upcoming Trips

#### Trip Grading

Trip grades depend on many factors, especially weather and terrain. A reasonably proficient trumper should expect 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 Milverton Park. A charge for transport will be collected on the day.

#### Gear for trips

Minimum gear for day trips is appropriate footwear, pack, lunch and snacks, waterproof jacket, overtrousers, gloves, warm hat, torch, toilet paper, matches or a lighter, sunblock, first aid kit, and a survival bag or space blanket. Each person needs to be equipped to survive overnight.

#### Trip leaders

Complete the trip intentions form and leave with one of Overdue Trip Contacts or drop into 44 Dahlia St. If you are unable to run your trip as scheduled, advise a trip coordinator as soon as possible so that alternatives can be arranged.

#### Overdue Trips

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

### 4- 5 September

**Waterfall Hut** F  
**Derek Sharp** 323 3028

Located in real Ruahine heartland, Waterfall Hut is a gem that is not always easy to reach. But when you do, it's worth spending time in this cosy forest hideaway, and exploring the upper Kawhatau River. Several alpine tops are within easy reach from this hut, so Derek will guarantee an interesting route both to and from Waterfall Hut, hopefully to meet up with the group below on Sunday. Full alpine and warm equipment essential. Depart PN Friday night or very early Saturday morning.

### 5 September

**Sunrise Hut** E  
**Peter Wiles** 358 6894

Depart 8.00am for this popular eastern Ruahine bushline hut. It's a good track all the way to the hut. We will have lunch on Armstrong Saddle if the weather and snow conditions allow.

### 11- 12 September

**Te Mari Craters** M, T  
**Warren Wheeler** 356 1998

Depart 6.30am Saturday, or Friday night. Lunch at our overnight destination of Ketetahi Hut on the northern slopes of Mt Tongariro, then across the snow-clad valley to explore the sulphur deposits and steaming cliffs of the Te Mari Craters out to the east. Plan A next day will be to climb above the Ketetahi fumaroles and do an inverse traverse of the Pot-hole in North Crater and back via Blue Lake and Te Mari Peak. Ice axes and crampons required.

### 12 September

**Roaring Stag Lodge** M  
**Duncan Hedderley** 354 6905

8am start for a trip to a riverside hut in the northern Tararuas, just in from Ekatahuna. Good bush, birdlife, and tracks here.

### 17- 20 September (swapped from 25 Sept)

**South Island Climbing** F, T  
**Alisdair Noble** 356 1094

We will depart early afternoon Friday and return Monday. The intent is to climb Mt Tapuaenuku in Marlborough. Ice axe and crampons essential, as are the skills to use them. We will walk up the Hodder river to the hut on Saturday, climb on Sunday and walk out on Monday morning. Should the weather be against us there are other opportunities in the area.

### 19 September

**Zekes Hut** E/ M  
**Peter Wiles** 358 6894

This new hut is located in the Hihitahi Forest Sanctuary, about half way between Taihape and Waiouru. Beautiful Kawaka forest, and hopefully some views of the volcanoes from Hihitahi trig.

### 25 September (changed from 18 Sept)

**TNP Snow shoeing** M  
**Tony Gates** 357 7439

We plan to visit the Tukino side of Mt Ruapehu, and can use one of the ski field huts (which has a café). We might have to walk a bit to get there, which is the aim of this trip. With good snow conditions and weather, this is a great place for snow shoeing and cross country skiing. This is a one day trip, with the option of staying over on Saturday night to join up with Terry (below).

### 26 September (changed from 19 Sept)

**TNP Climbing** T  
**Terry Crippen** 356 3588

A day of technical climbing on Mt Ruapehu, hopefully climbing Girdlestone Peak from the Tukino side. This trip is designed for people who have completed the PNTMC Snowcraft Course (or equivalent). We will probably tie in with Tony's snow shoeing trip, and so can possibly stay up on the Mountain Saturday night, or depart PN 4.00 AM.

### 26 September

**Waiopehu Loop** F  
**Martin Lawrence** 357 1695

Located in from Levin, this loop track follows a gradual but lengthy (and sometimes muddy) ridge track up to Waiopehu Hut and peak. Great Tararua views from the tussock here. An hour or two along tussock and leatherwood hills, then the track descends via Gable End and back to the Ohau River. Depart reasonably early.

### 2- 3 October

**PNTMC 2010** M/ F, T  
**Warren Wheeler** 356 1998

Depart 6.30am Saturday or Friday night. This is an anniversary celebration of the Grandstand View from Ngauruhoe of the Ruapehu eruption in October 1996. The aim of this trip is to do 2010m climbing via the footstool of Pukekaikiore below Ngauruhoe on Day 1 and Tongariro, 'Merald lakes and Central Crater on Day 2. Hut or cabin accommodation to be confirmed. Ice axes and crampons required.

## New Members

PNTMC offers a warm welcome to Eric Liu, and Sandy Huang, 06 353 2376. They both have experienced part of our Snowcraft course, and have featured in the 2010 photo competition.

## Notices

### PNTMC Photo Competition Report

Club member and well known photographer Harley Betts judged the PNTMC photo competition on 12 August 2010. Despite a very large number of entries, he got through the lot, many with technical comments and suggested improvements. Lighting, exposure, colour rendition, texture, composition, contrast, and subject choice were among the aspects considered. Harley short listed entries to each section, then we the club judged the top three or four entries. These will go forward to the Interclub competition.

#### Alpine NZ

1. Ruapehu - Woody Lee
2. View from Hikurangi - Martin Lawrence
3. Tauherinikau valley - Tony Gates

#### Scenic NZ

1. Lake Sylvester morning - Martin Lawrence
2. Castle in the sky - Chris Tuffley
3. Carved - Chris Tuffley



Lake Sylvester morning. Martin Lawrence

#### Natural History

1. Te Takapu - Chris Tuffley
2. Gannet at Cape Kidnappers - Eric Liu
3. Alpine flower at Mt Cook - Sandy Huang
4. Slug, Gertrude Valley - Terry Crippen

#### Overseas

1. Sunrise over the Grampians - Chris Tuffley
2. Spray, Yoho skiing - Mike Archer
3. Annapurna Circuit, Nepal - Eric Liu

#### Overseas People

1. Girl at Pokhara, Nepal - Eric Liu
2. Patagonian fisherman - Tony Gates
3. Porters, Nepal - Eric Liu

#### Topical NZ

1. Sandy Mt Kapakapanui - Eric Liu
2. The map readers - Tony Gates
- 3= That was hard work - Terry Crippen
- 3= Winter NZ - Mike Archer

#### Overall Judges Choice

Lake Sylvester morning - Martin Lawrence

### Interclub Photo Competition

5 October 2010

Organised by our friends at MTSC, this event will be held on Tuesday 5 October starting at 7:30pm. The venue is the Rose City Aquatic Club Rooms, 50 Park Road, Palmerston North (Next to the Lido Aquatic Centre).

Entries submitted by each club will generally be the top three for each category from the Annual Club Photo Competitions.

Some of the categories are slightly different to those in the PNTMC Photo Competition so Warren and Martin will make a judicious selection of PNTMC entries to suit.

### Interclub Quiz

Friday 17 September

Come along for a fun night out at the annual quiz between MUAC, MTSC and PNTMC. Answers to a variety of humorous, intellectual, and practical subjects will be competed for. The trophy is the Trevor Bissell Memorial Billy with (often scrummy) prizes for the winning teams.

The Interclub Quiz 2010 will be organised by MUAC, who have booked the MUBar as the venue, starting at 7pm on Friday 17 September. MUBar is a fully licensed bar located right in the middle of Massey University Campus, in the Student Services Building. Complimentary nibbles and discounted drink prices for the evening. We would like to see as many people at the Interclub quiz as possible, so come along and make up a team of 4-6 people.

### Kawhatau Base Access

Until 31<sup>st</sup> October, due to farm management issues, you must contact the landowner to make prior arrangements for access to Kawhatau Base and campground, Mokai Patea Range, Crow Hut, McKinnon Hut, etc. The gate will be locked during this period so you will not be able to enter if you have not contacted the landowners. Phone Alan or Liz Rennie on (06) 382-5554 to arrange access.

## **Conservation Week Open Day 11 September 2010**

An open day at the i-Site is planned to coincide with Conservation week on 11 September 2010.

PNTMC plans to have a stand there to promote the club activities and coming trips. If you would like to help out then come along between 10.30am and 2.00pm. Contact Warren 356-1998.

### **Discounts at Bivouac**

Just a reminder that to get your 10% discount when shopping at Bivouac stores, you need to show your FMC card. If you are a NZAC member you get 15% discount, so show your NZAC card. No cards - no discounts.

## **Trip Leaders Evening**

### **PNTMC's Leaders Evening 10 August 2010 By Anja Scholz**

To answer questions, reinforce club policies and procedures, and to give old and new trip leaders a chance to talk about past experiences and share information, Terry recently provided the venue for a trip leaders' evening. The evening was divided into three main parts, but was also peppered by many ideas, information and trip stories provided by the participants.

To start with, we scrutinized the blue "PNTMC Guide for trip leaders" sheet, making sure everybody knew what is expected of a trip leader, especially when a trip takes new people on board. It was reiterated that it is crucial to get as much information on fitness and experience, as well as any medical concerns, if the person has not tramped with the club before; to give detailed information on what to bring and wear, so the trip can run without problems, and so that newcomers get a good experience within their capabilities.

Leaving trip intentions sheets was another issue – these should be filled in conscientiously, and be left with one of the overdue trip contacts or in the letterbox at 44 Dahlia Street – in which case there needs to be a person that actually knows that there is a intentions form in the box!

Newcomers should also be told a number that can be contacted should the party become overdue (e.g. overdue trip contacts in most cases), so no one panics and calls the police

while the party is just delayed by a feed of fish and chips!

Next on the agenda were four scenarios, for which the participants split into groups and discussed approaches to particular tramping situations. This included judging newcomers' experience for a trip, decision making in accident/incident situations, gear considerations for winter trips (if in doubt, expect to have to survive a night out in the open!), whether to split groups in any situation, and other. The small groups presented their decisions, and this was discussed amongst all.

Lastly Alasdair provided us with a bit of entertainment discussing various bits of equipment he carries as essentials even on day trips. This included not only a light weight rain parka and pants, snow foam to sit on or use as splint, a bivvy bag and duct tape, but apparently also a large cockroach which dropped out of his pack. To Terry's relief the lively pet retreated smartly again into the pack.

Coffee and biscuits rounded off the evening which has been a good way to do formal and informal catching up on what PNTMC trip leaders should do, have been doing and will be doing from now on.

Of the variety of outdoor trip scenarios discussed, it has been decided to put the four of them into the next four newsletters. You, the prospective trip leaders, can consider them.

We were Terry Crippen, Alasdair Noble, Warren Wheeler, Janet Wilson, Malcolm Parker, Woody Lee, Jo O'Halloran, Richard Lockett, Michael Allerby, Craig Allerby, Anne Lawrence, Peter Wiles and Anja Scholz.

### **Scenario One Easy Grade day trip to Rangī Hut and beyond**

You are the leader. Before the trip, 5 others have put their names down/or phoned you including 2 newcomers whom you haven't met.

On the trip, weather conditions; a bit windy, some cloud and it looks like it could rain mid afternoon. You are keen to go up to the top of the range. The two newcomers found it a bit difficult on the detour above the slip. The two newcomers, quite slow, don't want to go further and are keen to head down after lunch.

What would you do if you were the leader?

## Editorial

This edition of the PNTMC Newsletter started off looking a bit lean. It has however blossomed out to a full fourteen pages, which is the fattest one for ages. Notices, trip blurbs, trip reports, photos, and all of the other stuff are useful, and I like to add features about really special places like Kamchatka. Historical PNTMC trip reports, and my very own speciality "quote of the month" have been left out this time but will again feature in future editions.

But it is the trip reports here of the large number of popular local trips that are the essence of this Newsletter. I'm impressed with the number and variety of trips recorded here, so I hope you readers are too. When I was Editor many years ago, twelve pages was printed on a number of occasions - then it was usually trimmed back to a more sensible ten or eight pages.

Newsletter size certainly reflects PNTMC activity well. Despite winter weather and short days, the plethora of local trips recorded here show an active club going to many interesting places. PNTMC activities will of course continue with longer and harder trips available as the days become longer and the rivers easier to deal with. Enjoy your time out in the hills and mountains, and tell your Editor about it.

## Trip Reports

**11 July**

**K2 Before Breakfast - Mt Cook by Noon  
Report and photo by Malcolm Parker**

Some trips just have to be done. There is often no really good reason. Ya just has ta. And so it was that three intrepid club members decided to embark on this trip that would challenge us in ways that we shouldn't have expected. There was the experienced and (almost) responsible leader who had successfully completed this trip a number of times before and was willing to lead it again. There was the other experienced and responsible team member prepared to assist and there was the complete novice who didn't even know how to put his crampons on. An early departure from Palmerston North was essential if we were to see us summit K2 (32,000mm above sea level) before breakfast.

The weather was kind, if not a little frigid. Locating K2 was initially a challenge. We knew it was there somewhere, but we just couldn't see it. Eventually, after driving up and down the Foxton-Shannon Road a few times our

experienced leader identified the right farm gate. And it was all on.

We set up base camp quickly and then kitted ourselves up for the push to the summit. Resplendent in full climbing kit we set off as the sun was just coming up. It was decided that good clean rope work was required right from base camp. But we thought it wise to treat the first major obstacle (the electric fence) with some caution. Team work to the fore and, once past, it was all on.

The rope work was a little slow, but it was reasonably steady as we clawed our way to the summit. And before we knew it we had all made it. Safely concerns over the death zone and the jet stream winds proved unfounded. The view was quite magnificent, with fresh snow on the Tararuas in the distance.

The next phase of the expedition saw us climbing individually against the clock. No safety rope this time. Warren won in a time, not quite a record, but still worthy at 32 (seconds), second was at 35 seconds and third was close behind at 40 seconds.



*Richard Lockett on the summit of Mt Cook. Note the difficult conditions and environment.*

We returned to base camp for a hearty breakfast and then it was on to Mt Cook (58,000mm above sea level), just 11km north, off Baines Rd.

Access here was a little more arduous, along the east ridge. And after struggling with the rope work again, another barrier was encountered about 2/3 of the way up. One not normally encountered by serious mountaineers. We discovered the summit had quite a dense crop of gorse on it!! But we battled on.

After being turned back from the summit by one route, an alternative was discovered (and aptly named the Lockett Step) and we eventually prevailed. The highest point between Palmerston North and Australia, in a straight line.

I had heard of peak bagging but didn't expect it to be anything like this. It's nice being able to impress your colleagues and friends with "Oh, I climbed Mt Cook last weekend", or "K2 isn't as technically challenging as I expected". Thank goodness they don't know the "truth".

We were Warren Wheeler, Richard Lockett and Malcolm Parker

### **17-18 July Wellington Weekend Walks By Warren Wheeler, photo Martin Lawrence**

What a wonderful idea for a winter weekend with woeful weather. Woody drove us down in his van, leaving at the leisurely hour of 9.00am. We dropped off Graham in central Wellington to spend the afternoon with his classic motorbike friends and then stopped at a German Bakery for Warren's lunch before arriving in light rain at Zealandia, a.k.a. Karori Wildlife Sanctuary, "a 252 hectare haven for native birds, plants and wildlife enthusiasts".

After lunch in the van (not allowed to eat our own food in the upstairs café) we donned wet weather gear and ventured into the new environmentally friendly Zealandia Visitor Centre. Entry fee \$18 (cough, mumble mumble, city prices). Still, this is certainly a very special place and we were lucky that it was wet and cold because there were very few other people about and the weather didn't seem to deter the birds – we heard and saw saddleback and stitchbird as well as the more common tui and bellbird.

Kaka are the real stars though, along with the two volunteers who turned up in their flashy Zealandia raincoats to give a talk at the kaka feeders despite the weather and our small audience. We learnt for instance that each year's hatching is called a cohort and the kaka leg markings include a colour for the cohort and then two individual bands for each bird.

Woody also learnt that wet jeans make you cold and miserable so he returned to the café while the rest of us tried to get our money's worth by taking one of the easier tracks around the Karori dam lake for an hour or so, then back to the cafe to dry out over a hot coffee and cake.

We then joined the guided evening tour (\$32, ouch again) with half a dozen others, including a couple of young German tourists. This started with a brief introduction to Zealandia, the NZ bit of Gondwanaland, and an awesome sound and light show (thanks Weta Workshop) tracing the impact of people on our wildlife and how the Sanctuary is trying to help preserve species being lost to predators and habitat loss.

For the outside bit we were given torches to use when necessary but advised to leave them off and let our eyes get used to the dark. The tracks we went on were well surfaced and with the low cloud there was plenty of backlight from the city anyway.

So, what did we see? Glow-worms galore (just everywhere in the bush - amazing), fluorescent worm poop (from eating too many glow-worms?), a tuatara outside its little pipe home beside the track – cool! And yes, we heard kiwi quite nearby but couldn't find it though we tried. After a couple of hours it was time to go – the weather had been kind with no rain and we were suitably impressed by the Zealandia experience.

Then we drove off back into central Wellington to our accommodation for the night - the rather trendy bachelor pad of Anne's brother (who was conveniently away for the weekend and had rooms to spare for two couples and two who didn't mind parallel bunking in our sleeping bags). After quick showers and a change into dry clothes we did a short urban night walk through the Cricket Grounds to Courtney Place.

Here we dined out on Cajun food at Sweet Mothers Kitchen while seated outside under the heaters, not smoking. Fun to watch the rugby fans wander past, suitably merry, we wrapped up warm, suitably cheery. After a pleasant evening we made it home between drizzly showers.

Sunday dawned a much nicer day, and so it



*Start of Eastern Walkway at Tarakena Bay*

continued for our walk along the Eastern Walkway on the southern end of Miramar Peninsula. We met up with the Lawrence locals at Tarakena Bay and started our easy walk with a steep section up to the Ataturk Memorial overlooking the entrance to Wellington Harbour. Continuing northwards we passed below an eclectic mix of housing that reminded us we were not in Santorini, Dorothy.

The track was a bit wet and slippery in places but being high up we enjoyed almost continuous coastal views, with more eclectic housing along Breaker Bay Road below. Just opposite was Barretts Reef, notorious wrecker of ships so it was surprising to see a yacht blithely taking a short cut between the reef and the mainland.

From the Branda Pass road crossing we went urban and wandered down the streets into Seatoun. After a rest break at Churchill Park by the sea, where there is a Wahine Memorial and some unusual modern sculpture, we returned along a short section of coast via a short cut through Point Dorset headland and a pleasant wander along the stony Breaker Bay beach, bringing us to Breaker Bay Road itself. This coast road made for an interesting urban walk, with a great variety of generally modest and quirky seaside houses and baches, bringing us back to the carpark around at Tarakena Bay.

We finished the day with lunch in the sunshine and a cool breeze on our backs for some fine waterfront dining at Scorch-o-rama restaurant in Scorching Bay.....ah, Wellington, absolutely positively marvellous.

Special thanks to Anne's brother for the generous use of his apartment. We were Anne and Martin Lawrence, Janet Wilson and Graham Peters, Woody Lee and Warren Wheeler as well as the Lawrence daughters Hannah and Tessa + Mike.

## **24 July Iron Gate Hut Report and photo by Craig Allerby**

The five of us met up in Feilding and piled into Janet and Graham's trusty Toyota. After less than 2 hours of superb driving, Graham had us at the wet and muddy Oroua Valley carpark just before 8.30am. With light drizzle falling it was quickly on with the boots, parka and packs and then down the farm track to the forest park.

DOC have had a small excavator creating a nice wide track to travel on, which goes from the start of the track all the way to the Alice Nash

Memorial Hut. From the hut we travelled along the Iron Gate Track to the first stream crossing. Avoiding wet feet Graham and Michael balanced along a fallen tree. It was then a steady climb up and around the large slip for 15mins. With good progress being made we decided to stop for morning tea at around 10am.

Carrying on we came to the Tunupo Stream which was higher than normal! Deciding on the best route to take, Michael, Richard and I linked up and proceeded across followed by Janet and Graham. All made it safely apart from me stumbling on some rocks and getting wet shorts!

Continuing along the track Michael stepped into a bog hole covering his boot in mud. Not to be out-done Richard managed to discover a bog hole all the way up to his knee! Just before noon we finally arrived at Iron Gate Hut spooking a couple of deer.

Graham boiled up some water for Richard, Michael and I to have a cup a soup. Then he made real soup! for him and Janet. After a satisfying lunch we went for a bit of a "recki" to find the location of the route across the Oroua River to Triangle Hut. The river was not in an inviting mood to cross with the previous day's rain.

Returning back the same way the Tunupo Stream had dropped and was easily crossed. We stopped for afternoon tea under a patch of Mountain beech forest, where you get a good view back to Alice Nash Memorial Hut. With a brief rest stop at the hut we got out to the carpark at 5pm. With a misted up windscreen and a low blinding sun, Graham's surmountable driving skills were to the fore as we headed back home.

We were Janet Wilson, Graham Peters, Michael Allerby, Richard Lockett and Craig Allerby.



*Iron Gate Hut and PNTMC team.*

**31 July- 1 August 2010**  
**PNTMC Snowcraft 1**  
**Report by Jo O'Halloran & photos by Eric Liu**

We gathered Friday evening outside Alasdair's house and travelled in 2 vehicles to Mt Ruapehu stopping at Taihape for some of us to visit the "Golden Arches" for a takeaway. We stopped at the shelter half way up the mountain to change into our tramping boots for the 15 minute walk to the Mananawtu Lodge. Once into the Lodge it was a matter of a quick cuppa and sorting out where we were going to sleep, it was 2300hrs.



*The luxurious MTSC hut at Iwikau Village.*

The morning found at least one person not in the original bed space – Jonathon was found to have slept in the drying room! He denied being evicted for snoring claiming that he was simply assisting the drying process with his nocturnal exhalations. We were called at 0700hrs for a hearty breakfast of scrambled eggs, porridge, baked beans and toast which was wolfed down by all. Then it was gear on and out into the snow. Angela would not be joining the Snow Craft sessions but headed off to the slopes to ski.

The sky was a beautiful luminous blue, not a cloud to be seen and the sun rising over in the east. We looked at each other, resplendent in our assorted gear. The rule appeared to be the more experienced and technically proficient one was, the shabbier ones gear was. Alasdair proudly sported a faded patched orange gagool which was older than some of our younger members of the group. But Robert, as befits a representative of Bivouac outdoor shop, looked like a coloured co-ordinated fashion plate in his gear, against the snow.

We trudged off toward the Amphitheatre and got our first lesson on how to walk in snow. The object being to step into the foot steps of the person in front of you, leaving only one set of footprints in the snow, and conserving energy. Terry showed us how to use the edge of our boots to cut into the snow, and how to use the ice axe by placing it into the snow - one - then

stepping with right foot - two- and then left - three.



*Snowcraft 1 at Whakapapa*

The use of crampons was demonstrated for going up and down steep snow. The soft snow was not ideal to work in but gave us a good idea that we could cross safely what had been until now, inaccessible terrain for Jo at least.

We interpreted clouds formations, while having a bite to eat, that were gathering in the sky, and were amazed that over a short period, the clear blue sky changed, and dark weather clouds were amassing to the south-west – always be watchful and aware of changing weather that will impact planning and on your safety. Eric took photos on what looked like a very sophisticated camera which must have weighed at least 2 kgs.

Lawrence helped Terry dig a hole in the snow, we inspected and felt the different layers of snow so that we would be able to judge what sort of terrain we might be crossing over – if there might be a possibility of the top layer sliding off if we were to walk on it – “slab avalanche”. After a very pleasant lunch on a wind free, sunny spot, and we were taken on our first lesson of “self-arresting.” Alasdair talked us thru the exercise with Terry ably demonstrating to us how we could save our lives should we need to.

Some of the group demanded more challenging stuff and practiced self arresting on steeper higher terrain...the daring of youth Jennifer! Terry had told us that unless we had bruises on our chests the next morning from leaning hard on the ice axe we hadn't done self arrest correctly!

Dinner that night was a delicious stew with roast veges, dessert being superbly cooked by the physicist in the group David, who could calculate the measurements of stewed apples, pears, sugar and flour we needed for the size of the group. The evening was finished off by 2 talks – Alasdair spoke about what gear every trumper needs to carry in their pack for any and every eventuality. Terry spoke about avalanches, and

the avalanche transmitters which we would be using the next day.

Cooking Sunday breakfast was allocated to Jonathan, Robert, Sandy, and Eric. No-one knew how to cook scrambled eggs for 18 people, which caused a small amount of stress for Sandy. Fortunately Jonathan led the group and managed to turn out very good scrambled eggs earning himself the title of 'Master Chef'.

The weather on Sunday had deteriorated and we were expecting rain and high winds. We donned our wet weather gear and avalanche transmitters and headed out. This was a day of practicing what we had learned yesterday, and finding the hidden transmitter. It was finish at lunch time due to wet weather. Back to the Lodge to find that Angela had done all the cleaning jobs – thanks Angela! After a debrief and feed back, where we all expressed how valuable the weekend had been, how much we had learned, and how great our 2 leaders had been, we headed home after lunch.

We were: Alasdair Noble, Terry Crippen, Jo and Lawrence O'Halloran, Eric Liu and Sandy Huang, Robert Kadlubowski, Jonathon Fanning David Heffernan, Jennifer Kitchen, and Angela Minto.

### **31 July 2010 Branch Road Walkway – plus Report by Anja Scholz**

Every year upon a time a call/trip offer from Janet comes along summoning the frost hardy at her place in the lovely Pohangina valley for a wintery sojourn easy enough for all to partake in, still providing sufficient diffused sunlight to prevent tramping club members to succumb to rickets. This year we were promised a special treat after duly tramping up and down a bit: Janet had tried a new recipe for extra flat muffins which turned out just as promised. But first the exercise.

Starting right from her doorstep, Janet led us up the Branch Road walkway, which had suffered greatly in the 2004 floods, and had only, after much community work input, been re-opened last year. A new piece of track at the start led away from the river and over some farmland, and soon we found ourselves changing tack, - er – track, what with old and new parts leading through pine forests and over a detour missing a nasty little slip. We headed uphill until reaching open farm country, where the track meandered on ridgetops until it met the Ridge Road, about 2 leisurely hours from the valley. The ridge track

was made pleasantly soft underfoot not least with the help of many cattle having used it. And I mean having USED it (a definite good scrub of the boots that night). The weather was pleasant with good views, and warm enough for an early lunch stop at the Ridge Road before we headed back the same way. The toadstools we had seen on the way up did not seem to have grown in the intervening time – we are still puzzled how mushrooms can spring up within a day or so, if they don't seem to grow at all in 2 hours ????. Coffees and Fluffins awaited on our return – they were consumed out in the bbq area (sunshine!), and they tasted great, despite Janet's efforts to convince us otherwise.

In the afternoon, joined by Graham, we went to check out "Luttrell's White Pine Park and Museum", made to come to life by the farmers of that block. They have put the stands of tall white pines/ Kahikatea on their property under a covenant so they won't be cut down in a hurry! We were taken on a walk through the bush and wetland area, and noted with concern that somehow the lake on the property seemed to be higher than the house, e.g. in the event of an earthquake or some dam breaking, would the house be flooded?

The museum was a large collection of all sorts of farm and household items from the previous century, some of it all too familiar for those born yesteryear. The most intriguing thing for me was the fact that the "Timm's" possum traps (the yellow buckets) were invented by farm owner Tim!

Thanks Janet for another interesting and educating Pohangina familiarization trip. We were : trip leader Janet Wilson, Malcolm Parker, Holly Yang, Richard Lockett, Warren Wheeler, Woody Lee, Graham Peters (for the museum part) and Anja Scholz.

### **1 August Yum Char Lunch By Mike Allerby**

It was a pleasant morning, cloudy and calm with none of the forecasted rain yet arriving. As we got ready to head off from the Summerhill shopping centre a tree was spotted in the garden. A toothed lancewood, *Pseudopanax ferox*, similar in appearance and growth habit to the more common lancewood, *Pseudopanax crassifolius* but not often seen in the wild as its distribution is quite sporadic.

Off down the first walkway we headed. It was interesting to look at the various species of

natives planted and how well they were growing, not so pleasant to see old mans beard and banana passion fruit though. Warren pointed out that the houses could only be built down the hills to a certain level because of erosion. Evidence of slumping could be seen due to the unstable soils and steep gradient, hence the plantings to try and stabilise the ground. Over yonder a house being built caught our attention requiring a closer inspection. The walls were being constructed with interlocking polystyrene formwork that is filled with concrete. It took some head scratching to determine how the builders were reinforcing the walls. There was horizontal steel running through the walls but no vertical steel?

We came back out on to one of the streets and wandered along, viewing the houses and gardens, which lead to some debate about their design, colour and landscaping. Walking aimlessly along Warren then steered us towards the Strand. Here an empty section caught Janet's eye. Beside was a house of Grand Designs which would have suited a beach front section in Miami. This section had splendid city views and of the Ruahine Ranges. Too much traffic noise exclaimed Graham! I could not sit out on the balcony and enjoy a quiet beer. Time to move along as we were booked into the restaurant at 11.30am and tummies were starting to rumble.

On to another walkway which lead through a Eucalypt forest interplanted with Banksia, a chorus of Tui and Bellbird could be heard. Arriving back at the car park, with a wardrobe in the boot Craig and I quickly got changed into something more suitable for dining. On our way rain drops began falling how fortunate we had been with the weather (Must have been due to Warren's brightly coloured attire that kept it at bay).

A selection of dumplings (fried and steamed), sticky rice, roast duck, rice rolls, crispy fried pork and squid, noodles, stuffed tofu, stuffed eggplant and capsicums, chicken feet, (picked up with great dexterity using chopsticks), washed down with plenty of jasmine tea and finished off with durian pasties, was enjoyed by all.

On leaving the Chinatown restaurant we bumped into a man of the wild haplessly wandering the concrete jungle in search of his wife and her friend who were busy shopping. Sorry we've eaten all the food Tony!

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

**7-8 August**

**Ngamoko Hut**

**Report and photo by Kelly Buckle**

Despite a somewhat rainy forecast, a merry band took to the hills on a Saturday morning, and were well-rewarded by lovely views, vigorous exercise, and glimpses of rare wildlife.

We set out up the Shorts Track from Limestone Road, with a high flat cloud but no rain in sight. The cloud was high enough to give us startling views of snow-covered Mt. Ruapehu in the distance, and we kept busy musing about the location of the infamous "Cat Slip" (actually "Pussy Cat Slip", sometimes "Teddy Bear Slip"-ed).



*Ngamoko Range tussock.*

On the tops we cut south along the ridge, with a stiff cold wind to remind us of the season. Never before had I understood the hatred of experienced trampers for leatherwood. The repeated scraping of hard leaf on wind-numbed thigh made us all yearn for the leggings we had packed away, and slowed us considerably as we picked our way through.

Finally we reached our turnoff, and down down down we thumped on a track that looked as though time (and DOC) had forgotten it. The rain arrived in late afternoon, but we were well-protected by a thick canopy of broad-leafed natives.

Ngamoko hut is a 6-bunk hut, comfortably refinished, clean and snug for a rainy winter's night. From the edge of Ngamoko's grassy clearing there is an excellent view of the Pohangina River, and a short walk brings one to the bank. We reached the river just in time to hear a shrill whistling, and keen eyes spotted a pair of whio downstream. One duck stood on a rock, while the other swam underwater laps. They appeared oblivious to us, and were there until nightfall.

We had arrived at the hut close to 4:30pm, and there was plenty of hut time for talking, the passing of biscuits, some experimental yoga, and a special treat of Woody's authentic Korean kimchi, a fermented cabbage dish that, Woody assured us, was hardly spicy at all.

After a rainy night the river had risen moderately, and we set out up up up the hill again. The tops had been cooled by a southerly wind, which fortunately pushed us forward or sideways, but not backwards. With leggings on we were quicker through the leatherwood. We gratefully followed GPS-masters Craig and Janet, who led us along the cloudy ridge. There was the occasional squall of horizontal rain, hail and snow, to make it a bit more interesting.

We lunched at a sheltered spot below the bushline, and after the steepness of the Ngamoko track the descent to the carpark on the Shorts track felt very gentle indeed.

Refreshment was had at the Kimbolton Pub before a roaring fire, and we arrived home at about 6pm on Sunday.

We were: Michael Allerby, Janet Wilson, Craig Allerby, Woody Lee, Darrin Davies, and Kelly Buckle

## **8 August 2010**

### **Mt Bruce Area**

#### **Report and photo by Malcolm Parker**

The original plan had been to have a look around the Mt Bruce park area. However, the access bridge by the carpark has been removed. We didn't fancy a deep river crossing first thing. So the alternative was a look at the Mikimiki track.

The forecast was not at all good. The weather on the Saturday was not at all encouraging. By Sunday morning dawned quite pleasant. The first obstacle was trying to remember where the turnoff from the main road was. But once we happened across it, it was obvious, and signposted. We wandered along at a very pleasant pace, as we followed the river along, then started the short climb up to the top. A brief stop here for a snack and a drink. Bench seats have been installed here since I'd done this trip last. Then it was on down the other side.

A minor mishap occurred when crossing the creek at the bottom with it being quite slippery. Then on down towards the farmland. Our leader located a very nice, sheltered spot, in the sun for lunch just a few minutes from the roadend. A

couple of wasps tried to join us but were soon sent on there way.

Then it was off back the way we came. Another brief stop at the top of the climb again, for a drink and a couple of photos. And so back to the car. We finished mid afternoon. The way the weather had been and the forecast had indicated it, I had been expecting to get absolutely drenched on this trip. However it was fine throughout the day, with odd patches of pleasant sunshine. Another great trip.

We were Anja Scholz, Malcolm Parker, Mohan and Shalini Udyawer



*Lunch in the dark Tararua bush.*

## **22 August**

### **On the Manawatu Gorge track again**

#### **Report and photo by Tony Gates**

The day started innocently enough with the promise of sunshine, and even ended with some good sunshine at the cafe. Winter weather offered us a mixed bag of sun and drizzle, but we were well sheltered in the bush. There was even a hint of Spring time on our Sunday trip through the Manawatu Gorge. It was crowded. We passed (rather, were passed by) several runners, about 50 or 60 other day trippers, and a few dogs out for the exercise too.

We noted the work done by DOC, with recent vegetation clearance, new seats and lookouts, and the flash bridge in the middle section. An information kiosk shelter is planned to be built at each end soon. Most of the Manawatu Gorge Track was completed without incident in about four hours, with rest/ photo stops at each of the lookouts. It ended in a brief monsoon like downpour- no pity for the one trip member without a rain coat. I thought of a Tony Nolan quote (next Newsletter) as I splashed into the Balance café car park. Heaters on soon dried us. Driving about one hour, tramping four hours,

café one hour seemed like a reasonable day trip ratio to us all.

Gorge day trippers were; Renee Donaldson, Kathy McKnight, Neal Lewell, Duncan Hedderley, Richard Lockett, Tony Gates, and Kathy Corner (leader).



*On the Manawatu Gorge track again, Te Apiti Lookout*

## International Feature

### Tramping in Kamchatka By Peter Wiles

In July 2010, I spent two weeks in Kamchatka, the large peninsula in far eastern Russia. It juts down between the Sea of Okhotsk on its western side and the Pacific Ocean and Bering Sea on its east coast and spans latitudes 51°N and 64°N – a distance of about 1500km, and covers 470,000 km<sup>2</sup>. The area is about the size of New Zealand but has only a population of around 300,000.

Ten days of my trip were spent on a Russian boat visiting some of the northern Kuril Islands to the south and Bering Island (55°N and a further 250km eastwards into the Pacific). (More about that perhaps another time.) Until the collapse of the Soviet Union, Kamchatka was a closed region to foreigners and indeed to most Russians as well. Now it is open to tourists although there are some challenges.

Getting to Kamchatka involves essentially flying to Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky (PK for short) the only major city in the region – about 200,000 people. As there are no roads or rail to the region, the only other way is by sea, as PK is a major fishing (and naval) port and is located at the head of Avacha Bay, one of the world's finest natural harbours. One can fly via Incheon (South Korea) or Narita (Tokyo) and on to either Vladivostok or Khabarovsk before reaching PK. One or two over night stops might be required

each way. I flew to Narita and over-nighted in Tokyo before flying to Khabarovsk and over-nighting again before reaching PK the next day. On my return, I flew to Vladivostok and then to Narita in the one day before staying in Tokyo again. This route saved an overnight stop on the return leg. Flights are not very frequent with only about 2 or 3 flights a week between PK and Vladivostok and between Narita and Khabarovsk. (Flights between PK and Moscow are more frequent!) Flying in Russia and on Russian planes is not so different from any Western country, but if anything, security is tighter. There are some quirks; there are no airbridges and you are usually bused to your plane somewhere distant from the terminal. Security is everywhere.



*Koryaksky (3456 m) & Avachinsky (2741 m) from PK hotel*

Travel and staying in Russia is expensive. Most of the hotels in PK, worth considering staying at, charge about US\$200 per night for a single room with breakfast! In contrast, I stayed at a perfectly acceptable (and much more modern) hotel in central Tokyo for about NZ\$140 per night with breakfast. (Let me know if you plan to stay in Tokyo.) However, the standard of service was good and everyone was most helpful. The local Kamchatka beer is both good and cheap – R70 (about NZ\$3.50) for 600mL served in the restaurant. The people on the streets are typically Russian i.e. of mostly of European lineage, despite the region being home to a variety of ethnic groups – the Koryaks, Itlemen, Evens, Kamchadals and Aleuts.

The geography of southern Kamchatka is dominated by volcanoes - mostly active and large ones – up to 4,700m. (One was erupting as I flew into PK!) Indeed from the streets of PK at least five volcanoes over 2000m are visible – the two largest 3,400m and 2,750m are only 30km or so beyond the city limits – also visible are the plumes of steam from their summits! Thus PK has perhaps a unique outlook – a huge

harbour on one side and a backdrop of looming active volcanoes immediately beyond.



*Waterfront Avacha Bay and heads.*

In mid July there were still patches of snow above about 700m. Forest covers the ground up to about 500-600m in the south. In the forest lurk bears. Although I did not see a bear on the trip (others in the party did), evidence of their presence was everywhere! The weather can be a challenge. The summers are short and are dominated by low cloud and fog. Indeed the day I arrived in PK it was low cloud/foggy and not much warmer than Palmy in July, as was the next day.

The day we arrived back in port, it was rain/fog, as was the next day, but the next day was fine (and warm – Tee-shirt day) and the day I flew out was cloudless! Late summer might be the best time. There are few roads in such a large area and they are mostly of a poor standard. Transport by helicopter is possible but is now prohibitively expensive.

The day trip from PK to the Valley of the Geysers has seen the charges (an hour helicopter flight each way) rise in recent years from R8,000 to R25,000 or about NZ\$1,200 per person for a machine that carries at least 20. (I was not interested at that price.) There are no recent topographical maps of the region. The only maps that exist are from the Soviet era and are long out of print. People get by, if they can locate a suitably relevant sheet, by photocopying, which I imagine is b/w. Or perhaps more likely photocopies of a photocopy etc.

However, trips for tramping or general mountaineering can be arranged and there are operators who conduct such business for tourists. I have the contact details of the operator for the trips I did (2 day trips and associated with the 10-day boat trip) and I can say she is reliable and helpful.

There are a variety of protected areas, some of them Federal preserves, national refuges and regional parks. Some of these cover more than 1,000,000 ha and are listed as World Heritage Sites. These include:

**Bystrinskiy Nature Park** (1,325,000 ha) offers hiking trips up to 10 day duration;

**Klyuchevskoy Nature Park** (376,000 ha) and includes Klyuchevskaya (4,750 m – the highest active volcano in Eurasia, and 47 glaciers covering 269 km<sup>2</sup>). Hiking / mountaineering trips of up to 11 days are available;

**Yuzhno-Kamchatskiy Nature Park** (486,000 ha) various hiking routes exist;

**Koryakskiy Federal Nature Preserve** (1,003,000 ha);

**Kronotskiy Federal Nature Preserve** This is one of the oldest protected areas in Russia. Protection of some parts of this preserve go back to 1882. The Preserve includes the famous Valley of the Geysers and the Uzon caldera.

There are many challenges and much potential for the trumper here.

### **Mambonsai From Yuko Watanabe in Japan**

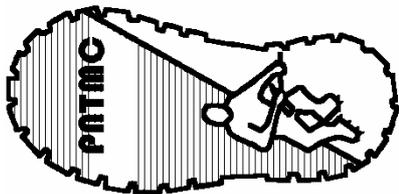
This is a picture of my memorable first Mambonsai work. "Trampers & moocows working hard on tree-climbing for muscle-strengthening training" Haze (Wax Tree)/ 14cm".



### **Editors Note:**

Mambonsai is a radical offshoot of traditional bonsai that is creative and fun and becoming increasingly popular in Japan and around the world.

Thanks to Yuko, Warren has a little reference book of mambonsai that is full of clever examples for your own mambonsai creation. Ask him for a look and join the craze!



**Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.**

[www.pntmc.org.nz](http://www.pntmc.org.nz)

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**PNTMC Newsletter**

**September 2010**

***What's inside this month?***

- *Upcoming trips and club events*
- *Leaders Evening, Snowcraft, Local, Ruahine and Tararua tramping trips*
- *Kamchatka travels*
- *Mambonsai letter from Japan*

**Articles for the newsletter**

Send by the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month to Tony Gates, the newsletter editor, via the club website <http://www.pntmc.org.nz/mail/>.

**Get out and about with us!**

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