

# Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.

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

P.O. Box 1217, Palmerston North

## Newsletter October 2010

### 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.

#### 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.

#### 14 October

#### Focus on Safety

"Good to Go". BYO normal safety gear to share tips on what to take into the hills, discussion on PLB and Mountain radio and maybe have a MSC safety DVD.

#### 21 October Committee Meeting

#### 28 October

#### Outback Antarctica

(rescheduled from 26 August)

Murray Potter heads the Zoology Major at Massey University. He has spent six seasons studying wildlife in Antarctica and the sub-Antarctic, and is an award-winning photographer. In this illustrated talk he will provide an insight into the biological and landscape richness of this extraordinary part of the world, and describe what it is like to live and work there.

#### 11 November BYO slides

Your chance to show off, and to boast about your recent trips. Contact Warren if you have anything to show.

#### 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 tramer 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

#### 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 accomodation to be confirmed. Ice axes and crampons required.

#### 9- 10 October

**Ringatoto (Mitre), TNP Climbing F, T**  
**Terry Crippen 356 3588/ 027 643 3637**

The plan is to do some technical climbing from the Tukino (Desert Road) side of Ruapehu. There are a number of interesting routes on Mitre that we can choose from for one of the days. The other day we can work away at the northern bluffs. The weekend is designed for those who have done Snowcraft or equivalent and are keen to practice their rope work. We will either head up Friday night or do the usual 4am depart from PN. Staying at either the NZAC Whangahu Hut or DoC Rangipo hut.

#### 9- 10 October

**SW Tararuas F**  
**Janet Wilson 329 4722**

This is currently a 3 day flexiplan Fit trip - leaving on the Friday ie you will need the day off or be one of the underemployed club members. Exact route to be decided amongst participants but likely to be a circuit around Field/ Kime/ Elder/ Renata/ Waiotaura Huts or YTTY/ Andersons/ Maungahuka/ Field. Please indicate your interest in plenty of time.

#### 10 October

**Apiti Track E**  
**Richard Lockett 323 0948**

This is a good bush track in from Norsewood. We plan to bowl up to the good lookout of the Manawatu River headwaters, then a bit further to the lookout of the Ruahine Ranges beyond. Depart 8.00 AM.

#### 16- 17 October

**Carkeek Ridge Hut F**  
**Grant Christian 354 5843**

This classic and tough Tararua tramp will take you on seldom trodden ridges to the mythical Carkeek Ridge Hut. We plan to enter from the Ohau river on Friday evening, then exit at Otaki Forks. We can follow the tussock tops if conditions permit- otherwise some good off track routes that are kept open by the friendly deer. Visits of Te Matawai, Arete, Nicholls, and Waitewaiwai Huts en route. Come well prepared.

#### 17 October

**Wharite M**  
**John Feeney 354 2940**  
A good local viewpoint close to Woodville. We

plan to enter at Coppermine Creek, climb the track to Wharite, then return the same way. Depart PN 8.00 AM

#### 23- 25 October Labour Weekend

**Around Ngaruahoe M**  
**Warren Wheeler 356 1998**

Depart 7.30am. Keen for some off track travel and camping out under the stars? From the Chateau we follow the track to Tama Lakes then follow our noses to Waihohonu Springs to camp first night. We then cut across country to Oturere Crater and camp by South Crater lagoon. Summit side trip optional. Then back to the Chateau via the main track past Mangatepopo Soda Springs.

#### 25 October

**Field Hut M**  
**Malcolm Parker 357 5203**

Safe and easy classic tramp in from Otaki Forks to the historic Field Hut. You will keep your feet dry and enjoy a few nice views of the Tararuas. Depart 8.00 AM.

#### 30- 31 October

**Triangle Hut M**  
**Barry Scott 354 0510**  
Great Ruahine country awaits on the tramp to and from Triangle Hut in the Oroua Valley. Enter via Rangi Hut, over the tussock tops, then so to Trangle Hut. If the river is OK (it usually is), tramp down to the Iron Gate Hut sidle track, then climb back up to the tops at Mahgahuia, returning to the car park via Deadmans Track. Depart PN 7.00 AM Saturday.

#### 31 October

**Caving Introduction M**  
**Graham Peters 329 4722**

This trip visits a North Wairarapa cave known as PT17 or Indecision. It is an easy introduction to caving and will give you a taste of the underground world. No special gear required but be prepared to get dirty! Departing 8am.

## Membership

### New Member

Kathy McKnight, 359-3333 is welcomed to PNTMC. Happy and safe tramping.

### New phone number

Malcolm and Edith Leary: 06 327-7825

### Resignation

Isobel Holdaway has moved to Hawkes Bay. She sends her thanks to PNTMC for the enjoyable tramping.

## Notices

### Follow up to PNTMC Leaders Evening 10 August 2010 Scenario Two: Medium/Fit, technical winter day climb of Mt Ngauruhoe

You are the leader. Four other people have put their names down /or phoned you, including 2 newcomers who have not used ice axe or crampons.

Before the trip, what would you get people to bring as personal gear?. What party gear would you ensure the group has for this type of trip?

On the trip, weather conditions are fine and clear. Early on the decent from the summit one person trips and sprains their ankle. The decent then becomes very slow. The party runs out of daylight before reaching South Crater. It is a new moon.

What would you do as trip leader to resolve this situation?

### Conservation Week Photo Competition 'Get Snapped Loving New Zealand'



Congratulations to Woody Lee for gaining first place in the DOC sponsored photo competition with 'Mt Ngauruhoe'. With two well known PNTMC models Crippen and Wheeler featured striding out between Waihohonu hut and Mt Ngauruhoe in the Tongariro Northern Circuit, it certainly was a great shot. Well done Woody.

### Conservation Week Display 11 September 2010

PNTMC recently presented a display at the i-Site in the Square, Palmerston North, along with several other like minded organisations. This was to mark the beginning of Conservation Week 2010. Photo competition enlargements looked great alongside three suitable attired trampers with their paraphenalia. It was a

pleasant and fairly lazy spring day yarning about the hills rather than going there.



*three suitable attired trampers with paraphenalia at the PNTMC display, I site, Conservation Day.*

As part of the display and i-Site day, Janet and Terry were interviewed about tramping and PNTMC and this was broadcast on Access Radio 999 AM on Tuesday 21st September afternoon - a good bit of promotion for the Club.

### Interclub Quiz Results

On 17 September the Interclub Quiz 2010 was hosted by MUAC in the MUBar, with 3 teams from MUAC, 2 from PNTMC, and 1 from MTSC (we host it next year). A fun night was had by all - educational, exciting, and sometimes humorous. There were a few tricks for the unware. As with previous quiz events, results were very closely tied. Of a possible 110 points, scores were;

Muddy Gaiters (PNTMC)	89.5
Young Snorters (MTSC)	89
Storm (PNTMC)	85
Rabid Possums (MUAC)	80
Darling Dugongs (MUAC)	68
A Team (MUAC)	62.5

Well done Team Muddy Gaiters members Warren Wheeler, Chris Tuffley, and Janet Wilson. Well done all other competitors too.

### Back Country Cuisine

PNTMC recently received a letter from Back Country Cuisine offering discount price direct orders for their popular freeze dried meals. We have sent in your orders of this quality durable freeze dried tramping food.

The two serve Classic Beef Curry and Roast Lamb and vegetables (both gluten free) have proven the most popular main course meal orders. Indeed, these were always the best

sellers at Mountain Equipment. The product has now arrived for distribution. Most orders are for lots of 5 of two serve meals, which at \$6.95 plus GST each, ie \$7.81, will be \$39.05. Please have your payment to PNTMC ready.

Refer [www.backcountrycuisine.co.nz](http://www.backcountrycuisine.co.nz)

### **Pesticides Notification North West Ruahines**

DOC are continuing with their protection of native vegetation, Whio, Kiwi, Kaka, Kakariki, and *Powelliphanta* giant snails in the Lake Colenso-Ruahine Corner area with aerially applied 1080 possum pellets (pre-feed then toxic). The operation is planned to go ahead during September 2010. Pellets will remain viable for a few weeks, and the dead carcasses will be toxic until decomposed.

### **Pesticides Notification Central Tararuas**

A vast 22 000 hectare slice of the central Tararuas from Otaki Forks to Holdsworth Lodge (about one fifth of the Tararuas), is now part of the aptly named "Project Kaka". This is between population strongholds of Kaka (and other bird species) on Kapiti Island and Pukaha-Mt Bruce. DOC have identified previous successful possum control operations with aerial 1080, particularly in the high-altitude fuchsia forest of the Waiohine and Otaki catchments. DOC want to continue this work with aerial application of 1080 (after pre feed) during September 2010. This will restore wider biodiversity values, with better protection of birds, insects and plants. Changes between protected and unprotected areas will be monitored. It is fortunate that 1080 pellets are effective in controlling possum and rat populations, while secondary poisoning will kill stoats and other mustelids as they scavenge on dead carcasses

In conjunction with DOC, the Animal Health Board (AHB) will be undertaking similar work during September 2010 on adjacent Tararua foothill areas from the Waingawa to the Tauherenikau. This will be a repeat of control works which were last done in 2003, covering 8,000 hectares.

### **"Rivers" by Craig Potton**

Sunday nights on Prime TV now features a stunning new programme by well known conservationist and photographer Craig Potton. He traces the course of one notable New Zealand river in each of the programmes, speaking about their history and points of

interest, meeting some locals, and of course showing some of their stunning scenery. The Clutha River featured in the first programme, with mountains in the headwaters that some of you will recognise. Others programmes feature the Waikato, Mokihinui, Clarence, and Rangitata Rivers.

### **"The Missing" TV programme, June Sowerby**

Manawatu tramp June Sowerby went missing without trace some seven years ago. Club members may recall her cheerful voice from the many easy local tramps she did. This second series of Screentime Production's "The Missing" started recently with the mystery of June's disappearance. Well known SAR people, including Ross Gordon, worked with teams of volunteers searching for evidence of June. They scoured thick scrub near Turangi, found some "items of interest", then nought. The case remains open as a crime.

### **Ruahine aerial video**

On the internet is a video of an aerial excursion into the Ruahines one fine winters day, probably during 2009. Have a look and see the places that you can recognise. Some of us easily noted the Oroua face of Te Hekenga, Sawtooth Ridge, and the Hikurangi Range. PNTMC is familiar with all of these places, and can take you to there. You need some fitness, Snowcraft skills, and equipment. Most importantly though, you need luck with the weather. If you are interested in seeing some of the amazing places in the high central Ruahines on foot, then check the trip card and Newsletter, and contact a trip leader.

The video was filmed and edited by TAIHAPENZ Russell Anderson, with Hill Country Helicopters.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EhawNmllQok&NR=1>

### **Editorial: Oroua Creek Names**

**Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) - Toitū te whenua** is a part of the NZ Government whose services we all use - their maps. Full information about maps are available at [www.linz.govt.nz](http://www.linz.govt.nz). Their web site section entitled "Topographic Maps" offers a check of the map grid areas of the national map series to identify which map sheet that you may require. Printed map sheets are available to the public through map retailers. Digital copies of maps are also available for download, including the Topo50 and Topo250 series. Please note, however, that one map will be 54 MB in TIFF format.

**The New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa** (NZGB) is a government body operating under the New Zealand Geographic Board Act 2008 and reporting to the Minister for Land Information. It is the part of LINZ that assigns, approves, alters or discontinues the use of names for geographic features (eg place names), undersea features and Crown protected areas in New Zealand and its offshore islands. The NZGB weighs information, evidence and views on name proposals and submissions against these rules, criteria, standards, guidelines and policies. When the NZGB considers proposals to assign, amend, approve, alter or discontinue official names, it does so in accordance with standard criteria. You can make a submission on a proposed name by selecting a place name link on their web site, where you can view more about the process.

The NZGB Meeting of 3 August 2010 considered formalising four commonly used names of tributaries of the Oroua River, Ruahine Forest Park. They were (from west to north east, ie from the farmland up to the headwaters); Cumberfield Creek, Iron Gate Creek, Howlett Creek, and Oxford Creek. The spelling has been altered from Tunupo (Creek and Hill) to Tunupō. Trampers familiar with the Oroua valley and Ngamoko Range will most likely be aware of these features, and may know of other names for such features. The proposal was to avoid confusion for navigation and SAR purposes, as well as to assist DOC and NZ Deerstalkers with their predator control work. Please be aware that the term "creek" can at times refer to a large watercourse more akin to a "river".

**Cumberfield Creek** is the first tributary that the track crosses up valley from Heritage Lodge. It a sizeable tributary of the Oroua River, descending from the high point of Tunupō peak (1568 m) on the Ngamoko Range, and at times confused with Tunupō Creek. Cumberfield was a hunter who died there during 1951, so the name has been commonly used by Deerstalkers in his honour.

**Iron Gate Creek** is the major tributary that descends west from Otumore peak to just upriver from Iron Gate Hut, so is closely associated with the Hut.

**Howlett Creek** is the next major tributary up valley, flowing from Tiraha peak, on the Ruahine Range, south through "Bullet Basin" (an informal deer cullers name), then below Howlett Hut and Oxford Creek. It joins the Oroua River between Triangle Hut and Iron Gates Hut, upstream from Iron Gates Stream. This convoluted watercourse

is named after William Howlett, who was a real Ruahine character. He was a botanist and explorer with significant connections with this area during his lifetime, and in 1893 he built the hut named after him. Howlett Hut has since been replaced twice. It remains a popular mountain haven of modern times, and like Iron Gate Hut, is frequently visited by PNTMC.



*Howlett Creek and Oxford Creek (TL, in shade) headwaters from Taumataatua (Daphne Ridge). Taumataomekura Peak centre top, Te Hekenga barely visible TL above Oxford Creek.*

**Oxford Creek** is the leatherwood covered tributary (with several waterfalls) that descends south from near Taumetaomekura (1682 m, on the Ruahine Range), and joins Howlett Creek about half way down its length. As discussed here two months ago, it was the scene of a major tragedy on 24 November 1948, when Mk 11 RNZAF Oxford Airspeed NZ 2127 crashed. All three on board were killed. There was a large and well publicised search and body recovery, with Howlett Hut crucial for the search. They constructed a good camp at the confluence of what then became known as Oxford Creek and Howlett Creek. One ridge here assumed the name "Plane Crash Spur" for obvious reasons. The aircraft wreck was never recovered, and some engine parts remain at the confluence of Howlett and Oxford Creek.

**Te Awa Kairangi.** In the Tararua mountains where most rivers assume names of Maori origin "Hutt" stands out as an unusual and somewhat meaningless name. Te Awa Kairangi is the original name, meaning "esteemed" or "precious", or "full of good food". The NZ Company renamed the river and settlement after British MP Sir William Hutt - a person who never even visited the place! The new official name will be Te Awa Kairangi/ Hutt River.

## Trip Reports

**15 August**

**Mt Holdsworth**

**Report by Graham Peters**

**Photo by Christine Cheyne**

As seems typical these days the weather forecast for this tramp was not clement. However, we are trampers - hardy souls with a lack of the wimp gene, so seven of us decarred at the Holdsworth road end heading off on the initial flat section in a light drizzle. Despite insisting that she was quite unfit, Christine lead the way once the track started climbing at such a pace that we were soon stopping to take off coats and layers of clothing.

There was much anticipation as we gained altitude on the very well graded and stepped track that the views from the Rocky Knob lookout would repay the effort getting there. As with much of life, the anticipation exceeded the realisation with a view of the inside of cloud. Not to be dismayed, we headed on for a break and snack at the Mountain House shelter.



*PNTMC team at the Mt Holdsworth trig - cool and damp but no snow mid August!.*

The original plan was to carry on past Powell hut for lunch on Mt Holdsworth, but we decided to review this at Powell. After another snack at Powell and bearing in mind that some of us were keen to get back for a film festival film, we decided that it was worth carrying on. It was. Despite a couple of places where we were exposed to the southerly we were at the top sooner than expected. It wasn't the place to stay long however and after the obligatory 'knocked the bastard off' photo, we headed back to Powell for lunch proper.

Janet and I, being the filmgoers, headed off before the others and had a very quick trip down, arriving at the theatre in plenty of time to have a leisurely cup of coffee with the well known and

buff film buff, Warren Wheeler.

Apart from Janet and myself, the others were Christine Cheyne, Michael Allerby, Darrin Davies, Glen Pendergrast, and the leader Anja Scholz.

**29 August**

**Kapakapanui ... or not?**

**Report by Anne Lawrence**

**Photo by Martin Lawrence**

Five of us headed off to Kapakapanui – the forecast was pretty wet but we had made the decision to go regardless. However as we approached Waikanae, the rain bucketed down and the hills were barely visible through the cloud. A brief discussion led to change of plans. So we headed further south to Raumati. We left the cars at the end of the Esplanade road and followed Te Araroa walk along through QEII park and onto Paekakariki. The track is pleasant providing lots of sea views, and there is an intriguing cafe (unfortunately closed on Sunday) with a range of interesting retro goods for sale. We returned via the inland track, stopping for lunch at a spot looking out to Kapiti.



*Walking the Pukerua Bay coastline.*

Back at the cars, we headed further south to Pukerua Bay where we once again left the cars at the end of the road and followed the foot track along the coast towards Plimmerton. This piece of coast is relatively wild – although there were a few others out, it was hard to believe we were just round the corner from the capital city. A comfortable cave provided good shelter for afternoon tea as the rain that had been threatening on and off all day finally let loose. Surprisingly we got back to the cars relatively dry. A local told us that the track goes all the way to Plimmerton something we were all keen to explore another day.

All in all, an enjoyable day – not the strenuous exercise we had planned, but we managed to explore some new territory, while keeping

relatively dry and mud-free and seeing a bit of wildlife including shags (pied and black) and a baby seal (dead) as well as seagulls galore and almost as many dogs as people.

We were: Janet Wilson, Graham Peters, Tina Bishop, Martin and Anne Lawrence.

**5 September**  
**Sunrise Hut and Beyond**  
**Report and Photo by Tony Gates**

They say that the most popular hut in the Ruahines is Sunrise Hut- rather Sunrise Lodge. This is understandable when you experience the sheltered track and hut, and the sort of weather that we had to tolerate when there recently-extreme winds and biting cold. We were (mostly) well sheltered on the bush track, while the Ruahine heartland was plastered in a white out, with even stronger winds. And we kept our feet dry.



A well fed and well dressed PNTMC team at Sunrise Hut, 5 September 2010.

On the well worn track zig zagging it's way up the hill, we needed a few pauses to rearrange sweaty clothing. It was warm in places and very chilly in others. Then we got into snow and ice on the track, made slightly uncomfortable for those without sun glasses with bright sunshine. Soon we were there at the hut, right on lunchtime, and right when the wind eased a little. Peter and Woody prepared a fine lunchtime soup and noodles, and we all prepared for the tramp to Armstrong Saddle. Surprisingly, the morning crowds had gone - they spoke of impossible winds on the track up there, and it had been a bitterly cold morning. I guess we were lucky with a brief clearance.

Deep snow at the saddle was easily bypassed on the windswept scree. Warren insisted in checking the tarn depth through the ice, reporting that it was deeper than his knees. No one had any desires to climb further into the

snowy murk. We retreated back to Sunrise hut, then ambled easily back to warmer climes in the forest. Everyone was happy with some good exercise with a safe look at the dramatic Ruahines beyond Sunrise Hut and Armstrong Saddle.

We were; Holly Yang, Tony Gates, Warren Wheeler, Woody Lee, Malcolm Parker, and Peter Wiles (Leader)

**11-12 September**  
**Te Mari Craters**  
**Report by Warren Wheeler**  
**Photos by Eric Liu**



At Te Mari Craters

A less than perfect forecast was not enough to deter five of us from setting off early on Saturday morning, armed with ice axes and crampons to tackle the northern slopes of Mount Tongariro. Unfortunately the snow was well above Ketetahi Hut, but at least the weather was reasonably clear...in between cloudy patches. It took us about 2 and half hours to walk up the nice National Park standard track, past Ketetahi Hot Springs and on to lunch to Ketetahi Hut.

After dropping off our gear for our stay there we headed up the first zig and kept going straight onto the old track sidling around into the gully rather than taking the zag. On the other side of the stream we lost the track in places (probably should have stayed lower) but the cloud lifted nicely to help orient us towards our objective of the Sulphur Lagoon of Te Mari Craters.

As we climbed up onto the rim we could smell rotten eggs on the light breeze from the Ketetahi area but there were also steaming sulphur stained cliffs just inside the crater rim here as well. Below us in the lower part of the flat bottomed crater was the yellowy brown Sulphur Lagoon. As we sidled around a bit to get a better view the cloud came in and it started to snow for about fifteen minutes – big juicy flakes, yummm.

We stayed at the rim level for a bit on the way back then sidled around and gradually lost height to pick up the track again. The cloud had us cutting across the stream too early and left us with a bit a climb up to find the track. A good introduction to off-track travel for one or two of us, which showed the importance of knowing how to use a map and compass.

After a pleasant evening we went to bed wondering how much of the rain on the roof would end up inside, as drips sprung up in several places.

Sunday morning the rain started to clear and fined up completely, so we set off for Blue Lake. Although cloud and drizzle set in soon after heading out it wasn't enough to turn us back from a good plod in the snow higher up. It was a bit windy on Blue Lake ridge so we slid down the short slope to the edge of the frozen lake. The ice was slushy around the edges but looked over a foot thick. A good sidle in snow the length of the lake was enough of a play in the snow and we headed off back to the hut for lunch and packup. With time to spare we visited the Tokaanu Hot Pools and were back in Palmerston North in time for dinner.

We were Brigid Glasgow (fresh out of Scotland), Richard Lockett, Eric Liu, Sandy Huang and Warren Wheeler (leader).



The view from Ketetahi.

## International Feature: Mt Fuji

### Climbing Mt Fuji – July 2010 By Peter Wiles

Everyone knows that Mt Fuji is the highest point in Japan (3776m). I am not sure when it first occurred to me to try climbing this mountain as part of my trip to Kamchatka. I had my flights booked that gave me a couple of days in Japan on my way to Russia and I was also able to arrange flights to give me another couple of days on my return.

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Initially I wondered about giving Fuji a go on my way up, which would enable another go, if the weather was unsuitable for the first attempt, on my return. However Mt Fuji has a very specific summer climbing period – the two months of July and August. My flights precluded the first option by a couple of days. After digging around on the internet, I found much useful information – in English – huts to possibly stay at (with contact phone numbers for reservations), bus timetables and the details of the various route options on the mountain. There were also blogs and articles of various people's experiences to glean much information. I had other useful resources to draw upon. On my first visit to Japan, I had been to the Kawaguchiko road end at 2300m and knew already the lay of the land at the start of the trek. I had previously stayed at huts in the Japanese Alps, and I was reasonably familiar with using the train system in Japan. And I remembered that Doug had been to the summit from his Club talk several years ago. And of course, Yuko, a former club member, lives not too far from Mt Fuji.

I opted to take a bus from downtown Tokyo. During the climbing season, several busses depart from a bus station located near Shinjuku Station. Making a booking on the Web meant grappling with a reservation system in Japanese. Doug and Maho kindly came to my rescue and did it for me. Also before I left home, I rang Japan and made a reservation for a hut at 3400m.

Once I arrived in Tokyo on my trip north, I decided to spend the first day checking out getting to Shinjuku Station and finding the bus terminal. My concern was that my reservation was on a Monday morning and that I would be traveling on the underground from my hotel near Tokyo Station to Shinjuku Station during the morning rush our. Shinjuku Station is an experience in its own right because more than 2,000,000 people pass through this station every day! This is the station that famously uses "pushers" to cram the people onto the trains so the doors will close.

After returning to Tokyo from my trip to Kamchatka, the weather seemed beautifully fine and it was all on. Unbeknown to me until I got to the bus terminal on the day, a lady who I spoke to told me that it was a public holiday in Japan, so there were relatively few people on the trains that day. The bus journey was a largely uneventful trip of about 2½h. Because it was a fine day and a long weekend, the last section of the road was jammed with busses and cars.

Once at the road end, I had some lunch and started walking. For the first quarter hour, or so, the track goes down hill, which is a bit frustrating. Fortunately the temperature was a pleasant low to mid 20sC rather than in the 30s back in Tokyo and there was protection from the sun by a collar of daytime cloud around the mountain. A clearly marked bilingual sign indicated the way to the summit. But even if you couldn't read at all, there was little problem figuring which way to go – you just follow the crowds. (During the 2 month climbing season something like 100,000 to 200,000 people visit the mountain. It is a well established tradition to walk up the mountain during the night to catch the sunrise at the summit.)

The track was initially a broad scoria path with steps, but later on, for perhaps about 500m, became rough lava, which was very firm to walk on as millions had passed this way previously removing almost all loose material. Chains marked the sides of the track and were useful to pull up on. (I had wondered about taking walking poles, but opted – rightly – not to bother [I didn't possess any anyway], but I took a very light ice-axe instead, which was handy for the night section.)

Various huts came and went in the mist. I stopped for a drink, a snack and a brief rest. I passed many people – a few who were foreigners. The vegetation gradually disappeared. I emerged above the cloud at about 3100m into clear blue sky with the summit and a few patches of snow beckoning. Fortunately, it was cooler up here. After about 3½h walking, I arrived at my hut (Fujisan Hotel II). They even had my reservation! The evening meal they provided was a modest plate of curry and rice and a small bottle of water. (Water to drink high on the mountain is very expensive – about 5X the price in downtown Tokyo. Although I had brought three bottles up with me, I bought another (¥600) but was still thirsty.)

In the morning, people started to get up at about 2.15am. I did likewise and joined the trail at about 2.30am. Conditions were near perfect and a long snake of headlamps and torches could be seen above and below the hut. I joined this stream of people moving steadily upwards. I arrived at the crater rim (about 3700m) at about 3.45am. There were hundreds of people about and a row of shops were noisily touting the punters for food, snacks, drinks and of course souvenirs. I ignored them all. There was a slight breeze and the temperature reminded you that you were at someplace up high. The sky was getting lighter gradually and at 4.35 am the sun emerged from the Pacific Ocean. Meanwhile a

large layer of cloud far below blotted out most the cities, including Tokyo.

I had my breakfast that the hotel had provided me (in a snack box) and then walked around the crater rim towards the true summit. The crater was about 1km in diameter and perhaps 60-80m deep. There were some patches of snow about. (I contemplated walking completely around the crater rim, which takes about 1 - 1½h. I am glad I did not as this would have turned my subsequent schedule into some disarray.)



*Sunrise on the summit of Mt Fuji 3776 m.*

On the way to the summit, I passed another group of buildings. Among them were a temple and a post office. However, the post office did not open until 6am. After heading up to the summit, where there is a large met-station, I returned and joined the queue outside the post office which was now open.

I had to decide which route to take down the mountain. Close to the post office was the turn-off for the Fujinomya track, which I opted to take. This track goes down the other side of the mountain to a road end at 2400m (the highest road end on Mt Fuji) but is less frequently used. (Only 10-20% use this route.) If I was to see Yuko as planned, I would need to take this route because a bus I could hopefully catch would take me to Mishima, which is close to where she lives.

I arrived at the road at 8.45 am and to my surprise and delight, a bus left (almost empty) for Mishima at 9.00am. Perfect timing! Once I was dropped off at Mishima Station, I rang Yuko and shortly afterwards she arrived and picked me up. While I waited for her, I purchased an iced coffee which helped to relieve my thirst and cool me from the 30°C heat.

After wonderful hospitality at the Watanabe household, I returned to Tokyo on the

Shinkansen in the evening to complete a wonderful 2-day excursion in Japan.

So if in Japan during the climbing season and you are up to doing a Tongariro crossing type trip but with some altitude, consider climbing Mt Fuji. It is a great walk and straight forward to organize with minimal knowledge of Japanese. Although I did not feel any noticeable affects from the altitude, some do, as the ascent from sea level to something getting close to 4000m is only a few hours. If you were organized and fit, you could possibly do the climb as a day trip and back from Tokyo!



View to Fuji summit from crater rim.

designed to be taken with you into the Tararuas, like "Tararua Footprints" (Merv Rodgers (1996) was. It is similar in format and style to the author's eternally popular "Classic New Zealand Mountain Bike Rides" (which is now in its 7th edition). As the back cover states, "*The Tararua Ranges await....Beautiful rivers, extensive forests, and wonderful alpine landscapes. Right there, on Wellington's doorstep!*" This book offers a large range of adventures, based essentially on tramping (of course). Some are seasonal adventures, and require special skills and equipment- crampons and ice axe, truck tube, wet suit, and crash helmet, or mountain bike. Others can be done any time of the year, and are understandably hugely popular.

Over half of the book details tramping routes, sensibly listed as classic routes (more or less weekend tramps), short day walks, more great tramping trips, and even "seldom travelled ridges and rivers". River trips, mountain bike rides, and mountain runs are discussed passionately, with additions about hunting, fishing, camping, the Te Araroa trail, and hut bagging. Although neither totally comprehensive nor with as lengthy route descriptions as those from Shaun Barnett or Mark Pickering's good books, the information is accurate and up to date- even with some of DOC's future plans.

After a sensible introduction with things like safety and etiquette, road ends (with simple line maps) are discussed, leading into the essence of the book, ie twenty seven adventures. Major ones, such as tramping the Holdsworth- Jumbo loop, cover about three pages, with short walks being described in a few sentences. There are links between described routes where they cross, and good indications of tramping times for each section.

Relevant web sites, public transport operators, DOC information, black and white photographs, map details, a smattering of interesting quotes, and route outlines in graph form are added. Colour photos are reserved for the front and back covers. Place names index and gear check list conclude the book. Sadly, under club contacts, PNTMC was omitted, as was Horizons Regional Council (river level data).

The three Kennett Brothers, that is, Simon, Paul and Jonathon, have written and published a series of books about cycling legends, and to complement their popular "Classic Mountain Bike Rides", they have a new book "Classic New Zealand Road Rides" coming out soon.

## Book Review

### Tararua Adventure Guide

By Jonathon Kennett (2010)

Tramping, Camping, Rafting, Mountain Biking, and Running in Tararua Forest Park.

Reviewed by Tony Gates.

152 pages, soft cover, RRP \$24.90. Refer [www.kennett.co.nz](http://www.kennett.co.nz)

The Tararuas attract many recreational users like ourselves, and have proven to attract more than the usual number of writers presenting books about them. From Chris Maclean's definitive history (1994), several historical publications, and now this very latest guide book, the literature list about the Tararuas is certainly more comprehensive than most other mountain areas in New Zealand. I think that's great, and it leaves me longing for books about other areas- the Ruahines, Kawekas, Ureweras, Kahurangi National Park.....

This new guide book on the Tararuas is bright, breezy, and useful. It is a pocket field guide

## DVD Review

### Off The Edge

DVD reviewed by Terry Crippen

Produced and directed by Michael Firth, staring Jeff Campbell and Blair Trenholme. Released by Jigsaw Entertainment, Auckland. 73 min.

Those of you who were mountain junkies in the late 1970s may remember the film "Off the Edge" that graced the picture theatres around New Zealand. I for one would have seen it a number of times, when at lunch time AUTC members, at student discounts, would grace the picture theatres in Auckland repeatedly when such a film was showing. You may also remember the John Hanlon song "Higher Trails" from the high point of the movie. It is now been re-edited and put out on DVD. For anyone who is currently into the mountains, it worth watching.

It was filmed on location in the high alps of Mt Cook and Westland National Parks. It is the story of a couple of very talented skiers from North America who decide to hang glide off the top of the alps. Using artistic licence, the jean clad lads head up to (the previous) Pioneer Hut, firstly by horse back through the Canterbury hill country, then into Westland calling into Welcome Flats for

a soak, and then on foot up onto the Fox Neve. They spend time doing some fantastic skiing, checking out the slopes (in the Pioneer and Tasman Saddle areas), battling the elements and being hut bound. There are full-on skiing sequences and some surreal shots of investigations of ice caves in glaciers. The climax of the movie, accompanied by "Higher Trails" is when they take off from (presumably) the summit of The Minarets, and fly around the highest peaks before descending down into the Hostettler Icefall and towards Lake Pukaki. Cameras mounted on the hang gliders and supporting helicopter produce spectacular closeup footage of the peaks, the seracs of the Hockstetter, and an impressive avalanche.

While the film is definitely 1970s vintage (no Gortex clothing is anywhere to be seen) and the commentary is perhaps a bit dated, it is still an excellent piece of entertainment when one is suffering mountain withdrawal symptoms from sitting round PN to long.

For trailers of this and other such films, see:  
[www.offtheedge.co.nz](http://www.offtheedge.co.nz), and  
[www.nzonscreen.com](http://www.nzonscreen.com).

### Quote "Ramblings" by Tony Nolan. From the Tararua Tramping Club archives.

*Tramping in those days still had not been granted full acceptance by the general public. Partly, I suppose, it was because it seemed rather aimless in comparison with hunting, which at least had an understandable and traditional purpose- but another reason was probably the trampers garb- their hobnail boots clattered and struck up sparks from the pavements, while their waterproof "slickers" stank of linseed oil and stale woodsmoke. Packs hung with slashers and black tin billies were a menace to dainty stockings and trousers on the black platforms of the trams. Tramping men were disdained as members of "The great unwashed", while females were viewed with open suspicion, snubbed, and given a wide berth on public transport. I recall that when I started work, I was the only tramer among nearly 100 workmates, and came in for much amusement and fatherly or motherly advice to give it up.*

The Editor recalls Tony Nolan from his early tramping days in Wellington. Tony and his elder brother Ted were both iconic and respected bushmen and mountain men from an extremely prosperous era. Tony authored several books about what he loved the most - Tramping.

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## Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.

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## PNTMC Newsletter

## October 2010

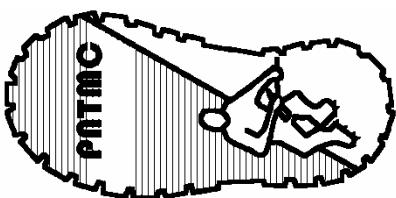
### *What's inside this month?*

- *Upcoming trips and club events*
- *Leaders Evening Scenario 2*
- *NZ Geographic Board name changes*
- *Mt Holdsworth tramp, Sunrise Hut, Te Mari Craters, Mt Fuji.*
- *Book and DVD Reviews.*

### **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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