

# Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.

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

P.O. Box 1217, Palmerston North

## Newsletter December 2010- January 2011

### 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 December

##### End of year BBQ

From 6.30pm onwards, at the Ashhurst Domain. BYO food and drink, plus a \$2.00 Christmas gift to put under the tree. Be warned, the eagerly awaited PNTMC Annual Awards will be given out to all those worthy recipients.

#### 27 January 2011

##### New Year BBQ

From 6.00pm, at the BBQ area at The Esplanade (next to the paddling pool and aviary). BYO food and drink.

#### 10 February

##### Tramping on Wheels

Jonathan Kennett is a well known author and keen tramper who currently works for the New Zealand Cycle Trail team. His presentation tonight will focus on the challenges of adventure cycling.

#### Trip Grading

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

#### 3- 5 December

##### Upper Otaki

M/ F

##### Tony Gates

357 7439

Departing Friday evening, this tramp will venture into the big bush of the upper Otaki Catchment, passing through beautiful river flats and forest. With a flexible plan, we will aim to establish a camp Friday evening a couple of hours up the Waikawa, then navigate through the Waitewaewae catchment to the Otaki. Plentiful gorgeous campsites on grassy river flats can be found there. On Sunday, we can climb out from the Otaki via Waiopehu/ Gable End.

**5 Dec**  
**Makairo-Coonor** **E/ M**  
**Fiona Donald** **356 1095**  
We depart at 8.00am from Milverton Park/ Victoria Ave. This closed road is between two country districts in the Pahiatua area. We turn at the Tui Brewery to journey inland. This is a great walk that winds its way up to the fantastic views at the summit. Others use this route: motor/ mountain cyclists. It can be muddy. If interested then please telephone **before** 9 pm.

**11- 12 Dec**  
**Piropiro Flats, Pureora** **All**  
**Richard Lockett** **323 0948**  
Piropiro Flats camping Pureora Forest Park  
Have unfinished MTB business here also for good day walks old forestry roads etc

**12 Dec**  
**Maharahara** **M**  
**Peter Wiles** **358 6894**  
Maharahara is a well defined peak in the southern Ruahines. It is a straight forward walk on a well cut track. There are several options for tackling Maharahara. If the weather is fine and there is interest (to set up the transport) we could do a crossing of the Ruahines, Dannevirke to Pohangina, or the other way. Depart at 7.00am. That will give heaps of time to wander along and have tea/coffee on the way home.

**19 Dec**  
**Short Knights** **E/M**  
**Warren Wheeler** **356 1998**  
Southwest Ruahine Ranges is the location for this Silly Season celebration of the Shortest Night (almost). Plan A is to leave Saturday evening 7.30pm for a sunset stroll up to fly camp on the tops for a Midnight Feast and Champagne Breakfast at dawn. Return via Shorts Track. Visit the glowworm cave on the way home, then refreshments at Kimbolton cafe. Plan B is sedate 4.30am dawn start for a Longest Day trip up Shorts and down Knights etc. Call Warren now !!

**15- 16 January 2011**  
**Full Ruamahanga** **F**  
**Derek Sharp** **323 3028**  
This Northern Tararua trip will traverse Dundas Ridge, the upper Ruamahanga leatherwood, then lower Ruamahanga forest the easiest way possible- via the river bed itself. Although it definitely a wet body trip, it will show you some of the best of the Tararuas. Not an easy trip.

**16 Jan**  
**Kapiti Island** **E**  
**Janet Wilson** **329 4722**  
Please refer to notice below.

**22- 24 Jan**  
**(Wgtn Anniversary Weekend)**  
**Tararua Southern Crossing** **M/ F**  
**Warren Wheeler** **356 1998**  
Depart 7.30am. This is a classic 3-day trip across the Tararua Ranges. Ideally we will have two parties starting at each end and swap car keys en route. One party will leave from Otaki Forks heading south up past historic Field Hut to Kime Hut for the night, then along the tussock tops over Mt Hector and around the Dress Circle to stay at Alpha Hut. From there it is downhill to Hells Gate, the Bull Mound and historic Cone Hut on the Tauherinikau River and out to Walls Whare road end on the Waiohine River behind Greytown. The other party does the trip in reverse.

**23 Jan**  
**Beehive Creek** **E**  
**Doug Strachan** **323 6525**  
Club trips don't get any easier than this, and we will be taking our kids aged 3 and 5 along. The trip begins with a 40 minute walk along the road to the start of the track. People with younger children can be dropped off here in advance to give them a head start up the hill. The short ascent is followed by a stroll across farmland before dropping down to the creek. The walk along the creek includes shady stretches. The creek bed is not rocky, and the water generally less than ankle deep. Beehive Creek Walkway (opened in 1983), just past Pohangina town, is only 30km from PN. Although this trip can be done in 2-3 hours, we took 4hrs last year. There is a pleasant picnic spot at the end for lunch. Leader will provide Buzz Bars. Leisurely 9am start. No dogs allowed.

**29- 30 Jan**  
**Te Hekenga crossing** **M/F**  
**Graham Peters** **329 4722**  
One of Graham's favourite areas will be visited on this interesting trip up into the tussock tops and rocky crags of the high central Ruahines. Bring good sun protection, water bottles, and enthusiasm. The Te Hekenga Crossing will most likely pass Rangi Hut, then on the other side, Howletts and Daphne Huts. There are long and easy tussock ridges to folly, and a few "tame" deer to chase along the way.

**30 Jan**  
**Tunupo** **M/ F**  
**Craig Allerby** **323 7913**  
Tunupo is the high craggy looking tussock peak on the Ngamoko Range, overlooking Apiti to the west and Norsewood to the east. There is a good, dry foot track (nearly) past Heritage Lodge and to the summit.

## Notices

### Kapiti Island 16 January 2011

By the time you read this newsletter there may possibly be some places left on the always popular Kapiti Island trip. Contact Janet asap (329-4722) as it may also be possible to increase the numbers on the permit. It's an easy going trip where you can do as you wish once you reach the island. Options include walking to the top or along the coast or just hanging around watching and listening to the birds including Takahe, Kiwi, and Kokako. Should be a lovely summers day out! Cost approx \$66 per adult for the permit and boat plus your transport down there (carpool as usual).

### Matemateonga 10-13 March 2011

PNTMC plans a 4 day Matemateonga Tramp for 10-13 March 2011. This is an area seldom visited by PNTMC but not too far away. It will be very interesting, and not too difficult once spread over four days. There are several options to explore the area, including visiting "The Bridge to Nowhere". Transport arrangements are \$190.00 (jet boat and connections).

Contact Malcolm Parker 06 357 5203

### 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/>

## Membership

Tramping and Mountaineering stalwart Alasdair Noble is shifting to Christchurch early next year. Our thanks for his sterling work on the Committee and with Snowcraft instruction. He will be at [adnoble@inspire.net.nz](mailto:adnoble@inspire.net.nz)

Please note that Eric Liu and Sandy Huang's home phone number was incorrect in the last Newsletter. The correct number is 06 355-1861.

### New Trip Card

The January-June 2011 Trip Card is out now. Thanks to Janet, Terry, and all who assisted them. I hope you can get out and enjoy some of the many trips listed that PNTMC offer.

### Walking Access Mapping System By Terry Crippen

As noted in the latest FMC newsletter (which you should have got by email) there is now available on-line map and aerial photo coverage for New Zealand of all the legal access ways to the DoC estate and all the legal roads – formed and unformed (so called "paper roads"). This has been produced by the Walking Access Commission. It is well worth looking at for all us trampers, mountain bikers, and walkers alike. Getting to the Walking Access Mapping System (WAMS) for the first time is a bit complicated at this stage since it is under trail and being tested, but give it a go. You need to invent your own user –id and password to get into the first site, then you are given another user-id and password for the map and aerial photographs. Once you have been given your passport you can go straight to the map and aerial photos. There is a zoom function for locating the access ways at detailed scales using the new NZ topo map series. There are lots of interesting paper roads in the local area. It is also informative in showing what access into the Ruahines and Tararuas isn't legal and therefore is just an agreement between DoC. The commission welcomes your online feedback.

The two web sites are:

<http://systema.sportsclubms.com>

to get you started, and

<http://wams.org.nz/wams/index.aspx>

for the actual maps once you have been given user name and password.

### PNTMC Leaders Evening: Scenario Four You are leading an overnight trip into Cow Creek Hut

Party of yourself, 2 experienced club members, and a new person who claims to have tramping experience. On the climb up to Blue Range the new person complains of blisters. You treat the blisters with plasters and sympathy and continue. On the descent down towards Cow

Creek she is very slow and complains still of blisters and weak wobbly knees. Discuss this scenario and what would you as leader of the group decide to do.

### From PN Police SAR

Official New Zealand Topographic Maps are available for free online through a new website [www.nztopomaps.com](http://www.nztopomaps.com). The online service allows users to quickly find, view and print topographic maps for planning recreational, business and research activities, and includes a place name search function. [nztopomaps.com](http://nztopomaps.com) provides fast and simple access to the 'NZTopo' Topographic Map Series, which are traditionally purchased as printed paper maps. The 'NZTopo' Topographic Map Series, produced by Land Information New Zealand (LINZ), is used for a variety of recreational activities such as tramping and fishing, and by businesses and government entities such as the Department of Conservation. Topographic maps are also an essential tool for defence planning, location and routing services, and land management. You can use the maps to look at areas where you go tramping and print them off for a paper copy. The printing option is a bit hit and miss, however it is a good resource available online and well suited for personal recreational use.

### BURTTONS TRACK CLOSURE NOTICE

Access to the Te Araroa Trail from Scotts Road and Tokomaru Valley Road, Mangahao Valley will be **closed during week days** due to forest harvesting operations and logging traffic.

The period of closure will be effective from 22 November 2010 to 24 December 2010 and from 3 January 2011 to 6 May 2011. Full access is available to the trail during weekends.

### DOC boundary changes

Area boundaries of DOC land have recently been adjusted so that Palmerston North now falls within Wellington Hawke's Bay Conservancy. From 1 December 2010, the Palmerston North area office will cover the area officially named Manawatū Rangitikei. To the north, the boundary will shift from around Waiouru to just north of Taihape. To the south, the boundary will also be shifted south to match

the Regional Council boundary north of Otaki. The Manawatū Rangitikei area will also manage all of Ruahine Forest Park, although the official boundary remains along the main divide.

## Editorial: The Colenso Society

Ruahine trampers like those in the PNTMC should have heard of the name William Colenso. He was a printer (he printed the Treaty of Waitangi), missionary, botanist, explorer, and later, Member of Parliament. Thankfully, he was a prolific writer, with some of his words appearing in this Newsletter from time to time. William Colenso completed many trips in the Ruahines in the 1840's and 1850's, and had many native plants and places named after him. One hundred years after his Ruahine trips, a voluminous biography about this great man was published.



The Colenso Society was formed last year to promote the study of the life and work of William Colenso, and in particular, to mark the bicentennial of his birth (7 November 2011) appropriately. The Society wishes to improve access to Colenso's work by digitising and/or transcribing it and making it accessible on the Internet as "The Colenso Project", and to assist Colenso scholars in applying for grants.

The activities so far include the email publication of a monthly newsletter, and the arrangements, in conjunction with the Hawke's Bay Museum and Art Gallery, for a Colenso Conference in November 2011 to celebrate the bicentennial.

One of the Newsletters had a photo of a modern day shop in Cornwall named "Colenso's Shop", and selling camping and DIY equipment. There are articles about plants that he studied or plants that were named after him (including Tupare/*Olearia colensoi* / leatherwood).

**And Another Thing** (still in the Ruahines), I recently I endured the last of winter's freezing weather up the Oroua Valley whilst checking stoat traps. My score was 1 stoat and 32 rats killed in about 100 traps checked. The cold weather wasn't too bad in the cosy hut as I burnt excellent Oroua river driftwood, and the days did warm up a bit. You can't avoid wet feet here, and the river water was very cold. Maybe it toughened me up (I hardly felt tough on the last familiar stagger back to my car), but the rewards were there. I enjoyed a few views out to the Whanahuia and Ngamoko Ranges, saw plenty of good Ruahine side creeks, and noted some recent DOC track maintenance. More importantly, though, I witnessed close up a family of Whio. They initially squawked, rather whistled, and paddled furiously down stream. The five tiny ducklings were bobbing about in the distance with concerned parents by this time honking and grunting. What a sight and sound. I managed to stalk in close, luckily in the shade, behind trees and rocks, and mamma whio with her flock bobbed in a pool a few metres from me. She knew something was up, but didn't (or couldn't) depart the scene. Her ducklings looked gorgeous.



Family of Whio, Oroua Valley, November 2010. Note mothers protective stance.

Whio are a rare native species of duck. They can however regularly be seen in remote places in the Ruahines. The Pohangina, Maropea, Ikawatea, and other rivers are known to hold reasonable populations, and they can be found in the Urewera and Raukumara mountains as well as the Southern Alps. To observe a complete Whio family close up was a very special moment, testament to the success of Predator control trapping for the DOC/NZDA Oroua Valley Blue Duck Project. This incident

may also reflect the similar predator control work done by DOC and volunteers in the Ruahine Corner- Lake Colenso area. And some PNTMC members are involved with predator control trapping work in the Manawatu Gorge area too.

On my return to town, the first car I saw had the number plate WH 10 xx. No kidding.

### Books for Christmas

The new Pickering book, reviewed below and with a quote borrowed from it, is one of many excellent new books available in time for Christmas 2010. NZAC have just published a new guide book about The Canterbury Westland Alps, by Yvonne Cook and the legendary Geoff Spearpoint, and Shaun Barnett and Rob Brown have revised, expanded, and updated their "Classic Tramping" (originally dated 1999). I recently saw two new books - one is an absolute stunner of historical photographs by Jack Adamson - entitled "Feeling for Daylight". Author Rhian Gallagher presents the best Mt Cook/Westland mountaineering images possible from more than one hundred years ago. You should recognise some of these photos. The other was Hillary Low's "Pushing His Luck", about the first European traverse of Whitcombe Pass by Henry Whitcombe and Jakob Lauper in 1863. This is a fine rehash of John Pascoe's "Over the Whitcombe Pass" (1960). These books add greatly to the historical theme (which Pickering, Barnett, Brown, and Spearpoint frequently dwell on), and prove good that literature is still very much alive.

## Trip Reports

### 23-25 October Around Ngauruhoe Report by Warren Wheeler

Five party members enjoyed near perfect weather for this Labour Weekend trip. However, fresh snow a few days before raised a few qualms about fly camping along our cross country route and when we stopped for a second breakfast at the Angkor Wat Tearooms in Waiouru there appeared to be snow well down on Ngauruhoe. So there was some trepidation and a mounting sense of anticipation as we geared up at the Whakapapa Carpark and set off along the almost wheelchair standard track to Taranaki Falls.

The carpark had been almost full and we soon started meeting people walking and running the easy "front country" loop. We stopped for a break at the bridge above the falls and veered off to the

top of the cliff where the stream plunges off through some amazingly smooth ice worn volcanic bed rock. Lawrence took the opportunity to take some Aspirin to ease a twinge in his back from slinging on his pack earlier.

From the loop junction the condition of the track became more "back country" standard, with some boardwalks over some particularly badly eroded sections. At Tama Lakes we came across several day walkers and a young group heading to Waihohonu Hut. We found a nice spot overlooking Lower Tama for lunch, just past the wind sock (literally!) on a marker post. From the track end on the bare scoria ridge overlooking Upper Tama we set off on the anticlockwise route around the old crater rim above the lake and an hour or so later arrived at the Dry Lake on the north side. The clockwise route is shorter but would be a much slower rugged side. Soon after the dry lake we came across our first small patches of snow and carried on down the dry creek bed to the informal campsite at Waihohonu Springs. The springs emerge from the base of a volcanic landslide off Ngauruhoe in much the same way as the Ohinepango Springs emerge from similar material off Ruapehu near the Waihohonu Hut.

There were two ideal camp spots nestled against the small beech trees growing at the abrupt end of the landslide and we soon had our two flies erected using beech poles left hidden leaning against a tree the last time PNTMC was there about a year ago. Also hidden amongst the trees was the fluffy remains of a newly dead hare, presumably the victim of a hawk or falcon. The corpse was duly dispatched further away. Both teams soon had dinner served after nibbles and a drop or two of wine but the Mt Doom dessert was hastily reconfigured as Trampers Cheesecake when the couscous was cooked with too much water and compromised the consistency. To the uninitiated it was still a wonder, dressed in Greek Yoghurt and fresh strawberries. Suitably sated we were soon fast asleep under a clear moonlit sky and cool temperatures.

Morning found us immersed in damp low cloud which eventually burned off as we set off just before 9 o'clock. Our route took us on a bee-line to Oturere Crater along a route that was lightly cairned in places, taking us under the cliffs on our right before climbing easily onto the broad bare tops that made for quick progress before dropping into the upper Oturere Stream valley and up the other side to the Oturere crater rim. From this vantage point the crater below looks very much the proverbial moonscape, isolated and desolate although at a squint we could pick

out people on the Tongariro Crossing track heading up to Red Crater and, on the far side to the north, others heading to Oturere Hut. Crossing the crater floor was easy between the ridges of lava and the pumice and scoria material was soft to walk on thanks to freeze thaw lifting the small stones and pumice being light anyway. After lunch amongst the boulders we joined the Oturere Track out of the crater, with its steaming sulphurous patch near the top, and arrived at the lower Emerald Lake. Iceberg races anyone? There were lots more people here, all thoroughly enjoying their fine sunny day trip. We dropped our packs and detoured to Blue Lake across the snow covered track across Central Crater.

Blue Lake was still totally covered in ice, which on closer inspection was 6 inches thick at the edge, but being mostly frozen snow that broke through when jumped on (in the ankle deep shallows!). Sliding down the slope back down into Central Crater would have been fun but a fast run required a bum slide in wet snow and didn't offer much attraction (we must be getting old!). Walking back across on virgin snow was somewhat easier than keeping to the heavily trafficked route made ever wider by the hordes of daytrippers with the same idea. With packs back on we carried on against the general flow of thinning downhill traffic, up past the upper Emerald Lakes that were also partly covered in snowy ice and laboured on up the short scoria section of lightly steaming crater rim to the breathtaking views at the top of Red Crater.



*Mt Ngauruhoe from Red Crater. [Woody Lee]*

After a celebratory drink here (water, no ice) we dropped down the ridge track and crossed the partly snow covered South Crater, pausing to contemplate our Plan A option of camping on the edge of the snowed in lagoon before carrying on down the new zigzag track (Caution – volcanic hazard!!) to seek out a new campsite. The Sulphur Springs area was quickly dismissed and we carried on along the Mangatepopo Valley

track to the snow moss campsites near the base of the Pukekaikiore bluffs. The only problem with this site is the lack of water, with only dry river bed nearby, so we filled our water bottles and a billy as we passed Mangatepopo Hut. With the sun easing towards the horizon we soon had our campsite set up and enjoyed convivial nibbles and Alpine Warmer boysenberry and apple wine. A beautiful evening was capped off with Egnaki in the sunset photo shots.

A fine morning had us wondering whether it was the wine or chocolate that gave each of us amazing dreams before we woke up....no headaches in any case. The track back to the Chateau is notorious for being the most boring part of the Northern Circuit and can be quite exposed in inclement weather. It passes through low-growing alpine scrub with invading heather and cuts across country at a fairly uniform elevation broken by numerous small gullies. As it is pumice country from the Taupo eruption around 2,000 years ago the track is badly scoured out in many places, especially where it crosses the gullies. There are some ladders and steps installed for the worst places but some are looking the worse for wear and more are needed to bring the track up to a more uniform standard.

It took us about 3 and half easy hours with breaks to marvel at the unique natural features such as a section of smoothly sculptured stream bed and the charcoal remains of vegetation buried in the pumice eruption. After the Chateau hove into view we still had about an hour to go, but it seemed to take forever!! The last bridge is over the Taranaki Falls Stream and we stopped for an early lunch and freshen up. Here the beech forest fills the valley and makes for a pleasant stroll along the Falls loop walk. We were back at the carpark around 1.30pm, very happy with our trip but rather surprised at the signposted prices for the huts and tent sites on the Great Walk – if you don't pre-book you pay double...over \$60 per person for a night at a hut and \$40 for a tent site...a bit tough to say the least, but certainly encourages people to book! Meanwhile we were more happy with our very own Great Walk - a Most Memorable Trip.

We were Jo and Lawrence O'Halloran, Woody Lee, John Philpott, Warren Wheeler (leader).

### **6- 7 Nov Roaring Stag Lodge & Hidden Lake Report and photos by Nicola Wallace**

The weather was overcast, but fine and calm as the three of us left Woody's van at 11.15am at the Putara Road end. It had been at least 6

months since I'd walked this track, and it was a bit different this time, due to a few slips, the largest not far from the start. Not far in we encountered a woman walking out. I asked her where she'd been. "Roaring Stag Lodge" was the answer, but she didn't sound too happy about it. (She was later found in the hut log book, and had left her phone no., looking for a tramping buddy).

It was initially suggested that we lunch at the swingbridge just before the hill, but I was already thinking I'd rather tackle that hill without the sluggishness conferred by a full stomach. Luckily the others agreed, and we kept going, climbing together at a pleasant pace. As we ascended, the wind picked up.

It was so windy at the top that we carried on down towards Roaring Stag for another 15 minutes or so before stopping to eat trackside, on a soft cushion of thousands of Rimu leaves. Most were dead and brown but there were a few greenies. During lunch, it got much colder, and when we started off again my hands were numb. They refused to warm up, so it was off with the pack, and out with the gloves (and hat). I make a note to pack them more accessably next time!

By now it was raining lightly. The track was in good condition, with a few slightly boggy patches. Love NZ, love its mud! Soon after, we came across a dead piglet on the track, a beautiful little fellow, blotched pink and grey in equal measure. He had a cut in his throat, but there was no sign of blood. Warren moved him to a much more dignified resting place – the bush from whence he came.



*Roaring Stag Lodge and swingbridge, Ruamahanga River.*

We carried on down to the hut, crossing the streams before it without wetting our feet. We arrived at Roaring Stag Lodge at 2.45pm. I love this hut, and its location. You arrive, and just want to sit on the veranda and absorb everything. But I thought we should claim

mattresses quickly in case a crowd arrived. Just after I said this, the 3Ds arrived – Dad, daughter and dog. Later they put their tent up, out the back of the hut, near the “Roadend” sign, so we had the hut to ourselves that night.

It was still only 3.15 pm and showers were coming across every few minutes. Warren was chaffing at the bit to go and find the Hidden Lake, but Woody and I wanted to wait till tomorrow. Later, when the weather improved, we headed over the swingbridge, went a short way up the Cattle Ridge track (lovely and mossy), and turned off down a short track to the Ruapae Stream. There are some really nice camping areas in here, as well as plenty of flowering Clematis to be seen in the bush. By now the sun was coming out now and again. After a bit of driftwood throwing and cairn building, we headed back. We all took back some dead Manuka trees for future firewood – fun getting over the swingbridge with a Manuka tree!

Woody had brought some lovely Korean brown noodles, and some little cheesy sausage thingies, which he kindly shared with us for tea. I had a heap of my own food as well, because I eat so much! With tea over, it was off to bed early. I had the top sleeping platform to myself – bliss – and with Woody and Warren being non snorers, I actually slept quite well.

The next morning the weather was clearer, and we set off at about 9am, with Warren as route finder to the Hidden Lake. We initially headed back up the track, then turned off into crown ferns, near the Ruamahanga Forks. Crown ferns are scratchy! We crossed the Ruapae Stream, and initially the bush was quite open, with dug up muddy areas – pig rooting evidence.

Under Warren’s direction, we headed parallel to the Ruapae Stream for a while, before heading in a more NW direction, towards the lake. The bush got thicker, with the odd boggy area, and I started finding it harder to keep up with Warren. Soon we scaled a steep cliff onto a higher terrace. This is great terrace country. Warren then realized we’d come up one terrace too high. We couldn’t see the lake from up here, but the height gave Warren a good idea of its location. We came down from the terrace, and not long after, we were at the lake.

The Hidden Lake is absolutely beautiful. Encircled by high trees, it has its own island with a variety of plants growing on it. Usually in the bush, water is rushing somewhere, but here was calm water. The serenity was amazing. There

was a resident eel, who came close enough to be photographed, and two swallows. The lake is very close to the Ruamahanga River, so we had a look over the high cliffs at the river below.



*Hidden Lake, Ruamahanga / Ruapae.*

We followed a track partway round the lake, before heading East back through the bush (quite a bit of windfall), and back to the Ruapae Stream.

We hadn’t been heading North, up the stream, for long, when I fell in. Step on a slippery rock, lose your balance, and in you go! The water wasn’t cold, but it was still a rude shock. Woody said he fell in too, but I didn’t see it. I took it a bit slower after that.

We had lunch under light cloud by a sidestream that came down from the Haukura Ridge – then it was out of the stream and into the last piece of bush bashing – again under Warren’s direction – up on to the ridge near the Roaring Stag Lodge/ Herepai sign.

This was steep, and the plants seemed to come up high on me because of the steepness. I felt like I was wading through plants, and lost track of time because I was concentrating. I could see the clouds above slowly getting closer and it felt like we were climbing to the sky. I had this idea that we’d get to the top, and the track would be on top of the ridge, so when it eventually flattened, and no track, I started to feel concerned. I wanted to check that we were still heading East, that we weren’t going parallel to the track. But the bush was much denser up here, and I had to keep going to not lose contact with the others. Soon I was knackered, and stopped for a bit of a break. By now we were just starting to descend. Woody and Warren shouted from a little further ahead “The track’s down here.” Good!

A real break now, and quite a relief to be on the orange triangle highway. We had a short



discussion on the pros and cons of those orange triangles. Then it was just 4 minutes walk to the Roaring Stag/Herepai sign.

From there, the walk out seemed very quick. Down the hill, and we met a couple at the swingbridge who'd been looking for, but not found, the Ruapae Falls. The man had a fine bunch of Clematis flowers attached to his pack. I sniffed them – no smell. There were gorgeous liverworts growing on the bank near the bridge.

I felt invigorated by being on a fast track again, and it was a quick walk out to the van, arriving at about 3pm.

Woody stopped in Eketahuna, where we refuelled ourselves at the 4 Square, and then it was homeward bound, after a challenging-at-times but great trip. I was very sleepy that evening and couldn't stay awake, but the next day I felt really good, like the trip had really done something for me.

Many thanks to Woody and Warren.

#### **14 Nov Keretaki Hut Report by Dave Grant**

It was heavily overcast and the wind was strong as we drove along Pinfold Road towards the track start. "Kind of a dreary day" was Tina's description. Nobody argued. In fact, a less motivated group may well have decided it was a better day to stay home. We had some trouble unlocking the gate to access the farm track. Two gates with choice of five padlocks at 8.30am on a Sunday morning. Murphy's Law said it had to be the last padlock tried, and it was. Also by this time the wind had increased to gale force. A rip roaring westerly coming over the Ruahines and gathering speed down the eastern side. As we bumped along the farm track we watched a paradise duck take off on our approach - only to remain stationary about 6 foot off the ground, wings beating frantically.

The wind roared through the macrocarpas and shook the old shed where we changed into our tramping gear, but finally we started off up the hill towards the bush edge a km away. A steep climb across farmland into the teeth of the gale, with a sort of horizontal mist, and the occasional wind gust threatening to blow us away. Warren had the thought (as only Warren would) that maybe we could all zip the leading edges of our parkas together and take off in a collective hang-glide cum base jump back down the hill.

All seven of us made it to the shelter of the bush edge. Wild waves of wind thrashed through the canopy of the forest, but at least we were protected from the buffeting. I think Cherry, on her first club trip, was wondering just what she had let herself in for by this time.

We picked our way along a hunter's track that led westward up the ridge that would take us to the head of the watershed then around and down to Keretaki Hut. Pretty easy going with varied forest cover – from areas of pepperwood scrub to some nice stands of rimu and miro in the relatively more sheltered places. And down in the gullies you could see clematis in flower. There is a spot about half way up the ridge where you come on to an open knob and from here you can see the orange silhouette of Keretaki Hut on the other side of the catchment and Maharahara on the skyline behind. On this occasion a misted outline. The wind was howling across this outlook and we scrambled quickly to the shelter of the pepperwood below. Even here the wind was so strong that the stunted trees were rocking over on their root platforms. A tough life for a tree.

As we continued to climb, the track swung round to the north and we entered the leatherwood zone so characteristic at this altitude in the Ruahines. Here, the way runs through the taller vegetation just on the lee side of the ridge so we were again sheltered from the elements. Towards the end of this the hunters trail joins with the DOC track coming up out of the Raparapawai Stream. From here on you follow a 10 foot wide swathe around the head of the catchment and down to Keretaki Hut. Quite a contrast to picking your way through and around the vegetation. A bit like coming off a metal country road and onto the main highway. Not sure I actually like the change although our speed of travel did increase and we reached the hut at midday, about three hours after starting out.

Keretaki is a very tidy hut of classic vintage, even down to the orange paint. The hut is located in a clearing on a scrubby ridge about two thirds of the way down to Keretaki Stream. We enjoyed its shelter while eating our lunch and ran a bit of a competition trying to rank the shudders of the hut in the wind. Common consensus put it at about 4.5 on the Richter scale. Graham reckoned we were safe enough. If the hut was going to blow away it would have done so long ago. Besides, it was held down by wire ropes.

Given there had been almost no rain I had hoped to complete the trip by going down the Keretaki

Stream back to the road end. Everyone was happy with this suggestion and we set off about 1pm, dropping quite steeply down a track to the creek. Travel downstream was fairly straight forward and we enjoyed the shelter, and the sight of bush clad slopes towering above. Well used bypasses took us around some deeper pools but most of us got our feet wet before we had gone too far. At one place quite a large slip had come down recently, almost blocking the streambed. As we scrambled past small rocks bounced down as a reminder of the still unstable state of the scar above. The valley gradually opened out and we were mostly able to travel on terraces beside the stream until reaching the farmland.

From there it was about a km back to the road end, time from the hut being about two and three quarter hours. Everyone declared they had enjoyed themselves, including the lawyer scratches and a bruised knee from a stumble in the creek. After the gathering up of vehicles and changing of gear we headed home via the Woodville ice cream shop, which just happens to be over the road from the Yummy Mummy cheese cake shop, which meant Warren didn't have to cook tea.

We were Janet, Graham, Tina, Cherry, Richard, Warren, and Dave.

## International Trip Report

### Rambles in the USA, Colville National Forest By Bruce van Brunt.

I spent much of this October travelling in the U.S. primarily to visit family members. These travels included the lovely rolling hills of Maryland and West Virginia, the scorching Nevada Mojave desert and the mountains of eastern Washington State. The cities I went through included San Francisco, Portland, Spokane, Boise, Las Vegas, Phoenix, Washington D.C., Baltimore, and New York City. Aside from a minute piece of the Appalachian Trail near Harpers Ferry (West Virginia), a small jaunt along Antietam Creek (Maryland) and various canyons and unnamed peaks of the Mojave Desert, most of my tramping was confined to the Colville National Forest in eastern Washington State.

The Colville National Forest is located in northern Washington State on the eastern side of the Cascade Mountains. The area is semi arid; the dominant trees are conifers. Most of the forest is above 2500ft in elevation and the peaks are generally around 6000-7000ft. The place is characterized by hot dry summers and

long winters that bring several feet of snow. In winter, much of it is painful to access because the snow layers are often 6+ feet, and even at lower elevations the snow sticks on the ground from November to April. The Forest has many recreational uses including multiday tramps, horse treks, hunting, mountain biking and skiing. Despite all these potential users, the place is not crowded. On most of my tramps I met at most one other party.

The mountains in this forest are not like the rugged rocky snow/glacier covered mountains of the Western Cascades. Indeed, they are quite the opposite. The tree line extends to 6500ft+. Because many of the tracks are graded for horses and bikers, tramping is a gentle affair and one can cover ground pretty fast. In my visit here I climbed Sherman Peak, Mt Columbia, Snowy Peak, Midnight Peak along with some other nameless bumps along a long ridge that extends miles and miles to the Canadian border. Each ascent had a really good access track and the actual peaks were mostly just a bit of scrambling. With these easy tracks I think one could easily climb two of these peaks a day! The "crux" is getting through the forest from the access track up to the top. In some places forest fires ravaged the areas and one must patiently negotiate a band endless fallen logs and small pine trees before reaching the rocks.

I tramped in this forest in the autumn, which is probably the best time to go. The weather was gloriously stable and clear with little wind. The autumn temperatures ranged from subzero in the mornings to shirt sleeve temperatures by mid morning. This is a nice forest to visit and certainly a bit out of the way for the overseas visitor. For the prospective NZ visitor one should note that there are no dangerous snakes, but you might have to "share" the place with the black bears and mountain lions. I have encountered both of these on separate visits to the forest.

## Book Review

### Review by Anne Lawrence

**Huts. Untold Stories from Back Country New Zealand. Mark Pickering (2010).** Canterbury University Press \$50.00. 383 pages, soft cover.

Mark Pickering is already well known for his numerous books about tramping. His latest book is a celebration of huts and the folk who built and lived in them (and still do). From the over 1500 huts in New Zealand back-country, the author has selected 15 huts that cover the diverse

types of huts in the New Zealand hills – everything from shepherds to goldminers, deer cullers, skiers and trampers huts.

Mark relates fascinating and often little-known details about the huts' history with each chapter focusing on one hut. For each hut, he relates stories about the hut, the location, and the history. Each chapter includes descriptions of the hut location and access as well as a 1:50,000 topographical map of the location. There are plenty of good photos (including many from the archives) and the production is of good quality so the photos have come out well and the maps are easy to read.

Chapters vary with some focusing more on the people involved and others focusing on the area or particular events. Having read the chapter on Dynamo hut, not only have I learnt something about the chequered history of the Otago gold mines, but I now understand more about the importance of power generation and the role that turbines and dynamos played in goldminers' lives. (and the water race men discussed below).

Dipping into the chapter on Howlett's Hut, I found out that William Howlett was a quirky character – a school teacher, he closed the school when he was reprimanded for caning a girl, and also ran a

store which he opened 'when he felt like it'. Daphne Hut became his summer camp and he paid local shepherds to pack stores and liquor into the hut. It is interesting to discover that Howlett's Club was set up in 1893 - well before the 1919 establishment of the Tararua Tramping Club which is usually acknowledged as the first tramping club in NZ. The author gratefully acknowledged this information from Howlett Hut regular and PNTMC stalwart Tony Gates.

Shutes Hut (northern Ruahines) is also discussed, as an example of a rabbiters hut from the 1920s, and several Tararua huts are mentioned as trampers huts. Sefton Bivvy is discussed as a mountaineers hut.

There is a comprehensive index and the contents pages are followed by a map showing the location of each of the huts covered.

One criticism concerns the order of the chapters for which I struggled to find a system. not alphabetic or geographic. But this is a minor quibble in an otherwise well-presented book.

All in all this is an interesting, informative book – one that I would be happy to come back and dip into regularly.

## Quote of the Month

### ***A day in the life***

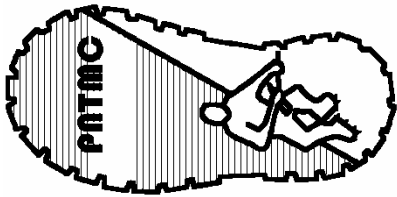
*They would have to get up early, the raceman and his dog. The first thing he would do was to stoke up the wood burner in the hut - and carefully; his firewood supplies would be meagre. A brew of billy tea and stale bread or damper would be breakfast. Most racemen lived in small huts beside the water race. Perhaps there was a coal seam nearby, otherwise the kindling and wood had to be brought in by packhorse. It would be more expensive than tobacco - an equally vital ingredient in the raceman's life.*

*In summer, the raceman would saunter along the race, clearing slips, shifting out rocks that had fallen in, digging out silt, and shoring up any parts of the bank that were starting to collapse. Perhaps a bit of stonework would be necessary. About noon the raceman would stop for smoko, probably at the end of his stretch, where he might meet up with the next raceman on his section and have a yarn and a smoke.*

*By autumn, the raceman would have to break up the ice on narrow sections, and make sure the water was flowing evenly. By winter, he would be out of a job. If he were re hired in spring, he would have a lot of work to do, because the melting snow would have caused all sorts of damage, and spring floods washed away the race walls or destroyed the intakes.*

*At the end of his day, the raceman and his dog would head back to his little hut for a simple meal of bread and cold mutton. The dog would get the bones. He would eke the fire out, and sip whiskey. There was no one to talk to, and nothing to do but go to bed and wait for another day.*

*From Chapter "Carrick Range Water Race Huts", by Mark Pickering (2010), from his new book "Huts".*



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

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**PNTMC Newsletter**

**December 2010**

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

- *Upcoming trips and club events*
- *Editorial: The Colenso Society plus*
- *Trip Reports: Ngauruhoe, Roaring Stag, Keretaki*
- *USA Report: Colville Forest, Cascade Mountains*
- *Book Review – Huts*
- *Quote of the Month – a raceman's day*

**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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