

Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.

www.pntmc.org.nz

P.O. Box 1217, Palmerston North

Newsletter March 2015



More than wet feet on the way to Iron Gates Gorge, Oroua River

[Warren Wheeler]

Club Nights

All are welcome to our club nights. These 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.

12 March

Auction

Warren Wheeler

Purchase a bargain, sell a treasure - time to clear out your unwanted gear. See Notices for details.

26 March

AGM

Come along to make up the all important quorum for our Annual Election of Officers, Presidents Report, Treasurers Report and any other items of General Business. If you would like to be involved in running the club then get yourself nominated for Committee. And for your post-AGM pleasure the outgoing Committee will provide a Chocolate Cake Competition. See you there, then.

Upcoming Trips

28-1 March

Kime Hut **M**
Woody Lee **357-2390**

You are invited to join me for this late summer tramping to top of the Tararua Range up from Otaki Forks. It is part of the popular Southern Crossing and we climb Mt Hector if the weather is friendly. Leave PN at 8am.

1 March

Maharahara/Matanganui Meander **M**
Peter van Essen **355-9076**

My March meander is a mosey up Maharahara and Matanganui mountain from Mangapuaka Stream. A medium moderate trip so not much mud or other mayhem. Marvel at the much maligned mighty leatherwood as we munch our lunch, then maybe a mid-slope minor detour to make the return more memorable. Depart 7am.

6-8 March

Mid Waiohine Hut **M/F**
Craig Allerby **323-7913**

Note change from Pohangina Huts trip.

Leave PN at 7.30. We will head up the Mt Holdsworth Track, stopping at Powell Hut or Mt Holdsworth for lunch. From Mt Holdsworth we descend down to the Waiohine River valley to stay at the excellent little backcountry hut for a night. Good camping is also possible.

8 March

Herepai **M**
Grant Christian **354-5843**

This trip takes us up to Herepai Hut. An easy walk alongside the river and then a 300 metre climb to the hut. Return by the same route.

14-15 March

Pohangina River Huts **M**
Janet Wilson **329-4722**

Note change from Ohau Huts trip.

Come along and visit our 2 "club huts" Ngamoko and Mid Pohangina. How we get there will depend on who is coming and the river levels. We will wash the exterior of Ngamoko Hut and clean tidy both huts – they are in good condition so not too much to do. I plan to take the Friday off work and make it a long weekend so am looking for another leader if people want to leave on Saturday. Please indicate your interest in this trip early to help me with planning.

15 March

Deadmans - Rangi **M**
Terry Crippen **356-3588**

A classic loop up onto the tussock tops with

great views into the central Ruahine Ranges and out to Ruapehu.

21-22 March

Ohau River Huts **M/F**
Michael Allerby **323-8563**

Note change from Mid-Waiohine trip.

Head in to South Ohau hut for the night (via the Gable End track), then follow the river out the next day, stopping in at North Ohau hut along the way.

22 March

Mitre Flats **M**
Malcolm Parker **357-5203**

A relatively easy walk in from The Pines carpark north of Masterton. Watch out for tree roots and wasps and some mighty forest. Out the same way or down the river if nice and hot.

28-29 March

Penn Creek **M**
Warren Wheeler **356-1998**

Depart 7.30am. We start with a steady climb up the track from Otaki Forks to historic Field Hut and carry on up to the tussock tops for some great views. We then drop down to cosy Penn Creek Hut for the night. Some nice camping spots if you wish. Out the same way or down the river if keen.

29 March

Ruapae Falls **M**
David Grant **328-7788**

Located in the eastern Tararuas, Ruapae Falls are a magical sight. Hidden away in dense bush on a branch of the upper Mangatainoka River the falls plunge maybe 20 metres into a deep pool. We leave the track to Herepai shortly after the first swing bridge and travel through mixed beech and rimu forest before following up the river. You will need to be a little bit adventurous to make the final section to the falls, having to climb up a log jammed in the river to reach the falls themselves. Leave Milverton Park 7.30am.

Easter Trips

28 March-6 April

Cupola Basin or Glacier Gully Climb **F/T**
Terry Crippen **356-3588**

Join Terry on this extended Easter climbing trip in Nelson Lakes National Park. Climbing skills essential if you want to knock off some peaks but a nice area for tramping too.

3-6 April

Easter Mid-Tararua Circuit **M**
Warren Wheeler **356-1998**

Depart PN at 7.30am. This will be weather dependent but Plan A is to start from

Kiriwhakapapa Carpark to Blue Range > Mitre Flats (1) > Tarn Ridge > Dorset > Carkeek (2) > Arete Forks > Cow Creek (3) > Blue Range > out. A nice mix of bush, goblin forest, tussock, rock and river with lots of hut bagging points for you.

Trip Grading

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

Personal Locator Beacons – Free for trips

The club has purchased two PLBs for members' use. If you want to take one of these on a trip, contact Martin or Anne Lawrence on 357-1695. Note that this applies to any trip you are going on - it doesn't need to be a club trip.

Trip leaders

Complete the trip intentions form and leave with one of Overdue Trip Contacts or drop into 44 Dahlia St or email to pntmctrips@gmail.com with the date and trip name in the subject line. 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:

Janet Wilson	329-4722
Martin and Anne Lawrence	357-1695

Articles for the newsletter

Send by the 20th of each month to Warren Wheeler, the newsletter editor, direct or via our web site <http://www.pntmc.org.nz/mail/>

Notices

PNTMC Auction 12 March 2015

Purchase a bargain, sell a treasure for profit, or just enjoy studying what old (?) equipment is up for sale. The biennial PNTMC auction is your chance to offer pre loved stuff up for sale, and to buy someone else's.

PNTMC takes

- sale price if item sells for under \$5.00
- \$2.00 if price between \$5.00 and \$10.00
- 15 % commission for items sold for more than \$10.00.

PNTMC 50th Anniversary 2015

Plans are under way to celebrate the club's 50th anniversary and Camp Rangī Woods at Totara Reserve has already been booked for the last weekend of November 2015.

A Jubilee book is also being prepared as a record of events and activities over the years.

If you have any ideas or are interested in assisting then please contact the club President Dave Grant who is heading the organising sub-committee of Terry Crippen, Peter Darragh, Doug Strachan and Martin Lawrence (Treasurer).

We would like to invite past members to join in the celebrations so if you know of anyone please let them know or give Terry their contact details.

A list of "missing" past club members is included with this newsletter.

Tararua Hut Bagging

Following the success of our previous Ruahine hut bagging and peak bagging competitions, PNTMC is running a new hut bagging competition focused on the Tararuas.

The challenge started on 1 July 2014 and will run over the 12 months until 30 June 2015.

3 points per visit to Tararua hut, bivvy, shelter, Holdsworth Lodge etc – as long as they are on DoC website. **Only 1 point for 2nd and 3rd visits, not 3 points.**

1 extra point if the visit is on a club trip.
 1 extra point if you stay the night. (One hut only per night) Camping outside crowded huts counts.
 1 extra point for a first visit.

All other DOC huts in the country - 1 point per visit (no extra points)
 All huts maximum of 3 visits to count for points.

Please take photos to record the visit, as well as for producing a new poster. As our Ruahine hut bagging poster was a huge success, the club would like to produce a similar one for the Tararuas.

Hut bags, email to jwilson@inspire.net.nz.
 Hut images, martin.lawrence.nz@gmail.com

Progress Update from Janet

The scores as I have them for the hutbagging are WW with a massive lead on 188, me 2nd on 125, and Graham Peters on 72. Woody has dropped to 4th on 62. So far there have been 324 hut visits by individuals (87 different huts), with an overall total of 989 points, mostly gained on club trips and at Tararua Huts.

There are plenty of opportunities coming up in the next 4 months – remember, the challenge runs until the end of June.

The current Top 10 Hut Baggers are:

Warren W	188
Janet W	125
Graham P	72
Woody L	62
Graeme R	58
Mike A	56
Richard L	54
Craig A	52
Grant C	52
Bruce vB	36

Trip Reports

16-19 January 2015 Tour de Biv (Tour de Cloud) Janet Wilson

Because it still felt like the holidays we decided to make a long, long-weekend and started our tour on the Friday morning.

Despite my many attempts at planning, it still looked very unlikely we could get to all 5 bivs (or huts as some are now known) without some very long days and the weather looked like it would play a part too.

So we set off up the very low Ohau River and had lunch at South Ohau Hut. It was a hot climb to Te Matawai Hut for a break, before climbing to Pukematawai and on to Arete Hut. We were soon in the cloud but not much wind until we dropped off the ridge at the "5 min to Arete Hut" sign. Despite having approached this hut from the same direction previously in clear conditions, I'd recommend in clag, to have your navigation well sorted before you start your final approach. The cosy 2 bunk hut was much appreciated shelter when we found it.



Leaving Arete Biv in the clag [Warren Wheeler]

We had a few options for our destination on the Saturday, but as it dawned claggy with little viz and a decent breeze, we retraced our steps to Pukematawai and then headed along the lovely Dracophyllum ridge to Dracophyllum Biv, where we had lunch. This was new country for Warren. We carried on to Nichols Hut for the night (only getting geographically confused once on the way).

The interesting thing about this route is that it is now part of the Te Araroa Trail and this has greatly increased the number of visits to these huts. We struck a quiet night and had Nichols to ourselves. The weather cleared briefly in the evening for great views - by morning the

cloud and wind were back. This meant we gave up all thoughts of trying to exit via Crawford and YTTY Hut (we would have had to find a ride back) and we retraced our steps through the goblin forest back past the biv.



Dracophyllum Biv [Warren Wheeler]

About half way from the biv to Pukematawai we picked up the old but fairly well marked old track down to the upper Otaki River. Some careful navigation was required at times. This route leads to a good campsite we had used a few years back and it is close to the main track to Te Matawai Hut. We had a pleasant evening under the fly with "starlike" glowworms lighting up all around us.

Next morning we, kind off, followed the old route back up to the track - this turn off point is well marked. We carried on out via a claggy Richards Knob and Waiopehu Hut.

A good solid tramp - 6 huts but only 2 of the biv's - still some work to do.....

We were Graham Peters, Warren Wheeler and Janet Wilson (leader and scribe).

1 February 2015 Atiwhakatu Hut Duncan Hedderley

Karen Tutt wasn't able to lead this, so Geoff Phillips stepped in. We had a good-sized party, and good weather - overcast, but not much rain despite a weather warning. The track to the hut is fairly flat, and very well-maintained - and well-used. We encountered one overnight group (Dad and kids), several day-walk parties, a couple of runners and someone being taken for a walk by her dog. We reached the hut in two hours (rather than the three and a half the sign at the start said: Warren's comment was that that was probably right "if you'd got a big pack and lots of yakkety yak"). Warren brought watermelon for lunch.

Light rain started on the way out, but not enough that anyone but me bothered with a raincoat. Half the party stopped for strawberries in Masterton on the way back; the other car stopped for coffee in Eketahuna. We were Geoff and Jane Phillips, Warren Wheeler, Owen Rogers, Miho and Duncan Hedderley.

6-9 February Wanganui Canoe Trip Report Benita Gross

This was a four day canoe trip down the Wanganui River planned by Kathy Corner and we had four canoes for eight people but after the first day we had only seven paddling, as one of the group decided to go home and not continue down the river.

The seven survivors were: Kathy Corner, Warren Wheeler, Richard Lockett, Tina Bishop, Romain Lebrun, Andrea Hom Diaz, Benita Gross.

Kathy did an amazing job of planning the trip and organizing it. We met the week before to discuss equipment and meals. The canoes, barrels, dry bags and life jackets were all supplied by Taumarunui Canoe Hire. We planned to camp for the four nights even though the camp grounds we stayed at had huts.

We lucked out with the weather – although we arrived in Taumarunui at dusk, and set up our (3) tents in the fading light on the edge of the river – it rained cats and dogs all through the night! Luckily we were told to set up our tent without blocking the road used by the Canoe Hire folks to deliver our barrels and dry bags in their little truck. The road had a river in it the next morning and we would have been flooded had we not set up on slightly higher ground.

The next morning was beautiful and sunny, if a bit windy. We packed up and tried to get organized packing into 1.5 barrels each and one dry bag to a canoe. The TCH folks had more than 70 people to get onto the river that day. A group of 8 was doing 5 days, beginning in Taumarunui, there were about 20 of us leaving from Ohinepane – for a 4 day trip, and the remainder – 55 or so, were starting from Whakahoro, for a 3 day trip – Whakahoro being our first night on the river and 35km of paddling for us. It seemed chaotic to most of us but somehow they got all 70 people out on the river that day and safely paddling their way

to Pipiriki where we would all be picked up.

The folks at TCH spent time with each group talking about safety, paddling, rapids and then showed some video explaining some of the sights we would see, things to look out for, and trying to give us pointers about our campsites along the river. Frankly, this was all too much information for me, but some members of our group must have listened - because as a group, we didn't miss much.

All this lecturing and outfitting us with life jackets that fit (extra small for all the (female) fit trampers in our group) took a while. The group of 55 got off first - and we ended up in Ohinepane around noon. We did a few turns for our instructor - showing that we were not completely incompetent and would likely survive 4 days of paddling. He also hopped down the rocks to watch us all negotiate the first little rapid - we survived it and were off on our own.



*Getting the hang of paddling the rapids
[Andrea Hom Diaz]*

We had 35 km of paddling that day. I think we all were quite worn out when we finally got to Whakahoro Hut. It was a windy day (we were told that the wind picks up around 2PM, and we accepted an apology for the late start), and access to the camp ground was possible from several areas, but the closest involved paddling UP a stream - I think we were all thinking (and some vocalizing) 'are we there yet'. I actually did not remember that we would see several tie up places before reaching the choice spot, and actually asked my paddling buddy where the hell everyone else was going.

The choice tie up spot still was more than 0.5km downhill from the camp ground. Carrying our gear up that hill was the last straw - most of us had been gripping the paddles so hard that our hands hurt, in

addition to backs and arms that didn't seem to want to work ever again.

The Whakahoro campsite was actually really beautiful, and is the last place that had contact with the outside world on this part of the river (why didn't I invest in a satellite phone - surely even in the gorge of the Wanganui River you can signal a satellite?). There is also a coffee shop/pub where you can buy food or coffee, and if you spend money there, they will truck your belongings back down the hill for you, or maybe even up. We had to make more than one trip each - and were assisted part of the way by a nice man with a trailer and one almost flat tire and three dogs.

We had planned dinner that night - tuna casserole - planned by Kathy and cooked by Warren. The pasta was cooked in one pot, the tuna mash in another - and Warren must have been really tired too because he managed, with great messiness and difficulty to mix the two pots together - after which he wondered why he hadn't left them separate so people could mix the food to their own desired proportion. There was half a pot left after we all ate heartily. Warren had it for lunch the next day.

I mentioned that the camp site was beautiful - it was spacious, there were lovely sheep covered mountains for a backdrop and a bunch of really friendly horses who came by to sniff all our tents and belongings. It was hazy that night and 4 degrees, but it made everything look beautiful. The cooking area and the toilet area are fenced off, presumably to keep animals out.

Grant, Vickie and their daughter Anna met us there that night - with their kayaks on top of their car. Grant drove his car to Taumarunui the next morning so that the TCH folks would deliver his car to Pipiriki in 3 days - at a cost (we later found out) of \$145 - and well worth it - but more about that later.

Day 2 paddling - Whakahoro to John Coull Hut - 37.5 km

With only 7 people and 4 canoes, we discussed possibly tying two together to help the person paddling alone. Romain said he thought he would be fine alone, and we loaded his canoe with some weight up front so he wouldn't ride with his nose in the air. He looked very regal sitting up straight in the back of his canoe switching sides frequently as we all paddled down the river. We got an early start and after some lessons from Warren

about tweaking our paddling skills - we were off again.



John Coull landing [Warren Wheeler]

That night rats ate into Warren's day pack trying to get at a cereal bar - he heard them or it making noise and prevented the bar from being taken. It was easy to recognize his pack with the hole in the pocket.



John Coull Campsite [Warren Wheeler]

Day 3 paddling - John Coull to Tieke Kainga Hut - 29 km

By the third day we were all pretty comfortable - and actually looking forward to the rapids as they speed you along the river - the long straight glassy stretches of the river were much more work in terms of paddling.



Some long calm sections [Warren Wheeler]

P.S - I forgot about the Bridge to Nowhere -

how nice it was to WALK.



Traffic jam at Bridge to Nowhere landing [Warren Wheeler]

The Tieke Kainga campgrounds were another 'tent city' with terraced areas for the tents, a well outfitted hut behind, and really stinky toilets down a long board walk path - but not long enough to keep the smell from the sleeping and eating area at times.

Andrea and Romain participated in a powhiri, along with many of the hut dwellers and were invited to sleep in the marae, but joined us in the tent city section.

There was also plenty of wildlife at this camp ground. One of our group hung the rubbish bag from the clothesline - and a possum managed to tear into it and leave trash all over the place. I got up to go to the stinky toilet during the night and actually saw a NZ possum for the first time. I knit and know what their hair looks like - but they are actually cute - compared to the American possum which looks like an elongated giant rat. The Kiwi possum looks more like a raccoon to me - although I am not disputing the trouble they make.

Day 4 paddling - Tieke Kainga to Pipiriki (and 50/50 rapid) - 21.5 km

Last day. Some of us were ready to get home, shower and sleep in our beds, some were not - and would have loved to take the river all the way to Wanganui. We were all feeling pretty comfortable in the canoes - even though we were warned about a big rock that we were supposed to stay left of - but no mention of the rapid that humbled those in three of our canoes. [Actually this was one of those useful tips I forgot.]

Tina and Andrea had been paddling ahead of us most of the time - and on the last day the rest of us stopped at a waterfall inside a cave. Tina and Andrea were just ahead. They were

the first of our group to traverse the rapid which we later learned is called 50/50. When they crossed it, the huge waves filled their canoe but they did not capsize - somehow the current carried them to the beach on the right side of the river. Romain went through next, and the front end of his canoe rose so high he was sure he was going to capsize head over tail - but didn't. He got to the landing spot in time to take a picture of Tina and Andrea with their swamped canoe. (Actually Andrea took a picture herself during this event).



Tina and Andrea in their swamped canoe

Richard and I went through next, the first wave filled the canoe and the second capsized us. Our instructions several days before were:

1. Don't panic (really??)
2. Stay with the canoe (any instructions on how to do this?)
3. Hang on to your paddle (after the first day of gripping it so hard - I was barely holding it).

All I can say is - I did panic, I think I got thrown from the canoe - and when I came up for the third time, I saw Richard floating away from me with the canoe, I remembered that I had on a life jacket - and by this time was probably way beyond the rapid, so I swam over to the closest solid ground which was on the opposite side of the river from the boats. My paddle was stuck in some trees - but as I tried to walk along to rocks to get it, it also floated away.

From this side of the river I got to watch Kathy and Warren as they came through and also capsized - but both managed to stay with the canoe.

At some point shortly after that, a jet boat came by, saw me and asked me where my boat was. He told me to sit on the front of his boat and then he went to get my paddle and

delivered me safe and sound to the landing where Richard was already sitting in a dry boat waiting for me.

After organizing ourselves and watching the other canoes and kayaks negotiate the rapid that humbled us – we tried to warn a few other people that we had been camping with over the last few days and paddling alongside. Most of the kayaks did fine, as did many of the canoes – the two we were all worried about were a family of parents, grandparents and three children under the age of 5. They too sailed through the '50/50' rapid with grace – much to our happiness for them.

At this point we were very close to Pipiriki and our pickup point, we were all soaking wet – thankfully the day was warm and sunny, and the River was fairly warm too.

We paddled on to Pipiriki, which has a fairly large concrete landing – and arrived at 12:30. We changed into dry clothing, ate whatever we could find in our barrels. We were told that we would be picked up at 1:30 and indeed all the canoe and kayak hire outfits managed to squeeze their trailers in to pickup their boats, equipment and people. We left Pipiriki at 2:30 (pretty good for loading 8 kayaks and 8 canoes on two trailers, all the life jackets, barrels, bags, ropes, balers and people into the buses).

The drive back to Taumarunui was 1-2 hours but we did not arrive till 5:00 because there was some confusion about people who needed to be dropped on the way but their backpacks somehow were in another bus that failed to meet us.

Once we got to Taumarunui, unpacked our barrels, sorted our things and got on the road – we decided to eat in Taumarunui and then drove to Palmy, arriving after 10 PM – in the driving rain!

All in all it was a great trip, with great people, and great weather – what else is there to ask for?

A few things I would recommend to myself or anyone who is going to canoe down the Wanganui.

1. Knee pads - we all had sore/bruised knees from sitting with our knees bracing the side of the canoe – as we were instructed.
2. Choose some of the smaller DOC campsites along the river. We spoke with

a fellow kayaker who was paddling down river with his girl friend – they seemed to know where all the quiet secluded areas were to pitch their tent.

3. Have your car driven to Pipiriki. If there are 4 people, it works out to \$36 each for the luxury of not having to go back to Taumarunui – it also means that you can drive the 64km down the River Road to Wanganui and then back to Palmy
4. Maybe do it next time in a kayak?

February 2015

Temple, Hopkins, Huxley Terry Crippen and Ange Minto

T: Well it was straight away into plan B, since the weather was going to be very mean; severe gales, rain and snow; bother!! So up the South Temple to the hut to weather out the next few days. Your boots get wet crossing the North Temple within the first 5 minutes. Lots of up and down along the gravel flats, due to plenty of streambank erosion, to the pleasant hut, built by the NZFS in 1960. The following day was a collection of severe gale, rain and hail so a good excuse for a pit bash day!

The third day we put on raincoats and headed up valley for a looksee, plenty of stream bank erosion here also, and lots of traps for the predators. The barometer wasn't doing much so the low and fronts were hanging around. The fourth day (Waitangi Day) there was plenty of fresh snow higher up so any ideas of crossing Gunsight Pass into the North Temple and climbing Rabbiters Peak were abandoned. We headed back down to the car park passing quite a few long weekend trampers, then drove up to Monument Hut up the Hopkins. We towed a group of NZACers out of one bog and gave them a lift. The place was a hive of activity; MTBers, 4WDs, jet boaters, trampers and day trippers - an overflowing hut for the night.

With river levels up we decided not to proceed to the Elcho Valley and decided on the Huxley Valley for about six days, Plan C – at long last for me after about 30 years and a couple of trips that went wrong or I had to turn round and come back to PN the night after arriving at Huxley Lodge. We followed the DOC track up the TR bank. It was good to see that Twizel DOC Area office was promoting good old NZFS; leaving permolat makers in place and on each hut stating the NZFS built the hut and when!

We eventually arrived at Huxley Forks and spent the night in the new "Officers Hut". Quite a few people about being the long weekend. The next day we headed up to Broderick Hut at 960m. Again the track soon peters out and it is along the river gravels and boulders before the final steep climb to the hut just on the bush edge. Overnight the wind and the rain set in with the altimeter rising 200m (i.e. the barometric pressure plummeted)! *Biggest change I have ever seen. So the next day it was again a pit day.*

At about lunch time all of a sudden there was a bang on the door and a lad from USA fell in complete with MTB panniers!! He was the advance guard of a group of extreme (mad) USA MTBers who were attempting to take their bikes over Broderick Pass – Yeh right! He had nearly been washed away down a sidestream, the rest of the party stayed on the other side.

Later in the afternoon when the rain and the wind had abated we went down with him to check on the others. Eventually they all arrived with their bikes – Broderick Hut full of MTBers, strange?

A: The next day the wx was perfect so the two of us headed up to Broderick Pass. The MTBers had decided it was a no go for them so they got on the sat-phone and tried to get a chopper to extract them. It wasn't long before we got to the base of the steep grunt up, head high scrub was good for pulling up on, then it opened out into snowgrass slopes and a mixture of greywacke and schist. The head of the North Huxley is quite an impressive valley, with Mt Trent towering above all. We eventually arrived at a point higher than the saddle, dropping down to it. Good views across to Mt McCullough over the other side of the Landsborough.

We then proceeded to climb up towards Mt MacKenzie (2156m), but one of T's new knees was playing up so he rested in the sun just below the snow dome watching my progress and checking out all the black butterflies. I had to solo the summit, thankfully an untechnical one. Excellent views of Mt's Hooker and Dechen. We saw far down below the chopper arriving to pick up the six MTBers and their bikes – they were due to fly out to USA in three days time. Heading back down to the hut we took a more direct route, once back at the hut a good feed was enjoyed.



Hooker and Dechan from MacKenzie summit

The following day after a bit of a clean-up of the hut and wood gathering it was back to the Officer's Hut at Huxley Forks. The MTBers must have had to carry their bikes most of the way up. Now there was no one about.

Our last day we wandered down the Huxley, running into a DOC worker who we had met at Twizel. Once in the Hopkins we decided on heading down the river flats rather than the track, that necessitated some good river crossing practice, eventually reaching Monument Hut. Then it was time to hop into Big Red and head down to Wanaka for a couple of days rest before our next adventure – attempting Mt Tyndall (2496m) up the West Matukituki above the Cascade Valley (Cascade Saddle area).

22 February 2015 Iron Gates Gorge Francesca Theoret

My mother, sister and I decided to participate in this tramp as a last minute kind of decision. We had never really hiked with a tramping group before, and we had some reservations, as we usually enjoy outdoorsy activities because they allow us to get away from crowds!

We needn't have worried; the group was lovely and welcoming and didn't make us feel as if we were part of some tourist experience of New Zealand. We have come from Canada for the year and we are wishing to get the most authentic feeling of this country as possible, so this was important to us.

Moreover, it would have been impossible for us to complete the tramp alone... we couldn't have found our way out of the bush!

Our guide was very knowledgeable and we felt very safe following him, even deep into the bush and at river crossings.

The tramp itself was very different to any hike we've ever been on in Canada. For one, there wasn't even a proper path to follow, half the time! We started out crossing a field, and then we reached the woods. Until we reached the first hut, where deerstalkers set up camp, the path was actually pretty easy to follow, but by the time we crossed the first stream, it started snaking up the opposite bank. The climb was quite steep and the path rather narrow, but the view down on the river was definitely worth it.

We then had to make our way back down to the river, where we stopped for lunch. On the first crossing, my sister and I made big efforts to keep our boots dry. Little did we know that we would be crossing at least half a dozen more times!!

Indeed, after lunch the tramp became more exciting! We left the easy track and from that point on we had to have blind faith in our guide because we had absolutely no idea where we were headed – except downstream.

The river was very low and most crossings were quite shallow but there were still some deep places that we had to wade through up to our shorts or climb around.

We were getting cold feet and a bit tired by the time we reached the flats and it was decided that the younger ones with their parents would take the track back out rather than carry on down the river.

When we finally reached the Iron Gates Gorge (the destination of our trip, after all!) the sun was getting lower and the light was amazing. We sat on boulders, in the middle of the river, looking down on the gorge for almost 20 minutes, just enjoying the beautiful view.

We then had to clamber back up to where we came from. It was even steeper than the first climb but everybody was in pretty good shape and we kept a good pace. We met a deerstalker with a crossbow on our way back and we stopped for a chat. When we finally reached the car park everybody felt refreshed... and drenched!

We stopped on our way back for some ice cream and our guide actually convinced my mom to have some, quite a feat in itself! The tramp was a unique one, very worth our

while, and it gave us an excellent first impression of the Palmerston tramping club. I definitely would be up for another one like it in the near future!!

Those on the trip were Christine Theoret (mum) with Francesca (15) and Moselle (13), Andrew Kelly (dad) with Chris (10), Karen Whitehead (mum) with Matthew and Benjamin (twins aged 10), Miho Ota, Lea Carlesso, Warren Wheeler (leader).

15–16 February Mid King Bivvy Geoff Phillips

With Mary's trip to Carkeek Hut off an alternative trip had to be found.

Janet needed a walk and I was happy to go anywhere. The forecast was for fresh southerlies meaning cloud on the Tararua tops and so Janet was careful in her choice of where to go.

We left the Pines car park at 9.00am in light drizzle; it wasn't enough for us to wear coats. The up and down and in and out root ridden track took us to Mitre Flats Hut in just under three hours. No one was there. After lunch we walked a short distance on the Atiwhakatu track and took the swing bridge crossing South Mitre Stream.

Janet wanted to find a route running up the right hand side of the stream. I thought it too bluffy for any easy travel and suggested we go higher away from the river. However this only brought us out on the track to Atiwhakatu so back down to the bridge we went and then hopped in the river and walked up a short distance. We climbed up to a river terrace; this gave us good travel and was much quicker than climbing over the large boulders in the river bed.

Some small cairns led us to the start of our spur at the forks of the river. Heading up we made good time picking our way through crown fern and around wind falls. Janet's pink tape fairies had been out tying the bit of pink tape to the odd tree and the odd out of place rock helped us on our way.

Janet made a very clear and important observation for our return journey noting that we must keep to the right when we came down. This proved to be most valuable the

next day.

After three hours of climbing we broke out into the open and then a little farther on we found the big orange triangle leading us down to Mid King bivvy. Sitting quietly on a small flat area just above a small stream the newly painted bright orange bivvy was in great condition. A group of deer stalkers have taken it over and are clearly doing a fine job. Janet was pleased to see they had very recently (last month) installed a toilet which I'm sure made the immediate area a lot healthier.



Mid King Biv - cool place to visit [Janet Wilson]

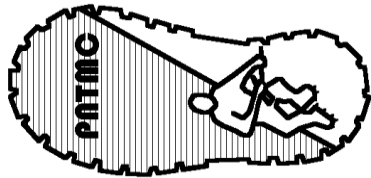
We held out for dinner until 6.00pm. By then the air temperature was down to three degrees. I was really cold and so with all my clothes on and my hot water bottle (that's my drink bottle filled with hot water, thanks Terry) I snuggled into my sleeping bag.

After breakfast Janet cleaned out the toilet which was still showing signs of the journey to its new location; there was grass and foliage inside it. I got some water and a rock for the door.

We headed down. Small ridges ran off to the left constantly drawing you away from the South Mitre Stream. We had to make a conscious effort to go right. We picked up the cairns which took us back to the river. Once on the river terrace we worked our way back to the Atiwhakatu track. On the way we found a very old sign which Janet said was the old track onto Baldy.

We had an early lunch at Mitre Hut and headed back to the car.

Thanks Janet for a really enjoyable trip. It was good to be off tracks and to do some exploring.



Palmerston North
Tramping and
Mountaineering
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PNTMC Newsletter March 2015

What's inside this month?

- Hut Bagging Update
- Summer Climbing Down South
- Whanganui River Great Walk
- Iron Gates Gorge
- Mid King Biv
- Atiwhakatu Hut
- Coming trips and more

Articles for the newsletter

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

Get out and about with us!

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