

Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.

www.pntmc.org.nz

P.O. Box 1217, Palmerston North

Newsletter December 2017



Wishing you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

[Warren Wheeler]

Club Nights

All are welcome to our club nights. These are held on the second and last Thursday of each month at the Society of Friends Hall, 227 College Street, Palmerston North. Doors open 7.15 pm for meeting start at 7.30pm.

14 December 2017

BYO BBQ

Warren Wheeler

Our annual end of year get together at Ashhurst Domain, including presentation of annual awards. (

25 January 2018

BYO BBQ

Warren Wheeler

What trips have you been doing over the summer holidays? What are you planning to do? Join us from 6pm at the Palmerston North Esplanade BBQ area (beside the children's paddling pool).

8 February 2018

Rescue Helicopter Hangar Visit

Come along at 7.15pm to the hangar in the PN Hospital carpark. We will be shown around the rescue helicopter and given a safety briefing. Find out what they do when a PLB is activated in an emergency.

Upcoming Trips

2-3 December

Lake Dive **M**
Kathy Corner **027 618 5722**

Leave Milverton Park at 7.30am and drive to Dawson Falls. Lake Dive Hut is a great hut on the shore of picturesque Lake Dive. And if you are lucky and it is fine and calm you may get reflections of Fanthams Peak in the lake. We can either take the high route to Lake Dive or the lower route through the bush, all weather dependent. The same goes for the trip back on the Sunday.

2-3 or 3 December

Intro Tramping 4 **E/M**
Anne Lawrence **357 1695**

This is the fourth in our series of Beginner Tramps, this time with a choice of an overnight or day trip. For the overnight trip we will stay Saturday night in a hut (probably Roaring Stag on the eastern side of the Tararua Ranges). The day trip on Sunday would be in the same area with the idea of meeting up with those coming out from the overnight trip. However, where we go and how far will, as usual, depend on the group. Leave from Milverton Park on either day at 7.30am and return about 5pm Sunday. Interested? Contact Anne 027 4504212 or 06 357 1695.

9-10 December

Matiu/Somes Island **All**
Kathy Corner **027 618 5722**

Matiu/Somes Island is a predator-free scientific reserve in the middle of Wellington Harbour. It is also a historic reserve with a rich multicultural history- it was once a quarantine and a military outpost. There are lots of short walks, tuatara to see if we are lucky, little penguins, and birds. We leave Milverton Park at 8am and need to catch the ferry from Days Bay Eastbourne at 10.30am. I have booked a DOC house which sleeps 8 (Cost \$200) so if you want to come, get in quick or you can camp (but I haven't booked any campsites yet).

10 December

Ridge Rd/Oroua Rd Farm Walk **M**
Dave Grant **328 7788**

Walk from Ridge Road over hill country farmland with magnificent views up the Oroua valley to Ruapehu and the Ruahines. Drop down to the picturesque Oroua River for lunch and then head upstream and follow a side gully back through reverting bush back to the start. Not a long day, say 4 hours on the trot,

and not too difficult but a bit of scrambling here and there. Could be scones at Dave's house on the way home!! Leave Milverton Park 8am home by 4pm.

16-17 December

Short-Knights **E/M**
Warren Wheeler **356 1998**

Depart 2pm on Saturday to go and celebrate the summer solstice by camping on top of the Ruahine Ranges. Past Apiti we turn off onto Table Flat Road and go to the DOC carpark at the roadend. Shorts Track will take us up to the tussock tops to camp. Heading north along the ridge to Toka we will drop back down via Knights Track. And so on to Christmas...

14-15 January

Roaring Stag Beginners Tramp **E/M**
Anne Lawrence **357 1695**

This trip was postponed in December and is the fourth in our series of Beginner Tramps. This time it involves an overnight stay at Roaring Stag Hut in the Tararua Forest Park behind Eketahuna. Leave from Milverton Park at 7.30am and return about 5pm Sunday. Interested? Contact Anne 027 4504212 or 06 357 1695.

15 January

Waipawa Loop **M**
Warren Wheeler **356 1998**

[Rescheduled from 26 November]

Depart 7.30am. This trip shows the wonderful variety of tramping beyond Sunrise Hut. We traverse the tops south from Armstrong Saddle and drop into the north branch of the Waipawa via a scree slope. It is an easy scramble down the stream to the Forks, then down the gravelly riverbed to loop back to the carpark.

20-22 January

Wellington Anniversary Weekend
Pohangina River Huts **M**
Martin Lawrence **357 1695**

This is our annual maintenance trip to clean up and check over Mid-Poh and Ngamoko Huts that PNTMC manages under an agreement with DOC. More hands make light work and it is a nice trip regardless, especially the Pohangina River section between the two huts.

20/21/22 January

Wellington Anniversary Weekend
Day Trip **TBA**

Leader required

Day trip to suit. Contact Janet 329 4722.

27-28 January

Top Gorge/Upper Pohangina M
Janet Wilson 329 4722

This Ruahine trip is an opportunity to explore the upper Pohangina and help check the stoat traps protecting whio. A lovely section of the Pohangina River.

28 January

Longview E/M
Anne Lawrence 357 1695

It's a nice steep track up onto the Ruahine tops behind Onga Onga with great views to Hawkes Bay and Mt Bruce.

3 February

Shingle Slip Plane Crash F
Angela Minto 027 472 0660

Visit the old crash site high in the Tararuas behind Masterton.

~~4 February~~ *Postponed to 25 February*

Iron Gates Gorge M
Warren Wheeler 356 1998

Depart 8.00am. A classic summer trip down an iconic section of the Oroua River, ideal for beginner trampers wanting to try something more adventurous as well as for those with more experience. Options to pack float or swim across some deep pools and through the gorge itself.

10-11 February

Pouakai Circuit E/M
Kathy Corner 027 618 5722

The DOC blurb says: Egmont National Park's premier 2-3 day tramp offers spectacular views of Mt Taranaki and the surrounding countryside. The 25 km track passes through forest, alpine tussock fields and the unique Ahukawakawa Swamp. It is certainly one of my favourite tramps. We will either leave Friday night or early Saturday morning. It is a 3- 4 hour walk to Holly Hut and then a further 2-3 hours to Pouakai Hut. Give me a ring if you are interested.

11 February

Coppermine Creek E
Woody Lee 357 2390

We walk up lowland forest for 30 minutes from the car park and cross Coppermine Stream and then rock-hop up the creek to explore the magazine shaft. Bring your torch to find some cave insects. Depart at 8am.

Trip Grading

Trip grades depend on many factors, especially weather and terrain. A reasonably proficient trumper should expect to do the trips in the following times:

Easy (E):	3-4 hrs
Medium (M):	5-6 hrs
Fit (F):	about 8 hrs
Fitness Essential (FE):	over 8 hrs

Other grades:

Technical skills (T)

Instructional (I)

Trip participants

Contact the leader at least 3 days in advance. Trips leave from Milverton Park. A charge for transport will be collected on the day.

Gear for trips

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

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
Graeme Richards	353-6227

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/>

From the Editor

You will see that the late publication of this edition of the newsletter has meant that club nights and trips in December have been included for completeness, even though they are no longer forthcoming.

Late publication has allowed the inclusion of the Annual Awards and other articles gathered since I returned from a Mega Tour of the South Island with Esther Pothuis, our PNTMC ambassador in the Netherlands.

With the Big Dry set to continue over summer - Famous Last Words – it looks like being a great season for river trips and early morning peak bagging or late afternoon forays along the tops, not to discount the joys of a nice refreshing dip after a long hot slog.

When you need a spell, try this one:
*Higglety pigglety, wigglety wog,
No more sweaty, uphill slog.*

May the skies be blue
And the trail be true.

Warren

Notices

PNTMC Annual Awards 2017

The following awards were announced at our end of year BBQ at Ashhurst Domain on 14 December 2017.

Dave Hodges Award for Excellence in Pursuit of Forgetfulness (our most prestigious award) – Sally Hewson, for forgetting she had brought her bean salad to the January BBQ (but left it on another bike seat) and went home to find it.

Salad Daze Award – Terry Crippen, for leaving his salad bowl behind at the BBQ.

Opportunity Knocks Award – Warren Wheeler, for being woken earlier than expected for the Roaring Stag Trip on the Sunday that Daylight Saving ended.

Early Bird Award – Graeme Richards, for attending the AGM a week early.

Lost in Space Award – Dieter Stalman, for getting lost in the dark and taking the wrong

stream to Daphne Hut, then missing the track next day up to Howletts.

Foot in Mouth Award – Richard Lockett, for mistakenly using fungal cream instead of toothpaste.

Eye Spy Just Gremlin Award – Martin Lawrence, for “just” grabbing his pocket binoculars instead of the PLB for pick up from his letterbox.

Tararua Trophy for Best Newsletter article – Elly Arnst for her poetic Kime Trip Report in the July newsletter.

May there be many more memorable occasions to celebrate in 2018.

Huts and High Places PNTMC Challenge 2018

15 December 2017 - 9 December 2018

Our PNTMC Challenge 2018 aims to inspire you to visit new places, support our club and have fun in the hills.

There are points to be earned for visits, bonus points for new places and bonus points if you are on a PNTMC trip.

To add more challenges to the fun, committee members have added their own challenges. Points for these can only be earned once.

Huts and High Places

Visit to DOC or NZAC hut	1 point
Visit a named high point	1 point
Bonus points for each hut or high point	
If a club trip	1/2 point
If your first visit	1/2 point

Committee Challenges

For a bonus of 5 points (once for each challenge):

- Pack float or swim a pool on a river (Warren's Challenge)
- Go on a club organised beginners trip (Anne's Challenge)
- Photograph a whio (Janet's challenge)
- Summit Tahurangi - Mt Ruapehu (Grant's Challenge)
- Visit Ngamoko or Mid Pohangina Hut (Martin's Challenge)

- Visit 3 or more huts on a trip (Graeme's Challenge)
- Camp above 2000m - not near a hut (Bruce's Challenge)
- Hut warden at Rangi Hut (Committee Challenge)
- Bring a new trampler on a club trip (Woody's Challenge)

Points to be gained fairly while visiting the DOC estate and in the spirit of the Challenge - talk to Janet or committee members if in doubt.

There is no restriction on how you can get to these places i.e. helicopters, boats, bikes etc acceptable.

Send your trip details, places visited etc to Janet or add them to the online spreadsheet which will hopefully be up and running for this challenge. Please send them in by the end of the month they are collected in so scores are kept up to date.

PNTMC Jubilee Book

Old Boots & Packs - The First 50 Years of the Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club (PNTMC) will interest and amuse mountain users, historians, photographers, hut baggers and tree huggers. Read about current and past members' exploits, which include climbing our highest peaks (sometimes with boots on the wrong feet) and powering a car on white spirits cooking fuel.



Order your copies directly from the editor Doug Strachan 353-6526 and get ready to put your feet up with this great read, all for only \$35.

PNTMC Hut Bagging Posters

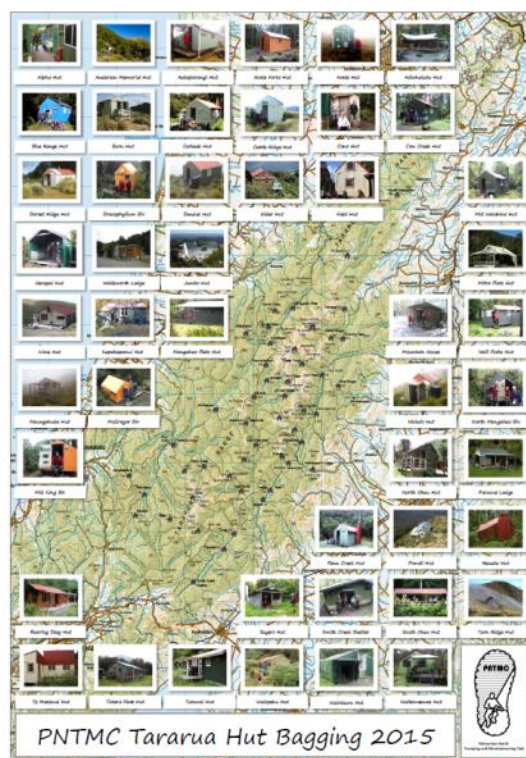
Posters are still available for both the Ruahine Hut Bagging 2012 and Tararua Hut Bagging 2015.

Size	Members	Non Members
A2	\$8	\$12
A1	\$16	\$24

Post and tube is about \$15 extra depending on where it is being sent.

Sale proceeds go towards our maintenance of the Mid-Pohangina Hut and Ngamoko Hut in Ruahine Forest Park.

Contact Warren (06) 356-1998.



New Members

Welcome to Mark Le Bas.
We wish you happy tramping with us.

Trip Reports

28– 29 October Tutuwai Hut Michael Allerby

We set off from Feilding at 8.00am and wound away across the Saddle Road to State Highway 2, heading for Greytown. Craig suggested stopping at the Mirabelle (French) Café in Carterton for morning tea/lunch would be good idea, so we did and he managed to down a boeuf bourguignon pie with salad, topped off with a hot chocolate. It was then back on the road to Greytown and Waiohine Valley Road Carpark.

Left the carpark at 11.30am, walked for about 1km along a unsealed road, then followed markers across farmland, crawling under a couple of electric fences before hitting the bushline. From here the track climbs up to the highest point, Reeves (888m) with a bit of up and down in places. Having left at midday in sunny weather with no wind it was quite energy sapping, but we weren't in any hurry. There was plenty to look at along the way and with months of inclement weather it was great to have a fine day.

White splashes of *clematis paniculata* and *olearia rani* in flower stood out from the rest of the forest. On the tops a strip of dracophyllum - which the track meanders through - tinged a brilliant brick red colour, contrasted strongly with the silver beech that framed it either side. Craig heard a bird calling along the way which he thought sounded like a shining cuckoo but we could not pick it out in the canopy. What fascinated us the most, was watching this parasitic wasp dragging a large spider with ease across twigs and branches at great speed. They are enormously strong for their size or is it six leg drive that makes all the difference?

After finally making it on to Reeves, a rest was had to take in the views of the Wairarapa plains, Lake Wairarapa and Lake Ferry in the distance. From here it is a steep climb down to the hut where, upon arrival, we dropped our packs off on the verandah and headed down to the river to freshen up. There *happily waiting to greet us were some sandflies that wanted their dinner*. So a quick wash and then back to the safety of the hut for a bag of crisps,

followed by a gourmet dehydrate for dinner and a fruit croissant for pudding.

Also had the company of a couple and a father with his young son and daughter staying in the hut. With the heat during the day and some cloud cover providing insulation, it was a warm night.

Got away from the hut at 8.00am in the morning, while it was cooler, for the climb back on to the tops, though it was still quite humid in the forest. The sun would break through the ever-increasing cloud cover every now and then, fortunately this had not blocked out the views from the tops down below. Tried to find an empty Corona bottle left on a tree by someone that we spotted the day before on the way up. Wanted to carry it out but could not find it, instead just a cigarette box probably left by the same person. With a few stops for a drink and snack along the way we made it back to the carpark in good time.

Stopped at Greytown for something to eat, then bought some supplies from Schoc Chocolate and the local butchery before leaving town. Travelling just north of Carterton we struck rain on and off all the way back to Feilding. Ah! How lucky had we been with the weather along the tramp?

Trip members: Craig and Michael Allerby.

2-3 December 2017 Lake Dive Pam Phease

Kathy, John and I headed off on a trip to Lake Drive. We had a lovely drive over. We stopped to visit Dawson Falls at the bottom of the mountain. We set off on the low track, expecting it to take about 3 hours. The forecast was for fine weather on Saturday and a few showers on the Sunday. Kathy told us that the low track sidled round the bottom of the mountain through the bush. I expected it be flat, but it is anything but flat. There's so much up and down as you have to climb down to cross rivers and then back up again once you are across. We were lucky with the weather though, as a few showers began as we neared the hut. *About ten minutes after reaching the hut it really bucketed down*. We had planned to swim in the lake but this rain put the kibosh on our plan.

We settled into the hut and played cards. In the midst of this rain we were joined by a young Frenchman, who had tramped a really long way and was so relieved to reach the hut. While we ate our gourmet meal, the young French guy opened a can of beans and proceeded to eat them cold. We did offer our equipment so he could heat up the beans but he refused. Anyway, the rain stopped and then we had magical views of the mountain top, all covered in snow.

The next morning we set off about 9. It was a bit chilly for the dip in the lake in the morning. Well, that was Kathy's excuse anyway!! We went back on the high route and so it was up and up and up, not extremely steep but a steady climb. Once we reached the top, Kathy informed us that it was flat for a while and then we would head down. Well, it's not really flat as there is still quite a lot of up but it is much more gentle. We had stunning views.



Great views on high level track. [Kathy Corner]

Eventually, we started our descent and then decided to stop for lunch. While lunching, the cloud rolled in and completely covered the top of the mountain. Quite a few people were still heading up to the top though. It wasn't long before we reached the bottom, had a sorbet and headed back to Palmy. We made a couple of stops on the way back – checked out the beach at Patea and at the strawberry place just outside Whanganui.

Thanks Kathy, it was a pretty cool trip overall.

South Island Mega Trip

28 October-12 December 2017

South Island Mega Trip

Report by Esther Pothuis

Participants: Warren Wheeler & Esther Pothuis. **Mission:** tramping. **Huts visited:** 29. Clinton, Mintaro, Dumpling, Lake Mackenzie, Routeburn Flats, Greenstone, McKellar, Luxmore, Aspiring, Stafford, Blue River (Blowfly), Welcome Flat, Cedar Flat, Grassy Flat, Harman, Edwards, Hawdon, Anti Crow, Carrington, Boyle Flat, Anne, Ada Pass, Mt Fyffe, Doubtful, Coldwater, Hopeless, Coldwater, Cecil Kings, and Kings Hut. **Hostels:** 10 nights. **Fly camp:** 1 night. **Friends':** 5 nights. Number of steps: 1,300,000. **Weather:** mostly fine. **Sandflies:** not too bad. **Breakfast:** porridge & tea. **Lunch:** crackers & cheese & salami. **Dinner:** spuds + peas + salami + cheese, or couscous + peas + sweet chilli chicken + Thai red curry, optional fresh veges. **Snacks:** scroggin & muesli bars. **Chocolate:** not enough.

The world famous Milford Track was the first of our South Island Mega Trip. With its plenty of birds, waterfalls, plants, valleys, Mount Cook buttercups, and nice path it was a true fine walk.



Clinton Valley, Milford Track

The birds were kind of annoying. It was impossible to get a decent night's sleep because they just could not contain their happiness when the stupid sun came through. If it wasn't the little singing birds annoying us it were kea trying to break into the hut. They dug into the wood, scratched at the door, and jumped on the roof in the middle of the night. They did that so that we would be too tired to stop them from raiding our packs at MacKinnon Pass. A kea opened a zipper on my pack and took two peanuts before I

noticed. If it wasn't the singing birds or kea bothering us it was wekas attempting to steal stuff. They almost took one of my stinky socks. If it wasn't the singing birds, kea, or wekas, there were other birds doing things. Robins came to check whether we dug up insects for them. Bellbirds sang constantly. Fantails wagged their tails when we passed by. Paradise ducks and patake were called blue ducks by tourists. Tomtits ignored us. A whoo lazily looked at us from a rock as we walked past it, not feeling the need to do anything useful, like swimming, or saving its species, or whatever. Moreporks called out their name at night. Wood pigeons are fat. We were happy to leave this bird infested walking area.



End of four fine days on the Milford Track

Other tracks were not too bad. We were better prepared against bird attacks, we'd gotten used to their songs, or there were fewer, so they didn't bother us too much. We enjoyed great views, sun, clouds, rain, and time with lovely people at the Routeburn Track. On the Greenstone Track we got more rain, and a bit of snow. Going up to Luxmore Hut was nice. Even nicer was the cold night at the hut with howling wind and lots of snowfall. The next day we woke up to be blinded by the whiteness of all the snow surrounding us. It was gorgeous.



Enjoying the fresh snow on Luxmore

As a result the rest of the Kepler Track was closed because of avalanche danger. Together with three adventurers we set off to see how far up Mt Luxmore we could get. It was a scramble up through more than knee deep snow. After mucking around in the snow for a couple of hours we headed back for a cup of tea.

After our two and a half Great Walk experiences we rented a car to drive up the south coast. Warren managed to wreck the car within half an hour so we had to drive back to the rental office and explain the rear bumper had fallen off. Luckily they decided it wasn't really his fault so we got a newer car. At Aspiring Hut we saw the peak of Mt Aspiring in the distance, at the Rob Roy Track we looked at the glacier and listened to the sound of avalanches falling down. The touristy Hooker Track to see Mt Cook was incredibly busy, but that's no wonder considering how beautiful the area is.



Enjoying Hooker Lake and view of Mount Cook

Five aggressive mallard ducklings attacked us while we were enjoying lunch at Lake Wanaka. They took my breadcrumbs.

At Smoothwater Bay we enjoyed a swim in the sea before heading off to one of my now favourite huts, cute little Stafford Hut, via the beautiful river track.

The next day we saw no penguins at Monro Beach before we walked into the historic Blowfly Hut, built in 1905, via the Paringa Cattle Track.

We enjoyed the luxury of a stinky bath at the hot pools at Welcome Flat and the company of the many people at the hut.



Heading up to Welcome Flat

The short walk through the valley to Fox Glacier was nicer than the view of the sad bits of dirty ice itself. It was cloudy at Franz Josef Glacier, but we did see bits of it. The hot pool at Cedar Flat was lovely, the hut was dark and quiet as we arrived late, but we nevertheless enjoyed dinner and strawberries, a muffin, golden kiwifruit, and chocolate before going to bed.

We braved and survived the track past the Styx River to Grassy Flat Hut, and the day after we wandered up to Harman Hut and up to Browning Pass which we never reached, but we did enjoy views of a nice waterfall before descending back down. The track from Edwards to Hawdon Hut was one of the highlights of our trip, with a beautiful climb up past many flowering plants, good company of a French girl, lovely tarns and grassy areas, descending by the creek and through forest. Anti Crow and Carrington Hut were really nice, but actually the walk up to Waimakariri Falls Hut was the most stunning bit of this trip. What a cute hut at a gorgeous spot.

At Punakaiki we had a look at the world famous pancake rocks. They do not really look like pancakes much, but they are weird rocks alright. The sea was too quiet to enjoy blows at the blowholes. The Porari River walk seemed really tropical with many tree ferns and nice weather. On the way we saw a little baby weka that was black and fluffy. Its parent would make a low clook clook noise upon finding a worm or an insect, which it would then feed to the hungry chick. Other wekas in the area would also be talking to the little family. How cute.

On the first day of the St James Walkway we enjoyed rain, the first rain in weeks. On the way we met some SOBOs doing the Te Araroa Trail, they seemed normal happy trampers. On the way to Anne Hut and Ada Pass Hut we

enjoyed the sound of thunder, but managed to reach the hut before rain struck. After hitching a ride back to the car we set off to Kaikoura.

Somewhere around this time we unknowingly took our millionth step of this trip.

In Kaikoura I enjoyed the company of Tulp (tulip in Dutch) the cat at the hostel. We did an Albatross Encounter boat tour. It was so cool. It was great trip at sea on a perfect morning in the sun. Albatrosses are so big and graceful. I'm so happy to having seen them. We saw 2 wandering albatrosses, and 1 royal albatross. Seeing them fly is just incredible, they are so big. Giant petrel are the funniest birds, protecting nothing in particular by fighting whenever, and spreading their wings to prevent others from getting to food. We saw so many sea birds, it was great. In addition to the many birds we got to see dolphins swimming and jumping right next to the boat. Also we saw a bunch of lazy fur seals chilling out on rocks near the beach, some swimming seals, and some younger pups hopping around.



Albatross Encounter at Kaikoura

After that we continued our tramping mission. We went up to Mt Fyffe Hut via the valley track, up the gentle Spaniard Spur route, a lovely track. The next day we got up early to watch the sunrise at the top of Mt Fyffe. The sun rose.

We drove via the reopened coastal highway back to Doubtful Valley (Lewis Pass). It was doubtful whether there would be mattresses available for us at Doubtful Biv (2 bunks). There weren't. I slept on a mat in the hut, together with a mum and daughter, while Warren and a child and dad camped outside.

At Nelson Lakes National Park we enjoyed sandflies at Coldwater Hut, a relaxing night at

the almost 50 year old Hopeless Hut and a nice walk up to a waterfall, and another night at Coldwater Hut because Warren had forgotten his toothbrush and Lake Rotoiti is the best place to take a swim with eels. For our last overnight track we took the Wangapeka track to the dark and old historic Cecil Kings Hut. The next day we walked to Stone Hut, where I finished three sudokus, and back. I decided I wanted to spend the night at the newer Kings Hut, which is 300m away from the old hut. At both huts the morning songs of birds were just incredible. It was so loud it was almost annoying. You just had to lay awake and enjoy their songs at 5.15 am for half an hour before being able to continue sleeping. On the track we saw more than 10 wekas, so that's great.

The last few days we were guests at Mieke and Hans' house in Nelson. We checked out the Brook Sanctuary with its big fence, and walked up the Cable Bay Walkway to get nice views of Nelson, the Boulder Bank, and the sea. The next day we spent time at Rabbit Island, swam to Mapua to have an icecream and then back to have lunch and a swim at the beach. The current was quite strong, but that was fun. On our last tramp we walked up to Mount Dun (pun intended) and back.

Our mega trip was fine. I did not kill Warren and he did not kill me. We killed sandflies. We tramped.



Robin checking for insects in our footsteps

Confessions of a Mega Trampler

Confessions About a Mega Trip By Warren Wheeler

I confess that I would probably never have done this trip except that Esther had this idea to slip away from her job at Wageningen University for two months and go tramping down south for at least 5 weeks before Christmas...she didn't have enough time in her six months here last year and her boyfriend didn't mind too much so she thought I might be able to find the time in my busy Gap Year to join her.

I confess that it didn't take me more than 10 seconds to accept this invitation ...and then spend the next 10 weeks fretting over where to go.

I confess that I rather liked the idea of visiting huts with catchy names like Aspiring Hut, Anti-Crow Hut, Blowfly Hut, Cannibal Gorge Hut, Doubtful Hut, Hopeless Hut and Coldwater Hut as well as place names like Temple Stream, Styx River, Spaniard Spur, Walker Saddle. We visited these but missed out on real beauties like Ugly River, Misery Hut, Wheeler Creek, Mt Warren, Top Hope Hut, Hellfire and Hidden Hut...to name just a few.

I confess that I lost 4-5 kg somewhere along the way, leaving me more stringy than wiry and really only good for sweeping the floor rather than chopping a chord of wood before dinner. I reckon I must've lost it before Esther took over cooking dinner and the quantities increased substantially. Esther didn't lose anything so it's a bit of a mystery.

All the preparatory mending of my bush shirt and old pack did the trick and received high praise from retrophiles who appreciate quality pre-loved goods. I even had a Chinese girl in Queenstown offer to buy my patchwork bush shirt for \$1,000.

Old gear doesn't last forever of course and I confess that my old walk socks (worn inside my good old Norsewear gumboot socks) are finally getting see through with holes at the big toes and my op-shop Pierre Cardin shirt finally had to be patched with plastic sticking plasters where the pack rubbed against the small of my back.

I confess that my old 3-season sleeping bag is light on feathers in some pockets and really needs replacing. I had to shake the feathers around four times one night, which can be quite annoying (apparently!).

I tried (not always successfully) to get in the habit of washing myself, my shirt, undies and walk socks each day, which made me feel virtuous even if it didn't control the odour as much as might have been possible if I had used hot soapy water. At least there was some respite thanks to the laundry facilities at the Backpackers we stayed at now and again.

My inner walk socks certainly worked well to prevent blisters. They also meant that the woollen ones didn't need to be washed the whole time (my story and I'm sticking with it)....the occasional rinse they got from river crossings probably helped (ah, hah). Esther only had one layer of socks (but several pairs) and had to put up with blisters, especially if she got wet feet.

I confess it was good to keep a diary – I ended up just taking a 1B5 notebook that I had already half filled with possible trip options and still had a few spare pages left over at the end. It was also good for jotting down "Bright Ideas", "Things to Google" (saves arguments), poetry and songs and any inspirational material we came across in huts or log books.

I particularly liked the laminated page left at Cecil King's Hut, "The Invitation" by Oriah Mountain Dreamer (a native American elder), the last line of which is:

I want to know if you can be alone with yourself, and if you truly like the company you keep in the empty moments.

Best Moment? Well, stopping the car in a little ford on the way out of the Wangapeka Track, opening our doors and soaking our hot sweaty feet was b-l-i-s-s.

Did you know? You can see Optimus Prime in the south west face of Mt Cook high above the Hooker Valley?

Thanks Esther, we didn't kill each other and I must confess it was a really Mega Plus Trip.

Poetry by Warren Wheeler

Inspirational, aspirational and not entirely rational - you never know what might pop into your head when you are out there in the hills.

In the Mountains You are Free

*In the mountains, in the mountains
In the mountains, you are free
Free to be there, free to be where
All you need be, is to be.
All your troubles, all your worries
Left behind you, far behind you
As all around you, in the mountains
You find the mountains, let you be.
In the mountains, you can see
All around you, in the mountains
In the mountains, you are free.*

A Weary Trumper (sung to the tune of A Gypsy Rover)

*A weary trumper came over the hill,
Down to the valley so shady
He whistled and he sang,
'Til the green woods rang,
'Cos he'd found the hut in the valley.*

*Ah de do, ah de do, ah de day
Ah, de, do, ah de day dee
He whistled and he sang,
'Til the green woods rang,
'Cos he'd found the hut in the valley.
[Repeat ad nauseum]*

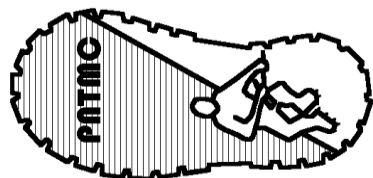
Hitch Hiking Trampers (with apologies to Itsy Bitsy Spider)

*Lcky stinky trampers, fresh off the track
Lcky stinky trampers, seat them in the back
Open all the windows, turn the air cond on
It'll help clear the air and eliminate the pong
(sung louder)
It'll help clear the air and e-lim-in-ate the pong.*

A Nice Cuppa Tea

*Social graces, I have none
I live alone, but never glum,
When friends come around they all agree
I make a pretty good cuppa tea.*

*Whether black and strong, gumboot tea
(For those who like it dairy free)
Or pale and weak, powdered milk stirred in
They all agree life is far from grim
When you're sipping a nice cuppa tea.*



Palmerston North
Tramping and
Mountaineering
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PNTMC Newsletter December 2017

What's inside this month?

- Huts and High Points Challenge 2018
- Annual Awards Announced
- Tutuwai Hut visited
- Lake Dive, Mt Egmont
- South Island Mega Trip
- Poetry from the Mega Trip
- 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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