



Palmerston North
Tramping and Mountaineering Club

www.pntmc.org.nz

PO Box 1217, Palmerston North

Newsletter February 2022



A cosy bed just below Toka Trig (see the full story in the trip reports)

COVID-19

All club activities require participants to present a current covid vaccination pass until further notice.

For club nights held indoors:

- Scan in at the Hall and/or sign in with contact details in our attendance book.
- Show your current vaccination pass at the door
- Use the hand sanitiser provided. Masks are optional but please feel comfortable to wear one if you prefer. Maintain social distance.
- If feeling unwell, stay home.

For club trips:

- Participants on a club trip form a 'trip bubble'.
- The trip leader is responsible for keeping contact details of everyone in the trip bubble and sighting each participant's vaccination pass

Club Nights

Thu 10 Feb Navigation Know How Warren Wheeler

Need to learn or practice your outdoors navigation skills? This will be mostly a practical night and a chance to brush up on the use of maps and compasses in small groups with the help of more experienced members. Feel free to bring along your own GPS or phone-based app to show others and find out more.

Thu 24 Feb Arthur's Pass Adventures Chris Tuffley

Arthur's Pass is a trapper's paradise, with its broad river valleys, craggy peaks and alpine passes. Chris will show some pictures from a couple of recent trips featuring, among other things, close encounters with rock wren, kea, and robins, robins, robins; a lesson in where best to pack your first aid kit; a discovery that it's a small world after all; and a Tall Tale of jandals lost and found.

Upcoming Trips

Sun 6 Feb [Late notice: postponed to Sun 19 Feb]

Beginner Tramp #1 Easy

Anne Lawrence 06 357 1695

From Holdsworth Roadend we follow the track to Atiwhakatu Hut for lunch. The track is relatively easy but has plenty of variety with some interesting bridges to cross. We will leave from Milverton Park at 7:30am.

Sat 12- Sun 13 Feb

Tunupo – Iron Gate Circuit Medium/Fit.

Janet Wilson 06 329 4722A

A classic Ruahine tramp – climbing up to the top of Tunupo, then heading North along the Ngamoko Range for a couple of hours before turning and heading down to Iron Gate Hut – well placed for a swim in the Oroua. On Sunday, if conditions allow, we will tramp out via the river, checking some traps along the way. Departing from Petersons Rd, Apiti on Saturday at 7.30am (or PNth 6.30am) - you are welcome to stay up at our Peterson Rd "shed" on the Friday evening

Sun 13 Feb

Iron Gates Gorge Easy/ Medium

Warren Wheeler 06 356 1998

A perennial classic Oroua River trip which is fun and suitable even for adventurous beginners. The first hour and a half is through bush along the sidle track with views down into the Oroua River, where we will soon be coming downstream. There are lots of easy crossings and opportunities for pool swims as we make our way down to the gorge itself. Whether we swim the short gorge section or not will depend on how we all feel. Expect to get wet feet and more. Depart Milverton Park 7.30am.

Sat 19-Sun 20 Feb [Late notice: this is now changed to 19-20 March]

Kawhatau Base Camping Medium

Janet Wilson 06 329 4722

An exploratory trip up the Kawhatau River. The Kawhatau Base is currently "closed" so we will camp nearby. Due to access issues this area has not been visited by the club for some time now – so it will be nice to revisit an old favourite. It is approximately 2 hours of river travel to the base (so I am hoping for low river levels). From there we can climb up to "Colenso" or explore further up the river. Departing PN 7.30am.

Fri 25 -Sun 27 Feb

Thunderbolt (Kaimanawas) Medium/Fit

Grant Christian 021 117 6921

Over Urchin to Thunderbolt to Waipakihi Hut and back out via Urchin. Camping.

Trip Grades

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	Other Grades:
Medium (M):	5-6 hrs	Family (Fam)
Fit (F):	about 8 hrs	Technical skills (T)
Fitness Essential (FE):	over 8 hrs	

BWD = Best weather day of a weekend

Trip participants

Contact the leader at least 3 days in advance. Trips usually 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, over-trousers, 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.

Overdue Trips

If a club trip is late returning, please do not worry as there is probably a good reason for the delay.

If you are in any doubt, please phone one of the Overdue Trip Contacts:

Martin Lawrence 357 1695 or Graeme Richards 353 6227

Department of Conservation News

COVID-19 Policy for DOC Visitor Facilities

Visitors to DOC facilities must now be fully vaccinated, and carry verification of this, to use DOC huts, camp by huts or in DOC campsites either as day visitors or overnight.

More details at:

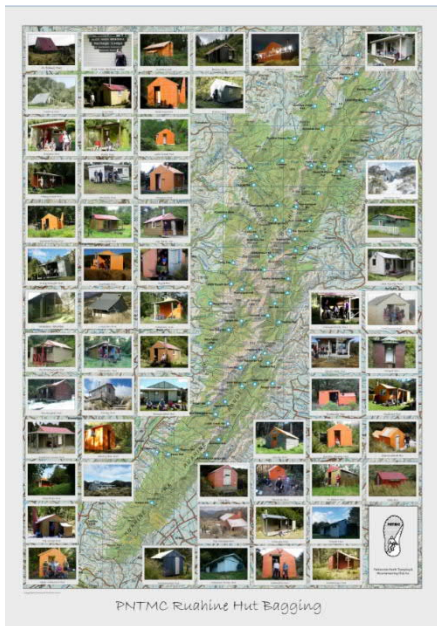
<https://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/know-before-you-go/vaccine-policy-for-doc-visitor-facilities/>

Weather Forecasts

DOC expanded their mountain forecasts in March this year and there are now forecasts for both Rangi and Sunrise hut which could be very useful for Ruahine trampers. Check out the link below:

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/know-before-you-go/weather/>

PNTMC Hut Bagging Posters



Ruahine Hut Bagging Poster



Tararua Hut Bagging Poster

Posters are still available for both the Ruahine Huts and Tararua Huts that were produced following our Hut Bagging Challenge in 2012 and 2015 respectively.

Size	Cost for Members	Cost for Non-Members
A2	\$12	\$18
A1	\$24	\$30

Postage is about \$15 extra depending on where it is being sent.

Proceeds from poster sales go towards the club's maintenance of Mid-Pohangina Hut and Ngamoko Hut in Ruahine Forest Park.

Contact Warren (06) 356 1998.

Locator Beacon Registration Database Upgrade

The New Zealand Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC) has updated its locator beacon registration database this year and is inviting all owners of a PLB registered before 25 February 2021 to check and update their details.

Your previous registration information is still held on file in the event of an activation, but owners moving to the new system will be able to amend the registration information themselves (in the past, you had to email changes through, which had to be manually entered by RCC) at

<https://www.beacons.org.nz/already-registered-a-beacon/>

Te Pua-a-Tane Circuit, Whirinaki Conservation Area 9-11 Dec 2021

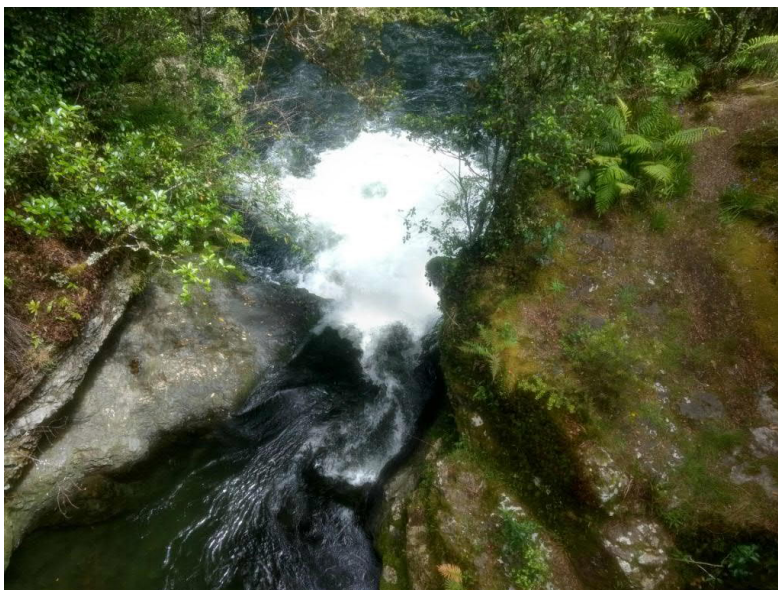
Report: Grant Christian

I was looking for a place where I could bag some huts that I haven't been to before and saw there were quite a few in the Whirinaki Conservation area. I had visited an easy track in the northern end a few years ago but I didn't know much about the area. Access to the circuit was about one and a quarter hours from Taupo. There were seven huts on the circuit so plenty of places to stay. Good weather was coming up so I made my preparations.

The whole circuit was just over 80 kms. Two thirds of the tracks are easy on graded and benched track. Some can be biked. The remainder is back country tramping. I started from the plateau car park which is accessed through forestry roads off the Napier Taupo Highway.



Upper Whirinaki Hut



Whirinaki waterfall

The start point was at 940 metres and went down to the first hut, Upper Whirinaki, through beech forest. From there I climbed over the high point on the circuit of 1140 metres and dropped down again to Upper Te Hoe Hut. I came across a Red Deer on the track. It stopped and stared at me before charging into the bush. Another good climb and descent took me to the Central Te Hoe Hut where I stayed the night. 21km of backcountry tramping for the day.

The second day I travelled along good track to Mangakahika Hut. From there the tracks became easy. It was apparent a motorbike had been ridden up to that point. There are numerous traps and perhaps poisoning stations along the track from here. Apparently an intensive conservation programme is in place. Rogers (Te Wairoa) Hut was my lunch stop. It is an old, quaint, slab hut. I spoke to two mountain bikers here. They were the only people I saw on the trip. I took time to soak my sore feet in the nearby stream. Probably a waste of time because

they were soon sore again as I pushed on to Moerangi Hut. I spent my second night here having covered 26km for the day. I was not looking forward to the third day. With sore feet and feeling quite weary I was wondering how much I would enjoy the 36km I needed to cover to return to my car and get home as planned.

The track was quicker than expected and after a short side trip to the Whirinaki Waterfall I reached Vern's Camp for lunch. There is a modern shelter at the camp and I wondered why it hadn't been built as a hut. It is an A frame design, had bench seats that could be used as six bunks, two mattresses, water, a sink and even a fireplace. It was open only along half the sides and one end. It could easily have been completed as a hut for minimal extra cost.

Central Whirinaki Hut took longer than expected to reach. I took time to make a cup of tea and have a break before setting off on the final stretch back to the car. Along this section I visited a cave that was carved out from pumice deposited in the Taupo Eruption. The cave can be easily entered but I wondered about the safety as the top is crumbly looking pumice, so I didn't go far. I eventually reached my car after 5 p.m. feeling tired and sore and glad to be finished.

I was able to add six huts to my tally on the Hut Bagger website including Vern's Camp shelter which is recorded as a hut.



Vern's Camp Shelter



Pumice Cave

Shorts Track to Toka Trig, return via Knights Track 18-19 Dec 2021

Trip Report: Jack

I reached out to Warren the day before this trip with a mind full of possibilities – I had not been out with the Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering club before, so I was not sure what to expect. From the description and a brief chat with Warren, I was expecting a pleasant (and warm) hike to watch the solstice (or thereabouts) sunset and sunrise. Warren gladly accepted my request to join, then promptly suggested we use my car – quick turnaround on that! The next day, I loaded the station wagon up and headed down to Milverton Park to meet the team. The team ended up consisting of me (Jack), Warren, Ernie, and Brendan. After a few brief pleasantries, we were on the road to the Table Flats road-end carpark – casual chat and 'get-to-know' you sort of stuff ensued.

The weather was fine as we departed the carpark, and everyone was excited to get rolling. A brief stream crossing ensured that socks were wet from the start as we started climbing up
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Shorts Track at a steady pace. We continued past the junction for the Deerford Loop climbing slowly up to the alpine tussock still in high spirits – although a bit concerned about the clouds rolling in around our eventual goal, Toka High Point. As we reached the beginning of the poled route we layered up for an exposed walk along the ridge. Cresting the ridge exposed us to a reasonably heavy wind coming at us from the West. As we continued climbing, the visibility got worse – we reached the track junction just below Toka Trig and grabbed some water from the tarns there with reduced visibility. With the wind a bit too high at the tarns, we decided to continue up to Toka to see if there was a better protected campsite off the leeward side. Thankfully, there was! After a brief search, I found a spot that seemed suitable for my tent and began pitching. Internally, I was a bit concerned as I had not set up my new tent in the field. Thankfully my practice in the backyard paid off!

After quickly setting up, we reconvened for a warm drink and some food. A pro-tip moving forward: everyone loves the person who bring lots of food. Big thanks for Warren for bringing ample food and offering it graciously to all those sitting in his immediate vicinity. A life-lesson not to be forgotten! After some more yarns and stories, we went to bed cozy in our protected perch just below Toka Trig – no sunset to be seen tonight.



We had decided to wake up early and get a reasonably early start – hopeful that the cloud had burned off and a sunrise might be visible. No luck on that front, either. After a chilly night (my phone said 3C when I woke up...) we ate a quick breakfast, packed up, and got ready to roll back down Knights Track. The return via Knights track was more direct than Shorts and was quite pleasant the whole way down. The one exception to this might have been Warren's scare-tactics (or generally sound advice) in terms of plane-crashes, storms, and missing trampers in the Tararuas! Getting back into the forest, the weather was fine and warm. Perfect weather for a casual descent to the road end! We got back to the car park nearing 10:00am – we had made good time. Despite being misled on a few fronts – no sunset, no sunrise, cold – it was a nice



Not quite a thrilling sunrise!



Homeward Bound down Knights Track

introduction to camping on the tops and a good introduction to the club. Thanks Warren, Ernie, and Brendan for showing me about!

The Enigma at Beehive Creek 23 Jan 2022

Report by: Doug Strachan

Last time I was down to lead a trip, Duncan Hedderley signed up for it, but then I put my back out and the trip didn't go. When Duncan put his name down for Beehive Creek, I told him things should work out fine this time, so long as I didn't have too bad a reaction to the covid booster shot. It did knock me around a bit, but I was OK by Sunday. However, on Saturday, Duncan had a sore throat and had to go for a covid test, given that case of Omicron had just been found in PN. Despite a prompt negative result, he had to stay home till symptoms cleared, so couldn't come. Then on Sunday, an hour before the tramp departed, Maho put her back out and we decided it



was best not to risk it, so she pulled out. Her parting words were, "Have you got your mask for the ice cream stop on the way home?" and "You don't need to mention my back in the trip report."

We got to Milverton early and the kids played on the relatively new equipment. The girls did full turns in the hamster wheel, turning upside down.

Ali hopped into Michelle and Neil's car, and the 7 of us headed off on a beautiful day to Beehive Creek. We got the dusty, exposed, road section of the walk out of the way first. Time passed reasonably quickly as we talked about Afghanistan, South Africa, NZ and so on. Ali and Neil had extensive conversations to do with sport.



Up the creek



Ali with the enigmatic tree felled by a rock

It was a tranquil walk along the creek, disturbed only by Jacinda sending out an alert that the covid traffic light system would switch to red at midnight. Eventually, we came to the massive rock that was never there until it appeared last summer. The enigma. How did it get there?

The consensus was that it couldn't have rolled down the stream even in a big flood as it was too massive and the gradient too low. It obviously didn't come up the stream. That left us with the options that it came from left, right, above or below. If it had rolled or bounced from left or right, there would be broken shrubs nearby, but there weren't. It almost looked like a fallen tree was growing from the rock. Could the massive tree have fallen and a large chunk of the ground containing the root system levered up out of the ground? No because the tapering trunk and branch angles indicated that the boulder was near the top of the fallen tree, not its base. Our best guess was that off to the true right the boulder fell off a cliff face, obscured from our line of sight by trees, picked up momentum, struck the tall pine up high, and felled it, coming to rest in the creek bed near the top of the tree. Oh, to have witnessed that and lived to tell the tale. In a sense, it came from above. But not from outer space, although at one point Michelle and I did discuss about what it would be like to emerge from a trip, if you had no contact with the outside world while away, and found that the world had changed due to an alien invasion, pandemic, or war. But I digress. The boulder kept us sleuthing long enough that the kids got ahead, and we never saw them again till the end of the trip. I asked the kids if anything memorable happened. Conan grunted, "I don't know." The girls mentioned they both slipped off the track into the water.

After the walk we crossed the road and had lunch at the usual picnic spot. It was looking rather overgrown. The chilly bin kept the watermelon, buzzbars etc. nice and cold.

Following lunch, it was time for a few more boulders to land from above... right into our ice cream cones. The freezer wasn't cold enough, so the ice cream was very soft and we had to eat them as if we were competing in a competition to see who could down it the fastest.

We were Michelle & Neil Ulrich, Ali Muhammad, Natsume Macdonald, Minami Strachan, Conan Strachan, Doug Strachan.



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- Trip reports
- Upcoming events

Send articles to Michelle Benton,
the newsletter editor at mch11291@gmail.com

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<https://tinyurl.com/pntmcfacbook>

Get out and about with us!

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