



Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club

www.pntmc.org.nz

PO Box 1217, Palmerston North

Newsletter March 2024



Heading off down the Oroua River to Iron Gates Gorge, Ruahine Forest Park Pic by Warren Wheeler

Club Nights

Club nights are generally held on the second and last Thursday of each month at the Quakers Hall, 227 College Street, Palmerston North. Doors open 7.15pm for meeting start at 7.30pm. All welcome.

14 March 2024

Don't Sweat It

Nigel Barrett

Sweating while out in the hills can leave us wet through and often cold and uncomfortable. Ye olde time member Nigel Barrett's search for a solution lead him to Paramo Directional Clothing and the Nikwax Analogy Fabric, which are so good that that he decided to go into business distributing this unique fabric and range of gear never before available in NZ. Come along and hear Nigel share his story, and be the first in the country to see the range.

28 March 2024

Blast from the Past

Peter Darragh

Peter celebrated 50 years with the club last year and has slides and stories to prove it was worth it. He will share with us some of the many trips and highlights of being with the club over the years. "You too can have a body like this if you abuse it enough".

Upcoming Trips

3 March 2024 **Beginner Tramp #2** **E** **Robyn Wheeler** **06 356 1998**

Our second trip of the four Beginner tramps. This time we will go north into the Ruahine Ranges and up to the popular Rangiwahia Hut. It is a well formed forest track up to the tussock tops. Great views to Tongariro and Taranaki. If keen we may also go up another hour to the Mangahua high point.

7-10 March 2024 **Ngamoko Hut Work Party** **M** **Janet Wilson** **06 329 4722**

Dates to be finalised. Ngamoko Hut is one of the 2 Pohangina River huts that the club has an agreement with DOC to help maintain. We need to get in there and give the exterior a good clean and touch up a small amount of the paintwork. Will need a few days to get this done so will suit the retired folk with more time to spare. Contact Janet if you keen to help out – can be flexible around the timing.

9 March 2024 **Archies Lookout** **E** **Nicola Wallace** **021 209 0720**

Rescheduled from January. Part of the Te Araroa Trail. A nice walk past Makahika Outdoor Centre up the valley behind Levin. Across paddocks then into the bush with several small stream crossings then up to the lookout for views over Horowhenua.

10 March 2024 **Ohau Gorge** **E/M** **Warren Wheeler** **06 356 1998**

This delightful section of the Ohau Gorge in the western Tararuas behind Levin offers those feeling a little adventurous an opportunity for a couple of hours of nice rock-hopping, wading and even some pool swimming. We start with an easy hour walk along the track from Poads Roadend carpark to Blackwater Creek stream, with views down into the gorge as we go, then down the river itself to exit just past the old town water intake. We then rejoin the track back to the roadend. Yes, you will get wet feet! Depart Milverton at 7.30am.

14-17 March 2024 **Beyond Otaki Forks** **M** **Blair Petersen** **027 600 4263**

Rescheduled from 23-25 Feb. My plan is (weather depending) leaving from Otaki Forks on 14 Mar to Kime Hut that night. Next day (15th) to Maungahuka Hut, then Penn Creek Hut on the 16th. Back to Otaki Forks and home on the 17th. Other options include going from Maungahuka to Field Hut (via Penn Creek) on day 3. It's the centenary of Field Hut this year, so to stay a night there sounds like a good idea. There's limited spaces available, please contact me ASAP if you're interested.

17 March 2024 **Deadmans Loop** **M** **Verity Elder** **021 260 1885**

We will complete this day trip in a clockwise direction, first heading to Rangiwahia Hut and then on to the tops and the Whanahua Range and Mangahua highpoint. We continue down the tussocks following the poles back into the bush and returning to the car park. This popular loop on a good day provides spectacular views of the inner workings of the Ruahine Range.

24 March 2024 **TBA** **E/M** **Robert van Bentum** **027 491 1205**

Yet to be decided where we go, but go we will.

PRE-EASTER TRIP

23-28 March 2024 **Kahurangi Lighthouse Keepers House** **M** **Janet Wilson** **06 329 4722**

An extended pre easter trip to one of our more remote huts, situated near Kahurangi Point on the remote northern west coast of the South Island. This trip involves quite a bit of driving to get there and then a beach walk, south from where we leave the cars. I plan to spend at least 2 nights and possibly 3 at the hut. Trip dependant on tides and river levels.

If you are interested and would like to know more, contact Janet well in advance so ferries can be booked and logistics sorted. Hopefully this will be followed by an Easter club trip, possibly visiting the Cobb Valley - more to come.

29 – 1 April 2024 Easter Trip TBA

A trip to the Cobb Valley has been cancelled. Anyone wanting to lead a trip please let Warren know on 06 356 1998. See day trip advertised below. Other suggestions for day trips also welcome.

31 March 2024 Easter Day Trip E/M Warren Wheeler 06 356 1998

Enjoy the autumn colours of the Pohangina Valley and check out Totara Reserve tracks to see how the river damage from Cyclone Gabrielle looks after a year. We will add on the Fern Walk for those keen for a slightly longer day. Best weather day. Depart Milverton Park 8.00am.

5 - 7 April 2024 Te Matawai 50th M Blair Petersen 027 600 4263

2024 is the 50th anniversary of the current Te Matawai Hut, so that sounds like a good excuse to go there. The plan is to go into Waiopehu Hut on Friday 5th, lunch at Te Matawai on the 6th and on to Mangahao Flats Hut that night. Walk out to the road end at the top Mangahao dam on the 7th. This will be in conjunction with MTSC (the original Te Matawai Hut was built by MTSC) and am hoping to have the use of the MTSC van for transport at both ends.

7 April 2024 Beginners Tramp #3 E/M Robyn Wheeler 06 356 1998

The third in our Beginner series, this time we walk up to Blue Range Hut in the eastern Tararua Ranges. It involves a steady uphill climb through beautiful forest to a quirky hut with views across to the main range. Depart Milverton Park 7.30am.

14 April 2024 Mangaweka Rail Tunnels E/M Malcolm Leary 06 327 7825

The 7 km Mangaweka Deviation opened in 1981 with the old railway line and tunnels converted to a walkway. The tunnels are quite long so you will need to bring a torch. Depart Milverton Park at 7.30am.

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

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 Martin Lawrence 357 1695 or Graeme Richards 021 149 8267.

Notices

AGM 11 April 2024

Venue: Quakers Hall, 227 College Street, PN.
Time: Doors open 7.15pm for meeting start at 7.30pm. Supper to follow.

If you would like to help with the running of the club we welcome your nomination to join the Committee. Nomination forms will be available on the night.

If you are unable to attend please send your apologies to Anne Lawrence, Club Secretary or any other Committee Member.

Coast to Coast Race Congratulations to Hannah Lund

Hannah improved on her fourth place last year, coming in second woman home in the one-day Coast to Coast race with a time of 12.51. Not surprising that she was "Feeling tired and hungry" as she sat down for a well earned dinner. Apparently to improve her kayaking she had done eight training paddles down the Waimakariri River without flipping out, only to be flipped out on the day....but as they say "That's racing". Better luck next time....we wish you all the best.

Mid-Pohangina Hut Upgrade

PNTMC manages Mid-Poh and Ngamoko huts for DOC and in the next month or so work parties will be carrying out annual maintenance as well as helping to install a new roof and wood burner to upgrade the old fireplace at Mid-Poh. The hut will also be given a repaint. This upgrade is a combined effort with Back Country Trust providing the roofing and DOC the wood burner. Paint is donated by DULUX. We are contributing \$5000 from our Hut Fund and Club member Chris Rayner has offered to be the builder. DOC is also providing support with planning, consents and logistics. Members who have volunteered to help will be flown in to carry out the painting and other maintenance. Thanks to Janet Wilson for her leadership in getting this work done.



Mid-Poh work party January 2018

Trip Reports

4 February 2024

Beginners #1 to Atiwhakatu Hut

Report by Warren Wheeler

Leaving early means you get home early, but we almost left too early when Verity arrived right on 7.30. Maybe Robyn got out of bed too early and counted the eight present as all accounted for but she hadn't counted on Jo being there as a late starter...who turned up early. Fortunately Verity could take five in her RAV so just two cars required, except that Jo would swap and go with Tricia who we were meeting in Eketahuna. So that meant 9 people in 2 cars for half the way and 10 people in 3 cars for the other half to Masterton and beyond to a fairly full Mt Holdsworth carpark. We wondered how many had arrived today to head off on a belated long Waitangi weekend under clear blue skies and how many had braved the cold, squally weather of the previous day to start on Saturday. Some epic tales in the making perhaps.



Our stroll up the well made track to Atiwhakatu Hut was delightful, with no new storm damage, just a few muddy patches and a small washout at the now overgrown old slip.

The washout heads up quite steeply, and so did Austin, thinking it was the track. An easy mistake for a Beginner to make and a good lesson for us all - It is so easy to be lead astray if busy chatting and not paying attention at tricky bits along an otherwise very good track.

It was nice to meet other people heading off up into the hills beyond the hut, as well as others just enjoying the popular walk in and out. It was particularly nice to see several very young family groups heading in to stay the night at this bookable hut, which has three bunk rooms. It would have been close to a full house.

Although this was a Beginners Tramp there were only 4 new people (several others had pulled out), but hopefully there will be more on Beginners#2, #3 and #4 in the coming months.

We were Robyn Wheeler (nee Boocock) – Leader, Warren Wheeler, Tricia Eder, Jo O’Halloran, Verity Elder, Peter Darragh, Bronwyn, Andrew, Angela, Austin (the Triple A Team)

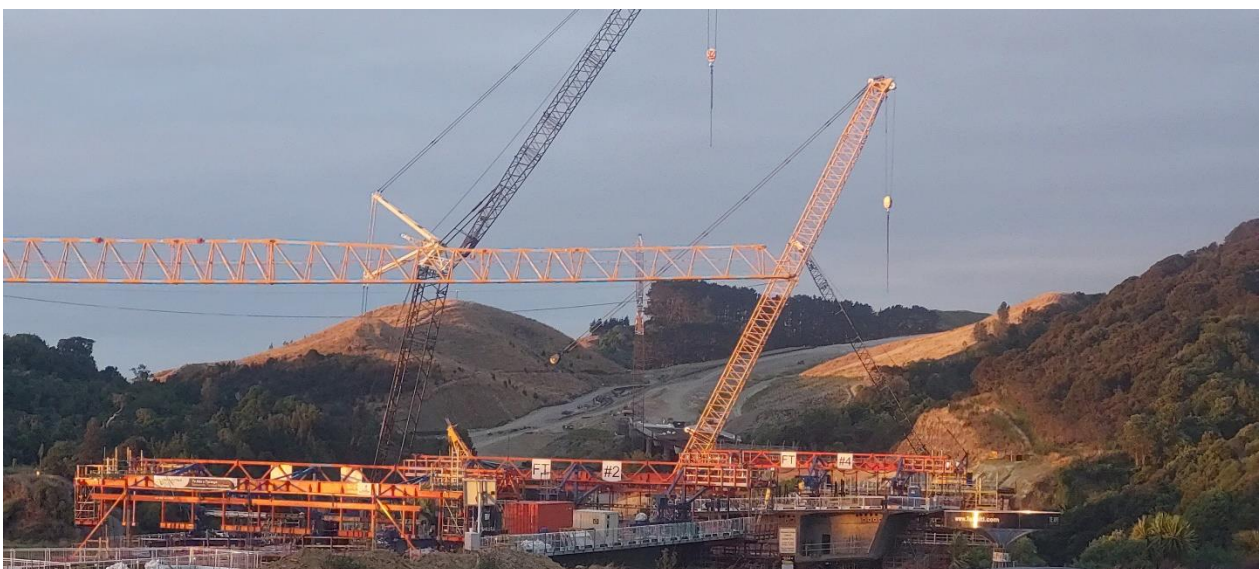
10 February 2024

Manawatu Gorge Twilight Walk

Report by Rose Dickison

Participants: Verity, Robyn, Bronwyn, Warren, Rose (and Ernie who walked in from the Woodville end and meet us for supper).

On Saturday a small group of us went on a walk along the gorge track in the evening for a 'twilight walk' with Verity.



Progress on the new highway bridge at the Ashhurst end of the Manawatu Gorge

The trail was lovely and we spotted a few birds along the way. We headed out to Sentinel Lookout where we stopped for supper.



We had a great view of the wind turbines and it was nice to stop and chat and get to know each other a bit.



There were some yummy snacks handed around, too - watermelon and chocolate, thanks!

A great walk and a good chance for me, the newbie, to meet some members and learn what the group is about. Thanks for having me!

11 February 2024

Iron Gates Gorge

Report by Michael Barker

We were greeted by a blast of cold air as we pulled on our packs at the Alice Nash carpark. This did not come as a surprise, though, having driven through rain and mist.



Wrapped up warm, we made the pleasant, but wet, walk to the Alice Nash Memorial Lodge. We met two new friends on the way: The first – a brown gecko who had lost its tail, which we promptly found 30cm away wriggling like crazy. The second – a man walking solo to check on the traps in the area.

After a quick morning tea break at the hut, we dropped down to the Oroua River (partly via Warren's "shortcut") so we could start making our way downstream to Iron Gates.

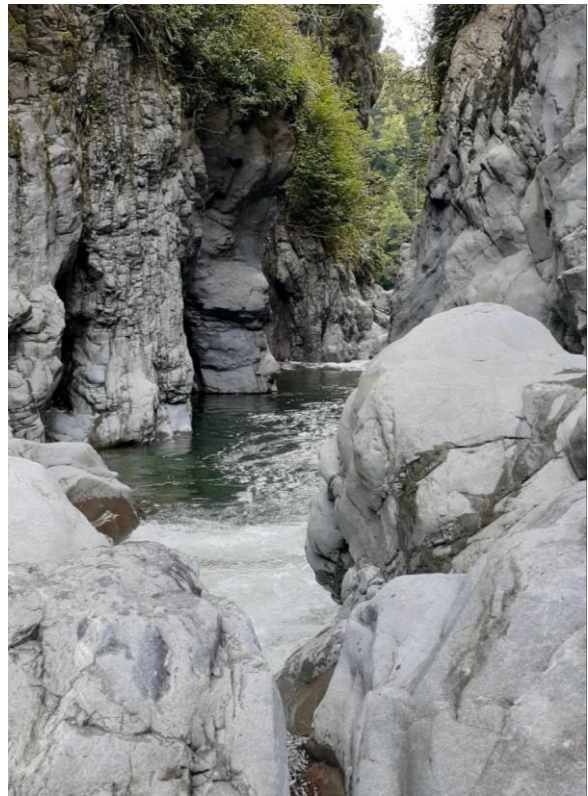
We discovered that, at some point in the past year, severe weather had caused slips along the river. It was still navigable, but we resorted to rock hopping and bush scrambling.

We grabbed hold of each other to cross the river safely. With cold legs, and boots twice as heavy, we arrived at Iron Gates to find enormous slips just upstream (see photo).

"WHIO! WHIO!" shouted Warren from atop a large boulder. A pair of whio whizzed past, flying low as they headed up the river. How lucky we were to have caught a glimpse of these elusive birds.



Big slip upstream of the gorge



View into Iron Gates Gorge

The sun emerged after lunch. We crossed the river once again and climbed out of the stream. The slips made this challenging – the ground was very steep and gave way under our feet – but we managed to find the distinctive pink tape marking the start of a steep trappers' track. We zig-zagged up the slope, traversed along the tops, and re-joined the Alice Nash track. On the way, we navigated a severe case of 'hook grass' (ouch!)

We ended the day with a sunny stroll uphill back to the carpark.



Overall, it was an adventurous day trip without having to travel too far from Palmy. Big thanks to Warren for his patience and expertise – we had a great time and learnt lots.

We were: Warren Wheeler (leader), Adele Singleton, Susan Bannister, and Michael Barker.

17 February 2024

Barlow by Bike

Report by Richard Lockett

I've been up the Makaroro River to Barlow Hut a few times over the years that I've been tramping with the PNTMC and on my first visit many years ago evidence existed of Quad Bikes being used to travel upriver to the hut from the road end. The scouring out of the river bed over recent years removed this travel

option for hunters etc but with the Cyclone Gabrielle having battered the wider Hawkes Bay I'd heard that the Makaroro had filled up with gravel again. My immediate reaction to this news was the thought that riding all the way up to Barlow Hut on a bike may be possible and would make for a neat trip maybe.

On the day Monika Coles and Dannevirke Doug came along to share the journey, Monika with her bike and Doug with boots to tramp.

With the cyclone having taken out the bridge over the Waipawa River on Wakarara Road access to Wakarara is now via Makaroro Road.

With Doug being happy to travel up river at his own pace and turnaround point Monika and I set off across the gravels with Barlow Hut our turnaround point. I was confident of at least getting to the Gold Creek confluence having done so easily by bike a few years ago and prewarned Monika that after that we may have to walk.

Cycling across gravel up a river bed with the odd water splash was a new experience for Monika and on first impressions she didn't look that comfortable but when questioned on this matter Monika was keen to carry on.



Four-wheel drive vehicles had been journeying upriver and keeping in their tracks made work easier. The main river channels were narrow and hence had some depth and flow of water, sufficient to make riding



across on your bike a no goer hence a lot of dismounts to cross the channel, but being trampers we're used to that.

Gold Creek was soon reached and with the vehicle tracks continuing on so did we and in no time we were at the Colenso Spur with its large orange triangle. Monika's tramping legs were starting to complain about having to pedal a bike under these conditions so her phone came out to see where we were at and how far we had to go, one and a half kilometres as the crow flies according to the maps installed on said phone, two and a bit via the river I said no sweat! Lots of cyclone damage evident whole hillsides have let go leaving ugly scars and hence all the gravel in the river, one of the biggest directly across from the hut which was reached just in time for their lunch service.



Too easy! I was well happy with the lunch they put on, a cheese and tomato sweet potato sourdough sandwich along with a slice of a rich dark fruit cake finished off with a banana. Monika was also very content with her lunch as well having not seeing exactly what it was that she had chosen. Eaten under clear blue skies in warm sunlight a couple of glasses of white wine would have capped lunch off well, but Barlow Hut is BYO apparently, next time!



It was suggested that the return leg should be quicker, being downhill and it was, half an hour, two up one and a half back.

Doug had made it up to the Colenso Spur and a visit to the Commemorative Cairn and made it back to the car a few minutes before Monika and myself turned up.

An enjoyable trip capped off with an ice cream in Dannevirke.

Thanks to Monika and Doug for making the trip happen.

25 February 2024

Pinnacle Ridge: Plan B

Report by Verity Elder

The plan was to walk Pinnacle Ridge on the true left of Atiwhakatu Stream and return via Atiwhakatu Track. To achieve this, we would climb the 700 odd metres up to the Pinnacle high point and move through two minor saddles before dropping down a spur about halfway along the ridge. Lastly, we would cross the stream to Atiwhakatu Hut and the main track.

In the lead up the weather was not looking great with a front moving up the country and 70-90mm of rain forecast for the evening prior. It was also forecast to rain in the afternoon on the day. Unfazed by a little bit of rain but concerned that the stream may be uncrossable, a back-up plan (plan B) was put into place. We would climb the ridge and drop through the saddles, going as far as we wanted to, and return via the same route.

Before we set off, we checked out Atiwhakatu Stream by the bridge. It was much fuller than usual, flowing fairly swiftly and a muddy brown colour. These are all indicators of a stream that is not safe to cross. Although the stream would probably change over the course of the day, we felt we did not want to drop down the spur to find it still uncrossable and then have to climb all the way back up again. Subsequently Plan B was put into action from the start.

In the end it turned out to be a great option. Walking the ridge in both directions provides a different experience each way, and we avoided the well-trodden and overly familiar main trail of Atiwhakatu. We also had an amazing treat on the return trip which you will have to read on to find out about, and which possibly would never have happened if we had continued to the hut.

The track began just before the first footbridge by following Atiwhakatu Stream (true left); when it started to climb we emerged temporarily out of the bush above a slip with a view of Donnelly Flat. It took us about 2 hours from the carpark to the Pinnacle high point. This is the only part of the ridge that emerges out of the bush, with a small open clearing and a plaque for Ron Brown (1945-2021) who maintained this track in his day. Powell and Jumbo hut took turns to reveal themselves as the clouds lifted and then folded back in. We could also see into the next valley (the Waingawa River).

From the high point, and studying the topo maps on our phones, we could see the two saddles in front of us. I had drawn a line with a highlighter on my paper copy of the Masterton TOPO50 map where I believed the track was. I was curious to find out via our GPS phones if I had highlighted the correct spur we (theoretically) would drop down if going to the hut.



The first saddle felt quite gentle but the second dropped a little more dramatically. Eventually we came to a sign pointing to Donnelly Flat, and it is at this point I have forgotten some important information about the trail - don't got to Donnelly Flat! It was still quite early, about 11:30am, so we decided to follow the track a bit further before turning back, but I kept turning around to talk to Blair saying '*it's a bit strange that it is dropping so quickly.....*' (It should have been more gradual as we headed to the northern part of the ridge). Blair suggested an early lunch at the next suitable log. A couple of minutes later that log presented itself and we sat down to enjoy the quiet of the bush and our lunch, but not before checking our topo maps again. On my phone, at first it looked like we were going backwards (very strange), but when I zoomed out I could see we had started to drop off the ridge entirely, we had taken a wrong turn.

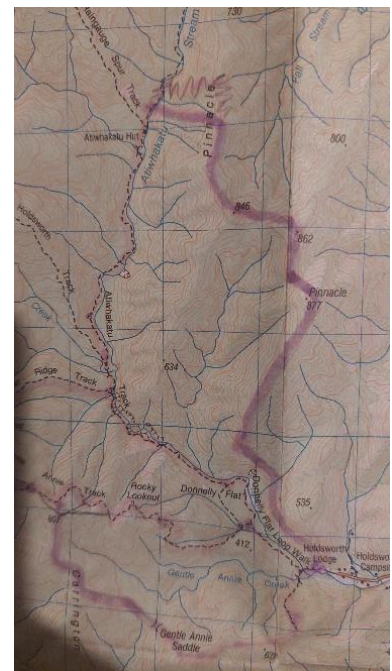
Regardless of the mis-step we were finding incredible bio diversity with a rich understory and surprising bird life. On our little side walk down the wrong track we came across a pair of rare kakariki parrots,

hanging about in the tree canopy and enthusiastically chatting away to each other. At our lunch spot a North Island robin came to say hello, and I felt almost certain a bellbird came and went (could have been wrong, was hard to tell). We also came across several kereru.

After lunch we retraced our steps (only took about 10 minutes) and returned to the sign that distracted us left rather than straight on. I think at this point it was our curiosity to find the 'cute handwritten' signs that mark the Atiwhakatu turn off that promoted us to continue on. (FYI – the drop off to Donnelly Flat follows large brightly painted orange tin cans, and unusually some French flags and hand painted orange triangles; avoid these and continue with the silver strips and the plastic orange triangle to continue along the ridge). We found Ron's Look-out, and as we edged along I kept checking my phone for how much further.... 50 meters, then 40 meters.... Blair suggested we should stop when we got to that little high point just in front of us, and as we reached it, sure enough, there it was! Contented we started to retrace our steps back to the original Pinnacle high point..



Pinnacle Ridge sign-posts



But then, just after we passed the infamous Donnelly Flat sign for the last time, a morepork (ruru/owl) shifted above us. At first, Blair, who was in front of me, did not see it. I whispered loudly to get his attention and pointed enthusiastically and, for a moment, Blair was right in front of it, before it shifted to another



branch just a few meters away. It sat there watching us for minutes on end, and I think would have continued to do so quite happily if we had not moved on. It was 1pm. We hoped the ruru was healthy (he appeared to be so, and certainly full of character), and would get back to his day time rest quickly, as ruru are of course, nocturnal.

We reached the main high point just before 2pm and got back to Holdsworth carpark at 3pm, 6 hours in total. Atiwhakatu Stream by then was less muddy and more viable for crossing, but we both felt like we'd had a decent work out and a decent days tramping. Despite not marked on official maps, this trail is well maintained and easy to follow (just be wary of signs that point to Donnelly Flat). In the end we missed the rain entirely. Thank you, Blair, for doing the driving and the great company.

Foot note: The sign and track leading to Donnelly Flat from Pinnacle ridge begins at highpoint .846 and moves through highpoint .634. If you stayed faithful to this ridge we would indeed arrive, after bit of stream crossing, at Donnelly Flat. Is this another PNTMC trip waiting to happen (easy/medium)?

End Notes

Bronwyn's Chocolate Bars

8 oz butter
 2 cups flour
 3/4 cup sugar (or less)
 1 tsp baking powder
 2 dsp cocoa powder
 4 handfuls of rolled oats
 1 tsp vanilla
 1 egg

Melt butter.
 Mix dry ingredients.
 Add to melted butter and mix.
 Then stir in beaten egg.
 Press into tin.
 Bake 180 degrees C for 20-25 minutes
 Can be iced.

Mountain books donated to PNTMC

PNTMC is very grateful to Bill Clague, a recent and temporary resident of Palmerston North, who has donated twenty-eight of his personal collection of mountaineering and climbing books to the club library.

Bill has had a fascinating and adventurous career worldwide as a CEO in the aviation industry.

He enjoyed many climbs in the Alps, trekked to Everest base camp and survived (just) the sinking of his sailboat off the NZ coast. He was plucked out of the sea by a passing super-tanker.

He now lives in Levin.



PNTMC Newsletter March 2024

- Upcoming Trips and Club Nights
- Notices: AGM on 11 April, Mid-Poh Hut Upgrade, Congratulations Hannah Lund
- Trip Reports on recent day trips
- End Note: Recipe - Bronwyns Chocolate Bar, Mountain Books donated by Bill Clague

Send articles to

the newsletter editor at pntmci@gmail.com



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