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# Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.

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

P.O. Box 1217, Palmerston North

## Newsletter June 2012

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*Bruce, Richard, Warren, Janet, Graham, and Peter at the William Colenso memorial, Colenso Spur, Makaroro valley.*

### 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.

**14 June**

**Creaky Joints and Frozen Noses**

**Glen Pendergrast**

How can you keep tramping as you get more old and decrepit? What is the latest research telling us about hypothermia? You can find out tonight from Glen Pendergrast, a local physiotherapist with a keen interest in the outdoors.

**28 June**

**Up's and Down's**

**Peter Wiles**

I will describe my trip to the summit of Fujiyama where I see the sunrise. Slightly higher than Mt Cook, Fujiyama is greatly revered in Japan as a place that one should visit at least once in your life. For locals, it is easy to get to and tackle Mt Fuji; for foreigners it is a more daunting undertaking. Then I will describe a day walk down into the lower parts of the Grand Canyon – a breathtakingly vast and beautiful place, where the challenge is coping with the 40°C heat at the bottom and then 1,000+m haul back out again.

## Upcoming Trips

### 2-4 June Queens Birthday Weekend

**Coastal Classic - Taranaki** E  
**Janet Wilson** 329 4722

This year we will be staying at Harley Bett's bach at Tongaporutu, where you can go fishing, mtn biking, tramping, kayaking etc. Limited space available at this stage. Departing Friday AM.

### 4 June (Monday)

**Manawatu Gorge Track** E/Family  
**Doug Strachan** 353 6526

Very close to P.N., this track has had a lot of work done on it, so it's a few hours of easy walking. We will leave a car at each end and go right through to the Beyond the Bridge Cafe, unless the road is still closed due to the slip, in which case we will go as far as the lookout and then come back the same way. It is a botanically interesting walk, and some of the trees have been honoured with informative plaques. If it's hot and sunny, the forest will offer shade. If it's windy, the windfarm will be a great sight. If it's raining, the waterfall on the Ruahine side will be more impressive. If it's cold, the cafe will seem even better. You can't lose.

Depart 9am from Milverton Park. Note that DOC no longer issues permits for dogs on this track, because of an intensive bait laying operation.

### 9-10 June

**Otukota Hut - Mokai Patea Range** M  
**Warren Wheeler** 356 1998

Depart 7.30am for Mangaweka, the Kawhatau Valley, and the DoC Kawhatau Base. We follow a good forest track up to Colenso peak and across the broad open tops of the Mokai Patea Range before dropping down to Otukota Hut on a terrace above the Maropea River. Return the same way to fully experience this diverse landscape and great views to Ruapehu, Egmont, and the Ruahines.

### 10 June

**Longview Hut** M  
**Malcolm Parker** 357 5203

The name for this popular Southern Hawkes Bay hut arose either from the long time it takes for you to wait to be rewarded with a view, or from the fact that it actually offers a very long view of the plains below. It's a lovely place for a winter stroll in the tussock. Depart 7.30 AM.

### 16-17 June

**Iron Gate Hut Stoat Line Check** M  
**Janet Wilson** 329 4722

Come along and HELP SAVE THE RUAHINE WHIO. This is an opportunity for any club

member to have a go at this worthwhile project. The trip will be arranged around who ever is available to help, but will most likely include a night at Iron Gates Hut. Day trip options closer to the road end and Heritage Lodge too, so something for everyone. Triangle Hut traps and river options only for the very keen!

### 17 June

**Tamaki River - Stanfield Hut** E  
**Tony Gates** 357 7439

An easy stroll near Dannevirke, up the Tamaki River to the well appointed Stanfield Hut, and back again. Depart PN 8.00 AM.

### 23 and/or 24 June

**Rangipo Scrambles** M/T  
**Terry Crippen** 356 3588

This is a chance to practice your mountaineering skills. We will be tackling slopes of various steepness, on the Rangipo Desert side of Mt Ruapehu. Depending on conditions these slopes may be the Northern Bluffs or higher up. This is NOT instructional but PRACTICE and you will need to come with ice axe, crampons, harness, helmet, carabineers, slings, snowstake/ pickets, hammer, etc. (Can be hired from gear custodian.) I will bring ropes. Depart very early morning from Palmerston North and depending on conditions may stay overnight at TASC Lodge.

### 24 June

**Pohangina Walkways** E/M  
**Kathy Corner** 356 8186

We will be leaving from Milverton Park at 8am. First we will walk the Fern Walk, a pleasant two and half hour walk through bush with views of the Pohangina Valley, then will drive onto Pohangina village to walk some of the Branch Highway. We will finish the day with a drink or coffee at the Waterford Pub.

### 30 June-1 July Mid Winter Celebrations

**Rangi Hut**  
**Janet Wilson** 329 4722

Rangi Hut will be this year's destination- a good opportunity to revisit the hut now that the club is entering in to a management arrangement with DOC. There are several options aimed at getting as many club members as possible up there that weekend. A nice photo of Rangi with lots of members would be a great centre piece for this year's Ruahine Hut Bagging Challenge poster.

#### Options

1. Saturday Rangi - come up for lunch or afternoon tea.
2. As above and stay the night

3. Sunday Rangī - come up for morning tea or lunch.
4. Extend your trip to include the Deadmans Track loop.
5. Bring nice food, memories and old photos!

Come and check out the hut and support the club. There may even be some snow!

**7 July (Sat)**  
**Fern Walk Pohangina** **E**  
**Janet Maessen** **323 0922**  
 One of many excellent walks in this area.

**7-8 July**  
**Pourangaki Hut** **M/F**  
**Janet Wilson** **329 4722**  
 Western Ruahines, in from Mangaweka.

**14 July (Sat)**  
**Burn Hut, Mangahao** **M**  
**Richard Lockett** **323 0948**  
 Northern Tararua, beyond the Mangahao Dams

**15 Te Ekaou + Forks** **E/M**  
**Graham Peters** **329 4722**  
 Pohangina valley tributary, with farm walk.

**21-22 July**  
**Triangle Hut** **M/F**  
**Mike Allerby** **323 8563**  
 Western Ruahines behind Rangī.

#### Trip Grading

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

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

Other grades:  
 Technical skills (T)  
 Instructional (I)

#### Trip participants

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

#### Gear for trips

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

#### Trip leaders

Complete the trip intentions form and leave with one of Overdue Trip Contacts or drop into 44 Dahlia St. If you are unable to run your trip as scheduled, advise a

trip coordinator as soon as possible so that alternatives can be arranged.

#### Overdue Trips

If a club trip is late returning, please do not worry unduly as there is probably a good reason for the delay. If you are in any doubt, please phone one of the Overdue Trip Contacts:

Janet Wilson	329 4722
Martin and Anne Lawrence	357-1695
Tony Gates	357 7429

#### Articles for the newsletter

Send by the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month to Tony Gates, the newsletter editor, at [kiwi@leatherwood.co.nz](mailto:kiwi@leatherwood.co.nz), or via <http://www.pntmc.org.nz/mail/>

## Editorial

Because the PNTMC is active in the mountains and valleys of the North Island, I should also mention the South Island. Many years ago, I think it was 1999, Terry took a keen group of us up to the aptly named "Thousand Acres Plateau" (it's next to "the Hundred Acre Plateau"). This beautiful area is located at the southern end of the Kahurangi national Park, overlooking the Matiri Valley (where we tramped down) and the Mokihinui Valley. Both valleys suffer earthquake damage, and there are goats etc in the Mokihinui. But there are many pristine forest and river areas, with kiwi, whio, and native bats.

Meridian Energy had made plans to build a 38 metre high dam on the Mokihinui River. It was announced during May 2012 that these plans were to be dropped. One of New Zealand's largest pristine rivers, and one of our top ten rivers for its nature conservation values, has been saved.

## Notices

#### PNTMC subscriptions are now due

Treasurer Martin Lawrence reminds you that subs are now due. With no change in price from last year, this is value for money. The previous Newsletter encloses a note on how to pay.

#### PNTMC Trip Card July-December 2012

Our next club trip card will be included with the July 2012 Newsletter. A taste of the first trips in July is included above.

## SNOWCRAFT 2012

Winter has arrived! PNTMC's Snowcraft Programme gets underway mid-July. It has two aims; to equip people with the necessary skills for safe tramping in snow; and to pass on the fundamental skills of mountaineering. It will be running as day trips to Mt Ruapehu with an evening session mid-week prior to each day trip. Dates are:

18 July (Wed evening) SC1 Intro and briefing  
21 or 22 July SC1 Mt Ruapehu

1 August (Wed evening) SC2 Briefing & intro to rope work  
4 or 5 August SC2 Mt Ruapehu

15 August (Wed evening) SC3 Briefing & rope work  
18 or 19 August SC3 Mt Ruapehu



*The business of mountain safety on the PNTMC Snowcraft course on Mt Ruapehu.*

**Fees:** For each of SC1, SC2, SC3: \$40 if PNTMC member or \$50 if non member. These cover weeknight venues, day transport, group gear hire, and instruction. Individual gear hire, if needed, is an additional cost for non PNTMC members. Pass the word round to friends you may think are interested.

### Applications Close 12 July

Applications (returned application form and fee) close Thursday 12th July. Application forms are available on the Snowcraft link at: [www.pntmc.org.nz](http://www.pntmc.org.nz) or from Terry Crippen 356-3588.

### Banff Mountain Film Festival

This film festival screens nine of the recent top mountaineering and outdoor films from around the world here in Palmerston North. It's well worth going along! The Festival, which is

sponsored by the NZ Alpine Club, is doing the rounds of NZ, and will be screening at the Globe Theatre on the evening of Sat 16<sup>th</sup> June. For details and bookings go to:

<http://alpineclub.org.nz/banff-mountain-film-festival-tour-of-new-zealand-2012>

Bookings can be done on line, and there's a PDF file of notes on the PN screening films.

### Living Legends planting maintenance day, Tuesday 19 June

As part of the Rugby World Cup celebrations last year, 5000 native trees were planted on an old slip site in Manawatu Gorge Scenic Reserve. It has been 9 months since they were planted, so they should be established now and in need of a little TLC.

Volunteers will help release the trees from any long grass and weeds growing around them. You cannot drive directly to the planting site; so some walking will be involved. The planting site is a long, steep slip so you need to be quite fit. To find out more and register before 4pm on Monday 11 June

Call Kelly on 06-350-9708 or email

[kstratford@doc.govt.nz](mailto:kstratford@doc.govt.nz)

## Committee Snippets

### From the May PNTMC Committee Meeting, by Dave Grant, Secretary.

Treasurer Martin reports that there are 54 club members for the start of 2012-13.

A Committee delegation recently met with Ian McKelvie, MP for Rangitikei, to alert him of the plight of our back country huts, tracks and bridges in the Ruahines under current DOC policy. He was sympathetic to the cause, placing tourism in its wider sense, alongside agriculture as the backbone of the Rangitikei region's economy, and will raise the issue with the Ministers of Tourism and Conservation. A similar meeting is to be organised with Ian Lees-Galloway, MP for Palmerston North.

While on matters involving DOC we have been advised that in the Tararua Ranges DOC intend to rebuild Kime Hut. The first Kime Hut was built during the 1920's as a ski and tramping hut. It was replaced in 1978, and has usually been a damp and cold hut. This area is however popular, with Field Hut nearby, and dry foot

access. Mt Hector makes for a popular destination.

Also in the Tararuas, Cattle Ridge Hut is no longer under threat of removal, an agreement having been reached with Wairarapa Deerstalkers Assoc regarding repairs and maintenance. This hut was built in the early 1960's by the NZ Forest Service for their deer cullers. The Ruamahanga catchment was particularly heavily populated by deer then. The area is a good destination in itself, or forms an excellent stop over to and from some wonderful Tararua alpine country.

The two new PLBs are now available for use, and will be held at Anne and Martin Lawrence's house (see below for conditions).

Planning for the mid winter Christmas party is well advanced. Why not join in this club celebration on the weekend of 30 June/1 July. If you can't spare the weekend then make a day trip.

Janet has almost completed the trip card for the second half of the year, and Warren has a great programme prepared for Club nights over this period.

## Personal Locator Beacons

PNTMC now owns two GME Accusat MT 410G (with integrated GPS) beacons. They are held by Martin & Anne Lawrence, phone 357 1695.

First priority is for the PLBs to be used for club trips, at the leader's discretion. If not being used for club trips the PLBs can be used for private trips by club members, free of charge. The PLBs are NOT available to non club members.

If PLBs are used for private trips, users are responsible for checking the unit works, and for making good loss, damage, and any costs associated with activation.

### Operational Protocol

Book PLB with holding Officer.  
Collect PLB and check function.  
Leave trip intentions form in letter box at 44 Dahlia Street.  
Confirm safe return and return PLB to holding Officer

### On Activation

Rescue Coordination Centre phones registered club contact list to confirm. Contact person accesses trip intentions form from 44 Dahlia

Street letter box and provides trip details to RCCNZ.

## Membership

Welcome to the PNTMC Lisa Imai. Her phone number is 359 3514.

Enjoy your tramping Lisa, and we hope that you will see lots of interesting country.

## Trip Reports

### 11 March Rangi Hut Report and photo by Woody Lee

When I heard that Peter Wiles could not lead his trip to North Ruapehu Lava Field, I offered to take the date but not the destination. I had cancelled my trip to Rangi Hut the previous weekend due to a muddy and slippery track (later on I heard that there were fresh snow patches on the Whanahuia Range). Kaaren was the only person to come and Jo kindly expressed her intention to join us on Saturday afternoon.

The three of us departed PN early morning and the topic of the day was about Townsville, QLD, which Kaaren had lived there for many years and Magnetic Island National Park. We also talked about many wild creatures such as St Andrews butterfly, crocodiles and frogs – frogs are singing in the rain and also do sing in the shower room. Jo and I were interested in Townsville and the NP so we asked more questions. When we arrived at the farm gate another two vehicles followed us and they were a party of seven middle-age trampers. At 9.20 am we headed off towards the hut and were slowed down a bit at the steep hill near the big slip and continued ups and downs the track. Once on the other side I suggested for Kaaren and Jo to track down to the slip site. Jo recalled the slip as she went to the hut with her friend before the new millennium, and told us it was a tiny slip so they could walk on the original track.

We stopped for a break before the fancy bridge and then looked down the stream from the bridge for a moment. Just before midday we caught up with the big group in the hut. They were from Feilding, and it was exercise before a big day out to Tongariro Crossing the following weekend. We had a relaxed long lunch with hot drink and it was time to head back out without exploring the tussock tops. We finished our day tramp before 3 pm. We were Kaaren, Jo and Woody.



At Rangī hut

**Centre Creek  
25 March 2012  
Poetry-Warren Wheeler, Photo-Tony Gates**

*It was worth a go  
Rain gone, no snow  
Piripiri running dirty  
Pohangina slightly murky.*

*Across we go, not a worry  
Easy does it, not to hurry.  
Bushy track leads us high  
View point rest with a sigh.*

*Gorge looks swift and slick today  
Won't be going back that way  
Follow sign to Centre Creek  
Read raving note from lunatic  
Of pine trees felled across the track  
DoC guys should get the sack.*

*But that was some time ago  
Now it's just a little slow  
Overgrown with lack of use  
But no need for round abuse.*

*Down at the river shall we cross?  
Wet shorts and slippery rocks  
Not a pleasant scenario  
So in a word the word is no.*

*Carry on upstream instead  
To confluence dead ahead  
Scramble around huge boulders worn  
Water smooth from rocks long torn*

*From steep and jagged valley sides  
Bush clad slopes and bare rock slides.  
Photos done its time for lunch  
Retreat to car, happy bunch.*

We were Jeanne Ramponi, Roy Hughes and Warren Wheeler (leader).



The Pohangina-Centre Creek confluence

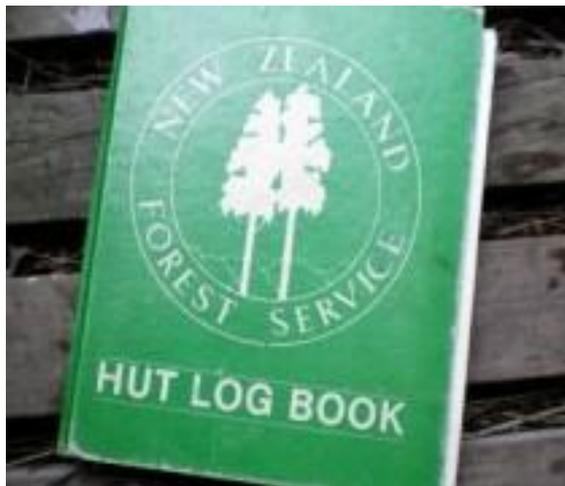
**April Hut Bagging 1 - Central Ruahines  
Report and photo by Derek Sharp**

A late afternoon start saw Alistair Millward and I at the Waipawa River, focused on getting to Waipawa Hut before nightfall. I wasn't planning on rock-hopping in the dark. After Waipawa Hut with torches adorned, we ascended the track to Sunrise Hut. Moreporks accompanied us on our climb as the lights of the Hawkes Bay towns grew brighter. Alistair had thoughts of staying at Sunrise but after seeing the twenty or more people at the hut I was able to persuade him not to sleep on the porch, but to carry on over Armstrong Saddle and on to Top Maropea. By now both the moon and wind had risen, and it was jackets on as we continued on our way into the gloom. At Armstrong Saddle the map came out as I hadn't seen the poles to the south and by now was heading north, and with a 180 degree correction we continued over and on down to the hut. A quick brew and noodles and off to bed.

Under fantastic conditions the next day we made and quick progress onto Te Atuaoparapara where we had lunch. I love the rocky tops of the central Ruahines; they have a good alpine feel to them. From here we descended down open scree slopes into the western creek that flows

into the Waikamaka River. A gorgeous open valley that is an easy amble, until the waterfall. This waterfall is a good twenty metres in height and is surrounded by some substantial cliffs which entailed some very steep climbing, a good hours worth of leatherwood bashing (or is it massage?), some more unnervingly steep down climbing, followed by a run down scree to eventuate at the bottom of this waterfall. No doubt there's an easier way, but that will be another day.

On to Waikamaka Hut a male who was first heard then spotted. With signatures left in the Hut Book, we wandered off to Rangi Saddle. Well in perfect conditions it is easily ascended and with no trouble route finding we were on our way to Waterfall hut. Rangi Creek and the upper Kawhatau are magic areas, beautiful open valleys surrounded by alpine peaks. Tony introduced me to this area in the early nineties – absolutely fantastic. I look forward to a trip here this winter. By now it was clouding over and upon arriving at the hut, rain began to fall.



*NZ Forest Service Smiths Stream Hut log book - an historical document. This hut, and Waterfall Hut are historic deer cullers' huts retained in (more or less) their original condition.*

The next day dawned clear, and with options discussed and different routes agreed upon we headed up Rangi Creek to go our different ways. At the cairn for Rangi Saddle I managed to convince or con Alistair into continuing up the creek with the option of bailing out, if need be, up an unknown slip to the south to ascend the western ridge of 1715. This is the highest peak in the Eastern Ruahines, yet has no name! Well we did bail, and ascended this slip to gain the tops, an excellent route which I would recommend. From here we descended a well marked track to Smith Stream Hut. The hut that has sack bunks and an old Forest Service Hut Book. A fresh slip north of the hut, to access the north branch of the stream and the track back to

Waipawa River, proved too difficult to cross. So a detour was made down to the forks before heading up the slippery creek. From here it was a long walk back to the road end along the bush edge. After a quick run to Triplex and a hut log book entry, we headed home.

### **April Hut Bagging 2 - Central Ruahines Report and photo by Derek Sharp**

This trip was designed to be quick exploratory trip of the central Ruahines for Thomas Robertson, who is new to the area, and to continue further hut bagging for me. What could be better than four perfect days in the best part of the Ruahines? O.K. I'm biased, I know.

I was feeling unusually tired heading up to Pohangina Saddle from the lower Kashmir Car park, perhaps it was the weight of my pack being somewhere in the twenties. Next time, no books. We lunched on the tops, and then descended to Iron Gates. It looked as if Iron Gates had five hunters in residence by the gear strewn around, and in the log book I saw that Janet and Graham had just been through that afternoon.

By now it was late afternoon, and for obtuse reasons not even clear to myself, I decided that a look at the gorge would make a more interesting route to Triangle Hut than over the saddle. I figured I'd done the Saddle enough times, it was now time to explore. Not something I'd recommend on a late autumn afternoon. By the time the pools became compulsory swims it was clear a decision had to be made. Progress was slow, it was cold, late and way unknown. We bailed. A steep climb ensued directly out of where we were. Near sixty metres above the river I dislodged a stone. It crashed through the vegetation, ending in a satisfying deep BOOM that echoed up from the river bed. Yeah, o.k. it's steep enough. It took an hour to gain the saddle track and then we quickly descended down to the Oroua, chasing nightfall. With torches on we headed up to Triangle under a cold, clear sky.

Cloud came over in the night and suppressed the expected frost, but still, the weather held promise so I was hopeful for the day ahead. Directly up the SW spur of Te Hekenga we went, and by the time we crested the summit, the cloud was well above us. On the way up I was quizzing Thomas about his head for heights to gauge whether we should sidle under Te Hekenga or attempt the cheval pitch. The pitch it was. I was to go first and then offer some pointers on the moves I made. The pitch remains as unstable, exposed and sketchy as ever, and after scratching our way over in turn

Thomas declared it was possibly the scariest thing he had done. I think it was after that, that he asked if anyone had been injured on any of my trips. Well, let me see...

On Taumataomekura after walking south for 5 minutes I had a change of mind of the route to Howletts and decided to take the SES spur alongside bullet basin, thinking that it would be new ground for me (not so). It was along here that we met Gordon and Kaiapoi who were successfully hunting the area around Howletts. One deer per day.



*Thomas grovelling over "The Cheval Pitch" of Te Hekenga. This section is severely eroded and steep, and is no place for the feint hearted. There is a safer and longer deer trail to follow down in the Oroua.*

At Howletts Hut there are times shown on the wall map that state 5.5 hrs to Hinerua. Though I thought it would be closer to 7, so we left early in the morning with the thought of enjoying a lazy afternoon. By midday we had crossed Sawtooth Ridge and were ascending the shoulder of Broken Ridge. Realising we would gain Hinerua about 1pm, to then basically burn a perfect day, we decided to extend our walk onto the summit of Broken Ridge, 1715, Smith Stream, then up to Hinerua. An excellent afternoon in perfect conditions, with unlimited views.

I was pleased that the route between Smith Stream Hut and Hinerua had recently been cut. As I had vowed never to repeat that leg after an earlier miserable experience there, of pushing through thick stands of wet cutty grass and tutu. This time quick progress was made, and as we ascended to Hinerua, cloud rolled in from the SE. We reached the hut on dusk, in drizzle and to the smell of wood smoke.

The morning was cool with cloud about the tops, and it wasn't long until we were enveloped in cloud. By 1500m we were walking amongst tussock coated in rime ice. Soon winter gear

was donned and the map and compass came out. A short exercise in navigation for Thomas from the shoulder through the saddle to Ohuinga and then on to Black Ridge ensued, as I had promised that he could navigate when the need arose. I'm not too sure that he was convinced at the need, though I thought it a good move as conditions could have worsened, and knowing where you are at all times prevents potential error. We walked passed Tarn Biv noting the loo with a view and after signing in carried on down to have lunch in the bush. From Daphne it was a short trip down the river, followed by a good grunt up the hill and then on down to the car park. An excellent trip with some solid days and good company. Thanks Thomas.

I did a further two single day trips to the Ruahines in April, bringing my total hut visits for the month of April 2012 to 24.

### **21-22 April 2012 Colenso Spur- Tupari- Kylie Biv- Makaroro Report-Warren Wheeler, Photo-Janet Wilson**

This trip easily exceeded expectations thanks to near perfect, fine but cool, autumn weather. Our leader Peter van Essen made the trip highly interesting with his botanical knowledge and historical anecdotes about William Colenso who discovered the wondrous diversity of alpine plants while travelling across the Ruahine Ranges way back in 1845.

Our journey started from the Wakarara Roadend with the six of us marvelling at the hardy six native porters who had accompanied Colenso in bare feet up the wide gravel bed of the Makaroro River - not only that but also dealing with the spear grass they met above the treeline on what is now named Colenso Spur. In Colenso's day the clumps of spear grass were five feet across and in need of an axe to clear a good route through, but now they are much smaller and less of a problem. Colenso also noted the lack of water on the tops, but nowadays there are plenty of small tarns.

Peter put one and one together and concluded that deer had caused the changes – nibbling away the tasty speargrass and trampling the vulnerable sub-alpine ground cover to form deer wallows that had filled with water and turned into tarns.

If Colenso had followed our route and turned right at high point Te Atua Mahuru (1534m) instead of left to go to Mokai Patea then he would have come across a large natural tarn in a depression just past Ina Rock, a minor high point

that seemed poorly named and lacking distinguishing features until viewed later from Kylie Biv when an unusual rocky outcrop was apparent just below the ridge line.

After our 1000 metre climb up Colenso Spur and the ups and downs along the main range we were a bit slow going up the final rise to the broad tussock top of Tupare at 1526m, but spirits soared with the distant views across the tarn spotted easy tops to the north. A cool breeze and lack of shelter discouraged us from a night out here and we dropped from the signpost about 60m down to Kylie Biv. Here we found three good spots for setting up a couple of tents and a fly but it turned out to be a cool night with ice in the billy next morning. Two of us shared the bivvie with its two mattresses making for a comfortable if somewhat chilly night, though free of the cold noses if, like Peter, we had been out under a fly.



PNTMC at Kylie Biv, Ruahine Range.

After a plate of nice hot porridge (for some us anyway) and a last perch on the box loo-with-a-view (ditto) we packed up and soon warmed up as we climbed back up to the tussock tops, then

past the tarns and a turn right to descend 700m down the well named Totara Spur to Upper Makaroro Hut.

Some fancy flax fencing in front of the hut suggested some kids had spent time there recently but there was no entry in the Log book to confirm this. After a first lunch we split into two parties to make our way back to the cars. Bruce, Janet and Graham opted for the 550m climb up through the beech forest to Parkes Peak Hut and down Parkes Ridge while Peter, Richard and Warren opted for the 15 km river route past Barlow Hut.

The river is a highly recommended little adventure with only one or two waist deep wades in the more gorgy sections but certainly best done in warmer weather and not recommended for the inexperienced. There is an obvious short cut about 250m downstream of the first major tributary on the True Left (about 4km down from the hut) which is no longer marked (so we missed it) but would have avoided a big loop with a gorge section as it climbs over a narrow neck and down a small side stream. Instead it took us 3.5 hours for the 7 km to Barlow Hut which meant we finally arrived at the cars around 5 o'clock, about an hour or so after the others. They had patiently waited for us while enjoying the late afternoon sun from their vantage point on the river terrace. It was good to see everyone safe and sound, swap route notes and cement memories of a great trip over a nice hot cuppa – thanks for the brew Graham.

We were Peter van Essen (leader), Bruce van Brunt, Janet Wilson, Graham Peters, Richard Lockett and Warren Wheeler.

*My Natives travelled on in a moody silence all day. We were obliged to keep near as we could to the middle of the bed of the [Makaroro] river, to escape the debris which continually fell from the high cliffs on either sides.*

*21<sup>st</sup>. A rainy morning detained us, but at x. we left. At iii. p.m. we reached the summit of the range, and were greatly disappointed in finding no water, which we needed very much; we sucked the damp moss in hopes of assuaging our thirst. Continuing our march until half past vi when we halted on one of the lateral ridges of the range, where were 3 muddy pools all but dry; we cleaned them out in hopes of their having water by our return. We ultimately obtained some water by descending the sides of the mountain to a considerable depth. It was delicious. My Natives very cross and gloomy.*

William Colenso, January 1848

**29 April**  
**Otairi Station, Hunterville farm walk with Edith and Malcolm Leary**  
**Report-Tony Gates, photo-Martin Lawrence**

A great crowd and large vehicles with co operative drivers made the April 2012 guided Leary farm walk possible this year. We figured that this was their tenth such walk to a wide choice of properties up in the Rangitikei. Most of

the group walked (more or less) the length of Otairi Station, north west of Hunterville, from Taupora peak (approx 850 metres), gently down farm tracks to the Turakina Valley Road (approx 100 m).

Starting off Watershed Road, Edith and Tony took the quad bike up to the lookout, while the others walked. We were all impressed with the great views, and with Malcolm and Edith's commentary. Edith and Tony retreated, shuffled vehicles, and drove back up from the bottom end, so all of the others could enjoy the good farm walk down to Te Namu hill then right through Otairi Station. We met for lunch there right on time. Grey skies parted for a while, so there were more great views out to the seemingly endless grassy and forested hills of Otiwhiti Station, Mangapapa (outstation), the vast Otairi Station, and far beyond.



*Travelling in style, Otairi Station, Hunterville*

Edith and Tony continued on the quad bike, exploring some of the many farm tracks, and the others continued on their gentle downhill stroll. Back at the car, Yvonne and Sally arrived with another vehicle, so they zoomed on up the farm track on the quad to meet the walkers, and to see some of the fascinating country there. Presently, we were all back down at the cars, and heading for Marton, and to memorable feed of what the hill country up here produces best - well roasted hogget with buckets of spuds, broccoli, pumpkin, cauli, kumara, etcetera. Quite a few photos of the Mt Cook area were on display too. Thanks Malcolm and Edith for the great farm tour and dinner.

Farm walkers were Michael and Craig Allerby, Warren Wheeler, Edith and Malcolm Leary, Tony Gates, Martin Lawrence, Penny Abercrombie (and later, Yvonne Vanderdoes and Sally Hewson).

**5-6 May 2012**

**Famous Last Words (Not Maropea Forks)**

**Report - Janet Wilson**

**Photo - Martin Lawrence**

"This is the way the trucks go" - Warren, as we become rather geographically confused out the back of Woodville and find ourselves circling back to where we have just come from.

"I don't usually get car sick" - Martin, not long before he loses his breakfast.

A "good" start to the morning. We arrive a little later than planned at the road end but are soon away, popping in to Triplex Hut to sign the hut book before having an uneventful walk up to Sunrise Hut. The weather is stunning and Armstrong Saddle calm. We head North from here along the main range, passing through 2 scrubby saddles - one deep, overgrown and slow travel - before we reach Sparrowhawk Biv, just off the tops to the east. It's about 2.30pm. We stop for food, photos and to sign in. The biv is an improvement on others of its type as it has a add-on, big enough to cook in. The mattresses are very mouldy.

"I'm glad we aren't staying here" thinks Grant to himself.

We go back to the top, head slightly South again and I lead as we drop over the edge to the west, into a headwater gully of the Maropea River.

"At least it's all down hill for the rest of the day" I say to myself

I'm confident this is where I have been before with Graham and Tony some 6 years ago.

"Last thing we want to do is get bluffed" I say out loud.

We drop lower, a stream forms and the gully narrows. Warren, in the lead, comes to an impassable waterfall. No obvious way on. We have about an hour of daylight left and we quickly reach the only safe conclusion. We trudge back up the hill, everyone taking their own line. Graham leaves his lost hat behind, his downhill line being too unpleasant to try in reverse. I suspect there was plenty of cursing, if you had enough breath left to curse on the steep climb up.

The cloud has come in. Back at Sparrowhawk it's cold, damp and nearly dark. Despite most of us having enough gear to bivvy out, no-one is keen and we all pile in to the biv for a cosy dinner and nights sleep. Graham sleeps on a

very narrow bench in the add-on.

The moon was at it apogee (ie very big) that night but unfortunately it was obscured by cloud.

Next morning we retreat back the way we have come. It's a fantastic day and interesting cloud pouring through the saddles makes for plenty of photo opportunities. We lunch just South of Armstrong Saddle, drop our packs and do a quick dash down to Top Maropea. The hut was looking great and I think improved since my last visit (but then I could be forgetting.....)

Thanks to Martin Lawrence for leading the trip. The rest of us were Graham Peters, Grant Christian, Warren Wheeler, and Janet Wilson (scribe).



*Graham and Warren on Maropea peak, Ruahine Range, Remutopo peak "Barrier of the defender god of the interior" is the prominent knob in the distance in front of Graham.*

### **6 May A Frame–Takapari Road–Stanfield Hut Report and photo by Peter Wiles**

It was a cool but fine morning when the four of us left the carpark along the track that was shortly to turn off to take us on the climb up to A Frame Hut. The challenge was to decide on the best combination of clothes – will I get too hot or will I get cold? We made good progress up the track with a couple of minor stops for clothing adjustments and a snack for some who had gone a bit light on breakfast. The hut was reached for a timely cup of tea and something to eat. We sat on the sunny side of the hut which was also out of the slight but cool SE breeze. There was nobody around. Persistent thin mist restricted our views, but otherwise conditions on the top of the range were good.

After smoko, we walked along the road and then along the track towards the Takapari – Stanfield turnoff. Over the last couple of years the vegetation has really grown up and now hinders

movement in some places – especially as the shrubbery was wet. Maybe the growth is from the wet summer?

At the Stanfield track descent turnoff, we discussed whether to have lunch (as it was midday) or to continue down to the hut. The consensus was to continue to the hut. The descent was rather slippery and we had to be careful in our foot placements. It was about 1 pm when we reached the hut – and what a statement it makes now – the most vivid Forest Service orange! Again there was no one about. Lunch was enjoyed on the porch. Then it was down the valley, up the track and along Holmes Ridge and back to the car.

An enjoyable and energetic day was had by all. Team: Woody Lee, Uma Patel, Ping Yang & Peter Wiles.



*Stanfield Hut, Tamaki valley.*

### **12-13 May Apiti Track-Leon Kinvig Hut Report - Kathy Corner, photo - Woody Lee**

I decided to spend the weekend of Mother's Day tramping to Leon Kinvig Hut, despite the not so good weather forecast for the Sunday. Warren decided we would get there via the eastern route for a change, so Woody and myself set off with Warren in his comfortable old car to the road end near Norsewood. The sign at the carpark said 5-6 hours to the hut, then 10 minutes up the track a DOC sign said 6-7 hours! We encountered a similar variation in travel times later on in our tramp- which sign to believe this is the question!

The beginning of the tramp follows the Apiti Rd which is a track which was to be a road over the Ruahines to Apiti, however this was stopped due to the depression. Warren is still thinking about which route the road would have taken! (across the Pohangina at near Leon Kinvig hut, up to the Ngamoko Range just downstream, then descend

north of the Piripiri- approximately- ed.). We entered the bush tramping through podocarp and beech forest. The track was difficult going at times with minor slips and trees down. After exactly 3 hours we reached our lunch stop and sat in the sun with great views of the Ruahine Range, and the spur we were about to climb. I have never seen so much moss on a track, it was beautiful walking with the dappled sunlight on the beech trees and moss. Warren and Woody had fun clearing fallen dead beech tree branches which were blocking the track as we ascended. I could hear Woody with his piece of wood, whacking the branches out the way. After one and a half hours and lots of false summits we reached the top. It wasn't as windy as I thought it was going to be and we had superb views. Then an hour's descent to the hut, the billy on for tea and Warren set about lighting the open fire.



*The pleasantly appointed Leon Kinvig Hut, upper Pohangina Valley.*

An hour later Janet, Graham and Richard arrived. They had tramped in over Toka on Friday and spent Saturday setting stoat/rat traps along the river. They were tired, wet and hungry and were very happy to see the smoke from the fire as they neared the hut. We dined on noodles, followed by mushrooms, Woody's special curry, and steamed pudding and custard, washed down with white and red wine and port! The fire wasn't too smoky (except Warren thought so). Apparently the night before, it was so bad they could hardly see each other. We learnt all about the new humane traps made by a company called Goodnature. You can look them up on the web.

After coffee in bed - Mother's Day treat - thanks Warren, and delicious porridge, we watched Janet set a trap behind the toilet, she also crawled under the hut to set a trap - brave woman!!! Following the photo session, we left the others and headed up the Nice Spur (as Janet called it). The weather stayed fine for our

tramp back, we only had a few drops of rain which soon got blown away, and had lunch at the same spot in the sunshine. Behind us, we could see the dark clouds over the ranges - quite dramatic. Thanks for the company and a great weekend in the hills.

**15-16 May 2012**

**Makaretu Hut**

**Report and photo by Alistair Millward**

When I told my boss I was going tramping on Wednesday and Thursday he was surprised and a little concerned. The weather forecast was pretty awful. Had he known I was tramping with Derek and had he known what Derek is like he would perhaps have been even more worried.

We quickly walked into Awatere hut in a cold southwest wind. Two points for Derek's hut bagging challenge. A few minutes downriver we fossicked around in the wet bush until we found Black Stag Hut. What a miserable, dirty, damp ruin of a place. You would have to be truly desperate to sleep in there - I think a rainy night under a tree would be preferable.



*Derek checks out Black Stag Hut. This bush residence is understandably worth zero points.*

We continued down river as the showers came and went. The water was cold and the boulders slippery. By the time we reached Happy Daze (2 more points for Derek) the rain had properly set in. Rats quietly slipped out a hole in the roof as we came in the door. Stacker (41 years married and about 60 years old if I interpret his hut book entries correctly) often comes in to Happy Daze where he is usually either "looking around" or "checking up". Another entry suggested that he originally built the hut. Sounds like an interesting bit of Ruahine history there.

Up the river to Makaretu was slow and uncomfortable. The river was up quite a bit and the water was freezing. The short sidles weren't

much better, pushing through cold wet crown fern. At one point I decided to jump off a bank that was a little too high. I was cold, impatient and not thinking clearly. My pack overbalanced me and I fell forward on impact. I was lucky to escape with a grazed knee, a bruised finger, a wet sleeve and a dose of shock. Normally I wouldn't shock from a small fall like that but the cold, tiredness, hunger and general misery added to the experience. I was dizzy, nauseous, shaky and a little confused. After a couple of minutes lying on my pack in the rain I was up and we continued to Makeretu, which wasn't much further.

At Makeretu (2 more points) Derek wanted to continue to Leon Kinvig. I flatly refused. I hadn't been feeling well all day, I was cold and wet and the weather had gone round to solid southerly rain. I crawled into my sleeping bag for a couple of hours then got up and lit the fire. Derek read magazines and thought wistfully of the two points he was missing.

Next morning was clear and cold. We climbed the spur behind the hut to the tops, which were wearing their first snow of the season. A keen southwest wind sucked the warmth from us and iced the southerly slopes. Derek dived off into the snow-covered leatherwood towards Top Gorge Hut (2 points) while I continued to Longview. I fired up the heater, which is about as warming as being coughed on by a mouse, boiled the billy and enjoyed the long view. Derek arrived a couple of hours later, points accumulated and, after adding another point for Longview Hut, we headed down to the car.

**April and May 2012 More Ruahine hut bagging with PNTMC. Photos by various**



25 April, PNTMC at Diggers Hut [Woody Lee].



12 May, Iron Gate Hut, Oroua Valley. They bagged all Oroua huts in one day [Chris Tuffley].



20 May, Kelly Knight Hut, Pourangaki Valley. Chris, Bruce, Penny, and Derek [Chris Tuffley].



20 May, Purity Hut, [Chris Tuffley].

**East Ridge Scrambles**

**Terry Crippen**

For those of you who enjoy scrambles up mountains there are two East Ridges that could be called classic close at hand; on Ruapehu and Egmont/Taranaki.

The first one is the *East Ridge of Mt Egmont*, leading directly onto Sharks Tooth. It is the obvious ridge when viewed from the Stratford side of the mountain and is accessed from the Stratford skifield. In summer it is a delightful steep exposed scramble (grade 1); good for an Easter day trip, when it typically lacks any snow. It is on more or less solid lava (unlike the usual

northern ascent route on dismal loose scree/scoria). In winter it becomes a relatively long exposed steep snow/ice climb (Grade 2 to 2+) and the only North Island climb mentioned in "Classic Peaks of New Zealand" by Hugh Logan. Then you will be dealing with sastrugi and you will need confidence on steep exposed winter slopes, together with a rope for some.

From the (upper) ski tow head towards what is called The Policeman. Once gaining the ridge it is a steady scramble upwards till a pole is reached, this is a good rest point and you cut north here to less steep ground if needed. Above this point the ridge steepens with the crux of the climb in front of you. Continuing up over this section eventually brings you onto the Sharks Tooth. From here you go north along the crater rim for a short distance and descend into the crater via a chimney with the odd bit of No. 8 wire. Then scramble across and up to Egmont's summit. Descent via the northern routes is the best option.



*Terry checking out the route part way up Egmont's East Ridge - summer*

The other east ridge is on Ringatoto (Mitre) on Ruapehu. This is accessed from the Tukino Mountain Rd and the RTM Track. It is best done in winter using Rangipo Hut as a base. This autumn a couple of us tried it, a very late start after a dawn service on ANZAC day, accessing the ridge by heading up through the bluffs on the true right of the Whangehu valley. Once on the ridge proper it is difficult to pick out which side of the various gendarmes it is best to sidle past and the most of the route is on loose rock rubble. So as a summer route – Not Recommended.



*The East Ridge of Ringatoto from pt 2123m - winter*

In winter with a decent cover of firm snow it is a much better proposition with an early start from Rangipo Hut. Heading up easy broad slopes you gain the ridge then work along it to where it steepens. From here on it is easy to distinguish between the snow slopes, rock steps and gendarmes, and so it becomes an enjoyable scramble using ice axe and crampons. It is graded as 1+. In some parts a second tool or a rope could be useful depending on ones experience and confidence. On the summit, continue along to Taurangi. Descent can the same way. Or for a long day, down the Wahianoa Valley and cutting across back to Rangipo Hut, good navigation and route finding through the bluffs and avoiding gorge sections is needed.

Both climbs and many others are detailed in the NZ Alpine Club's guide books; "Taranaki Mt Egmont" by Ross Eden; and "Tongariro" by Richard Thomson.

## Ruahine hut bagging fantasy

Deep in the northern Ruahines lie numerous good huts that have thus far seemed to escape the attention of PNTMC hut baggers. A dedicated hut bagger could get all of these huts in two-three days, maybe a little more, at the same time as enjoying some great tramping country. Note that there are many worthy huts nearby to these ones, including Shutes, Ruahine Corner, Kylie Biv, Aranga, Parkes Peak, Dead Dog, No Mans, Ruahine Hut, Herricks, Masters Shelter, and the Sentry Box. Look on the map for these huts;

**1- Dianes Hut**, a small and well constructed concrete blocks/tin memorial hut constructed during the mid 1980's to the memory of Dianne Tressider. It is on a small terrace of the Koau

Stream, surrounded by steep slopes of beech forest.

The Koau catchment drains much of the northern Ruahine tussock, beech, and scrub lands, and is a sizeable tributary of the Ngauroro River. This catchment is uniquely unmodified by large scale erosion, (as seen in all of the other catchments in the area). There is a short, steep track descending from the No Mans road to Dianas Hut, but no bridge over the stream. This may be difficult to cross if it is flooded

**2- Taruarau Biv** is one of the original ex NZFS "dog kennel" bivvi's from the 1960's. Its log book went back to the early 1970's (and someone said that the water in the tank dated from then also!). It is located five minutes down a side ridge from the main ridge track from Shutes to No mans or Ikawatea huts. It is just in the shelter of some beech forest, with a tributary nearby that might provide water after rain. But it is a dry area. The entire area has scrubby/rocky/ tussocky botany from the forest fires of eons ago, so there are plenty of good views of the Ikawatea and Taraurau Catchments, and the Otapae Ridge beyond.

The big screen featured scenes of this area in the award winning movie "This way of life" a few years ago.

**3- Ikawatea Forks hut** has six bunks, an open fireplace, and pleasant grassy clearings set between the major forks of the Ikawatea River. This once frequently visited spot now receives few visitors, although helicoptering in is popular for summertime fishing and autumn hunting.

There is an overgrown track climbing east to Tauwharepokoru peak (1403), passing through some lovely mature beech forest. This ridge leads to the wide open tussock tops of No Mans, most of which is private land. There is also a track climbing behind the hut, to sidle the obvious waterfall in the eastern fork of the Ikawatea River. Other than at this waterfall, tramping via the rivers is usually quite good in this area. There is a well beaten and sometimes easy to follow route climbing to the west of the hut, to the vast tussock plateaux of Mangahohane Station and Ruahine Corner.

**4- Rockslide Biv.** The Ikawatea Catchment displays some of the most spectacular erosion of

a rocky mountain range in New Zealand. Vast shingle river beds and terraces have built up and been washed away, so you could imagine that forest has a difficult job keeping stable. There is a vehicle track from No Mans, down Slaughter Spur, and almost to the Biv.

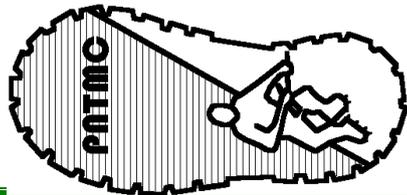
River flats frequently form, and where possible, scrub covers them, as at Rockslide bivvi. It is surrounded by mature manuka trees, with the wide open gravel riverbed of the nearby Apias Creek "any point in a storm". It is an old ex NZFS two person dog kennel, with a tarpaulin extension providing room for two more. It's fireplace is an open one, just outside the tarpaulin.

**5- Mistake Biv** was originally a two person "dog kennel", tidily upgraded by DOC during the early 1990's to include a spacious porch, with bunks and fire place. It is located on a river terrace at the top forks of the Apias Stream. The stream provides good travel, although waterfalls and scree at the headwaters can cause access problems. This is a good spot to observe Whio. It is difficult to imagine what this area would be like without massive erosion.

## Caving Section



*The late Trevor Bissell (L), with Sallie Hewson. ? Terry Beech, Phillip Beech caving at Waitomo, mid 1980's.*



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## PNTMC Newsletter June 2012

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

- Snowcraft Course Details
- May Committee Snippets
- Ruahine Hut bagging with Derek
- PNTMC visit Stanfield, Leon Kinvig, and Rangihuts, and Centre Creek
- East Ridge scrambles

### **Articles for the newsletter**

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

**Get out and about with us!**

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