

Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.

www.pntmc.org.nz

P.O. Box 1217, Palmerston North

Newsletter December 2012



Ngamoko Hut, mid Pohangina Valley [Chris Tuffley]

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.

13 December

EOY BBQ

PNTMC

Our Christmas BYO BBQ is held at the Ashhurst Domain. Bring food and drink, plus a small gift up to the value of \$5.00. Annual awards and Ruahine hutbagging prize winners announced.

31 January

BBQ at the Esplanade

Our first get together of the year is held at the electric BBQs by the paddling pool opposite the tearooms in the Esplanade. Bring food and drink and lots of summer tramping stories to share. 6.30pm start.

Merry Christmas and happy tramping to all in PNTMC, and from all at PNTMC

Upcoming Trips

1-2 December

Ngamoko and Mid Pohangina M
Janet Wilson 329 4722

This trip has been altered from Top Gorge Poahngina. Ngamoko and Mid Pohangina Huts will undergo their planned Spring clean. Two classic Ruahine valley and riverside huts.

8 Dec (Saturday a day earlier than advertised)

Happy Daze, Makaretu M
Kathy Corner 356 8186

An interesting and easy Ruahine valley in from Norsewood, with the choice of a northern or southern access

9 Dec (postponed from last week)

Holdsworth Waterfall F
Terry Crippen 356 3588/ 027 6433637

Come and help find the elusive impressive 50m high Holdsworth Waterfall, hiding in a very narrow section of Holdsworth Creek. Off-track stream travel. Once found we will then leatherwood bush bash onto the tops and return via the usual track down from Mt Holdsworth. Probably leave PN 6am or meet at Holdsworth Lodge about 7:30am.

8-9 Dec

Maropea Forks Hut M/ F
Grant Christian 354 5843

The central Ruahine beech forests and gravel river beds are attractive and interesting, with this lovely hut well sited for accommodation (along with many great camp sites). Plenty to do here - spy on Whio, rest and relax, tramp and swim, and roam the tussock tops. In via Sunrise Hut, out via Wakelings- Waikamaka.

15 Dec (Saturday)

"Summer Solstice Scrub Slog" F
Peter van Essen 355 9076

Saturday's summer solstice secluded scrub slog is to Arawaru, situated slightly to the south. A singularly spectacular saunter with slipping and sliding, shirt soaking sweating, surely some scrub scratching, but nothing a smidgen of soothing salve won't solve. So no shirking and skiving, stow your scroggin, sammies, sunnies and sunhat in your sackbag, shake off the sciatica and sclerosis, sign up soon.

Depart: sparrow-fart

Return: sundown

16 Dec

Mangaturuturu Glacier, TNP M/ T
Warren Wheeler 356 1998

Depart 6.00am. Enjoy the alpine flowers above Turoa skifield and out to the left to the glacier; then up for a look at the crater lake if safe to do

so given latest eruption warnings. Option for a low level explore to silica rapids or circuit to Lake Surprise.

1-5 or 2-6 January New Year's Trip

Forks and Flies, Tararua FP M/ F
Warren Wheeler 356 1998

Big hills, great beech forest, and beautiful rivers are a feature of the Tararuas. This classic trip starts from Otaki Forks and makes a west-east crossing of the ranges, fly camping at Waitewaewae Forks, Park Forks, Arete Forks, and Ruamahanga Forks. Contact Warren before 21 Dec to discuss dates (would be nice to start on New Year Day, but).

12-13 January 2013

Oroua Camp BBQ All
Janet Wilson 329 4722

A lovely and easy Ruahine trip.

13 Jan

Tunupo Stream M/ F
Graham Peters 329 4722

Tunupo Stream drains some of the Ngamoko Range into the Oroua River. A chance to explore possible whio territory and a beautiful upper basin area rich with sub-alpine summer flowers.

13-18 Jan (full week)

Ngamoko Hut painting
 Contact Janet Wilson if you are keen to help.

19-21 Jan - Anniversary Weekend

Pohangina River and Mid Pohangina Hut M
Warren Wheeler 356 1998

Depart 7.30am. Come and take on the dreaded (but really quite easy) sidle track up the river to our base at Mid-Poh hut. Side trips to explore up to Cattle Creek Hut as well as Ngamoko and Leon Kinvig huts if keen to spot some whio. Back out down the "sporty" river for some nice pools and rock scrambles. Summer tramping at its best.

20 January 2012

Wharite E/ M
Duncan Hedderley 354 6905

The hill with the TV tower on it, just north of the Gorge. You can walk up there from the Woodville side, starting at Coppermine Creek. There's one rather steep bit, and the top of the hills can be muddy and windy, but you can get a neat view of the Manawatu from the top.

26 Jan

Barlow Hut M
Janet Wilson 329 4722

Barlow is an easy riverside hut, with several accessible tracks radiating out from the river and lovely camp sites.

26 or 27 Jan
Yeomans Hut
Richard Lockett

Mtn bike
323 0948

Old forestry roads make this a wonderful mountain biking area. Ellis Hut, otherwise known as Murderers Hut, is easy to cycle to on this trip.

2- 3 February
Atiwhakitu Hut
Kathy Corner

E
356 8186

This pleasant hut has many good tracks leading to and from it. It is close to Mt Holdsworth, and well worth a visit.

3 Feb
Roaring Stag Lodge
Dave Grant

E/ M
357 8269

A lovely new-ish riverside hut in the north eastern Taranaki, with great forest, and swimming holes in the Ruamahanga River.

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:

Tony Gates	357 7439
Janet Wilson	329 4722
Martin and Anne Lawrence	357-1695

Articles for the newsletter

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

Notices

Customised Clothing

Several years ago, PNTMC printed our logo on some sunhats, beanies, and shirts. These proved very popular, so we are doing this again. Terry Crippen will be placing this popular order.

Next Trip Card: January - June 2013

The January-June 2013 Trip Card is enclosed with this edition of the PNTMC Newsletter. Thank you to all trip leaders, club night guests, and to Janet, Terry, and Warren for doing yet another sterling job at presenting these trips and club nights. Enjoy them.

Ruahine Hut Bagging

As this edition of the PNTMC Newsletter goes to print, the 2012 hut bagging competition enters its final couple of weekends. It has been extremely successful. Full results and statistics will be available in the next Newsletter, and also at the end of year BBQ on 13 December.

A poster is currently being drafted of hut photos surrounding a Ruahine map. Each hut and biv features, with no more than one photo of each. Copies of the poster will be available for sale soon. Thank you to Eric, Bruce, and Tony for compiling files of photographs and the poster.

Kawhatau Base Access, from Kerry McKenzie, Ranger Service

Due to a number of reasons, the landowner has closed access across his property to Kawhatau Base, thence Colenso Trig and the northern end of the Hikurangi Range. Explanation is found at the link:

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/places-to-stay/lodges-cabins-and-cottages-by-region/manawatu-whanganui/kawhatau-base/>

DoC Tongariro/ Taupo Summer Programme

The Popular Tongariro National Park and environs, despite being in the news recently for volcanic eruptions, remains one of New

Zealand's most popular summer time holiday destinations. DoC assist with their Summer Programme, with guided excursions to many interesting places. There are excursions to suit all grades of fitness and ability.

Information and bookings are at

www.doc.govt.nz/tongarirosummer

Aotea Track, Great Barrier Island

DoC are publicising a new track (which is actually a combination of several existing tracks) on public conservation land on Great Barrier Island. With multiple entrances and exits, the Aotea Track essentially circles Hiramata/ Mt Hobson, so passing through some fascinating geology, botany, and history. There are hot springs, huts, restored kauri dams, and lots to interest you. And GBI is only 30 minutes flight from Auckland.

Bookings for GBI huts and camp grounds are possible on line at www.doc.govt.nz

Volunteer Hut Wardening for DoC

Volunteer hut wardens over summer are required for the popular serviced huts in the Ruahine Forest Park; Rangiwahia, Sunrise and Longview. The main task for hut wardens is "helping hut users enjoy their stay in the right way" – providing information and encouraging hut ticket compliance. Hut wardens will need to tramp in to the huts and warden for a minimum of two nights. Free accommodation and an allowance of \$20 per day for food will be provided.

Also, there will be volunteer work available maintaining historic facilities in the Manawatu Rangitikei area, including monuments at Bruce Park Scenic Reserve, Simpsons Reserve and huts in the Ruahine Forest Park. Volunteers will be part of a team working from 9am on Monday to 4pm on Thursday during 11th-22nd March 2013.

If you are interested in this, please email me or give me a call to register your interest. Volunteer positions will be confirmed in January 2013.

kstratford@doc.govt.nz

[online hut warden registration form.](#)

Lake Waikaremoana Run

Well done Grant Christian, for winning his section in the Waikaremoana Run, held mid

November. It took Grant 2 hours 28 to get around the Lake Waikare iti- Ruapani circuit, so that he could win the solo section. The teams (pairs) section was won in 1:45, with the legendary Phil Costley completing it in 1:47. Even Coast to Coast legend Richard Usher took more time.

Te Araroa Run

English ultra marathon adventure runner Richard Bowles is currently (mid November 2012) endeavouring to be the first to run the length of New Zealand along Te Araroa Trail. He ran through Feilding and Palmerston North, then up into the Tararua foothills at the Turitea, Kahuterawa, and Mangahao-Makahika. Warren, Richard, and Tony were lucky enough to meet him at Otaki Forks on 22 November after he completed the gruelling Tararua section of the trail. He had toiled over Waiopahu-Pukematawai-Dracophyllum Knob-Crawford in a fast time and in typically poor Tararua weather, then out past YTTY hut.

To further understand Richard's level of fitness, his web site "live tracker" reveals that he ran from St Arnaud to Upper Travers Hut then back in a day (avalanche danger prevented further southwards progress. That is immediately after running the Queen Charlotte Track, the Pelorous, and through the Richmond Range.

Project Crimson (plus others) sponsor Richard, so there is a little tree planting and charity work on the way. He is a real inspiration.

Look at

www.richardbowles.com.au

<https://www.facebook.com/UltraRunnerRich>

For Sale

For Sale: La Sportiva boots Very sturdy tramping/climbing boots, in very good condition, size 43.5, rigid (or semi rigid), new price was \$600. Offers, phone Alan Ward 357-4052

New Members

Welcome to PNTMC, and happy tramping to Andrew Kelly, who is at 0274 461 981.

Book For Sale: "Worn Out Boots" four decades enjoying the New Zealand mountains

Tramper and Editor of this Newsletter has recently published volume one of his memoirs. As the title suggests, he has spent much time with PNTMC in the Tararuas, Ruahines, and other places.

Worn out boots. \$30.00, 160 pages, soft cover, with b/w and colour photos.

Trip Reports

29-30 Sept 2012
Smiths Stream Hut
Janet Wilson

Back at the end of September, Warren and I went to the seldom visited "historic" Smiths Stream Hut. Originally advertised as a Hinerua/Smiths Stream trip, rain during the week before made it likely the stream travel between the 2 huts would be unpleasant and so we settled on just Smiths Stream, starting at the Waipawa River/ Sunrise Rd end.

You start over a well gated bridge, pass more locked gates on the well signposted farm track and eventually come to the park boundary, where you cross a stile. Don't do as we did and carry on up the track towards a trig called Homestead. It wasn't too far back when we discovered our mistake. The good track sidles through scrubby farm land, over a couple of small tributary streams before reaching Middle Stream. It was running fairly fresh and although it is not wide, we linked up for the rather awkward crossing.

From here you climb steadily through patches of scrub and open country and eventually pick up an easy (and unexpected) side track through trees to the saddle above a tributary of Smiths Stream. It is a small drop to pick up the stream and then it was about an hour down the slippery and cold stream. Markers indicated a track leaving the river on the TR which we followed until it vanished – cut off by a decent sized impassable slip. We climbed through trees above the slip and soon intersected the track which leads from the hut to the tops. It was not far down from here to the hut. About 5 ½ hours to get there.

The hut turned out to be rather "ratty" – we set to work cleaning out piles of rat droppings and found a couple of dead rats. They had had a lovely time shredding paper around the hut. The mattresses were very mouldy and Warren got

stuck in scrubbing these – and did a fantastic job cleaning both sides – well done Warren. We had a nice fire – the hut has a refurbished open fire which didn't smoke in the hut at all – great.

Next day we returned the same way. There were a lot of cracks in the ground on the track above the slip and it would be interesting to see if the slip has got bigger since. It may be best to travel further down the stream to the forks when approaching the hut from this way. Approx 4 ½ hours back – easier when you know the route.

We were Warren Wheeler and Janet Wilson.

20 October
Ruahine hut bagging with Eric and Sandy Liu



Jolene at Heritage Lodge- well wrapped up and comfortable.

We took Jolene to the Alice Nash Memorial Heritage Lodge last Saturday. At seven and half months, can she win the category of Youngest Hut Bagger?

22 October
Cattle Creek Hut via A-Frame, with Bruce van Brunt, Derek Sharp and Thomas Robertson

It is a rare event that I ever see the Takapari road in anything approaching pleasant conditions. My last visit up there was anomalous because the weather was too nice: this visit made up for it. The forecast once again was for lots of wind punctuated by the occasional shower.

Another early start from Ashhurst, but this time we had to drive only to the West Tamaki roadend. Conditions were not that pleasant at the carpark (mostly wind), but this is usually one of the worst spots. We quickly made our way towards the track to A-Frame and started the climb up to Takapari road. It appears that some work has been done on this track. The track has been cleaned up a bit and for the most part is pleasant. We were lucky with the rain and

missed it until we got to A-Frame. (I did get a bit wet coming into A-Frame, but Derek and Thomas escaped the rain completely).

A-Frame is a valuable shelter: I do wish people would take care of it. In the last year I have noticed that some of the windows have been damaged and there is clearly water intrusion. The hut book was removed a few months ago. The rain stopped while we were in the hut and we started off down the Takapari road savouring the delicious winds. This is the Takapari I know: lots of wind, clag and no views. The track to Stanfield hut that continues from the road along the ridge has also had some maintenance. The newly cleared track soon ends, however, and there is quite a lot of cut leatherwood littering the track. Presumably DoC will return to finish the job. The trip to Cattle Creek hut via Stanfield was notable mostly because we managed to get to Cattle Creek hut just before another shower came in and we managed to leave after the event. The rain never really caught us.

We returned to the carpark via the Tamaki river, which has been cleared out by recent floods. Aside from a few fallen trees, and some slimy river rocks, the river bed is in pretty good shape for travel.

**Guest Report from Ex-PNTMC Jonathan Astin
27 October
Te Hekenga-Triangle Hut**

I went up into the Ruahine a few weekends ago. Walked up past Rangī on Friday night and camped near a tarn south of Maungamahue. Next day traversed over to Tiraha, had a bit of fun in the snow getting around Te Hekenga. The weather wasn't too fantastic so I decided to drop down to Triangle, went down the SW spur of Taumataomekura to the large flat saddle. It was easy down to the leatherwood and then I followed a deer trail for a bit, but when that ran out some serious "Leatherwood dancing" ensued. Eventually I bailed out into a gut which gave easy descent below the leatherwood line into the bush. From there it was an easy sidle above the Oroua until I dropped into the river about 30min above the hut. There are a few small waterfalls requiring a sidle on the true left but otherwise the river is easy going. Lunch at triangle then over to Rangī and back to my car.

A few pics are on my flickr site

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/ruahinetramper/>

Reading the hut book it looks like one party came into Triangle via the south ridge of Te Hekenga, I could certainly see a good deer trail

above the bush line as I passed over. Probably a better option than my route as it appears to have a reasonable trail through the leatherwood line. I'll hopefully be back over Xmas.

**27- 28 October
Janets North Eastern Ruahine Explorer
Graham Peters**

For me, the north eastern Ruahines were a foreign country, so this trip was eagerly anticipated. Making a 3 day weekend, the original plan was to drive to Herricks hut giving access up the stream to Dead Dog and places beyond. Unfortunately there was a party of hunters going in already so the farmer wasn't keen for us to be there also.



Dead Dog Hut, north east Ruahines

Thus plan B with the five of us in the borrowed 4wd at Master's Shelter earlyish on the Saturday morning. The air was pleasantly cool on the 800m climb to the top of Golden Crown Ridge - it would be a different story in the height of a Hawke's Bay summer. Janet had been waxing lyrical about the easy travel along the tops to No Mans. This was pretty much true but for the drop down and climb out of the saddle after we'd had 1st lunch after leaving the bush. The weather forecast for the weekend was one of deteriorating weather but on the Friday, but for a cool tailwind it was quite OK with good views.

Before long we were at No Man's hut for a 2nd lunch in the sun. None of us were looking forward to the trudge down the road but it wasn't long before we were at the turnoff to Dead Dog. At this point Bruce, in a fit of hut bagging enthusiasm, decided to do a side trip there and back before carrying on to join us at Diane's. His estimate was he'd be three hours behind us. The rest of us carried on and were enjoying the sun at Diane's in time for late afternoon tea. Bruce eventually turned up at about 10.30pm after some challenges finding the hut from the stream.



Diannes Hut, Te Koua Stream

The plan for Saturday was a return trip to Shute's with a side trip to Taruarau biv. The 380m to the top of the ridge was efficient and from there it was only about 15 minutes to the delightfully positioned Taruarau biv with its open air dunny. The route along the tops towards Shute's was easy going before starting to descend meandering through Kaweka-like clay pans before the final steep 500m descent to Shute's. Here we lazed around in the sun eating our lunch and eagerly anticipating the climb back up. We were surprised Bruce chose not to carry on and return to Diane's via the loop to Ruahine hut. On the way back we admired the view down to Pohokura - from this altitude the farmland looked like a well tended golf course.

Sunday was the day the weather was predicted to pack up so we were keen to get underway and cover as much of the exposed tops before it did. As it turned out the weather was typically fickle and quite pleasant - no rain coats required with just a bit of mist as we descended to the roadend. We were quite early back so drove down the road and went and visited Sentry Box before capping it off with a stop at the Ongaonga general store for an icecream.

On the trip were Bruce van Brunt, Janet Wilson, Warren Wheeler, Woody Lee and myself.

27 October
Kiritaki Hut Day Trip
Grant Christian

This was a quick solo trip. The day was overcast but not too windy. I started at the end of Kumeti road and headed up the Mangapuaka Stream at a slow jog. There is track that heads up a spur on the true right, opposite where the Kumeti Hut used to be. This track leads up towards Mataganui. Unfortunately, right around the spot where this track started there was a fallen tree across the stream and I headed to the other side of the stream bed and missed the track. After about ten minutes I knew I had gone too far and

retraced my steps. I found the track and also searched around and found the old Kumeti Hut site. I then climbed quickly up the spur to the top of the gently climbing ridge that heads toward the peak. There is a very good track here and I ran the flat and downhill sections. By this time the cloud had cleared and the sun made it very pleasant.

The track to Kiritaki Hut goes off to the left before reaching the peak and falls gently for a while before it gets very steep down to the Orouakaretaki Stream. From there it was downstream for about 200 metres and then a steep climb up to the hut. I inspected the hut ate my sandwich and was off. I managed to run more of the track on the return journey and arrived back at my car in 2 ¼ hours.

27-28 October
Mid Pohangina-Ngamoko-Piripiri
Chris Tuffley

Some of these are the huts that PNTMC will be taking over Management of from DoC. It's lovely Southern Ruahine country, but Derek and Chris reportedly got a bit scratched getting over the saddle and into the Piripiri!

Refer to cover photo, plus this one



Piripiri Biv- a well hidden Ruahine gem.

3-4 November 2012
Matiu/Somes Island
Janet Wilson

"Such a lovely spot - surrounded by the city but so apart - cool to see penguins and giant weta. Next time skinks and tuatara. Amazing how penguin's little legs can get them to the top", Martin and Anne.

"Somes/ Matiu was a great trip so near to the mainland geographically but so far away in terms of the experience"

"Lawrence was able to "light several peoples fire" by being the only one with matches to light the gas cooker. Sleeping in the tent was great, after having to shovel sheep poop to clear the ground. We saw the native giant weta at night, and only from a distance saw a tuatara. The tiny penguins heading up to nest were very exciting", Jo and Lawrence.

"It was great for a weekend but we read about those interned on the island during the war and wondered how they survived those years"

"Another great weekend out with PNTMC. Settled in to Education House, had some lunch and then down on to the circuit track northern side and was rewarded with meeting a tuatara soaking up moisture under an old pine tree, 25 metres from the track start, happy as", Richard.



PNTMC on Matui/ Somes Island

"The giant weka got me in a head-hold and threw me off the track", Doug (Dannevirke)

"It was an amazing place. Lots of interesting spots - lighthouse, quarantine station etc. Then there was wildlife, which got you out because it was elusive. No sitting around waiting for it except for the penguins. The best part was the incredible setting in the harbour"

"One waxes philosophical about the amazing diversity of the life evolving to suit its own

environment - giant Cook Strait weta, gulls nesting with sheep, tree weta hiding in concrete fence post holes, Canadian geese a long way from home, little blue penguins out all day fishing, skinks hiding, zombies resting before next full moon....."

"Fantastic trip - will do again", George and Jeremy

"We saw four tuatara. One with his head poking out of his burrow, two were out in the open away from their burrows. The fourth tuatara was down underneath a large macrocarpa tree. Earlier before searching for the tuatara we discovered some more giant weta around the gun emplacements". Craig and Mike

"It was a great opportunity to experience about Matiu/ Somes Island, especially the lighthouse (the first harbour light in the country) and the site for both human and animal quarantine. We really enjoyed the overnight on the island."

"Loved the boatride and the view of the coastline!!!"

"Good trip love seeing the tuatara and all the lights of Wellington at night"

"It was an interesting time at the island. Many birds, penguins and exploring in such an atmosphere where you don't hear city noise. Unfortunately we didn't see fireworks but saw the lights of Wellington and the train looked like a caterpillar glowing in the dark. I will come back sometime in the future", Lisa.

Thanks for coming along everyone - a big diverse group of 19! I really enjoyed my second visit to the island, and the tuatara are much easier to find the 2nd time around! Thanks Wellington for turning on some good atmospheric weather, Janet.

We were George and Jeremy, Anne and Anastasia, Martin and Anne, Mike and Craig, Jo and Lawrence, Lisa, Kathy, Richard, Warren, Doug, Woody, Jennifer, Graham and Janet (leader).

4 November
Otaki Forks BBQ
Tony Gates

Doubtful weather steadily dissipated during the day to reveal some sunny Tararua foothills and a very pleasant picnic area at Otaki Forks. The four of us, that is, Tony, Yvonne, Sally, and Fiona, drove to Schoolhouse Flat before lunch and set up the BBQ. Before the sausages were

even burnt, crowds of well laden PNTMC people from the Matui/ Somes Island trip arrived. It was then a substantial picnic.



Otaki Forks picnic

4 November 2012
Rangiwahia Hut to Heritage Hut Day Trip
Grant Christian

Kelly Holland, Cathy Fraser and I did this one way trip and managed to bag four more huts. We dropped off a car at the car park on Table Flat Road before carrying on to the end of Renfrew Road. We made good time to Rangiwahia Hut where it was snowing lightly but it was calm with good visibility. After a short stop at Rangi we headed up towards Mangahuia. We were in running shoes which resulted in cold feet for a while as there was still a bit of snow lying about. It was easy going until we started dropping down the spur to Triangle Hut. This is a track that requires a bit of care when things are damp. I slipped over a couple of times on the way down. At the bottom we crossed the river to Heritage Hut. There were a couple staying there doing possum trapping. Apparently the trapping had not been that successful.



The comfortable and well sited Iron Gate Hut, well known to PNTMC

After a short break for lunch we headed down the river for Iron Gate Hut. The river travel was good. We had a steep climb over a spur and dropped down into the river again. The map was not very clear on where to find the track at this point and we wasted a bit of time searching around in the bush for it, before getting down river a little and finding the track. We were soon at Iron Gate Hut where we had another short stop before heading off. Up & down the numerous ridges on the way down the valley kept us working hard to Heritage Hut. We barely stopped before carrying on to the road end and a well earned rest. It had been a long but satisfying day.

10- 11 November
Rockslide Biv
Bruce van Brunt

Derek, Thomas and I went to Rockslide Biv on 10- 11 November. In fact, we went in via Masters Shelter to Aranga (Hut Ruin) then to Kylie Biv and on to Ruahine Corner. We then dropped down to Ikawatea forks Hut and went up the river to Rockslide Biv. I saw Tony's name in the Rockslide hut book from 1998.



Ikawatea Forks Hut- the traditional NZFS high viz colour is a familiar Ruahine sight.

10-11 November
Makaretu Hut
Report by Warren Wheeler
Photo by Janet Wilson

Maybe the dodgy weather forecast put people off, but for the two of us this turned out to be a really nice trip to a spot that neither of had been to before. Unfortunately Kashmir Road is not in good condition so the two of us had to park the mighty Renault at the bottom of the hill by the Ruahine Forest Park sign and walk the three kms to the roadend. On the way we saw a group of four heading off towards Daphne and another couple of vehicles parked up but as it turned out

none of their occupants were heading to Makaretu and we saw no-one else all weekend.

To make things easy we did a clockwise loop down to Awatere Hut and down the North Branch of the Makaretu River to Happy Daze hut, then up the South Branch to Makaretu Hut. This gave us a nice calm sunny day to enjoy the river route and the option next day of an easy side trip to Top Gorge Hut on the way out via Longview Hut, before the forecast weather closed in.

Big slips below Longview Hut feed plenty of gravel into the North Makaretu, which makes for a wide bed and pretty easy going with no deep pools or gorge sections to worry about. First off though we had to find Awatere Hut, which we knew was diagonally across from where the track down from the roadend meets the river, but the big orange marker was obscured by debris in the middle of the almost dry river-bed until we were half way across. Awatere is a classic orange Forest Service hut in 'near-original condition' but in need of some TLC or at least some rat poison to get rid of the nest in the building paper under the roofing iron. We found the old track heading up the spur behind the hut to Rocky Knob, but Janet assured me it is not as easy to find at the top.

Our next stop was a few hundred metres downstream on the opposite bank where we found the "seen better days" Black Stag bivvie, about 10m in from the river bank on the terrace there. The tin door is rotting off but it was closed so it looks like someone still uses it or at least appreciates the bush craftsmanship in the corrugated iron and beech branch construction. It has a dirt floor and there are draughty gaps between the low walls and rickety roofing iron so a night there would make for a memorable experience.

We carried on down river for a pleasant couple of hours and stopped for lunch before carrying on to the South Branch junction and the sign-posted turnoff, 15 minutes up to Happy Daze Hut. This track is notorious for getting pugged up by cattle but wasn't too bad due to the dry conditions, which may have accounted for the heavy flowering of several native tree daisy in the beech forest along the way. The hut itself is nicely located at the end of a 4WD track on the edge of the farmland, with large beech trees forming a magnificent backdrop.

Back at the confluence we headed up the South Branch of Makaretu Stream, which is more confined and slippery, so we took every opportunity to shortcut bends. Amazingly there were old markers strategically placed on the odd

tree, even though the deer trails were really more useful to show the route.

After an hour or more a large orange triangle marked our exit at the confluence – or did it? The track seemed to be heading up the hill rather than to the hut so we backtracked and went up the left branch, which is the route down from Apiti Track. Sure enough we found the orange marker for the exit up to the hut, which as shown on the map, is on the spur between the two branches and not visible from the river here. After reaching the hut we saw that it was also well sign-posted from the track up the hill, which cuts back to the stream before heading up in earnest. There was also a signpost to Leon Kinvig behind the hut. This apparently leads up the spur for a more direct route but is not marked as a track on the map.

As it was only 3 o'clock we were tempted to carry on to Top Gorge Hut, but only briefly. Instead we opted to relax and enjoy the sunny afternoon with a snooze or a swim or both. For some reason this nicely renovated hut with its expansive front lawn and good camp sites nearby gets very few guests, although it does feature as a lunch stop for longer trips out from Leon Kinvig.

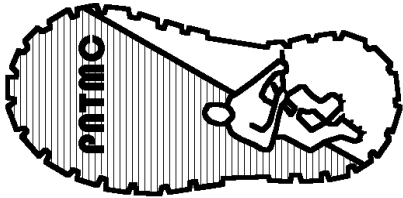
After an uneventful night we were woken by a modest dawn chorus and were soon on our way up onto the ridge, which is at about 1,000m so the track cuts through leatherwood and alpine scrub. There is an occasional exposed rocky outcrop but the leatherwood is high enough that it provides good shelter from the wind. We could see dirty weather coming in from the south but it seemed to have stalled so we decided to drop down to Top Gorge Hut on an old track that Janet had heard about. It starts in the tussock at the low saddle before Rocky Knob and proved to be quite easy to follow. It cuts left out of the watercourse and onto an old slip, then down and after crossing the small stream it is marked with tape and cut through the leatherwood, then drops down to the right on another old slip to a distinctive right angle bend in the Pohangina River – it is only 150m down and seems to take no time at all. Top Gorge Biv (aka Motel) is about 40 minutes of easy rock-hopping downstream. After signing in the log book and taking hut pics we had lunch back at the bend before climbing out and carrying on up to Rocky Knob and along to Longview Hut. The wind had eased off somewhat, signalling a change in the weather, and sure enough it started to drizzle just before we reached the roadend. It didn't come to much and we made it back to the car with raincoats only lightly wet. This was a really nice medium trip with lots of variety – well worth a visit.



Kiritaki Hut, otherwise known as “Seamac Motel”, overlooking the Dannevirke farmland [Janet Wilson]



Yet another comfortable Ruahine hut - Triangle, beside the upper Oroua River and over the range from Rangī. Note great whio habitat and fairly thick beech forest and scrub. [Chris Tuffley]



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PNTMC Newsletter December 2012

What's inside this month?

- More Ruahine hutbagging
- Matiu/Somes Island
- Smiths Stream, Makaretu Hut
- New Year Forks and Files Trip
- Visit Great Barrier Island
- Try Volunteer Hut Wardening
- And More – Merry Xmas

Articles for the newsletter

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

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