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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

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## Newsletter March 2011

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### Club Nights

Club nights 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. All welcome! Please sign the visitor's book at the door.

#### 10 March Digital Magic Udo von Mulert

Want to find out how to get the most from your digital camera? How to improve your digital images? Find out tonight from our local photography wizard, Udo von Mulert.

#### 17 March Committee Meeting

#### 31 March AGM 2011

The PNTMC AGM 2011 is your chance to hear about how the club has done over the previous year financially, and to catch up on a summary of the club's activities and committee business. A new committee will be elected, so if you are interested in standing for office, or being on the committee, please contact a current member.

Featured at the AGM will be a "tramping snack food making competition" with savoury or sweet allowed. It will be open to club members as well as the committee, and judged by a suitable candidate. Bring something or taste something (or both). Visitors welcome.

#### 14 April Grand Tetons Chris Tuffley

### Trip Grading

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

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

Other grades:

Technical skills (T)
Instructional (I)

### Trip participants

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

### Gear for trips

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

### 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:

Mick Leyland	358-3183
Terry Crippen	356-3588
Janet Wilson	329-4722

## Upcoming Trips

**5 March (Sat)**

**Tongariro South Ridge** M  
**Bruce van Brunt** 328-4761

A good late summer rock scramble to an easy summit, well away from the madding crowds tramping the Tongariro Alpine Crossing. Depart early. Bring a good water bottle.

**5-6 March**

**Sawtooth Ridge** F  
**Chris Tuffley** 359-2530

Weather permitting, this will be my third attempt at the legendary Sawtooth Ridge, in the high central Ruahines. We plan to take the route from Longview through to Howletts, then on to Sawtooth Ridge. Tony says that it is worth the wait, so I hope this time I get to find out. Departure Friday afternoon or early Saturday.

**10-13 March**

**Matemateonga** M  
**Malcolm Parker** 357 5203

Postponed- refer to notices.

**11-13 March**

**Full Kawhatau River** F  
**Derek Sharp** 323 3028

This scenic Ruahine River provides a great, if tough, mix of pleasant grassy flats, easy beech forest terraces, good huts, and a semi gorge. Despite being considerably smaller than its Tararua equivalents, the Kawhatau River will only let you pass during periods of normal river flow. Depart Friday evening for Purity Hut.

**13 March**

**Hinerua Hut** E/M  
**Martin Lawrence** 357 1695

Tramping to this lovely bushline Ruahine hut in the Tukituki Valley offers some river travel, farmland, and forest- then tussock tops a wee bit further on. Depart 7.00 AM.

**19-20 March**

**Lake Colenso** M  
**Tony Gates** 357 7439

Located in from Taihape, Lake Colenso and hut are central to many great northern Ruahine places, and there are numerous exploration routes available. Depart early Saturday morning.

**20 March**

**Ballance Farm Walk** E/M  
**Kay Sinclair (nee Kitchen)** 06 376 8689

A pleasant local walk on the Sinclair Farm beside the Mangahao River. A great café at the end. Depart PN 9.00 AM.

**26-27 March**

**Carkeek Ridge** F  
**Grant Christian** 354 5843

Dep. PN Friday afternoon, hopefully about 3.00 PM, sprint into South Ohau Hut. On Saturday, climb to Te Matawai Hut, Arete Biv, then tramp the high tussock tops to Carkeek Ridge Hut. Sunday, out via Park Forks- Crawford Peak and Waitewaiwai, to Otaki Forks. A hard but rewarding trip to the Tararua heartland.

**27 March**

**Field Hut** M  
**Duncan Hedderly** 354 6905

7.45 start for a trip into the hills behind Otaki Forks. Great views over Kapiti, even down to the Marlborough Sounds, on a good day; plenty of bush shelter if the weather's not so good.

**2-3 April**

**Upper Makaroro** F  
**Warren Wheeler** 356 1998

Depart 7.00am. Explore this valley in the north eastern Ruahine Ranges. We will go up the ridge to Parks Peak Hut and drop down to Upper Makaroro Hut for the night. Next day we follow the river back down. From narrow gorge to wide gravel this river is surprisingly easy travel. Swims are optional in the occasional pool.

**3 April**

**Waikamaka Hut** M  
**Peter Wiles** 358 6894

We will leave at 6.30 for the drive over to Whakarara Road. We might be able to do a slight round trip by going via the Waipawa Gorge, one way and the sidle track onto the Sunrise Hut track for other way. Expect a mixture of bush, water and riverbed.

**16-21 April**

**Pre Easter Kahurangi NP** M/F  
**Terry Crippen** 356 3588

We will be running a pre Easter trip to Kahurangi National Park, with a range of possibilities, including tramping the Wangapeka and Upper Karamea valleys, and another attempt at Mt Kendall. There will be vehicle(s) going down, or down there, but going elsewhere for Easter, so you will need to at least organize your own flights.

Please let Terry (356-3588) or Janet (329-4722) know if you are interested.

### 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/>

## Notices

### Matemateonga Trip

PNTMC plans a 4 day Matemateonga Tramp. This has been postponed till April-May. Dates to be advised. It is an area seldom visited by PNTMC but not far away, very interesting, and not difficult once spread over four days. There are several areas to explore, including visiting "The Bridge to Nowhere". Transport costs \$215.00 (jet boat and connections).

### FMC Club Photo Competition 2011

#### General Conditions

Entries are open only to FMC member clubs, and must be received at FMC office by **Tuesday 17 May 2011**. For the purpose of the competition each branch of the NZAC is regarded as a separate club.

The categories are:

ABOVE BUSHLINE

BELOW BUSHLINE

HISTORIC

HUT OR CAMP LIFE

NATIVE FLORA OR FAUNA \*\*

OUTDOOR LANDSCAPES \*\*

\*\* = no people in these photos

All entries (except in Historic category) must be submitted electronically with a file size between 500kB and 5MB preferably as jpg files. The only digital manipulation permitted is cropping, sharpening and tonal or exposure adjustments. They must be taken since 1 January 2008 by a member of the club and may not have won awards in any other photographic competition other than the members own Club Photo Competition.

Entries in the Historic category can be submitted as original prints or colour slides (these will be returned) or scanned and submitted electronically. If scanned they should be at least 600 pixels on each dimension.

Clubs are asked to collate all entries from their club and submit them in one mailing on a CD. No more than 2 entries per club in any one category. Contact a committee member.

### FMC YouTube Competition

Affiliated clubs can also enter the YouTube Video Competition. Further information will be found on the FMC web site, or in the Bulletin.

Four categories are;

The Natural world,

Outdoor history and heritage,

People and outdoor culture,

Adventure.

### FMC Card discount

Club members are reminded of the useful discount that their FMC card allows. Bivouac Outdoor, and other businesses, accept this card.

### Wellington-Hawkes Bay Conservation Board.

PNTMC President Anne Lawrence has recently been elected onto this Advisory Board to the new (enlarged) Conservancy of DoC. Well done Anne. She is available to take feedback and (constructive) criticism to DoC.

### Newsletter article catalogue

Kevin Pearce has catalogued all Newsletter articles from 1974 to 2010. The list is now available on our web site. It is an alphabetic list of 53 pages, with the Ruahines and Tararuas featuring most often. This is a useful reference list to allow rapid access to the many and varied articles. Thank you Kevin, great work.

### BURTTONS TRACK CLOSURE NOTICE

Access to the Te Araroa Trail from Scotts Road and Mangahao Valley will be closed during week days due to forest operations and logging traffic.

The period of closure will be effective from 22 November 2010 to 24 December 2010 and from 3 January 2011 to 6 May 2011. Full access is available to the trail during weekends.

### Avian Aversion Training

DoC have recently approved a Willy Marsh as an avian aversion dog trainer (all breeds except pit bulls) in Woodville. The course that he can offer your dog is specifically aimed at whio and kiwi aversion. This will be run monthly, on demand. Your dog will need a bird safe certificate if he/she is to join you on conservation land. Course bookings can be made at the DoC Palmerston North office, 06 350 9700.

### Tracker Snackers

PNTMC recently received free samples of a new product, Organic Tracker Snackers. Taster feedback suggest that these make a fine tramping food. Gluten free, healthy, tasty (made from local ingredients), and robust, PNTMC may be able to make up a discounted bulk order if interest allows. Refer; [www.trackersnacker.com](http://www.trackersnacker.com)

### Lost and Found

Found: One Teva sandal on Lake Colenso Track, 7 January. It looks quite nice. Phone Warren 356-1998.

## Trip Reports

**31 October 2010**

### **Caving Introduction with Graham Peters Report by Kelly Buckle**

Icy water trickled down my back as I clung to wet rock, three metres up the vertical side of an underground waterfall. I was used to climbing dry, sunny rock, and the damp muddy stuff was out of my comfort zone. Before I went on Graham's trip I hadn't imagined there was much climbing at all to be done in caves. How wrong I was! Caving was much more of a mental and physical challenge than I had anticipated, and was a fun experience I would gladly do again.

On a brisk and somewhat threatening day we piled into cars for the trip to Indecision Cave, also known as PT17, near Coonoor. For once, the looming clouds weren't a threat – we were going to spend the day underground! Graham was the inveterate caving guide, complete with a carbide helmet-mounted torch. I came to appreciate the bright warm glow it gave off even in the darkest of caves.

We suited up near the cars, with helmets, boots, and extra layers of polyprop and tough outer layers. For the only time on a PNTMC trip I can remember, we were discouraged from taking packs. We soon found out why. From the cars it was a short walk to a patch of bush that contained a sinkhole the size of a large house, that swallowed up the earth and vegetation around it. It was the kind of sinkhole I normally would have taken care to avoid, but instead we minced down the steep sides, aiming for the sunken centre. Graham anchored a rope, and one by one we walked down a jumble of boulders, towards the cool blackness within. The transition was abrupt, and the sliver of daylight above seemed instantly to belong to another world. From an initial ledge we carefully traversed the entranceway until we came to a small stream, which we proceeded to walk in. No attempts to keep dry, here. I never expected underground to be so damp, and so muddy. By the end of the day, the overalls I borrowed from Janet would be soaked through, caked in mud.

As a novice caver, I imagined that traversing the world underground would consist of crawling and walking through tubes of various sizes. Little did I realise that in order to access most caves there's a lot of scrambling and climbing. I am a keen climber, but I prefer to use my rock shoes, and I would never climb on a wet day, because the rock gets slippery. No such fussiness for Graham, who took to the slippery heights clad in gardening gloves and gumboots.

Indecision Cave branches in several directions from a central point, and in each case reaches a narrow or blunt-ended or steep-sided cul-de-sac. We clambered and shimmied and slimed and hopped our ways along each of its branches, pausing occasionally to enjoy a gorgeous underground waterfall, or a graceful stalagmite. It made for wonderful exploring, with narrow hallways and crawlways opening into huge chambers, and vertical holes leading to chambers above and below. We spent several hours exploring. During a section or two I found myself with rock in front and rock behind, squirming sideways between gritty walls, understanding why we were told not to bring packs. I was glad to be small so as to fit more easily through those tight passageways. All in all, underground travel was even more of a total-body exercise than the average Ruahine tree-vaulting, root-climbing tramp.

After we had explored all the passageways, were thoroughly wet and mud-brown, and had almost forgotten the existence of sunlight, we headed back. Climbing the rope into the sunlight, I remembered the feel of the fresh breeze, and the lovely brightness of the colours of the above-ground world. For days afterwards, however, I felt a sort of nostalgia for the dark mysterious, clammy world I had left below ground. I suppose that's what keeps drawing cavers back down.

We were: Graham Peters, Woody Lee, Warren Wheeler, Chris Tuffley, and Kelly Buckle

## Poetry - Ngamoko Range Huts

These two charming poems were copied from log books from huts on the slopes of the Ngamoko Range- Heritage Lodge, in the Oroua, and Toka Biv, in the Pohangina.

### **The Oroua Valley**

**By BW Jan 2011**

#### **From the Heritage Lodge Log Book**

Us great hunters had great hopes  
When we got out here on Monday  
But all we found on that day  
Was two pair of dirty undies.

The next day we bush bashed  
For at least eight hours  
All I found was nasty stinging weed  
And ripped the arse right out of my trousers!

We didn't walk on any track  
It was fairly steep and thick  
The only time I used my rifle  
Was as a walking stick.

At last light we saw a hind  
Walking on a slip  
If I'd had a '50  
I would've let her rip.

Next day brought the crappy weather  
Some rain and mostly fog  
We hate you mother nature  
You stupid female dog.

Later we spooked a small young deer  
Walking up the track that night  
I don't know if it was him or me  
Who got the biggest fright.

The past few days, we saw heaps of sign  
And two actual deer  
But we didn't shoot a single one  
It's not us they have to fear.

This morning when we woke  
To the alarm on my phone  
I lay in bed thinking "bugger this"  
I should've stayed at home.

Us great hunters had great hopes  
Thought our chances pretty sweet  
But all I'm walking home with  
Is balls out and wet feet.

**Toka Biv**  
**By Dylan, April 2010**  
**From the Toka Biv log book**

One thing strikes me true  
Whether hunting for stag, pot, or simply the view  
Be it a family, a hunter  
or just a good keen joker  
Everyone is grateful  
to see the little hut called Toka

With its leaky roof, draughty door  
and candlelight glowin  
O what a haven  
when the Ruahines start blowin  
It's the simple things for which people like us  
strive  
So please DoC, keep little Toka Biv alive!

## More Trip Reports

**27 - 28 Nov 2010**

**Tunupo - Iron Gate**

**Report and photo by Woody Lee**

This trip was organised by Martin but he was unable to run it so Warren kindly volunteered to make this trip happen. I have heard about the Iron Gate many times but for some reason I

never went there so I was looking forward to that weekend.



*Janet and Warren on the Ngamoko Range.*

8am Warren picked me up at my place and drove to Colyton clock museum to meet Janet. At the beginning of the walk I was impressed with two unusual landmarks; the first one was an arch footbridge over the Umutoi creek and the second one was a rifle range, which looked extremely long to me (nearly 300 metres measured by Warren's footsteps). We dropped our packs down at the sign of Tunupo Trig 3hrs and then Warren and I went to the Heritage Lodge to catch up with Kim Fraser while Janet waited at the grassy area. We met Kim at the lodge and she gave a stoat trap route map to Warren after a brief talk and I thought she would be a DOC staff (later I realised she was Chief Guide for MTSC). As we returned to the grassy area Warren shouted "look at the green hooded orchids" excitedly and explained 'how they catch insects': there were several small orchids at the surrounding area and it was a surprise to see them. I also took close snapshots.

We headed off to check the stoat traps once we made a decision on our roles; Warren opens up the trap lids using his small spanner, Janet makes a tally and records the tag numbers at the same time and my role is to collect dead stoats and to reset the trap. We also had a practice trial with the first one; Warren demonstrated how to reset the trap and told me to practise. It basically looked like a mouse trap but the metal plate was very strong to reset using my hands.

There were 26 traps on the track and a couple of times we had to turn back to find missing ones. We also discovered some of the tag numbers were not matching the route map. We finally completed our mission without any capture.

We came out of the bush shortly after having lunch on the bush edge, then I soon realised it was a hot sunny day as I began to slow down

reaching Tunupo. Janet and Warren were already at the tussock top while I was struggling to climb the steep hill and slowly made my way to the top. It was an easy walk on the broad ridge and suddenly I got cramp in my left-thigh. I dropped my pack down and sat on the ground to relieve the pain, then managed to walk but soon my left thigh began to cramp again. What a tough afternoon it was! Janet gave me a small sachet of electrolyte as I had sweated a lot and it was a really hot day. Anyway I continued walking without any further hassles until the Iron Gate track via junction to the Top Gorge hut.

The first section of the track from the top was not properly maintained so the ground was very rough and then the last section was ending with a steep descent to the hut.

We put up our fly on a soft ground near the riverbed, which was a perfect campsite, then we visited the hut to see Kim's party and Warren gave back the trap route map to her. The Iron Gate hut looked very cosy with full occupants and there was a family tent and two single tents on the grassy clearing. I spotted a rain gauge at the back yard (I had never seen before and wondered how to measure the volume accurately). After having a relaxed evening we went to sleep at 9pm. It was a warm night of 12°C.

Next morning Warren suggested taking the river track to see the water level but we did not like the plan. We made an early departure from the campsite and eventually had an early tea break after crossing the first stream and another stop at the lodge after 11am. We had lunch at the end of the walk road just before the farmland fence and it was 10 minutes away from the carpark. Many thanks to Warren and Janet.

**5- 6 February  
Ngamoko Range - Leon Kinvig Hut  
Report- Michael Allerby, photo- Craig Allerby**



*Michael and Woody at Leon Kinvig Hut, Pohangina Valley.*

With rain Friday and continuing on Saturday morning the weather was not looking flash! Tony Gates was heading into the Oroua valley Friday and planned to come across the tops to meet us at Leon Kinvig on Saturday. He sent an email before leaving Friday and mentioned that the Pohangina River has a wee flood.

Craig was to pick Woody up after finishing work Saturday morning. On arriving at Woody's residence heavy rain was falling and he decided not to come. When Craig arrived at my place in Feilding the weather had cleared. I was going to take my car but since Craig had his car already loaded up we took his. On driving off out of Feilding we decided to turn back and ring up Woody with the weather much improved. With this news Woody made his way over and we left at a later than anticipated time. It was fortunate we had decided to turn back and ring Woody as I realised I had left my raincoat behind.

Heading off from the Limestone Rd end car park at 11.50am into drizzle, mist and low cloud it looked like a gloomy winters day, but with the temperature in the 20's and high humidity it was shorts, shirt and no raincoat. Making our way to the first stream crossing the flow made the usual rock hop impractical. Woody raced through, stumbled over dunking his camera (he spent the rest of the trip trying to dry it out) and shirt in the stream. After crossing the next stream we stopped for lunch and drained our boots.

Slogging our way up the Knights track, which starts with a steep climb, good progress was made and we reached the part of the ridge where a gentler gradient is enjoyed. The views below were a blanket of grey mist and we arrived at Toka shrouded in cloud with a cold wind blowing, a quick stop for a photo then onto the ridge leading down to Leon Kinvig. Making our way down an exposed piece of ridge covered in tussock and stunted leatherwood the Pohangina valley could be seen clearly in the distance.

When we arrived at the river the level was quite a bit higher than normal. It was also murky making it hard to judge its depth because you could not see the bottom. Craig suggested angling across a wider slower flowing section of the river. We linked together with Craig as the anchor, Woody in the middle and me on the down river side. Moving out into the river it progressively got deeper. Woody exclaimed Ah! I'm floating, a few seconds later I was doing the same. Craig's feet were still hitting the bottom and we made it to the other side soaked from the chest down.

Arriving at an empty hut (no sign of Tony and a hot brew) we changed into some dry clothes then got the billy going. Starting with chippies, crackers and cheeses, washed down with red wine, then Korean brown noodles, followed by pasta, mixed veges and Smoked Swiss sausages, the bellies had been filled to capacity (thanks for the wine and noodles Woody).

Awakening to sunny skies after a night of showers and chimney rattling wind gusts, it looked a much better day. Our only real concern was the speed that the clouds were racing across Ngamoko range. With some hot noodles for breakfast and our gear packed up, we headed back across the river in yesterdays wet shorts. This time you could see the river bed which had dropped to about waist deep. On reaching the other side we changed into dry shorts, drained our boots then continued up the steep climb to Toka. At that exposed tussock covered part of ridge connecting to the tops we were hit by strong northwesterlies and battled against them for half an hour. Its intensity was so strong in one weather beaten section of track you were practically on all fours and hardly making any headway.

Resting in a sheltered spot just below Toka (tarn area), we had lunch before heading over the tops and back into the wind until reaching the leatherwood where it was sheltered and warm. It was an easy walk back down Knights track to the car park with good views of the Manawatu plains along the way. After a challenging two days a beer at the Kimbolton Cafe was beckoning, but oh no! closed for Waitangi Day, luckily I had some cold ones at home.

We were Woody Lee, Craig Allerby and Michael Allerby.

#### **4- 6 February Back over the hill. Heritage- Iron Gate. Report and photo by Tony Gates**

The promised warm fire and cuppa tea ready for Craig, Michael, and Woody at Leon Kinvig Hut didn't materialise- sorry 'bout that. I had wanted to join you, but the thick mist put me off a crossing of the Ngamoko Range. I was happily ensconced at Heritage Lodge, then Iron Gate Hut, and the Oroua river looked pretty flooded. The Pohangina would also have been flooded and the weather forecast wasn't great. PNTMC was up at Longview then, probably in the clear. For me, deep in the Oroua valley, I decided to sit it out. The storm cleared a little on Sunday morning, allowing me a much needed stroll up onto Tunupo Peak- extreme winds there too. But down in the shelter, look what I found. I

watched this creature for some fifteen minutes happily creeping up a bank, only to fall off, and roll down about 100 mm. I carefully re positioned it to a somewhat safer location.



*Powellaphanta marchanti*, Tunupo Peak, February 2011. This is the common species found around various parts of the central north island.

You may have seen shells of these native land snails. There can be lots littering the tussock tops, with their bodies eaten by introduced predators. Their size will be 20- 30 mm in diameter. I was lucky to see an active snail during the day.

I also saw a remarkable fungal specimen beside the track. I think it was *Gymnopilus junonius* in its prime, a rather rubbery and attractive rusty coloured gill fungus (or several joined together) at least the volume of my weekend pack.

#### **6 February Longview Hut Report and photos by Nicola Wallace**

"There it is"! Longview Hut was white and bright against the brown-green Ruahines as we turned off SH 50 onto Ashley Clinton Road. We'd left PN at 7.00 am under heavy cloud, picked up the first sun at Dannevirke, and now clear blue sky promised pleasant tramping on a perfect day.

Not long afterwards, we approached 'the hill', about 3km from the Kashmir Road end. I guess anyone who's ever driven up here knows 'the hill'. Not only is it steep, the surface is gravelly, muddy, and very spongy. John's hatchback was reluctant to make it up, so we reversed to the bottom. A combination of lower gear, and greater speed was tried, but 2/3 of the way up the car said 'no more'. Warren and I sat on the bonnet to aid the front wheel drive, but still no go, so back down. John's car would spend the day at the bottom of the hill, in the company of another hatchback parked there.

After some debate, we decided to do 'the loop', starting with the climb up the Daphne Hut track, then heading SW along the tussock tops to the hut, and back down the main Longview track, leaving the longest bit of road walk till last. So at about 9.30 am, we left the car. On the way up 'the hill' I prodded the loose surface with my stick. Lumpy, bumpy, and spongy indeed.

After about 1 km, we descended from the road to the start of the Daphne Hut track. We crossed the Moorcock Stream, and headed uphill through long grass, and ferns. It was hot already, with the sun beating down on us, but soon we were climbing in bush - cooler. A flat section was most welcome, then it was a gentler ascent to the track intersection. The wooden sign suggested, optimistically, a time of 45 minutes to Longview Hut. John and Warren said "more like an hour". It would turn out to be one and a quarter hours.

After morning tea in dappled sunlight, we headed off in a SW direction and soon left the bush behind. It was good to be in the open again, but boy was it windy! It was up and down here, over the tussocky hills. The wind was invigorating, and with wonderful views of Hawkes Bay to the East, photo stops were made. I was really enjoying this bit, but as we got higher, the NW wind strengthened, and then became a problem. Blowing very hard on our right sides, it became very difficult to stay upright, and hard to move forward without stumbling sideways to the left! I was about to discover though, that Warren has an incredible ability to remain upright and fully functional in a gale, an ability I would soon be relying on.

After a particularly hair raising bit, John and I stopped to plan how we'd proceed. We decided to work our way through the tussock on the windward side of the hill, rather than risk getting blown off the top. We set off, and John, working his way through the tussock, was faster than me, and soon out of sight. I decided to head to the top and find Warren, as I wasn't progressing well. Stumbling up through the tussock, getting blown over, picking myself up again and again, it took a while, but I got to the top and there was Warren. He said "It's easier following the track than stumbling round in the tussock". He was right - I was stuffed!

It was very exposed up here, and I couldn't stand up, so grabbed onto Warren's shirt. We made good progress, and I was soon hanging onto his pack strap. There was a sort of stony track along the top, with cairns now and again. This was the strongest wind I'd experienced in my life. It blew my cheeks in, and made my face feel

rubbery. Now I just wanted to get to the hut. I craved the shelter from the wind it would offer. "Where's the hut?". "Just on the other side of those slips". A little later: "When do we get to see the hut?"



*A very windy day at Longview ridge.*

We battled on, and not long after Warren pointed out Pohangina Saddle on the right, we finally, joyfully, saw Longview Hut. It's tucked into the side of the hill. What a great sight!

A few minutes later we arrived. John had arrived just before us and was already sitting on the veranda starting his lunch. First things first - drop the pack and check out the hut. Longview Hut is a bright, friendly little 12 bunk gas serviced hut. So it's a 3 ticketer. Two big windows frame the beautiful view to the East. There's even a sink, with a tap, inside.

Next was lunch on the generously sized veranda - relatively sheltered, but very cool. We could see the sea. It was heavenly to sit in the sunshine and rest with only the occasional strong gust to contend with.

Too soon it was time to head off. A brief struggle with the wind up to the start of the main Longview track, then a steep descent with the wind mostly behind us down the ridge. We'd descended only a short way before I noticed the reduced velocity of the wind, but there were still some dodgy bits, where I crouched down to avoid the blowover. At one point, John reached out to give me a hand, and his hat (a round one) blew away Frisbee style. Here and there were gorgeous orange Spaniard flowers, well protected by stout thorns.

The tramp had become really enjoyable again, ambling safely down in the increasingly warm sunshine, the moderate wind at our backs. About halfway down the ridge I stopped to savour all this, and heard the steady roar of the wind up top. Already it sounded far away.



*At last we found a more sheltered location, and could enjoy the view of Southern Hawkes Bay.*

Soon, or so it seemed, we were down at the bottom. A brief stop to drink, and then the 3 km walk back to John's car. It was very hot walking back along the road, and conversation flowed freely about this and that. There was only the occasional breath of wind to cool us down a bit. What amazingly different conditions to those higher up. I felt like we had been brief visitors to another world.

Many thanks to Warren and John for an exciting day. We were: John Feeney (leader and driver), Warren Wheeler, and Nicola Wallace.

### **12- 13 February Gorge trip and canyoning at Punga Hut. Report and photos by Daniel Clearwater**

A programmed trip with the PNTMC to Tube the Waiohine Gorge caught my eye as I flicked through the clubs newsletter in Bivouac. Since I'd just moved to Palmy, I promised myself I'd go check out the PNTMC. A challenging tubing adventure seemed like a good way to meet adventurous people who think things like grovelling through scrub, floating through inescapable gorges and being generally cold/terrified are the ingredients for a fun weekend.

I contacted the trip organizer, one Mr Tony Gates and mentioned that although I wasn't yet a member, I was a keen Canyoner with the right skills and gear to be worth allowing along on a tubing trip. Tony was curious about the whole Canyoning business and with encouragement he began to suggest a number of spots that might be worth a visit to search for canyons one day.

The Tube trip Friday rolled around and a call to Tony revealed that no one was keen on the Waiohine this weekend. Instead we schemed a trip to go canyoning instead, to check out some of his creeks.

A quick glance at the map will show that there's not a lot of 'standard' tramping to be had in the far northern Taranaki's. No DoC tracks, no huts, no tops, no point. Or so I thought. Tony knew of a 'secret hut' out the back of the Kahuterawa and Tokomaru catchments that sat in between two potential canyons.

Punga Hut is accessed via the Burtons Track section of Te Araroa, off Scotts Rd. We followed a confusing array of forestry tracks, first via the 'M1' main road and then off to the right up 'Scrub Ridge Rd'. We followed the track uphill until it reached a fenceline, with views out toward the Tokomaru Headwaters. Tony grinned, said something like 'follow me' then disappeared into the Toitoti and leatherwood on some poor excuse for a track.

Once we were in the bush proper, the track had quite a defined foot pad and in places was well cut. We followed the track, past 'the rocks' over the 686m feature 'Scrub' and found our way down the lightly cut track all the way to Punga Hut.



*Tony and Daniel at the very rustic Punga Hut.*

Tony had told me I was in for a treat and he wasn't wrong. Punga Hut is clad with old Punga logs and Stag trophies. The woodshed was well stocked with fuel for the new steel fireplace, but the bunks were a little saggy. Upon arrival we helped ourselves to some of the hut food stash and set up camp.

First stream to check out was the South Branch of the Patupaiarehe Stream, which led directly east from the saddle. Only 5 minutes downstream from the hut, the bedrock began to form small pools, so we put on our wetsuits and enjoyed the water. Not too much further below, the slot canyon began abruptly.

Whenever I read 'impassable/ terrible/ horrendous gorge' in any sort of mountain

literature, I immediately read closer to see if I can find the location in order to pay a visit with canyoning gear. Someone else's nightmare usually is a great canyoning adventure. Today's horrible gorge began with a wonderful series of down climbs into deep pools with dark greywacke walls covered by intense green moss. We made a 20m abseil over a fault style waterfall, and continued down the now open stream way.

The stream had plenty of boulders, but also several pools, swims and scrambles. Approaching another abseil, we looked at our watches and the map and decided to call it a day. Having only descended 1/3 of the stream and with a long bush bash to get back to the hut, we chose to save the rest of the canyon for another day.

Sunday dawned grey and breezy, but this didn't deter us setting off into the Number One Stream directly west of the hut. After a following a hunters track for a while and our noses for a while more, we arrived at the stream. Number One Stream had a totally different character; nice clean pools, shallow canyon walls, with few boulders and grassy/low scrub sides. There were lots of nice little drops, with some jumps, and neat little sections of true slot canyon.

Just as things were starting to get interesting, we arrived at the top of a series of three 10-15m waterfalls. Beyond, the world seemed to drop away as the stream plunged off the plateau and into the cloud.

We pondered the low vis, the escape options, the time, the weather, the meaning of life, before again choosing to retreat. Tony led up stream until we found 'The Banana Track' that brought us quickly along a hunter trail and back up over 'Scrub' to our car.

## Book Review By Tony Gates

### **The Canterbury Westland Alps**

A climbing and transalpine guide. By Yvonne Cook and Geoff Spearpoint (2010) NZAC/ CMC.

295 pages, soft cover, \$35.00 (member \$25.00). Refer <http://alpineclub.org.nz/>

**The NZAC** have published an excellent series of mountaineering guide books for various New Zealand areas over the past few years. Some have been reviewed in this Newsletter, and you may have seen (or even used) some. They are complemented by a few tramping guide books. There are guide books similar to this one for; the Tongariro mountains, Taranaki, Kahurangi-

I was really surprised to see such potential so close to town and in such an obscure area. Thanks for the local knowledge Tony.

I'll be back. I think. For more info about Canyoning check out

[http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/kiwi\\_canyons/](http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/kiwi_canyons/)

[www.chuckysadventures.blogspot.com](http://www.chuckysadventures.blogspot.com)



*Tony self abseiling/ down climbing Number one creek canyon. We enjoyed half a dozen such descents.*

Kaikoura, Arthurs Pass, Aoraki/ Mt Cook, Barron Saddle- Mt Brewster, Aspiring, and two sections of Moirs Guide books (the northern one written by Geoff Spearpoint). There is even a back country ski guide in this series, featuring trips to our very own Ruahines and Tararuas. These books are based on mountain guide books for European and North American mountains, and are all well presented field guides. This latest book by trans alpine tramper/ mountaineer/ photographer/ writer Geoff Spearpoint is similarly an essential book for trips as much as for study and fantasy. This latest guide book is however so thorough, and covering such a vast area, that it is perhaps too large to take on a multi day trip to the area.

**Geoff Spearpoint** commenced his considerable alpine career at an early age in the Tararuas. He continued with major trans alpine trips all over New Zealand, including some detailed in this book during the 1970's. There was a first ascent of the north ridge of Kensington in 1974 (the Purerora Mt Kensington, there is another similarly named peak in the upper Mathias), and many others. Indeed, first ascents are a recurring theme in this book, with some very recent ones listed, and unclimbed routes noted. My father did a trip to Kashmir with Geoff in 1979, and spoke of some hard days, good mountains, and Geoff as an immensely fit and experienced mountain man. The FMC Bulletin has featured Geoff, and he regularly has stories and photos published in "Wilderness". And after over thirty very active years of trans alpine trips, many multi day trips in the area, and after a couple of attempts, Geoff completed a Garden of Allah traverse, road end to road end, in under 24 hours. Sort of like tramping the length of the Tararuas in that time (with a few glaciers in the middle). If trans alpine tramping was an Olympic sport, then Geoff would be the gold medallist.

**The Canterbury Westland Alps** guide book is an excellent book. It's well written, with introductory notes on topics such as access and permission requirements, camp sights, river crossing points, Mountain Radio and cell phone reception, SAR, avalanches, weather, geology, and contact details of surrounding land owners

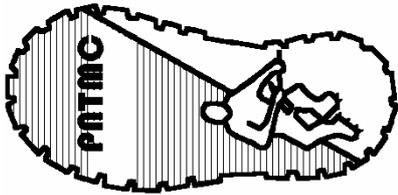
and DoC offices. Some other activities are mentioned, such as ski touring. There are good notes about each mountain range, climbing history, literature (of course featuring John Pascoe), and further reading. Grid references (from both NZMS 260 and NZTopo 50 series), and contour lines marking specific points state the detail the authors have gone to. Sketch maps, advertisements, and quotes complement the many great photos.

**The twenty four chapters** each cover a major catchment (with sub catchments), listed south to north, with approximately half of the book dedicated to each side of the Southern Alps. As an example, the Rakaia chapter covers 23 pages, with a few paragraphs on important details such as 4WD and foot access, huts, river crossings, and major geographic features. Each of the listed climbs are covered in one or two sentences, with grades, spot heights and first ascents listed (including a couple of new routes by PNTMC members Trevor Bissell, Bill Olsen, and Tony Gates). Route options are grouped together, and displayed on photos where possible.

## Quote of the Month

*The upper Mangahao is a masterpiece of river scenery, and entirely different from the much less rugged sylvan charms of the upper Ohau. The bed of the upper Mangahao takes the form of a great stairway massed with majestic boulders, huge, beautifully rounded by the action of water, and embellished by floral and botanical decorations of almost infinite variety. Along the bush-clad banks flowering trees and shrubs, as well as masses of smaller flowering plants nearer the water's edge, combine to make a sense of unspoiled grandeur probably unsurpassed in the Tararua Range. In addition, one section of the valley has topographic features of a most arresting character: a series of bush-clad bluffs rise vertically to a height of from 500 ft. to 600 ft. above the river, and on at least one of them the bush is growing on a promontory that actually overhangs the valley-bottom; another bluff has the form of a great partially-bare rock slab, square-cut and overhanging, and of so formidable an appearance as to make the traveller hurry on from under. The force of the Mangahao floods is demonstrated by the stability of the boulder-packed bed; though rounded and smooth, all boulders both large and small are tightly wedged in position, seldom if ever moving under the foot and forming stepping-stones that greatly facilitate the rate and ease of travel.*

By G.L. Adkin (1928), from the Levin Chronicle. NB Adkin peak, on the Southern Crossing, is named after him. He was a great Tararua explorer.



**Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.**

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

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**PNTMC Newsletter**

**March 2011**

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

- ***Upcoming trips and club events***
- Recent Trip Reports
- Great hut log book poems
- Punga Hut canyons
- A charming Tararua quote
- Review of the latest Geoff Spearpoint book

**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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