

Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.

www.pntmc.org.nz

P.O. Box 1217, Palmerston North

Newsletter February 2012



The Oroua river at its peak, Iron Gate Hut, Sunday 8 Jan 2012. [Janet Wilson] Refer to trip report inside.

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.

9 February

Navigation and GPS

Warren Wheeler

Where am I ? How do I get where? Why aren't I there yet? These and other mysteries will be explored tonight. We will have maps and compasses and GPS but feel free to bring your own along.

16 February

Committee Meeting

23 February

Club Night Outward Bound at Anakiwa, Marlborough Sounds Woody Lee

8 March

Extraordinary General Meeting

Refer notices, website, previous Newsletter.

22 March

AGM

The PNTMC Annual General Meeting 2012 will sort out routine club business, offices, and finances, then offer you a good supper.

Upcoming Trips

4-6 February Waitangi Weekend

**Mokai-Patea-Waikamaka River-Wakelings Hut
-Otukota Hut Circuit** M/F

Chris Tuffley 359 2530

Lovely western Ruahine/ Colenso country forest-tussock- river tramping territory. Good opportunity for hut bagging too.

6 Feb

Wharite E/M
Duncan Hedderley 354 6905

Starting from Coppermine Creek, we head up into the hills and along to the TV tower at Wharite. Back the same way. Good views of the wind farms, Ashurst and the Manawatu. Meet 8am at Milverton Park.

11- 12 Feb

Sunrise Hut E/ family
Doug Strachan 353 6526

This hut is in the eastern Ruahines, in from Ongaonga, about a 2hr drive from PN. We follow up a well-maintained track for 2-3hrs. Visit the site where Shuteye Shack used to stand. Stand on the place where Hamish Armstrong's plane crashed. Crash at Sunrise Hut. This tramp is billed as a family trip. Looks like my kids will be otherwise occupied this weekend and won't be coming. There is considerable flexibility as to what people do, including easy and not-so-easy routes for returning to the cars.

12 Feb

Purity Hut and beyond M/ F
Warren Wheeler 356 1998

Leave PN at 7.30 am and head for Mangakokeke Roadend. We have to cross some steep farmland to get to the park boundary, and then a nice climb up through the Western Ruahines gets us to Purity Hut - it is sited just above the tussock line, and on a clear day, there are stunning views of the ranges including Mt Ruapehu and Taranaki. There is the option of carrying onto Iron Peg and Mangaweka Trig (dependent on weather and fitness).

18- 19 Feb

Waterfall Hut M/ F
Peter Darragh 353 0922

This historic ex NZFS hut is located in forest beside beautifully scenic river flats in the upper Kawhatau valley, central to many Ruahine places. There are lovely camp sights, no river crossing problems, a few marked tracks, and a considerable array of route choices to reach the hut. Peter will choose a suitable one, and show you some great country. Depart 8.00am.

19 Feb

Iron Gates Gorge M
Warren Wheeler 356 1998

Depart 9.00am. A classic river trip for a fine summer day. The gorge confines the Oroua River at the boundary of the Ruahine Forest Park. We first follow the sidle track past Heritage Lodge for about an hour. After a swim and early lunch we follow the river downstream to the gorge. Expect to get more than your feet wet and maybe try pack floating. Beginners welcome.

20- 24 Feb

Lake Colenso Hut painting (work)
Janet Wilson 329 4722

The Colenso Work party - The club is helping DOC with the repainting of Lake Colenso Hut. This is for a week, starting on Monday., and I believe we will be flown in and out. We will also (probably) be helping with the Te Potae stoat line. If you are interested and available contact me for more details as soon as possible.

25- 25 Feb

Keretaki Hut M
Richard Lockett 323 0948

A lovely 6 bunk ex forest service over looking Dannevirke. We will be heading in from the western side of the Ruahine range via a bush bash from No 1 line, Pohangina valley east rd, investigating some off track routes, following deer trails and open creeks. Depart 8.00am.

25 Feb (Sat)

Atiwhakatu Valley E/ Family
Janet Maessen 353 0922

The Atiwhakatu Valley is understandably the most popular area of the Tararuas, with the spacious car park and camping area at the road end in from Masterton, good forest tracks, (including good access to Mt Holdsworth) and a pleasant river to swim in. Definitely not a hard trip. Depart 8.00am.

3- 4 March

Upper Makaroro Valley M/ F
Craig Allerby 323 7913

Flowing into Hawkes Bay, the Makaroro River provides plenty of classic Ruahine tramping, both on and off track. Destination Parkes Peak, Upper Makaroro, and Barlow Huts as part of the classic circuit. Depart 7.00am.

4 March

Rangi Hut E/ M
Woody Lee 357 2390

One of popular huts in Western Ruahine Forest Park. It will be an easy tramp to the hut and we will explore the tussock tops of the Whanahua Range. Leave PN at 8am.

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:

| | |
|--------------------------|----------|
| Mick Leyland | 358-3183 |
| 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

PNTMC Extraordinary General Meeting, 8 March 2012. Managing Ruahine Huts

PNTMC has two proposals to work with DoC with managing Ngamoko, Mid Pohangina, and Rangiwahia huts. Separate documents have been prepared, copies of which have been circulated and placed on the PNTMC web site.

The EGM planned for 7.45 pm on 8 March 2012 at the Society of Friends clubrooms is to discuss these proposals. Please attend.

PNTMC Annual General Meeting 2012

The PNTMC AGM 2012 will be held on 22 March. There will be the usual business, and hopefully a guest speaker with some shared interests. Please come to support PNTMC.

PNTMC Annual Christmas Awards

These were held at the PNTMC Christmas BBQ at Ashhurst Domain, with awards listed below issued for a variety of achievements from 2011.

Woody Lee – Great Leap Forward Award – wound clock forward instead of back for Waikamaka Trip with Peter Wiles.

Tony Gates– Lone Ranger Pale Face Award – crook in the car coming back from Plimmerton coastal walk – not just lost lunch.

Tina Bishop– Alison Holst Hospitality Award – Foxton Beach soup and muffins

Woody Lee– Parallel Universe Award – Mitre, “its not very steep, pretty easy” yeah, right.

Ray Corner– Lonely Lunch Award – left lunch behind at lodge Boundary Stream.

Eric Liu – Artistic Director Award – photo display for library

Martin Lawrence– No Hang Ups Award – winning photo of Ngamoko Hut

Anne/ Martin – Just Gremlin Strikes Thrice Award – Kaweka trip, camera conked out, cooker caught fire, torch flew apart.

Bruce Van Brunt– Snailcraft Award – late back (3.00 AM) from slow climb of Girdlestone and Ruapehu with Eric and other learners.

And the prestigious Tararua Trophy for excellence in literature for 2011 goes to Anja Sholz. It was her fascinating story about the A Frame all women expedition.

FMC photograph competition 2012

PNTMC Committee hopes to enter the FMC photo competition 2012 with relevant place getters from our very own photo competition of 2012. Entries close April 2012.

The Ruahine Hut Bagging Challenge

This club challenge is now underway, with more than a few Ruahine Hut logbooks displaying the PNTMC name. The challenge is to encourage members to visit Ruahine Huts and bivs in a one year period, until December 2012. Enter names in the hut books and photograph the huts, with the aim of producing a poster of all the huts at the end. Wouldn't be great if, as a club, members visited all Ruahine huts and bivvies, and that all club members could be included in at least one photo!

Think of some areas of concentrations of huts for easy pickings. Diggers-Forks-Te Ekaou-Stanfield-Cattle Creek-Mid Poh etc, Triplex-Sunrise-Waipawa-Top Maropea-Waikamaka and Barlows-Top Makaroro-Kylie-Parkes Peak-Sentry Box-Masters-Herricks-Dead Dog-Ruahine all have huts worth visiting. A determined hut bagger could check out three or four (or more) huts on a good day, and they are all (generally) in good condition.

Rules

- You must be a club member
- Hut means those recognised by DOC (sorry to "secret huts")
- Period to go from this years end of year BBQ to next years ie from Friday 16th Dec 2011 to Thursday 13 Dec 2012
- All huts worth 2 points.
- 1st 2 visits to each hut = 2 pts per visit, thereafter 1 point for that hut
- Hut can only be claimed once per trip
- You must enter your name in the hut log book with PNTMC and take a photo of the hut (with or without trip members)
- Kawhatau Base value is 1 point
- Unknown campsite is worth 2 points.
- Winner announced at EOY BBQ



PNTMC at Crow Hut, Kawhatau, Jan 2012.

Death in the Mt Aspiring National Park

With sadness, we hear of two more deaths in the Mountains during January 2012. A chamois hunter fell to his death in the Rob Roy area of Mt Aspiring National Park. This is an area well known for steep rock, tussock, snow, and ice terrain. Tararua Tramping Club life member Michael Taylor also fell to his death in similar terrain the upper Wilkin valley, a couple of valleys north.

I had done a couple of trips with Michael back in the 80's, and always considered him a good companion and tough trumper. He completed many great trips to the Tararuas, Southern Alps, and elsewhere, and was actively involved with club administration. He was attempting a solo ascent of Twilight peak from the top forks of the Wilkin Valley, and it appears that he fell from bluffs near the bushline. Although many areas appear to be easy country here, it is big and wild country. Remember to always take care.

Books

I'm sure that many good books were given and received as Christmas gifts. A few new ones arrived to my personal library, some of which are available for review here if you wish to borrow them. They include;

Davey Hughes, Untamed. The extraordinary adventures of the Swazi Man. By Davey Hughes (2011). Random House.

Well presented stories by a local man, featuring some Tararua hut building and SAR activities.

Bold beyond belief. Bill Denz, New Zealand's Mountain Warrior. By Paul Maxin (2011). Maxim Books.

A wonderfully written life story of an exceptional Kiwi mountaineer. Recommended.

Wind from a Distant Summit. P Deavoll (2001)

Tales from another great Kiwi mountaineer.

Wild Heart, the Possibility of Wilderness in Aotearoa. Edited by M Abbott and R Reeve.

Fair Weather Trampers. by Julia Millen (2011), Writes Hill Press.

A well written series of short stories of trips to the Tararuas, Ruahines, Ruapehu (plus), and featuring numerous near disasters and steadfast refusal to learn from prior mistakes.

Travels of Hochstetter and Haast in New Zealand. By Mike Johnstone and Saacha Nolden (2011), Nikau Press.

Fascinating true stories of two William Colenso type characters.

A Life on Gorge River. New Zealand's most remote family. Robert Long (2010). Random.

A lovely life story (so far) of living in (and making a living off) the wilderness south of Haast.

Te Araroa Walkway (2011)

Glossy book on TAW, useful for field route guide information and reference.

Alpine Journal 2011 published by the NZAC. Typically a well presented mix of club activities.

DoC news from the Tararuas

Possum and Rodent Control Operation in the Manawatu Gorge Scenic Reserve

DOC has advised the public of their ongoing possum and rat control programme in the Manawatu Gorge Scenic Reserve. This is undertaken as part of the Manawatu Gorge Biodiversity partnership with the intention of keeping rat and possum numbers as low as possible.

Control is through bait stations, using either biodegradable bait stations stapled directly to trees or white plastic bait stations. Toxins are Feratox (cyanide based) for possums and Diphacinone (anti-coagulant based) for rats. Feratox will not be placed within 20 metres of public walking tracks.

The following safety rules apply (from the DOC Fact Sheet "Key facts about possum and rodent control in the Manawatu Gorge Scenic Reserve")

- DO NOT handle any bait
- DO NOT allow CHILDREN to wander unsupervised.
- DO NOT bring DOGS into this area
- DO NOT handle or eat ANIMALS from this area

This is a summary of some of the info provided in the fact sheet. For more information on the operation or to get your own copy of the fact sheet please contact DOC ph 06 350 9700.

The track to Waitewaewae

If you are feeling a bit lazy, particularly near the end of a hard tramp, one rather annoying aspect of any track in the Tararuas is the continual up's and down's. The Manawatu Gorge track may have small and gentle dips, the Arete Forks Sidle track mountains to climb, and others something in between. Even those little ups and downs on the Atiwhakitu valley track can be tiring.

The track to Waitewaewae Hut, more passionately known simply as YTTY, was once, in part, an easily graded old tram track. An exceptionally mean looking slip cut up from the Waitatapia River a few years ago, removed the track, and forced a new and very annoying diversion near Papa Creek. This diversion was forced to be re cut several times- a humiliating grunt on an otherwise easy bush ramble. When tramping from Otaki Forks into YTTY, the track continues past the diversion easily to Papa Creek and the old steam engine, then Saddle Creek, and its gentle climb up to the plateau. After the gentle descent to the Otaki River and YTTY hut, a good track climbs to the Tararua Range, and several off track routes are available into the Otaki and YTTY river headwaters.

TTC and DoC track cutters have been investigating cutting a new track from the top of this slip, sidling easy terrain between the 300 and 450 metre contours more or less directly to the Plateau. It's definitely a short cut, and on the map, it looks quite obvious. Saddle Creek can be a nuisance at times, so there are safety issues here during floods.

This section of track is part of the Te Araroa Walkway. Government funds are therefore available for track maintenance.

New Memorial on Waiopehu Peak

During January 1936, a storm of historic proportions hit the Tararuas. Vast areas of forest were blown over, and some of the logs can still be seen. Ralph Wood and friends departed Te Matawai Hut to escape the maelstrom, avoiding the flooded Ohau, and struggling around a by then devastated track. Once on the open tops near Waiopehu peak, Ralph Wood succumbed to hypothermia. His friends thought they wouldn't make it out alive. They returned for on site burial, with his grave and a memorial trig beside the track. This is visible from Levin when sun reflects off it.

The memorial trig has recently been re built above the grave site on Twin peak by volunteers and DoC.

The Waiopahu Hut-Twin peak-Gable End track makes for a good day tramp. Waiopahu Hut attracts both morning and afternoon sunshine, on the prominent outlier peak of Waiopahu. There are great views of the upper Otaki, Mangahao, and Ohau valleys, and a selection of tracks leading into the high central Tararuas of the interior. There is some easy country around Waiopahu-Twin Peaks, and some very difficult leatherwood cloaked creek headwaters.



Death in the tussock: the Ralph Wood grave, Twin Peak/ Waiopahu.

DoC news from the Ruahines

In the midst of these immense, primeval forests which surround for miles on every side the view from this place was very extensive solemn, and grand, overlooking miles of forests, with the eternal mountains up rearing their heads and peaks around. On the E and S was the great Ruahine Range, with the many isolated spurs and ridges of its W flank, here rising abruptly like a formidable barrier to our progress that way.

William Colenso 1847.

Colenso's Ruahine Crossing "The CRC", or "Ruahine Ara Noho" (The Ruahine trail of Noho/ Colenso).

Or even perhaps "*Te Ngahere Awa Maunga Ruahine Ara Noho*", ie The Ruahine forest river and mountain trail of Colenso.

The name William Colenso has appeared in this Newsletter many times. He was a great explorer, botanist, and Missionary from the 1840's and 1850's who explored vast tracts of the North Island (Including of course the Ruahines). He was a prolific writer with great scientific interest, and befriended the local iwi. He crossed the Ruahines eight times via Colenso Spur-Maropea Valley-Mokai Patea Range, re making an historic Maori trail.

PNTMC have visited this area many times, to places like; the Makaroro and Maropea Valleys, Lake Colenso, Colenso Spur, and Te Atū O Mahuru peak. The latter has been translated by William Colenso as "The opposite of comfort". His Maori guides sometimes called this peak Te Taumata a Noho "The summit, or pass of Noho".



Colenso Country. The evocatively named Te Papakia Kuutaa "Barrier of the Defender God of the Interior" (Papakiakuta Ridge and Remutopo Peak), as viewed from the Ruahine Range near Maroparea. Colenso Creek flows to the Makaroro River to the right, the Unknown Stream flows to the Maropea River to the left.

DoC are planning to publicise this area of the Ruahines with the CRC, an over the range trail that follows much of William Colenso's original route, combined with DoC's excellent facilities. As with much of Ruahine tramping, the CRC follows a route, rather than a formed track, because of easy river bed, tussock tops, and

farmland terrain. There are DoC tracks and signs, and some marked routes, leading to excellent huts at Barlows, Maropea Forks, Otukota, Iron Bark, and Lake Colenso. DoC have removed the swingbridge built for NZ Forest Service deer cullers, located between Iron Bark and Otukota Huts, and constructed two new bridges in much more useful locations over the Maropea River and Unknown Stream near Iron Bark Hut. They have also altered the track over the Mokai Station, at the northern end of the Mokai Patea Range, to make access easier.

The Mid Pohangina Hut Swingbridge

Last summer, an Engineers Report failed the Pohangina River swingbridge just down from Mid

Pohangina Hut. DoC plan to remove this bridge and not replace it, despite some concern from PNTMC, and FMC. When the bridge is not replaced, access from the western side of the range will be limited. The Pohangina River will allow a safe crossing at this location for only two or three months of the year, and the terrain and vegetation in the area is steep and difficult. Once the bridge is gone, there will be no easy river crossing options, so DoC hopes to alter the tracks to access easier and safer crossing points up river. Access to Mid Pohangina Hut is still possible from the Dannevirke side, via Stanfield and Cattle Creek Huts, and for the more adventurous, from Takapari Road via Centre Creek. DoC will offer signs advising of updates.

Trip Reports

12 November 2011

Ruapae Falls

Report and Photo by Richard Lockett

A lovely fine warm spring day saw Warren and I heading towards the Tararuas from Eketahuna and wondering where everyone else was. We put it down to early Christmas shopping. A few cars at the road end with a couple of warm bonnets which meant a busy night at Roaring Stag Hut and possibly people ahead of us on the track. I was saying to Warren that the track from the road end up to the second swing bridge is one of the nicest stream sidle tracks around, with a couple of camp sites and swimming holes and with the track not getting too high above the stream. About half way to the second bridge we caught up with a couple of young women with two little something Terrier dogs complete with mussels' which one would think could hinder their ability cool off by not being able to poke the tongue out. One of the women was from Chile and doing a mountain stream project with Mike Joy at Massey, Warren (quick as) offered an escorted tour of the Ruapae Stream and environs, but no, the allure of lunch at Herepai hut was not to be missed.

Second swing bridge and goodbye to the two something terriers and their companions as we were to go off track and head north up 250 metres onto the broad flattish area 655 metres ASL and to pick up the pink ribbon marked trail which traverses along the top and brings one out onto the grassy flats of the Ruapae Stream half a kilometre from the Falls. Morning tea in the sun, and then head up stream towards the falls.



Warren strolling the delightful grassy flats near Ruapae falls, Mangatainoka stream.

The stream went from being open with grassy flats with shingle banks, to closing up until being a 5 metre wide slot with vertical sides and deep pools of water. This spot brought proceedings to a halt just one bend away from the falls, "mutter just like last time" said Warren. This spot in the slot has a ledge across it about a metre high which the water flows over and I've climbed over this on previous occasions but with a lot more shingle at its base. Warren being the leader tells me to wade out along the shallow side and test the depth, but with the cool temperature of being in the slot and water at waist height and rising still being 5 metres from the ledge, Warren flagged it for another season. So back down stream to the flats for lunch in the sun were it was decided to continue down stream to the second bridge being such a nice day and being wet already. Good travel in the stream, boulder hopping, a bit of up and over and around some big stuff and we were soon back onto the sidle track along side the Mangatainoka a nice round trip capped off with an ice cream at Eketahuna.

26-27 November 2011
Pureroa Forest Park
Photos by Richard Lockett



Action photos of Kathy Corner at Pureora Forest Park. Crossing the stream north of Piopio Flats (top), and at hunters hut, top end of Waione Tramway MTB track

1-5 December 2011
Hikurangi-Pourangaki-Kawhatau-Mokai Patea
Report by Derek Sharp

This was a brilliant pre Christmas hut bagging stroll in the Ruahines, just Nigel Scott and myself, light packs, and good weather. We started by completing a full length north south traverse of the Hikurangi Range, from the Kawhatau River to Iron Peg, then Hawkes Bay Ridge and Pourangaki Hut. It was a good stroll over to the traditional Waterfall Hut, ranging about much of the lovely high central Ruahines. We continued over to Waikamaka Hut, and chased several deer and trout down river to Wakelings Hut. Homeward bound on our fifth day, we simply nicked over the Mokai Patea Range, through easy though extensive tussock plateaux and so back to the car.

This is a fantastic tramping area known very well to many PNTMC members. Access and facilities are excellent, and could be used much more

than at present. Some of the huts are cosy, well maintained, and seldom visited.

28 December 2011
Lower Pohangina River
Report: Tina Bishop, photos: Warren Wheeler

On a hot summers day four of us and Holly (dog) headed up the Pohangina Valley. Disappointed that our five day tramp was cancelled due to heavy rain forecasts (what a wise choice that turned out to be) we were determined to at least to get a short river tramp in. Accosted by the owner whose land we had to cross to get to the track, I thought Holly was going to be mauled by his four dogs and banished to the car for the day - Whoops there was a small sign on the gate "no dogs". As always, Holly's charm ruled and we were off down the steep muddy farm track across some grass and headed beside the river until we reached the bush track which heads to Mid Pohangina Hut.

It was a pleasant walk through bush and a sidle over an old slip, entertained by Emma's many graceful falls which I'm sure were a result of feeling the pressure of being in front. After an hour or so we dropped down and rock hopped along the river for a while. This was a new and challenging experience for Emma and I felt for her knowing what it is like to try and keep up with Warren's long confident stride. We crossed the river and bush bashed up a very steep bank to investigate Centre Creek Biv which I thought would be a unique shelter, only it was just a clearing/camp site in the bush. Back to the river to have lunch by the stunning river – no one was tempted to have a swim though, not even Warren. We crossed the river again to begin our traipse downstream where *we rock hopped, waded and swam for a good couple of hours. There were some very challenging aspects of this river* which pushed Emma, Holly and I to our limits.

The trip has become a bit of a blur but I recall having to climb over some large and tricky boulders, wade through some fast and deep pools and clamber around banks. Luckily I had invested in a "harness collar" for Holly as she found this trip very challenging and made things harder for me as I/we had to lift her up and over places she did not want to go! I had to put her lead on and drag her into the deep pools and try not to be pulled over by her. The highlight of the trip was when we got to the canyon.



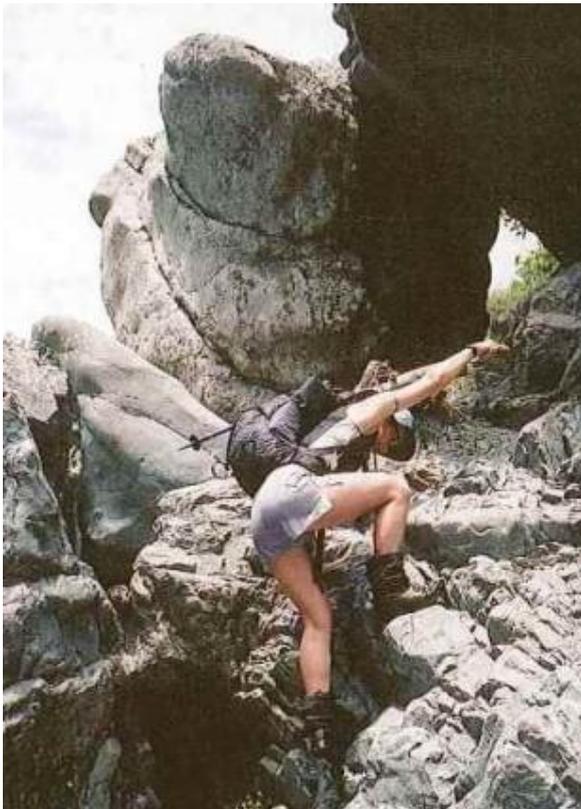
course Warren decided he could “Spiderman” his way around the rocky steep bank and avoid the water. I followed with Holly on her lead. Of course she panicked and made me fall into the water and do it the way we intended – yay I’m so glad as it was very cool! For a split second Holly and I were pulled under from the surge and pull of the rapid, scary! Next was Emma followed by Richard.

Eventually we got back onto the farmers track and climbed the very steep hill back to the car arriving hot and sweaty again desperately in need of another swim!



I think Warren made it through relatively dry. We stopped off at Raumai where there were lots of people and rubbish galore - yuck! The river was lovely and it was nice to relax and float on the current. Back to the car for a quick change and Warren being the good citizen that he is filled his boot with rubbish. A drink and some chips at the Waterford finished off our trip which I think was quite an adventure!

We were, Warren Wheeler, Richard Lockett, Emma, Tina Bishop and Holly.



**4 5 January 2011
Upper Pohangina-Top Gorge Hut
Report: Tina Bishop, Photos: Warren Wheeler**

Another sunny summer day and we were off to stomp the Pohangina river, this time the head waters via Longview Hut. Having finished work at 10am it was a late start, we had lunch at the Monckton Reserve and arrived at the Kashmir Road end about two-ish. Warren’s nineteen seventies Renault is now world famous in the Ruahines, folk say it took four attempts, reverse gear and someone to hold it in gear to get to the top of that road! Some hunters were heading off the same time as us but in a different direction, they wanted to know how we got up the hill in “that” car.

It was rather a hot steamy climb up the ridge in the mid afternoon sun to Longview Hut but the odd breeze cooled us down and strong winds nearly bowled us over at the top, I had visions of Holly or myself being flung over the edge. We signed the hut book, took a photo, and had a quick chat to a man and his two boys then we were off again. Back up to the sign at the top and then we dropped down via a slip to meet the head of the Pohangina River.

*PNTMC in the Pohangina River, January 2012
“some very challenging aspects of this river.....”*

This was basically a compulsory swim. The beginning was a swift rapid which led into a beautiful deep pool through the canyon. Of

What looks like a very small typical stream suddenly slopes sharply down into a beautiful waterfall – the first of three or four. Travel is

tricky around the falls and at times it's a matter of finding a safe foot/hand holds. We came to a cairn and headed up a steep track and climbed down a bank having to lift Holly while avoiding slipping. You then see why you have to head away from the stream as we look up towards a seven metre waterfall – wow! There is a nice big deep pool at the bottom asking to be swum in but we did not feel like a swim as it had cooled down. A lone young trumper appeared from downstream wondering if he was heading in the right direction, by the sounds of it he was having quite an adventure!

We trudged on along the river with many crossings which got more complicated as the river grew. The scenery was great and in some areas quite windy – enough to put me off balance as I rock hopped but I managed to only let Warren witness one fall. Holly showed huge improvement in her river skills and easily kept up with Warren. Our plan was to camp along the river on a site previously visited by the club but the wind was up so we carried on to Top Gorge Hut which was just around the corner....? Oh the next corner....? Maybe the next one...? According to the sign on the tops it was only 1 ½ hours to the hut, after 2 ½ hours we finally came across a sign which said "Motel".

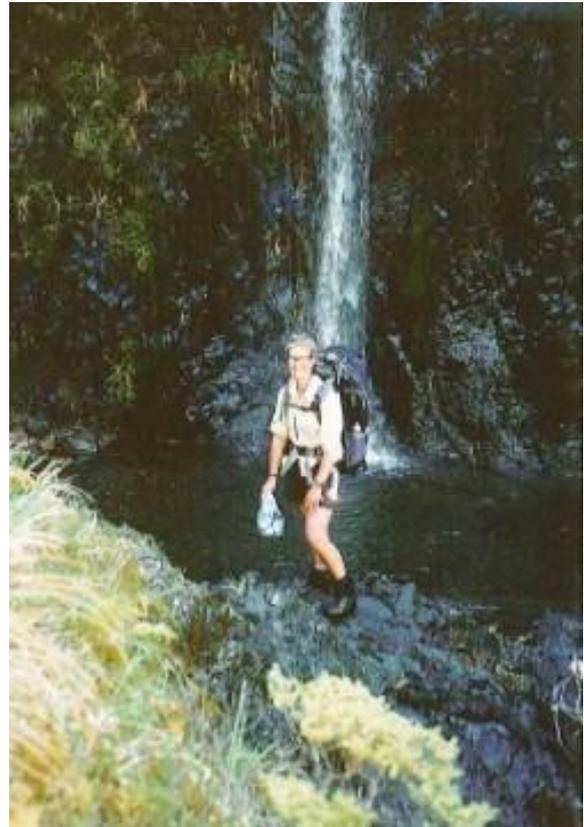


Tina and Holly at Top Gorge Hut

The hut is a very old two bunker with cobwebs, natural air vents and mouldy mattresses. A can of baked beans had leaked but "Mr Tidy Kiwi Wheeler" found some leftover wet wipes to clean it up and also remove the mould off the mattresses. By this time the place was starting to get cosy so we scrapped the idea to camp out by the river and settled in to cook dinner and then sleep. We woke quite late, apparently there was tapping on the window in the night – I suggested a Deer? I know there was something very heavy on my feet all night.

We headed off around eight heading back up stream the way we came yesterday. In no time we were back at the big waterfall deciding

whether to have a swim... or not... it was too early so we gave it a miss. Morning tea at the bottom of the slip gave us time to admire the botanical beauty and reflect on what non-trampers miss out on.



Tina at one of the Upper Pohangina waterfalls. Where is Holly hiding?

After a quick sidetrack back to Longview Hut to check in and have a gossip we learnt that the rescue helicopter had just been in to pick up one of the guy's daughters whom had come down with a bad tummy bug. Oh and we were asked if we were the ones with the blue Renault and how did we get up the road in "that" car? Lunch was again at Monckton Reserve then home in time to shower and go to work – phew!! awesome! We were Warren, Tina and Holly.

December 2011 and January 2011 Oroua Valley stoat lines Report and photos by Janet Wilson

In early December, the Tararua College group led by Colin Leigh, had a successful trip to Iron Gate Hut and back down the river to the Oroua campsite, checking all traps along the way and rebaiting those on the tracks. They got 9 rats and also helped out with fixing a couple of traps.

Next came the big trap move from Iron Gate and Tunupo streams to the Tunupo Ridge track and

the ridge above Iron Gate Hut (Iron Gate Ridge?) I am extremely grateful to the Airforce No 3 Squadron for helping so willingly with this job and to the volunteers who offered their time so willingly too - especially those who turned up for all 3 attempts. There must be something about those old helicopters and the opportunity to be winched in and out of them! On 12 Dec, the first attempt was made. The Iroquois, tanker and 8 volunteers (Graham Peters, Peter Darragh, Richard Lockett, Colin Leigh, Steve Bielski, Andrew, Duncan and myself) were all at the airstrip, but the weather closed in before we could get up the valley. Three people had a go on the winch before they flew away. Steve and Duncan went down and rebaited the traps on the new Stoat Trappers Line to Iron Gate Gorge and checked the rest of the traps to the campsite back up to the main track and got 4 rats so the day wasn't completely wasted for them.

The Airforce kindly agreed to try again a week later and so we were back there again (Graham P, Richard L, Peter D, Warren Wheeler, Martin and Anne Lawrence - all PNTMC - Steve B and myself) on the 19 December. This time the cloud didn't lift in time and they once again flew back to Ohakea, promising to try again on the Wed before Xmas, when the forecast looked very positive.



Stoat line workers at the heli pad.

This day dawned bright and clear. Seven volunteers this time - Graham, Martin, Steve, Richard, Peter, Yvette Cottam and myself. After winch practise for us all, we were inserted as 3 teams of 2 (plus myself) to the piles of traps. It took from 10am until around 3pm until the job of moving the piles on to the ridge tracks was done and the Airforce flew away, leaving us to spread out the traps. The Tunupo team made it out to the cars by early evening (collecting 4 rats on the way), the team of 4 coming down to Iron Gate Hut and then out got back to the cars at 11pm - 2 rats removed from traps before it got dark. A great job done (54 traps moved) and now

hopefully, what were very inaccessible traps will be easier to bait and check regularly. There were lots of photos taken and also some video of the last trip so we are looking forward to seeing that.

On 23 Dec, Steve B checked the Stoat trappers line and got 1 rat and 1 stoat. He checked again on 29 Dec but got nothing. Around this time his son tramped up to Triangle Hut and spotted a pair of blue ducks with 3 young.

The Manawatu Speleo group check was 5-9 January 2012. I went in via the tops to Triangle Hut with Graham P and Yvette C on the Thursday as a pleasant tramp. We saw 1 pair of ducks from the hut - no ducklings though. We enjoyed swimming in the river. On the Friday we checked the traps down to Iron Gate Hut, finding only 1 rat (that's 6 weeks since these traps were last rebaited).

We then went and explored up to Iron Gate Creek, which was new to us. We retrieved the 6 remaining boxes that has not been gathered up previously and took these back to the hut - they are now cleaned up and under the hut (awaiting redeployment?).

On the Saturday, we went up the ridge track and sorted out the numbering on the traps. Jean Garman and Ivan Reinks tramped in via Tunupo and the tops just checking the traps and found only 1 rat on the main track in. Jenny McCarthy and Brian Webster came in via the sidle track with eggs and got 4 rats, 2 stoats and one unknown. We all gathered at the hut - my fly camping idea ruined by the weather. It poured down Sat night, causing the river to become a raging brown torrent - most impressive how big it became so quickly.

On Sunday morning we checked out Tunupo Creek which was most definitely uncrossable. We returned to the hut, where 4 of us (Graham, Brian, Yvette and myself) decided to stay put and the others braved the conditions and tramped out over the tops. The river dropped about 2 metres overnight from its peak on Sunday afternoon, and it was easy to cross Tunupo Creek around 10am Monday - a good lesson in how quickly that river can rise (and fall).

Our decision to sit it out was made easier by the 1kg of rice and tin of baked beans that we found in the hut. Not that we were short of food anyway. We left the tin of beans (and half the rice) for someone else. We finished off by checking and rebaiting the traps down to the Oroua campsite and were pleased to find 2 stoats.

15 January 2012
**Takapari Road- A Frame Hut in style
Report and Photo by Tony Gates**

I wondered if chauffer driven limousine transport was allowed for the Ruahine hut bagging challenge as Terry slowed the vehicle to negotiate difficult rocky sections of road. Then he powered up steep bits, pushing effortlessly through overhanging vegetation, and gave us glorious views of the Pohangina, Makawakawa, and Tamaki catchments. It was pretty easy really, with several short walks to various lookouts, some map checks, and of course we needed to take shelter from the brutal sunshine. The ground was surprisingly damp up top, with recent earthworks allowing the road to drain well. The road was in excellent form, and the A Frame Hut (illustrated) was a good lunch spot. How many more Ruahine huts can we drive to?

For those unfamiliar with Takapari Road, it is a popular southern Ruahine access point for four wheel drives, mountain bikes, and the like. The road climbs gently from the Pohangina valley to vast and flat leatherwood plateaux. The steep eastern side descends to the Tamaki River, and Dannevirke is almost directly below the A Frame Hut. There are several tracks that link up to Takapari Road.



Tony Gates, Peter Darragh, and Terry Crippen at the A Frame Hut, Takapari Road.

Historic PNTMC Ruahine Trip Report

Wharite Peak

Log of Day Trip to Wharite Peak, Sunday 8 May 1966, Leader: Roger Clarke, with Bryan Abraham, Trevor Arnold, Roger Clarke, J. Croke, J. Edwards, Carolyn Finch, D. Fletcher, Sue Johnstone, Russ Lacey, M. Moore, Tony Morrison, C. Newport, D. Pither, L. Pither, J. Pither, P. Pither, Sue Roberts, W. Rogerson, R. Scott, Miles Stiltwell, Gloria Traill, Karen Traill, Bruce Watson, Malcom Watson, Graham Whitcombe.

The air was crisp as 5 cars departed from the Post Office at 6.15 a.m. and proceeded through the Gorge. The weather was fine as we left the cars mid-way up Wharite. The going was good on the metal road and we reached the summit at 10 a.m. There the keen and fit clambered up to the first landing on the mast. After a short rest we proceeded along past the T.V. installations onto a bush track which led us along a ridge on the Ruahine Range. Then 1½ hours later, we arrived on a Saddle where we stopped. It was 12 o'clock by the time the billy was on boil and everybody had lunch in the sunshine.

At 1 p.m. some of the keen ones went up onto a higher ridge for a better view. Half-way up the track petered out and they were faced with thick patches of Leatherwood. From the top Feilding, Palmerston North, Pahiatua, Woodville, and Ashhurst could be seen. Then after a short rest they made their way back to the others. At 2.30 p.m. we headed back along the track. We arrived at the Wharite T.V. Tower at 4 pm. There, a party was organised and was shown inside the T.V. Station and shown briefly what makes a station operate. Time passed quickly, and at 5 p.m. everybody set off from the station, down the metal road and arrived back at the cars at 6 p.m.

We then all departed back to P.N. after enjoying an easy tramp on a very pleasant day.

A Christmas Gathering in the Austrian Alps by Terry Crippen

No hot summer weather this time for four past and present PNTMC and NZAC bods; it was sub-zero temperatures, down-hill skiing, langlaufing and alpine hiking in deep soft snow. A White Christmas at long last for the two born and breed NZers! Tony Holleman, ex NZAC and P North, now living in Prague, caught up with Terry and Angela in Mayrhofen for a few days before Christmas. He came well supplied with Dutch and Czech goodies to feed us, as we were lacking in luxury European food intake being on a tight budget. We had organized excellent very reasonable priced accommodation, with BIG Austrian

breakfasts supplied and a guest kitchen. Snow fell for a couple of days, so it was some deep step plugging in the slopes above the town and ski-fields, investigating various minor peaks, and cafes. We were (as expected) unusual sights amongst the well-dressed German and Austrian skiers, in our long-johns, shorts and overtrousers, armed with ice axes.

Then it was off to Biberwier, also in Austria but just over the border from Zugspitze (Germany's highest peak), where we had booked in for a week. Glad Tony was driving, with heavy snow falling during the drive! The locals don't seem to use chains. Even more snow here with the village at just on 1000m. Excellent views of the back end of the Zugspitze massif, as well as all the peaks in every direction. Everything was plastered in snow. To go shopping for groceries and other supplies in the nearby town of Erhwald, it was by cross country skis (langlaufing). We managed to stay on the skis most of the time but trying out the red trails was a bit hairy! Lucky we didn't buy eggs. The thin long skis are much harder to stop by doing snowploughs than normal downhill skis.

Christmas Eve arrived and it continued to snow, so it was briefly off to the local church to listen to the 10pm service – and of course *Silent Night* sung in German, then The Cube, a gigantic glass building – the local night club. On Christmas day it was time to hit the piste for some downhill skiing. Five minutes' walk from our accommodation had us on the chair lift. The ski fields in the area (what they call the Zugspitze Arena) are very extensive, the groomed areas considerably wider than on Ruapehu and far less crowded. (But a bit more expensive we think.) And it was new to us skiing in areas partially surrounded by forest.

Annett Patzold (ex PNTMC, now living in Hannover) arrived late on Christmas evening, armed with a BIG bag of luxurious (Eastern) German goodies and some interesting fire-water for celebrations! Boxing Day was spent cross country skiing both on and off trail, with a picnic by a lake, with nearly waist-deep snow. Annett was by far the best at cross country skiing.

On the other days more downhill skiing was undertaken on ski-fields in the area, with general improvement in technique by all involved, but Ange and Annett continued to have better style than Terry. The last day, in near perfect weather, we pugged our way up to a minor peak (Hollkof), at just under 2200m; the views were impressive. Well three of us did the plugging; Tony fortunately for him had hired snowshoes, so he had a much easier day. Wish we had had ski-mountaineering gear. Of course we cheated by using the chair-lift for the start and finish.

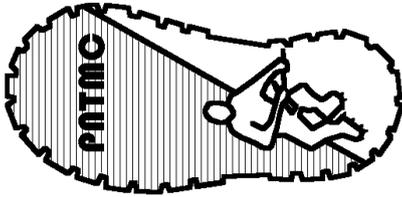
Our seven days were up, so we headed north into Germany, to visit Neuschwanstein Castle (the very famous fairy tale like castle of German calendars), hundreds of tourist about; but it was all covered in scaffolding and netting – under restoration. Oh well, we had our northern hemisphere White Christmas!



Boxing Day picnic by the lake, Austrian style, cross country skiing; for some members of PNTMC and/or NZAC: Annett Patzold; Angela Minto, Tony Holleman, Terry Crippen.



we pugged our way up to a minor peak (Hollkof), at just under 2200m Biberwier Christmas



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PNTMC Newsletter February 2012

What's inside this month?

- *A White Christmas in Austria*
- *DoC news in Tararuas and Ruahines*
- *Oroua Valley stoat trapping*
- *Pohangina Valley tramping*
- *Takapari Road 4 WD*
- *Ruapae Falls, Tararuas.*
- *Christmas in Austrian Alps*

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/>.

Get out and about with us!

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