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# Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.

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

P.O. Box 1217, Palmerston North

## Newsletter October 2012

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*Trekking through the European Alps. The iconic Matterhorn peak. [Malcolm Leary]*

### 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.

#### **Monday 1 October**

#### **Interclub Debate with MUAC**

Come along and support our team of Graham Peters, Chris Tuffley and Malcolm Parker at this Battle of Wits for the prized Old Boot Trophy. 7.00pm, ICLT Lecture Theatre, Vet Tower Block, Massey.

#### **Tuesday 2 October**

#### **Interclub Quiz**

#### **MTSC**

A fun and humorous evening, as the three clubs vie for the coveted Trevor Bissell trophy. 7.30pm at Rose City Aquatic Club Rooms, to the right of the Lido Pool Complex, Park Road.

#### **Thursday 11 October**

#### **Interclub Photo Competition**

#### **Martin Lawrence**

Following on our own photo competition, this evening will display the best from the three tramping clubs.

#### **Thursday 25 October**

#### **Wild Brazil and Patagonia**

Liz Flint will give us a presentation of wild life and wild places from her recent South American adventure.

## Upcoming Trips

**29-30 September**

**Hinerua Hut - Smiths Stream Hut** M  
**Martin Lawrence** 357 1695

Located in the Ruahines in Southern Hawkes Bay, in the Tukituki River headwaters, these huts are both cosy and historic. There will be plenty of opportunity to nick up onto the tops near Hinerua Hut for some great views of the Sawtooth and the high peaks near Sunrise Hut.

**30 September**

**No 1 Line Explorer** E/M  
**Peter Darragh** 353 0922

DoC have a new and very easy circuit track near the car park at No 1 line, then the main track- a short, sharp climb to the lookout seat. We could return down the stream (around the giant waterfall), or just enjoy the Ruahine bush.

**Kaweka tramp**

**Geoff Beaumont** E/M  
354 4929

Lovely country, with great huts and tracks. Longer days make the tramping more pleasant.

**NB - this tramp is delayed a couple of weeks from the original date of 6-7 October.**

**7 October**

**Ngauruhoe TNP** M/T  
**Warren Wheeler** 356 1998

Depart 6.00am. Practise your cramponing skills with a zig zag climb up the west face of Ngauruhoe. Also featuring scoria fields, steaming craters, cauliflower ice formations, grandstand views and a power stride or slide down the north face. We might even see an eruption! This classic day trip is a must – option of staying overnight if you are keen to do more.

**13-14 October**

**NB - Now postponed to later in summer.**

**Mid Pohangina Hut spring clean** E/M  
**Anne Lawrence** 357 1695

PNTMC has recently assumed role as manager of Mid Pohangina, which is a nice Southern Ruahine Hut. We will trim back the long grass, clean the windows, and check that everything at the hut is ready for any summer visitors.

**14 October**

**Sunrise Hut** E/M  
**Doug Strachan** 353 6526

A well-graded track zig-zags uphill for 2-3hrs to this eastern Ruahine hut, which has impressive views. There is good variety on offer, including PNTMC folklore, historical sites, with options of coming back down the track or the river or a bit of each. The drive to the start of the track behind Ongaonga takes 2hrs, so it will be a fairly long day. My kids will be in Japan, so you don't have

to worry about trying to keep up with them. 7:30am start from Milverton Park.

**20-22 October**

**Lake Colenso area** M  
**Warren Wheeler** 356 1998

Depart 7.30am. Come exploring this Labour Weekend to Lake Colenso, a gem in the northern Ruahines. From Mokai Station in the west there is a steep climb up through tussock grassland to the bush track down to Ironbark Hut for the night (4-5 hours) – trout for dinner? A new bridge allows all weather access to Colenso Hut (3 hours) with plenty of time to explore this unusual limestone area. Return option via the Unknown Stream to Ironbark Hut and out.

**22 October**

**Field Hut** E/M  
**Duncan Hedderley** 354 6905

Near Otaki Forks, Field Hut allows good access and great views of the Southern Tararuas. This is an historic area with lots of interesting things to look at. Depart Milverton Park 7.45 am.

**26-28 October**

**North East Ruahine Explorer** M/F  
**Janet Wilson** 329 4722

This hut baggers paradise will show you vast, sweeping tussock plateaux and classic Ruahine beech forest. Of the many DoC huts dotted throughout the NE Ruahines, Janet will lead you to many of them. Depart PN 7.00 am.

**28 October**

**Rangi Deadmans Loop** M  
**Peter Wiles** 358 6894

A classic local tramp past Rangi Hut to the wide open tussock grasslands of the Ruahines. Great views. Depart 7.30 am.

**3-4 November**

**Matui-Somes Island** E/M  
**Janet Wilson** 329 4722

This DoC island is located in the middle of Wellington Harbour. Good chance to see tuatara, penguins, huge wetas, birds and (hopefully) fireworks. Travel down Sat am, return Sunday and meet up for the BBQ (below). We have one house booked out and some camp sites reserved. Get in touch with Janet asap if you want to go.

**4 November**

**Otaki Forks BBQ and Picnic** All  
**Tony Gates** 357 7439

An easy day picnic where you do not need to stray far from your vehicle, and can explore the easy trails near the Waitotauru River. We will prepare a BBQ for the above group. Depart PN mid morning.

### **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:

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

### **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**

### **Meetings with DOC about Ruahine Huts**

Janet and Anne have been representing the club at the Ruahine Forest Park visitor facility management review. DOC invited representatives from a range of tramping and hunting groups whose members work and play in the Ruahines. The initial focus was on the impact of budget cuts on DOC's management of facilities in the Ruahines. After a number of meetings, we have agreed to form a group that meets regularly (4 times a year) with DOC to help inform their decisions about huts, tracks and bridges in the Ruahines. We also agreed there was a need for other ways of getting community

involved in maintaining huts and tracks and are keen to set up a website to manage this.

### **Hut Management Agreement Signed**

At the PNTMC meeting on 13 September, Jason Roxborough (on behalf of DOC) and Anne Lawrence as club president signed the Hut Management agreements. This means the club will have input into decisions about Rangī and is responsible for ongoing maintenance of Ngamoko and Mid-Pohangina Huts. They are now "our" huts! We are keen to have a good number of club members on the inaugural trip to do a bit of an inspection/spring clean of Mid-Pohangina Hut. NB please note that this has been postponed till later in summer, when the river levels should be easier to manage.

### **Other Committee Business**

The PNTMC committee has discussed public access to the Kawhatau Base (thence the Mokai Patea Range and Hikurangi Range). The property through which the road passes is for subdivision and sale, and we are hopeful that public access can continue here in future.

Maropea Forks Hut is an important shelter in the north-central Ruahines. It is in a beautiful location near the trail where William Colenso botanised many years ago. The Maropea River has been cutting into the bank in front of the hut, so DoC are looking at ways of either replacing or modifying it. They also want a community partner to assist with then management and maintenance of this lovely hut.

The A-Frame Hut, located near the end of Takapari Road, has received nil maintenance since 2005. It is a sturdy hut, but currently in a run down condition. DoC are considering down grading this to a shelter only (I think the most likely option), removing it, or tidying it up.

PNTMC regularly visit all three of these Ruahine huts, and appreciate their continued existence.

### **Conservation Award 2012**

DoC have two annual conservation awards - one for an individual, and one for an organisation. For 2012, PNTMC stalwart and Ruahine trumper Janet Wilson took the award for her stellar work in organising and leading the Oroua predator control project. With other PNTMC members, plus friends, Janet has tirelessly tramped the Oroua valley trapping stoats and rats, and assisted with allowing the local Whio population to live in peace. The project even spread over the hill and into the upper Pohangina Valley, with many predator tramps around Leon Kinvig Hut.

The vest, book, and mounted award were very well deserved. Well done Janet.



Janet Wilson, "Stoat Slayer" with Jason Roxborough (DoC Manager).

### Two New Ruahine Bridges



The new Unknown Stream bridge at Iron Bark Hut [Andrew Mercer]

Contractors for DoC have recently completed two new bridges near Iron Bark Hut, north-west Ruahines.



The new Maropea River bridge at Iron Bark Hut [Andrew Mercer]

The Maropea River and Unknown stream have been bridged, and tracks re aligned, ensuring safe, dry foot access to and from Lake Colenso

and the Mokai road end. The spectacular ex NZFS bridge half way up river to Otukota Hut will be removed. DoC will also be realigning the poled access track to Iron Bark Hut through Mokai Station farmland, and closing the Mokai Station to Otukota Hut track (the western route). Otukota Hut is still accessible from the Kawhatau Base and via the Maropea River (when river levels allow).

### Yuichiro Miura on Everest

Japanese septuagenarian Yuichiro Miura is soon to celebrate his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday with none other than an attempt on the summit of Everest. He gave a wonderful talk in Palmerston North on 18 September about his life, and how he is training for this event. He climbed to the summit of Everest when he was 70, and then again when aged 75 - and that was after a life time of skiing off high peaks like McKinley, Vinsin, Kilimanjaro, and of course Everest itself. So he knows the highest mountain quite well.

### New Member

Welcome to Sally Hewson, who has recently re joined PNTMC. Sally has tramped and caved for many years. Phone 06 357 0990.

### Book Section: a doorstep and a story book

Soon to be reviewed here are two new books about the hills - both with the Tararuas and Ruahines featuring. Well known writer/ photographers Shaun Barnett, Rob Brown, and Geoff Spearpoint have produced a magnificent hard cover "door stop" sized volume about huts entitled "Shelter from the Storm". Weighing in at over 2 kg, and with 364 pages, it is very impressive. Check it out at:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Shelter-from-the-Storm/478611882149614>

Both Rob and Shaun will be interviewed about the book by Kathryn Ryan on her daily Nine to Noon program, Radio NZ, on October 9th, probably about 11 am.

Another new book about trips by your hard working Editor and friends to the Tararuas, Ruahines, and other places is rumoured to be in the pipeline, and due out very soon. "Worn out boots", by Tony Gates, is a book about activities, places, and people who enjoy the mountains, forests, and rivers. Many of these trips have involved PNTMC people, and many places will be familiar to you.

## Trip Reports

### Ruahine Hut Bagging

The PNTMC Ruahine Hut bagging competition has proceeded really well over the past ten months. It is planned to finish on Thursday 13 December 2012, in time for the winner to be awarded at the Christmas BBQ. The emphasis is on safe and enjoyable tramping.

Many names feature in our hut bagging book, with Bruce van Brunt and Derek Sharp currently in the lead. Many huts feature, such as; Heritage, Rangī, Stanfields, Sunrise, and Parkes Peak. But what of the remote northern Ruahine huts? Ikawatea Forks, Ruahine Corner, Shutes, and Rockslide await. Now, they will be easier to tramp to and from during longer days and lower river levels. Remember to photograph the huts that you bag, and record the names and dates.

**28 July**

#### Foxton Beach Trip

**Tina Bishop**

Warren, Lisa, Richard, Janet and Graham met us at The Bishops Beach Bach on a typical sunny Foxton Beach day. Holly was introduced to Bruce who was waiting patiently in Janet and Graham's car. We headed off across the park and streets to the Forest on Cousins Ave where we followed some random tracks through the trees for a while. Eventually we headed for the dunes where there is a well-worn four wheel motorbike track. This track winds around and over the dunes for miles towards Himatangi, judging by the bike tracks it's not a good place to be if the local bike enthusiasts are out playing. Warren pointed out some deer tracks too.

After a while we headed towards the beach where the tide was well out. Janet (Bruce too) and Lisa had a paddle in the sea while Warren tried to make a sculpture on a large driftwood log with plastic lids he found on the beach. We headed back down the beach towards the surf lifesaving club and back to the Bach for a lunch of Vege soup, fresh baked bread and muffins. After lunch we were very full and reluctantly headed in the other direction through the dune walking tracks back to the beach and around the point where there were a few people fishing at the river mouth. We took the long way back through the new walking track behind the camp ground and back to the Bach for more coffee and muffins☺. We were six very full people and two very happy dogs.

The next day my trip was extended by a visit from Tony and Yvonne Gates who couldn't make it yesterday. They had a cuppa and got to wade

through my tramping photo album scrap book, and then they drove down to the beach while Holly and I walked down to meet them. We had a nice stroll along the sand until Tony found a nice log to sit on so we could enjoy the view and Holly entertained us by depositing every stick she fetched up into the grass in the dunes.

**11-12 August 2012**

#### Masters-Sentry Box-Parks Peak-Herricks Hut Road Trip

**Report and photos by Janet Wilson**

Lots of ambitious route/hut ideas were tossed around in the planning stages of this trip, which was originally to go to Dead Dog Hut. In the end the weather had the final say (very bad forecast for the Sunday and already very fresh running streams) and we opted for Plan A, the original easy option.

We met up on Ashhurst at 6.30am, 5 into Terry's Pajero. We made good time, stopping only at a bakery in Dannevirke, up Highway 50 and then through the back roads to Mangleton Rd. This is a destination not frequented by PNTMC that provides lots of access options into the N/E Ruahines. Our first stop was Masters Shelter - a real road trip hut, as you can drive to it on a good track across a farm. Then a few km further down the road to Sentry Box Hut, 5 min walk from the road. From here we took our day packs up to Parks Peak Hut, about a 2 hour pleasant walk away. There were a few patches of snow once we reached the ridge but no problems and we were at the hut for lunch in great weather. We retraced our steps, with time to laze in the sun on the rocky knobs on the way down.



*Terry, Graham, Bruce, Janet, and Warren at "The Sentry Box"..*

We then drove back down the road to the Herricks hut farm. We had to get out the map to sort out the correct way once we turned off Mangleton Rd - a short moment of geographical confusion. The farmer was welcoming and gave us good instructions for finding the correct gateway. It's a reasonable length drive across

the station on a very good track for the most of it. The last part of the track turned out to be just a bit too wet and we off-loaded our gear near the hut before moving the vehicle to a safer parking place back on the main track. Herricks is made up of 2 small huts placed very close to each other, in a clearing amongst big kanuka, with a picnic table and plenty of firewood.



*Terry, Graham, Bruce, Janet, and Warren at Herricks "double" Hut, northern Ruahines.*

As it turned out it was Terry's birthday, which added a sense of occasion to the trip and gave us good reason to drink the bottles of wine that we hadn't had to carry far. It was a lovely evening - so good that I worried the forecast rain wouldn't come and we had wasted the opportunity for a bigger trip. We separated the snorers into one room and I had a good nights sleep. Nothing came through the possum sized hole in the wall by my feet during the night and the predicted rain started some time before dawn.

We packed up in the rain and adjourned to a cafe in Norsewood for brunch. Very pleasant it was too. We had a little retail therapy at the ex Norsewear shop and were home in the early afternoon. A most enjoyable social trip, and four huts bagged with minimal effort (and no guilty feelings either!) We were Warren Wheeler, Bruce van Brunt, Terry Crippen, Graham Peters, and Janet Wilson (leader and scribe).

**18th August (Saturday)  
Snowcraft 3 at Tukino, Mt Ruapehu  
Report and photo by Dave Deverall**

It was a crisp morning, crisp but not quite frosty. We left just after sparrow fart, roughly 4.30am. The birds were just getting into their chirping. The country was still as there was little wind around, the traffic was minimal, a comfortable drive all the way to the BP in Waiouru followed. Dwight (aka Scree Dog) the experienced truck driver took the lead in his truck, followed by Terry's Big Red truck and then a very tough

looking, four wheel drive station wagon.

At the BP station in went the pies and out came the smart phone. First the forecast; forecast was good, then we checked to see if the road conditions required chains: none required, so Terry and Bruce decided no need to change the plan to drive up from the east of Ruapehu past a gate (which requires a responsible key holder in summer) and park up next to Tukino ski field.

Even without chains as soon as we turned off the desert road onto metal things got interesting. We almost immediately lost visual of the state highway as there is an early bend in the rough road. As soon as we lost visuals of the state highway, four light armed vehicles were immediately upon us, and they were moving quickly. Luckily we live in New Zealand and gentlemen exchanged nods, thumbs ups, waves and even a cheerful grin or two. The drivers of the L.A.V.S must have been in their early twenties and turned off the road and just kept going at the same speed through bumps, branches, and dips. They pulled back onto the road, no one had to stop, and I'm sure the drivers had fun.

The mountain chill hit as we got out of the cars, deep breaths were taken in, steamy breaths out followed. But instead of silence there was a strange low deep pulsing noise. It was most probably a generator but it did have a strange sound to it. There was also 16 earthquakes off the chart that day on the Geonet seismic graph for the mountain. We were up the mountain during its most active day for the mountain in years. If Tongariro had not erupted 12 days earlier I probably would not have found the deep pulsing noise so strange, it was coming from all around the mountain.



I would like to again emphasize the toughness of the station wagon and other 4WD vehicles; wouldn't recommend taking a car up. Bruce pointed to the shape of the clouds above us and mentioned that they showed a front was on the

way, but still a day away. We then went over our knots and practiced being roped up. After a short walk we made it to a river that was shooting off a cliff above us. As the water fell the 30+ feet down it almost froze in the air. It was forming amazing ice structures in a pool. This pool fed a river that flowed under a bridge of ice we were about to cross.

A drama free crossing over the ice bridge followed. Then under the waterfall we started our climbing, people were moving about as fast as they were learning. Terry and Bruce seemed to always be in the right place at the right time. Dwight took a long time climbing over a tricky rock. But he and I managed to keep up with everyone and reach the lunch spot at the top of the slope in good time. The sun then arrived and with it the sunburn. After lunch we used the avalanche transceivers to get in some practice. They were fairly easy to use. We did find out that for future reference i-phones do stuff up avalanche devices and they don't work properly. So beware!! That info could be important one day.

We practiced double anchors and practiced being anchors ourselves. A practical demonstration showed that sitting in the snow can allow you to hold a lot of weight. It was hot and cold and the sun was burning so we all made it back to the cars again in a good time. We left the mountain, again seeing many army vehicles. In no time at all we had the head chefs at McDonalds Taihape cooking multiple lamb burgers. The consensus was that they were a good burger, maybe a little too herby. The food kicked in, energy came back, and the conversation on the way home was fantastic. The front kicked in the next day and I'm sure we all soaked up some knowledge. Next step - hassling Dwight and others to get up the mountain as often as possible. And keeping those skills up.

The names of all of us: Terry Crippen, Bruce van Brunt, Kelly Holland, Greg Thurlow, Grant Christian, Piet de Vegt, Thomas Robertson, Michael Allerby, Hannah Lund, Dwight Swainson, Dave Deverall.

### **19 August Takapari Road - A Frame Report and photo by Tony Gates**

Takapari Road winds far into the southern Ruahines. From the Pohangina Valley, a person can walk, mountain bike, or four wheel drive high onto the Ruahine Range, and admire views of Dannevirke and the upper Pohangina Valley, far below. It's gaunt, eroded country, with highly

modified forest and a few tracks here and there. Takapari Road is a popular Ruahine place.

We took two 4WD's, and cruised up the lower warm and sheltered forest section. Soon, however, the weather became much colder as we gained altitude. The road was in good condition in the leatherwood section, although 4WD is essential there. We paused to explore some "secret" hunters' trails. The views improved with altitude, with the Ngamoko Range and high central Ruahines in the distance, and the big Pohangina Valley at our feet.



*Cruising Takapari Road*

We arrived at the A-Frame Hut in good time, so a brew was soon made and a little exploring done. The winter sunshine was lovely. Some of us relaxed, some wandered along the road for a bit, admiring the mega erosion dropping down to the Dannevirke side. The other side has impenetrable leatherwood. There was some talk of one day going right to the end of Takapari Road, by either foot or mountain bike, and exploring some more "secret" tracks dropping down to Forks Hut and environs. Who knows, these tracks may be completely overgrown now. Bruce really enjoyed himself.

On the return, the weather warmed up with sunshine and shelter from the forest. We completed the tramp early with coffee and cake at Graham and Janet's house.

We were: Graham Peters, Janet Wilson, (with Bruce) Warren Wheeler, Sally Hewson, and Tony Gates.

### **Daphne - Howletts 25-26 August 2012 Report and photo by Nicola Wallace**

Four intrepid souls left PN at 7.30am, and reached Kashmir Road less than 2 hours later, after a brief stop in Dannevirke to inspect the public conveniences. Peter wisely decided not

to attempt driving up the gnarly hill, and parked at the roadside, giving us 1km or so of a very pleasant warm up road walk, before dropping down to the Daphne track start.

It was a lovely sunny day, and the first ascent was quite hot. In the distance I saw something new, the zig-zag track up to Longview Hut, looking very obvious on the landscape. Soon it was cooler, and easier, climbing through the bush, and we all got together again at the Longview-Daphne intersection.

Once on the track down to the Tukituki, there were good views of snowy peaks in the distance, and once in the bush, a close visit by a friendly robin. The descent steepened, then we dropped onto the banks of the sidestream near where it joins the Tukituki. We lunched here in the sun, each of us in their own private world, absorbing the stream's peaceful babble.

Well fed, we headed up the Tukituki for the short journey to Daphne Hut. The river was mercifully low, reaching mid thigh at its highest. At the hut, Warren looked through the hut book, apparently no one had been there for about 3 months! Out front was a sign "Daphne Hut 1.5 hrs". Where had that been pinched from? A photo or two, and we were off. Across the river once again, and Warren took a shortcut down a stony dropoff, I followed, but ended tumbling ass over tit after a rock pulled out of the shingle bank. No harm done, and we started the 2 hr climb up Daphne Spur to Howletts Hut.

I'd never walked up here before, and though very steep, the track was good, and it wasn't long before the gradient eased off. The higher we got, the wetter it became underfoot, and I became aware that the sky had clouded over. We had a long rest about half way up, and after each collecting some wood, emerged from the bush to a cloudy, cool afternoon, and the curiously trench like track up to the top. Suddenly there was a spectacular view of the snowy ridge beyond the hut, and we arrived at the unoccupied Howletts Hut at about 4pm. I didn't notice the wind much at this stage, but it was much stronger when I went outside for an explore at about 5pm. The shape of things to come.....

The boys got an excellent fire going, and we all ate satisfying dinners: the others a mixture of tortellini, veges & other bits, myself a delectable Spag Bol freeze dried meal. With the fire still going, it was early to bed.

I'd picked a choice sleeping spot, only big enough for a shorty, just above the door. It even had its own little window. But after lights out, it

soon became apparent there was a mega-snorer in the hut. I heard harsh words spoken, but the racket continued, so I abandoned my spot and transferred to the veranda. It was breezy all night, but otherwise quiet. Between bits of sleep, I had a great view of the lights of Hastings, and sometimes the stars, as cloud drifted across. Early next morning, there was a beautiful orange strip of light along the horizon about 30 mins before sunrise.



*A classic view of a classic Ruahine hut: the historic Howletts hut, in the high central Ruahines. Sawtooth Ridge top right.*

Our plan was to go back over the tops. By the time we left the hut, the NW wind was very strong, and getting stronger. Walking SW towards Taumatataua, I soon had trouble staying upright in the relentless crosswind, but the others were faring a little better. Out to the NW, the clouds were darkening. One hour after leaving the hut, we'd struggled our way to Taumatataua. It was drizzling, and Warren wisely made the decision that we should turn around. I was glad, as I wondered how bad the wind would be at Otumore, which is higher than Taumatataua.

Struggling back towards Howletts, the wind seemed worse than before, and in the worst bits it was hands and knees. 2 hours after leaving the hut, we were nearly back there, at the top of the Daphne Spur track. Peter and Warren toddled along to the hut to alter the log book entry. Jonathan & I had a bite to eat, then started off down Daphne Spur. What a relief to be out of the wind! I felt suddenly very light, and walking seemed like floating. Before we reached the bush, Jonathan's feet slipped out from under him, and he got a nasty rip in his shorts. Even the steepest bits of track weren't too slippery and we all made it happily down to the river. We didn't revisit Daphne Hut, but went down-river and had lunch at the previous day's lunch spot. Down here there was hardly any wind! What a contrast.

Now the long climb up to the Daphne-Longview

intersection. The weather was improving all the time, and Warren started regretting his decision to turn around. I kept telling him he'd made the right choice, on account of the wind. We had a good, long break near the top of the main climb, not quite sunny, but warm.

By the time we were descending the last hill, my knees were sore, but I was remarkably mud free. Unfortunately, this was about to change. The last bit through the paddock was wet, and I wasn't too fussed about stepping in a wet bit as my feet were soaked anyway. But one little puddle in the grass was actually the most amazing bog hole, and I instantly sunk in up to my bum. I had to laugh. Almost back to the start, and I'd muddied my reputation once again.

As we ambled down Kashmir Road, we debated the best way to deal with the mud that covered my bottom half, and right arm. Warren thought I should wash in a puddle (they were all muddy anyway) and I was in favour of letting it dry as we walked, and brushing it off. By the time we got back to the car, it was half dry, so I wiped it off and threw everything into plastic bags. No bog smell!

We stopped off at Dannevirke for tea on the way home. Going to Howletts Hut is always special, and thanks to everyone for a relaxed (mostly) and fun weekend, including Peter for all the driving.

We were Peter Darragh, Warren Wheeler, Jonathan Fanning and Nicola Wallace.

### **1-3 September**

**Ruahine Hutbagging with Derek and Friends  
Kawhatau-Otukota-Puketaramea-Maropea  
Forks-Wakelings-Mokai-Patea-Crow-  
McKinnon-Hikurangi  
Report Thomas Robertson, photo C. Tuffley**

Me, Derek Sharp and Chris Tuffley left bright and early Saturday morning, heading away at 5am, and Chris drove us up to Kawhatau base. The plan was a three day loop trip from the base to Otukota hut, then on to Maropea Forks for the night, then on to Wakelings and Crow for the second night and out via McKinnon on Monday.

Originally we had planned to do the loop in the opposite direction, but while the weather forecast was good for the Saturday and Sunday there was wind and rain predicted for the Monday and so we decided to reverse the loop doing the longest day first and leaving the shortest day for when the bad weather set in.



*Tramping the delightful Bruce Ridge, Mokai Patea Range. Maropea catchment behind.*

We got to the base at around 7am, and straight away Derek spotted two deer on the river flats - we were too see plenty more. Another party left just before us, and we overtook them as we got to the tops. We started with a brisk climb up to Colenso, where we saw a mob of 8 hinds as soon as we came out on to the tops. The tarns were frozen over with a thick layer of ice. We followed the Mokai Patea range, then followed a clear trail to the bushline. On the way we found a rain gauge, and Derek managed to pull put a metre long perfect cylinder of ice from it.

We dropped down to Otukota hut, which was in good order, and had a small break there. The Waikamaka River was fairly strong and we were glad to have reversed the loop - a few extra feet of depth could have made it almost uncrossable. From there it was another relentless uphill to Puketaramea before starting to drop again - this constant up and down was to be the theme for the tramp. We got to Maropea Forks hut around 5 o'clock, making it a solid ten hour day. A large chunk of the bank had been washed away since our last visit, taking a tree and washing line with it. There were no entries in the hut book since our last visit, which was with Luke and Erin also, from the Eastern side of the ranges. Chris made a good dinner of veges, noodles and sauce, and Derek made dessert.

After a good breakfast of porridge we set off reasonably early in the morning with a steep uphill to just below Piringa, then a longer decline to Wakelings hut. We spooked a deer on the way down to the hut, making a total of 11 deer seen in the trip. We stopped there for a break and to read the log book. From there it was uphill again to Rongotea, then following along the peak for a while and dropping down again to Crow hut - which in contrast to what the map shows is downstream from the bridge. Derek was keen to head down a promising looking slip, but Chris managed to talk him out of it. The track drops to the river, then leaves it again, and heads slightly downriver, where a swingbridge over a decent sized gorge gives access to Crow hut, well

above the river. This leg took us 8 hours, and we arrived at three o'clock. As it was still fairly sunny we all lay on the grass outside the hut for a few hours, sunbathing and reading. The hut itself was fairly warm, a perfect trap for the sun's heat. It was my turn at dinner, with dehydrated chilli beans and instant potato, and the Derek outdid himself for dessert with an excellent and very filling cheesecake.



*Thomas negotiating the Kawhatau River.*

After porridge again the next morning we set off upriver, which was warmer than we expected, before taking the track uphill, climbing to McKinnon hut, right on the bushline. We took the opportunity to put on extra thermals and get out our ice axes before heading up on to the tops. The rain was holding off but the wind was picking up at this point, and there was a decent cover of snow on the ground. For a while it was tricky going with a very strong wind, but it slowly improved. We passed some large tarns on the way, only partly frozen over.

We stopped for a bite to eat on reaching the bushline, and to lose layers as we figured we would warm up once out of the wind and snow. Shortly after we overtook a man who had stayed in McKinnon hut the night before, and whose crampon marks we had seen in the snow. The snow was fairly soft when we went over it after a few hours of soon, but judging by the crampon marks it was hard first thing in the morning, and

could have been unpleasant for us if we were there earlier—we had brought ice-axes but didn't think crampons necessary. We dropped down to the river fairly quickly, and used the cableway to cross the river—which made for some good photos. This was our shortest day at only 7 hours. We were lucky with the weather, as it started to rain half an hour after leaving Kawhatau base. Cheers to Derek for organising the trip, to Chris for driving, and to Emily.

More of Chris Tuffley's photos of this trip (and others) can be seen on:

<https://picasaweb.google.com/103339572273663933322/RuahineHutBagging2012>

### **16 September Kashmir Road, Ruahine Hut Bagging Report by Penny Abercrombie**

Bruce and I had an interesting day (for me) as 4 wheel driving is a real novelty and the car drove really well to the end of Kashmir Road. I think I could get into this four wheel driving thing. Kashmir road is NOT as I recall it. It is a lot rougher and many rills and a few deep holes now. I must apologise for the muddy state of the car. I think somehow it needs a big wash.

Back at work today and would rather be tramping... Whoops almost forgot – we made it to Awatere and Happy Daze Huts, but missed the Black Stag Bivvy. A really lovely landscape with variable vegetation that to me is almost reminiscent of bits of the South Island (there's one scree covered hillock). A very refreshing area actually.

### **16 September Rangi Hut Report and photo by Woody Lee**



*PNTMC at Rangi Hut*

Our 16 September trip to Rangi Hut went well and the hut was very quite in the light rain. There

were only two parties there at lunchtime. We missed the great view of Ruapehu.

There is flash new stuff there since September. A new log burning stove, a new shed behind the toilet for firewood (it's full) and a hut logbook dating 6/9/2012.

**15-16 September  
Parks Peak Hut  
Report and photo by Emily Viersma**

As a new member I have been given the "great privilege" of writing the trip report for the recent Parks Peak Hut trip. I'll keep it short and sweet.

This was my first tramp with the PNTMC and I was pleasantly surprised at how welcomed I felt. Conversation flowed easily and there were plenty of laughs along the way.



*Karen, Kathy, Emily, and Warren at Parkes Peak*

I was shocked at the sharp incline of the track after spending six months walking around on the wonderfully flat land of Palmerston North. Thankfully this shock did not last too long as we generally kept together and my lack of fitness wasn't too much of a problem. The track had recently been cleared and most of the way it was covered in a beautiful sprinkling of snow. There were also amazing views through the trees out to the expansive land beyond. The hut was a welcome sight and certainly lived up to our expectations. Only two years old, the hut was warm and dry and looked beautiful in the surrounding bush and snow. The long drop however could more appropriately be called a 'short drop'. Hopefully this will be sorted soon. Since the tramp was only a few hours, it gave us plenty of time to build a snow man and explore the surrounding bush.

To our surprise three of the people on the tramp had their birthday's one after the other. Kathy's on the 15th, Warren on the 16th, and mine on the 17th. This meant a celebration was in order. Three bottles of wine, Baileys, birthday cake,

cheese and crackers, biscuits, you name it we had it! We even got to enjoy some music and dancing with the help of Kaaren's tin whistle. Soon night fell and we chattered away in the candle light. During the night the rain that we had been expecting all day finally fell and the wind picked up. This highlighted what a great little hut Parks Peak is. We were all cosy and warm thanks to the insulation and the superb little free standing fire.

The next day we woke to see the snow had turned to slush and the tracks had become slippery. This made for a slippery and slow walk back down to the car. All and all a good little adventure was had. I'm sure more adventures will be had in the near future.

Members of the tramp were Warren Wheeler, Kathy Corner, Kaaren Tutt, and myself- Emily Viersma.

**22-23 September  
Shutes Hut and Beyond  
Report and photos by Bruce van Brunt**

The trip down south was cancelled and it left me wondering what to do with the good patch of weather coming on the weekend. I decided this was prime weather for going to Sawtooth Ridge, but at the last moment curiosity got the best of me and I decided to have a look at the northernmost part of the Ruahines. I talked Dwight Swainson into going for a tour of Comet hut, Shutes hut, along the tops to Taruarau Biv and down to Dianes hut.

We left Marton about 7:30am and headed over the Napier-Taihape to the Comet Road. The Comet Road is in great nick at the moment and most vehicles can get up to the hut without any problem. We arrived at Comet (aka Komata) hut around 9:30am. For a hut at the end of a road, this one is probably the cleanest I have seen. The hut is quite useable and the roadend is pretty tidy.



*Dwight fording the deep Taruarau River*

It takes about 3 hours to go from Comet hut to Shutes hut. From the Comet road end you climb up about 150m to the trig. The landscape here is pretty scrubby followed by a very thick growth of pine trees. These trees seem to be new arrivals as the trig itself is embedded in the pines with trees growing around it, inside it etc. For significant lengths of the track over Komata, there is what can only be described as a pine tunnel. It seems odd to find old cairns on this extremely well defined passage. Perhaps these are relics of earlier days before the pines took over. There is at least one nice section of beech forest. The bad news is that one has to lose some 700+ metres in a steepish descent down to the Taruarau river. The river itself is perhaps the crux of the entire tramp. Dwight and I crossed it around midday. The river level in Hawkes Bay had been going down steadily over the preceding 3 or so days, but the water level was still waist deep and reasonably swift. There is a good campsite on the Shutes side just up from the crossing, where I expect more than one party has stayed because of the river. It took us about 20 minutes from the crossing to climb up to Shutes Hut, where we stopped for lunch.

***Ode to the 1961 Summer season air drop. By J. Luff and M. Shailer, Government. Hunters at Shutes hut. From the hut log book.***

*We came to Shutes, seems like ages ago  
Blown off the Taruarau, to the pines below  
And for days on end, how that wind did blow!  
Life gets tedious don't it?*

*Malcolm's on the bunk, his eyes shut tight  
He's been awake for most of the night  
He's this and haggard, and sure looks a sight  
I don't think he'll last much longer.*

*The dog is weary, and full of scorn  
He's the hungriest dog that ever was born  
We just feed him on the last of the corn  
And now he's looking slimmer.*

*I made a brew a few hours back  
And handed to Malcolm a brew that was black  
He took one sip and handed it back  
We just had the last of the sugar.*

*There's a rat chewin' on the old cupboard door  
In fact there's not one, I think three or four  
It's a shame to let them gnaw and gnaw  
There aint a darn thing there.*

*So we'll lie here, listening for the sound of a motor  
And the rhythm chop chop of a helicopter rotor  
And when it arrives, we'll sure find our quota  
Life gets tasteless, don't it!*

Shutes hut has a lot of character, being the only stone hut in the Ruahines. It was built in 1920 and Alex Shute lived there for 12 years. There are two hut books, one goes back to 1956 (it is a photocopy of the original) and another one picks up from 1985. The latter is a large, leather bound record book. Someone has planted daffodils along one side of the hut, and there is a stand of massive pine trees planted by Alex Shute. The hut itself is rat infested as many entries in the book attest and there is certainly a lot of sign. The environs around the hut are a bit rough. Pigs have dug up the clearing in front of the hut, and somebody has cut down pine trees but failed to clean up much of the mess.



*Dwight at the seldom visited Taruarau Biv*

After lunch at Shutes, we climbed up a somewhat uninspiring track through the scrubby forest (no beeches or pines here) until we reached the tops. The track is in good condition and easy to follow. Higher up in the low scrub there are lots of cairns and the occasional blaze. It seems that in the not too distant past, DoC has recut the scrub sections, so travel is pretty easy and the views are great. Higher up there are poles to follow, though sometimes these can be hard to spot as they are rusted and the predominant colour of the scrub is rusty brown with very little tussock. It took about 3.5 hours to get to Taruarau biv. This biv is nicely situated nestled at the edge of the forest just off the tops. The views, of course, are great. We stayed the night in the biv noting that we were the first visitors since early April. At least 3 helicopters buzzed around the area, one even came in quite close to check us out. It made me feel like I was at Fox Glacier with all that traffic in the middle of nowhere.

The next morning we went off to Dianes hut. This required a 400m descent off the tops, but it was worth it. The hut gets few visitors, but it is in very nice clean shape. It was built privately by Diane's family: she died in 1978 at age 21. We ascended back up the 400m and headed back to Shutes hut for lunch. It takes about 3-4 hours to

get from Dianes hut to Shutes hut (the hut names in this area never use an apostrophe). Very pleasant travel down to Shutes hut, but then we had to face the river and worse yet the final 700m climb up Komata. Once this slog was

over, we cruised through the pine tunnel and got back to the car around 5pm. It was an enjoyable straightforward tramp that had a lot of novelty. The weather was beautiful on both days.



*Shutes Hut, Northern Ruahines.*

## South Island Section

**1 – 3 September 2012**

**Nelson Lakes–Travers Valley–Hopeless Hut–  
Sunrise Saddle– Angelus Hut**  
**Report and photo by Grant Christian**

The plan for me, Kelly Holland (new club member) and non-members Clive Jones & Greg Thurlow was to get a boat to Coldwater Hut and walk in to Hopeless Hut on Saturday. On Sunday we were to climb Mt Hopeless and return to Hopeless hut where we would stay another night and walk back to Coldwater Hut on Monday with the boat picking us up again. Unfortunately the weather forecast was for high winds, snow and rain starting Sunday. So the plan changed to a long day on the Saturday, climbing Mt Hopeless in the afternoon and returning to Hopeless Hut in the dark.

We stayed at St Arnaud on Friday night. At 7:30am on Saturday we met our water taxi which

delivered us to Coldwater Hut. The weather was fine as we walked up the valley along the, mostly flat, Travers Track beside the Travers River. The scenery and views of the mountains were impressive. This would've been an enjoyable walk if not for the unpleasant strain in my shoulders due to the weight of all the climbing gear on my back. After a couple of hours we reached Hopeless Track which turned west towards the Travers Range and climbed steadily for about 350 metres to Hopeless Hut. At Hopeless Hut we had lunch and discarded all our overnight gear, extra food etc.

It was 1:20pm before we started heading up the valley leading to Mt Hopeless. After a short walk up the creek the track went very steeply up the side of the valley. Using trees and shrubs to help pull ourselves up we struggled onwards through the difficult track. We passed a waterfall where the shrub was getting sparse. The steep track relented a little and up ahead I spotted a chamois which was promptly joined by another.

They stood around for a bit before running off into a patch of bush. We continued up the steady climb before the track again headed up a very steep section. We all appeared to be finding the difficult terrain hard going. A kea made its presence known by calling before flying overhead and disappearing in the distance.

We made steady progress as we encountered patches of snow. We had realised by now that we were never going to reach the top before dark and certainly wouldn't wish to be climbing down what we had just covered in the dark. We decided to clamber up one last steep slope which involved cautiously negotiating wet slippery rock and slippery snowgrass. We had reached 1800 metres by the time we turned around at 4 pm, still 480 metres from the top. The steep slope we had just negotiated proved to be a lot more treacherous heading down and required extra care. Once below the treacherous section it was just hard work, with knees and thighs complaining as we clambered back down to the hut. We were pleased to arrive back at the hut and finally have a well earned rest.

Sunday morning was wet but the high winds had not arrived. We agreed on a plan to head up the valley to Sunrise Saddle and on to Angelus Hut and possibly on to Speargrass Hut from there. We found our way up the valley in the rain, eventually reaching the head of the valley where the track steepened and went over a steep slope of loose rock that was tough work. We were soon into the snow and attaching crampons, although the snow was soft. As we gained height the snow got deeper and the effort required increased. My short periods of plugging the snow had me soon exhausted and handing the lead back to one of the others. I had little idea of how hard climbing a slope in soft snow could be. By now we were in the cloud and the navigating was getting a little tricky. Clive did a great job of keeping us on track. The wind and cold was also making it unpleasant. At one point some of the group thought we had reached the pass but my altimeter showed there was still about 200 metres to go. We just couldn't see the higher ground ahead of us. We eventually reached the pass which is at 1900 metres. From here things got easier for a bit as we dropped down the other side but we were soon climbing again as we covered the undulating terrain on the top of the range. Although it was not that steep my body was feeling the strain from the long climb up to the pass in difficult conditions. I was looking forward to reaching Angelus. Fortunately Greg, the youngest and fittest of us was doing most of the snow plugging. We located a marker pole which we knew was on the track that led to Angelus Hut. From here it was not too much longer before Angelus Hut

appeared in the gloom. I was thankful to get my pack off and have a break. It was now 2:15pm and we all agreed that we were not keen on travelling on to Speargrass Hut after the effort to get here. Instead we got into dry clothes and Clive got a good fire going. After a late lunch we melted snow for water as the tap was not flowing from the tank. We then had an early dinner followed by an early night for most, everyone feeling weary from our exertions. We all brought our mattresses into the dining area close to the fire. The temperature in the bunk rooms was decidedly colder. Kelly entertained us somewhat with unusual noises in his sleep along with snoring. We soon tired of the noise and Clive prodded him (violently according to Kelly) which gave us some peace for a while.

It rained throughout the night and was still raining Monday morning. Thankfully our clothing, hung near the fire, was dry enough to be not too unpleasant to put on. We decided to go back out via the Cascade Track and meet up with the water taxi back at Coldwater Hut. Although it was raining, the visibility was a little better today. From the hut you soon reach the downhill slope into the valley. It starts quite steeply and care was needed. With the rain the streams were very swift in the steep parts. The track crossed the Hukere Stream where the water was cascading down a steep and narrow channel. We searched for a crossing place, even venturing into the water at one point where we thought it may be crossable but decided it was too swift. The only option was to try and head down through the bush on the true left and cross down on the flat section we could see a couple of hundred metres below. Given the steepness of the slope I expected we may not find a route down this way and we would end up having to climb back up. We struggled through the bush apprehensive at what we may find. Thankfully, there were no impassable bluffs and we came out onto a clearing on the flats we had seen earlier. Here the stream was easily crossed. There was a bridge sitting on the ground here that we later concluded was probably placed further up over summer, where the track crossed the gorge in the steeper section. There was a block of concrete there which we realised was probably the anchor for one end of the bridge.

From here it was a straightforward walk down the valley, crossing the stream a few times and trying (in vain in my case) not to slip over on the wet roots. There were many impressive waterfalls down the valley with both sides of the valley being extremely steep. At one point we could see some huge rocks that had got lodged in a narrow gorge hanging high above us. It was a good track with an easy rate of descent. About

11:15am we reached the Lakeside Track that took us back to Coldwater Hut. It was another hour to Coldwater Hut where we could get into dry clothes, enjoy hot soup and wait for the water taxi. The water taxi arrived on time and we were soon delivered to St Arnaud by the friendly & chatty driver.

Although we had not achieved our original goal it had still been a challenging and satisfying trip. We had covered some interesting and beautiful terrain. Thoughts of other ventures in this area were running through my head.



*Kelly Holland and the "Hopeless" view*

## Overseas Section

### July and August 2012 Travels in the European Alps Malcolm Leary

Edith and I did an FMC trip to the Dolomites in Italy, the Stubai in Austria, then Switzerland, in July and August. Some people did one or two countries but four of us did all three. Our leaders were a Swiss born couple who moved to NZ forty years ago. There were eighteen of us in Italy, sixteen in Austria and thirteen in Switzerland.

We flew to Zurich via Singapore, then took a train through Austria to Bressanone in Italy. We did an eight day circuit in the Dolomites staying in ski lodges in the off-season. We then travelled to Innsbruck and on to Neustift to do the Austrian Stubai High Path - a 120 km circuit at 2200m to 2700m altitude. We lost visibility for two days and then had snow as well, then crossed a high pass in a thunderstorm with almost horizontal hail. On the 10th day we ended at the Starkenburger hut with great views including our start point straight across the valley.

For the Swiss part, we took the train to Lucerne. The first day in Lucerne we went up Mt. Pilatus on the cog train, into yet another zero visibility scene and back down on the cable car after waiting many hours for it to clear to no avail. The next few days our walking took us to Grindalwald below the Eiger. We took the cog train to Jungfraujoch through the Eiger @ 3454m. The trains struggle to cope with as many as 5000 passengers a day. From Jungfraujoch you look down the Grosser Aletsch glacier. On the way back to Grindalwald some of us walked a track under the Eiger north face. The following day when we were nearly to our accommodation we ran into our neighbours' daughter. Amazing.

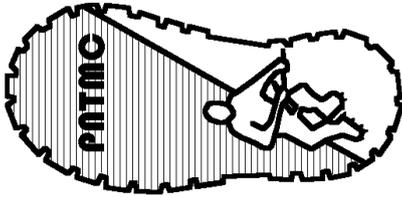
We stayed in Zermatt for three nights. I headed up to the Hornli hut and spent several hours watching a small number of climbers on the Matterhorn (fresh snow having stopped all guiding for a day or two). The next day I took the cable car to the Klein Matterhorn and then I climbed Mt. Breithorn (4160m) We took the train to the Rhone valley and walked beside the lower Aletsch glacier. We took the train back to Zurich and flew home via Singapore. The end of five weeks with a pack on.



*Malcolm, Edith and friends in the European Alps*



*Another beautiful day in the European Alps*



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## PNTMC Newsletter October 2012

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

- Stoat Slayer Award
- Snowcraft 3 stories
- More Ruahine hut bagging
- Foxton Beach strolls
- Takapari Road 4WD
- Nelson Lakes
- European travels

### **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!**

**Sender: PNTMC  
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