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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 March 2013

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*Terry Crippen on the summit of Aylmer, Tasman Glacier flows to the left, Whymper Glacier to the left (north). De La Beche is the prominent skyline peak mid left. [Ange Minto]*

### 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.

Please note that some dates have been changed from those advertised on the trip card.

**14 March**

**Triple Treat Trekking Europe**

**Malcolm Leary**

The trips that FMC Travel Club offers in Europe looked so good that Malcolm and Edith decided to do three of them together, visiting the magnificent Austrian Stubai, Dolomites and Switzerland.

**28 March**

**Safe Tramping - Short Films**

The AGM is postponed to 11 April to avoid the Easter rush. Instead we will be showing some short safety films including the classic "Such a Stupid Way to Die" about hypothermia, as well as river crossings, surviving a night in the bush and more.

## Upcoming Trips

**2-3 March**

**Gold Creek Camp** 4WD/ all  
**Tony Gates** 357 7439

If the Makaroro River permits, we plan to drive up to the Gold Creek confluence and camp next to our vehicles. It is a delightful place, with good swimming holes, walking and mountain biking.

**2-3 March**

**Sparrowhawk Biv** M  
**Peter Darragh** 353 0922

As an extension of the easy tramp, Peter will take a more energetic stroll up onto the Ruahine tussock tops, and meet the campers back down at the river. This is real William Colenso country.

**2-3 March (CHANGED FROM 9-10)**

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

Note that this Ruahine trip has moved from 9-10 March on the trip card to 2-3 March. We drive for 2hrs, via Ongaonga, to the start of the 2-3hr climb to Sunrise Hut on an almost-wheelchair-friendly track. We're bringing our son (5 yrs), daughter (7 yrs) and international student Sara (14 yrs). Options for Sunday include coming out partly down the track and partly along the river, or a sub-group could escape the kids and do something more adventurous. Depart 9am from Milverton Park.

**9-10 March**

**Triangle Hut** M  
**Craig Allerby** 323 7913

Great whio territory in the upper Oroua, with an excellent hut and lots to do.

**10 March**

**Rock Climbing** T  
**Terry Crippen** 027 643 36 37 (or 356-3588)

A day of rock climbing, probably at Titahi Bay (probably not Mangatepopo), for those of you who have rock climbed before or at least used ropes before (ie on Snowcraft). Its not really instructional so you need to have the basics for knot tying, belaying etc. Departure time etc depends on when low tide is.

**16- 17 March**

**Castlepoint** All  
**Jennifer Wilson** 323 6694

Lots to do and see. bring a rod to go fishing, togs to go swimming and walking shoes to explore the beach and lighthouse. Loads of room in the house for good social weekend. Able to go down Friday night or Saturday morning.

**23-24 March**

**Otukota-Iron Bark Hut** M  
**Warren Wheeler** 356 1998

Depart 7.30am. This Ruahine trip heads up from Mokai Station to the easy tussock tops and great views along the Mokai Patea Range. Lunch down at the Otukota Hut before following the Whakaurekou River for a couple of hours down to Iron Bark Hut. We should see blue duck along the way. An easy 4 hours brings us back over the range on Sunday. Perhaps a bungy jump or flying fox on the way home?

**24 March**

**East Ridge of Egmont** F  
**Bruce van Brunt** 328 4761

We will leave EARLY from Palmerston North and climb this magnificent mountain by perhaps the most enjoyable route. The plan is to start from the Stratford Plateau, follow the big track up to the ski fields and then take a vague (and old) track up to the Policeman to gain the E Ridge. From here, we will go straight up the ridge to the top of the Shark's Tooth, descend a pleasant chimney to get in the crater and go on up to the summit. We aim to come down the N Ridge and take the round the mountain track back to the Ski field. This is a pretty full day (1400m climb), but a rewarding trip with a sustained rock scramble. In normal conditions, we would not need an ice axe or crampons, though they can be handy for a play in the crater. This trip is very weather dependent.

**23- 28 March (pre Easter)**

**Kahurangi NP- Blue Duck Creek** M/ F  
**Janet Wilson** 329 4722

A must for all blue duck fans.

**29-1 April**

**Easter in Kahurangi** M  
**Martin Lawrence** 357 1695

Hop across Cook Strait and enjoy Easter in the area previously known as North West Nelson Forest Park.

**31 March**

**Easter Egmont** M  
**Warren Wheeler** 356 1998

Did you miss Bruce's trip? No worries, this time. Depart 6.00am. Breakfast stop in Hawera. Stratford carpark. East Ridge to Sharks Tooth and the Summit. Above the clouds for lunch. Lovely. Northern exit descent. Around the Mountain Track to hop back. Marvellous. Dinner in Ponganui. Plan B is a Moonlight Climb, summit at dawn. We would leave about 4.30pm and sleep for a few hours before heading off around 2.30am. Either way this trip may change day to suit the weather.

6-7 April

**Northern Crossing, Tararuas** F  
**Mike Allerby** 323 8563

Another Tararua classic, from Levin to Masterton. Big, rugged country with great huts, tussock tops, and rivers.

7 April

**Beehive Creek** Family  
**Doug Strachan** 353 6526

A lovely easy stroll up the Pohangina Valley.

#### Trip Grading

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

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

Other grades:

Technical skills (T)
Instructional (I)

#### Trip participants

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

#### Gear for trips

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

#### Trip leaders

Complete the trip intentions form and leave with one of Overdue Trip Contacts or drop into 44 Dahlia St. If you are unable to run your trip as scheduled, advise a trip coordinator as soon as possible so that alternatives can be arranged.

#### Overdue Trips

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

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

#### Articles for the newsletter

Send by the 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

#### PNTMC AGM 2013

The AGM is to be held on Thursday 11 April, not 28 March as previously advertised.

#### Also featuring Billy TT

We plan to hold a billy boiling competition after the AGM. Please therefore bring your best tramping cooker, lighter, a billy, and water bottle with at least 1000cc capacity.

#### Ruahine Hut Bagging Challenge 2012 PNTMC Poster For sale

PNTMC has made a poster of their hut bagging efforts in 2012, a stunning array of hut photos surrounding a map of the Ruahines. These have proved extremely popular and we are planning a second print run for those who missed the February deadline.

Deadline for this order is 31 March.

Price for club members is \$16.00 for A1 size, or \$8.00 for A2. Non members price is \$24.00 and \$12.00 respectively. P&P extra. Order your copy from the Secretary [d.a.grant@xtra.co.nz](mailto:d.a.grant@xtra.co.nz)

#### PNTMC 2013-2014 Challenge

The committee has discussed a new challenge for PNTMC for the 2013- 2014 year (this time from AGM to AGM). It is proposed that this time, it will be a peak bagging challenge, the rules of which are yet to be finalised. It is most likely that the challenge will be to bag as many named peaks as possible on the DoC Estate, perhaps a 100 Peak Challenge. With almost 50 peaks in the Ruahines and 120 in the Tararuas there is plenty of scope locally, not to mention the rest of the country.

#### DoC News: Ruahines

Ngamoko and Mid Poh huts have been inspected and tidied up by DoC staff while they were in the area. They cut windfalls off the Ngamoko track, dug a new (and much bigger) toilet hole, fitted a new tap to the water tank, and cut up some dead beech logs behind hut for firewood. Ngamoko now has a really good supply of wood.

PVC cement is needed to fix guttering and some piles need bracing – the hut is still wobbly even with all the work done in the past with drainage etc. These jobs may be able to be done when the painting team heads in shortly after being put off by poor weather in January.

### **DoC News: Tararua – Kime Hut Closed**

Kime Hut will be closed on 4 March until further notice to allow demolition and replacement.

## **Editorial**

The local newspapers have assisted with promoting PNTMC recently, with two articles about us. Anne was interviewed by the Evening Standard, and they published an excellent article (with photo) of some of our activities. The Tribune published photos of Janet, Warren (and others) and whio, in an interesting article about the Oroua Blue Duck Programme.

Stories from the Ruahines seem to have dominated this Newsletter over the past couple of years. This is understandable when you look at the beautiful country out there, the hut bagging, and all of the traditional areas that we tramp in. It is good therefore to read of PNTMC's exploits elsewhere in the Tararuas, Kawekas, and Southern Alps. The Tararuas, in particular, are a great range to visit during hot summer days, with the big rivers and big swimming holes.

I've just returned from my first tramping/ fishing trip for eighteen months, to the high central Kawekas by helicopter. There are many delightful DoC huts there, and we chose Ngaawapurua, next to the Ngaruroro River. The bush and river scenes were lovely, and it made me think of all the wonderful tramping in the area. Rafting, fishing, and hunting are understandably popular there too. And for some, hutbagging.

Old friend and Kaweka Challenge stalwart Randall Goldfinch, had, with Heretaunga Tramping Club friends, completed a mammoth Kaweka hut bagging expedition during one summer a few years back. Ngaawapurua was number 5 of 32 huts. I don't know how long it took them, but I think a speedy group could do all of the huts in maybe eight days, conditions permitting. There are many easy pickings around Makahu road end, but like the Ruahines, many huts you would have to really sweat for.

*"On Boxing Day we left the car at Kuri*

*Aiming to walk one fifty miles*

*Every hut in the Forest Park is our aim*

*Maybe running not tramping is our game"*

(extract) By RB, Heretaunga Tramping Club



*The Newsletter Editor relaxing at Ngaawapurua Hut, Ngaruroro River, Kawekas. Note down jacket worn in the mid day sun.*

Members of the Heretaunga Tramping Club have also been busy in the Ruahines, re-cutting a useful track through some bad leatherwood.

During the 1970's, the NZFS had a hut at the bottom of this track, long since destroyed by the ravages of mega erosion. During the 1990's, Mick Leyland and friends completed several Ruahine crossings via this route. As mentioned, it leads to/from some wonderful Ruahine country; real Colenso country.

### **Ruahine Forest Park Track Re-Opened Te Atua Mahuru to Colenso Hut**

This track/route off the main range into the (unnamed) Remutupo Creek had not been maintained since the NZFS days. It has now been opened up and marked during Feb 2013 by Heretaunga TC and Napier TC. The track is shown on the NZMS 260 maps but not Topo 50. It follows the western edge of the massive shingle/rock scar west of Te Atua Mahuru.

This route now opens up some new weekend loop trips in the central Ruahines, including the magic Colenso Lake area. A two day (fit) crossing from Mokai Road to the Makaroro River in Hawkes Bay is also now easier.



*Remutopo Creek forks, up from Lake Colenso. NZFS had a deer cullers hut here during the 1970's, until the gravel buried it. The re-cut track leads from here up to the Ruahine Range, and Te Atu Mahuru. In William Colenso's time, a loose translation of this name was "The opposite of comfort"*

## For Sale

**"Worn Out Boots"** four decades enjoying the New Zealand mountains.

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

Worn Out Boots. \$30.00, 160 pages, soft cover, with b/ w and colour photos. Contact Tony Gates 357-7439 for your copy.

## Trip Reports

**30 Nov to 2 Dec 2012**  
**PNTMC Pohangina Huts Spring Clean**  
**Tina Bishop**

If anyone had driven up East Pohangina Road mid morning on Friday the 30<sup>th</sup> of November they would have thought something very serious was going on. There were fourteen trampers wandering down the road, an Iroquois in the paddock across the road from the DOC Field Centre, a fuel truck and quite a few Army and Air Force men in their camo gear. In fact we were off to Ngamoko and Mid Pohangina huts to spring clean, stock up the firewood, set stoat traps and tomorrow officially claim them as our (PNTMC) own.

Originally I thought we all had to be winched down from the Iroquois to get to the huts but

instead we had a practice in the paddock while they hovered about 15-20 metres above the ground. Only the ones who had never done this before got a turn (about seven of us). Most of us were quite nervous, my heart was beating fast and I felt a bit sick in the stomach but once it was my turn I felt fine. I found the harness a bit hard on my upper back but it was exhilarating and not really scary at all – there were smiles all round! I think the worst part was worrying about following all the instructions correctly.

Terry, Angela, Warren, Richard, Martin, Geoff, and I flew into Mid Poh about lunchtime – it took two trips. I got to sit right by the open door with just a lap belt and thankfully a handle above the door to cling to! Wow! I have been on a small helicopter once before but this was much more exciting, like being on a fun park ride but with an awesome view of the river and bush. We flew up the river past the hut and then circled back to about 400m upstream where we got out while the pilot hovered above the riverbed. It amazes me how the pilot and his co-pilot open their doors to check where they are placed. After a bit of confusion as to where the hut was, we found it about 400m downstream. One of the Air Force crew "Sav" accompanied us so he could help with the firewood landings.



*Winching out at Mid Poh Hut [Warren Wheeler]*

We had lunch and then got stuck into cleaning the inside of the hut, boiling up billies furiously

and using what equipment we had. Some of us got side tracked with organising the wood pile and cutting up the large logs with our saws (much more exciting than cleaning!!) The Iroquois returned twice with the bags of firewood which we stacked nicely under the lean-to. Geoff reattached the broken axe handle – good skills! Warren got stuck into cleaning the mattresses with help from Angela; Martin and Terry plodded on inside scrubbing everything in sight. Richard cleaned the Dunny. Mid afternoon the others flew past on their way to Ngamoko Hut late because the weather was not very nice.

Late afternoon the weather cleared so it was decided we would climb over the ridge down into Cattle Creek and wander up to Cattle Creek Hut “only an hours walk” although 2 ½ on the sigh I think. Luckily I have learnt about “only 1 hour walks” and took my small back pack/snacks etc.

*I'm sure tramping is like giving birth – over time you forget how long and hard it was!*

The track down into the creek was very very steep – down on my bum for me while the guys just strolled on down. We plodded up the river for a while, losing Terry and Angela (they turned back) and Geoff popped up later. Like most river walks it got more technical as you headed upstream, I love the challenge of climbing over boulders and negotiating rivers but it got a bit scary for me. We had to climb around a waterfall on a very skinny track and my balance is not what it used to be! One part has a chain you hold onto and that was very helpful but challenging. After around two hours “are we nearly there yet” had been asked and answered “yes” quite a few times. My calculations told me if it took another half hour we would not get back to the hut until close on nine o'clock and I hadn't set my tent up yet so at the next very scary part I pulled the plug, broke tramping safety rules and turned back by myself. I told myself that if I wasn't confident to get around parts I would sit and wait for the others to come back. I did manage to do the chain and the waterfall ok but my adrenalin was pumping and I held on for dear life! It didn't take too long to get back to the hut and the welcoming smell of a nice warm fire that Terry and Angela had lit. The others arrived back soon after having made it to Cattle Creek Hut so we set up our tents and flys although there is not much flat ground for them around the hut. We had dinner and then bed.

Next morning we finished the cleaning on the outside of the hut. Martin, Warren, Richard and Geoff walked out as they needed to be back in town. Terry and Angela decided to walk to

Ngamoko Hut, I decided to stay at the hut as I knew the walk would be longer than anticipated (ha ha and it was).

I'm very glad my bath/swim didn't happen because Chris and Bruce turned up just as I decided it was too cold. They had lunch and carried on out too. I had a very leisurely day. Craig and Michael turned up after setting stoat traps, Terry and Angela returned. We had dinner and waited until Janet and Jean returned. They turned up quite late as they had had a very long day setting traps. As the hut is only a four bunker, they slept under the bunks. I nearly chickened out with my tent, as the wind was up. I have to say I'm very impressed with my new lightweight tent – it did well in the wind.

It was always in the back of our minds that it was meant to rain and if the river got up we could not get out but the rain never really eventuated. It would have been good publicity if we had got stranded to prove why it was silly to pull the bridge down.

We left the hut about 8am and crossed the river a couple of times in search of the track where the swing bridge used to be. After the initial climb out of the river the track is quite repetitive with seemingly endless up and downs. It drizzled a bit but we hardly needed our raincoats. We had a good view of Centre Creek from a lookout point and some had a chance to rest their knees. The track eventually follows the riverbed amongst very tall lupins and then heads across private farmland up a very steep hill right at the end. We had a short walk along the road back to the DoC field base where we had our lunch in comfort. Once again an awesome well planned productive trip, thanks Janet!

#### **24-25 November 2012 Dead Dog Revisited Bruce van Brunt**

It is a truth universally acknowledged that any hut with the name Dead Dog is in want of at least one visitation. If for no other reason the traveller must wonder how such an appellation is bestowed on any structure. I think any trumper resident in the southern North Island should go there and pay homage to a true NZ icon. The hut was given its peculiar name owing to an epidemic of distemper among the dogs used by deer cullers. It is a proper and fitting monument to their contribution. If you do not believe this, make the pilgrimage yourself to this Ruahine shrine.

It is in the north-eastern Ruahines that such a structure stands, and it is surrounded by

colourful places such as No Mans Road/Hut and Mistake Biv, punctuated by less colourful names like Ruahine Hut. Here, we lose the genitive case, and huts are given names like Dianes, Shutes, and Herricks (big savings on the apostrophe). Sometimes it pays to spell a place slightly wrong: a great trivia question is what does the sign on Taruarau Biv actually say (check your photos!)?

This was my third trip this year into the great north eastern Ruahine hinterland. At some cost, I had gone to Dead Dog on an earlier trip. I raced down the nice track from No Mans Road to the hut with time enough to have a snack at the hut and get a few quick photographs. I really wanted to see the catchment and absorb the place, but time was against me. I knew I had to get to Dianes Hut as soon as possible. As it turned out, I came to Dianes late. After playing with eels for an hour in the stream, much to the amusement of my tramping party I arrived at Dianes when they were all tucked up in bed.

I wanted to do Dead Dog Hut in a proper fashion unfettered by time constraints: I wanted in a modest way to explore the place further. To do Dead Dog proper one must start at Herricks Hut. Here, it is a short and fairly nice sidle track to the stream. With a bit of patience one then travels up the stream using terraces where they occur, but avoiding the onga onga nettle patches. The stream itself is straightforward and interesting with plenty of swimming holes in the summer. I would hesitate to do it in full flow conditions.

Chris Tuffley and I started this bold venture from Herricks Hut. Our mission was to go up the valley to Dead Dog hut, climb up to No Mans Road, go back down to Dianes Hut and eventually make our way out via Shutes Hut. Derek Sharp and Thomas Robertson were to start from Comet Road end and meet us at Dianes. We would swap car keys here and regroup in Ashhurst later. It actually worked, and the plan came off flawlessly.

En route to Dead Dog, we met Richard, the younger brother of Diane, in whose name the hut we were to stay at that night was given. Richard was hunting with his son Gus and some friends, and I took the time to learn a bit about the history of Dianes Hut. It is a remarkable story of family and friends building a hut to commemorate a family member/friend. I do wonder how DoC will work with these issues, when they are trying to lose huts to avoid depreciation. I know that so far they have not been sensitive to Dianes Hut. This hut was built with a purpose that I think transcends the accountants. I should think it a very low ebb of NZ government to let this hut go

for such slender reasoning as depreciation, given its history.

There are few maintained tracks to Dead Dog Hut. In fact, though older maps display a plethora of routes, there is in fact only one maintained track from No Mans Road. Derek explored the logical track from Ruahine Hut to Dead Dog via the Hollowback Ridge, but it is terribly overgrown. It seems that the only track is that marked on the new series map. This track is very good, and Chris and I used it to get to the road.

*We were then faced with the death march to Ruahine Hut along a sinuous road.*

Were it not for the Ruahine Hut Challenge, we would make the sensible choice of simply going to Dianes: we had to go to Ruahine Hut and somehow make to Dianes by night. This was “deja vue”: the weather was deteriorating, the natural light was leaving, and there was slender promise of a “nice outcome”. Nonetheless, we powered through this, and got to Ruahine Hut. The hut itself is very tidy and nicely situated, but a pain to get to from anywhere else. We raced up the road to the junction with the track to Dianes Hut. The weather and daylight held, and we found ourselves in the stream before Dianes in the fading light. Well, I know this place from earlier exploration, and we soon found the hut, though the light was lost.

Of all the huts in this area I find Dianes the most fetching. It is a lovely, but underused hut imbued with a history that scarcely escapes any occupant. It was not built by the NZ Forest Service or DoC, but by “private” subscription. As a result, the place is like no other “official residence”. It is truly unique among huts in the Ruahines. This was my third visit to the hut in a year, and I hope to see it again soon. It is perhaps the nicest hut in the northern Ruahines.

Chris and I left Dianes the next day en route for Shutes Hut and the Comet (aka Kometa) Road. Taruarau Biv was populated by a large group of hunters (5+ judging by the beer cases), though we met nobody. We spent a respectful time at Shutes and descended down to the river for a swim. After a delightful 700+m climb we arrived at the overgrown Komata trig and made our way to the car. On our last leg there, we met a hopeful tramper, who was to go the length of the park in 7 days. My advice was that Shutes was a picturesque rathole, Taruarau was full, and go to Dianes. It is still probably the best hut.

**7 to 9 December 2012**  
**Last Chance Ruahine Hut Bagging**  
**Grant Christian**

Janet Wilson was unsure if she would come on this trip because of the amount of time she had spent in the hills lately. It looked like I would have to join one of the other groups heading out this weekend. Fortunately our enthusiastic club trip participant, Warren Wheeler, called and a plan was finalised. I got back to Janet and after thinking it over for the night she decided to join us. It was the last weekend before the Ruahine hut bagging competition ended so the last chance for many to get out and add to their tally.

Friday night tea was fish and chips in Dannevirke. Although a little slow in getting cooked they were very good. We hit the track up to Sunrise Hut about 8 p.m. in pleasant conditions. Warren amused himself by counting the switchbacks. I forget how many there were. When the light faded Janet & I stopped while Janet got out her headlamp. Warren continued on unlit. While Janet rummaged through her pack I thought to myself, we need a headlamp to help find Janet's headlamp.

Before reaching Sunrise Hut we had a bit of sleety rain but it was not too bad. We had the hut to ourselves, at least we thought we did until after we were all in bed and I heard the rustle of a plastic bag. I got up to see if I could find the culprit to no avail. After getting back into bed I heard more rustling but ignored it. In the morning a mouse was spotted but it was not until later in the day that Warren found it had gnawed into his stash of nuts.



*Janet and Warren at Maroepa Forks Hut.*

We got away bright and early on Saturday. There was fresh snow in the surrounding hills but conditions were pleasant. We made good time to Top Maroepa Hut and then headed down to the Maroepa River. From here it was all down the river to Maroepa Forks Hut. The river travel was straight forward. I was startled by a blue

duck that took off from the river bank right next to me. Further down we spotted a deer which quickly ran for cover. After three hours of river travel we reached Maroepa Forks Hut. The river here has scoured out the river bank and is now very close to the hut, which I understand is going to be moved. It was a beautiful spot and we took the opportunity to have lunch and relax a little.

With appetites satisfied and hut photos completed we proceeded up river to where the track heads up onto a spur and then on to Wakelings hut. After crossing the river we waited for Warren to wring out his socks, which he had done before leaving Maroepa Forks just a few minutes earlier. We were going to be away from the river for a while and *the disadvantage of rubber boots is that they don't let the water out.*

Upon reaching the top of the ridge we had an easy walk along the track before dropping down the other side of the ridge and coming to a river crossing that led to Wakelings hut.

Wakelings was freshly painted. It was only 2:40 p.m. and we discussed camping further upstream but did not know what suitable campsites there would be. Also, I was not well equipped for camping so we stayed put. Warren busied himself with cleaning hut mattresses.

Later the temperature started dropping and Janet got a good fire going that made the hut cosy. The fire was enhanced by the Black Devil Black Sapote port from the Murdering Point Winery that I had brought along. It was a cold night for the time of year and I needed a few extra clothes in the night to keep me warm in my light sleeping bag.

The next day Warren had us awake at 5:30. Janet's complaints fell on deaf ears although he was considerate enough to bring us coffee in bed. We hit the trail about 7:45. The weather was great.

We had 8 or 9 km of river travel ahead of us up the Waikamaka River to Waikamaka Hut. It was good travel most of the way. Janet spotted a good sized trout and we came across a pair of blue ducks that were not at all worried about us as we took the opportunity to take photos of them.

We also spotted a large hind that ran up a very steep slip before disappearing into the bush.



There was one difficult section where a deep pool sat between steep rock on either side. Rather than swimming it we chose to climb up and over the top of the rock face. It was a steep and crumbly slope with just a few small plants to hold on to. Thankfully we made it safely past. After nearly five hours of river travel we came upon the large open area where three tributaries converged. We welcomed the sight of Waikamaka Hut a small way up a ridge on the opposite side of the open area.

We had lunch at Waikamaka Hut before heading up river to the Waipawa Saddle. We traversed the saddle and Janet & I negotiated the steep track on the eastern side while Warren chose the slip route. From here we followed the Waipawa River down the valley. It was straight forward travel down to the Waipawa Hut. We stopped at the hut for the obligatory photo and briefly chatted to the hunting party that were there. From here it was another 40 minutes downstream to the farmland and then a walk along the farm track back to the car.

It had been a very enjoyable trip and we had managed to visit another seven huts over the weekend, two of which were first visits for me. Also it was the first time up this section of the Waikamaka River for all of us.

Trip Participants: Grant Christian, Janet Wilson, Warren Wheeler.

## **2 February The Real Manawatu Gorge Walk Marjan Kloos**

As most people know, there is a track that goes from the Ashhurst side of the Manawatu Gorge to the Woodville side. This is a beautiful walk through the bush with nice views of the river from above. But Warren reckoned it was a bit off to call it a "gorge walk" and wondered what would it be like to follow the river all the way through the gorge itself?

We knew that it would involve a bit of climbing around rock faces, tramping through the river, finding our way through some tough terrain and some swimming if there was no way to follow the shore and the river was our only option. Driving through the gorge we stopped at various places to do some scouting. Well that resulted in me being a little bit more worried about our adventure....but we set off.

The first part was relatively easy and only wet feet were of some nuisance. But then we found the first rock faces that we needed to scale, followed by a waist deep wade across the river.

We were now on the road side rather than railway side of the river and found this good going for the rest of the trip. We noticed that the terrain was never the same. *We had shingle, boulders, hard bed rock, mud, and everything in between.* Before we reached the halfway mark we were faced with a cliff that we could not climb around, swimming was our only option. Thank goodness that the weather was more than optimal and the water temperature was very agreeable.



*All that remains of the Big Slip [Warren Wheeler].*

After the first swim everything that wasn't in a water tight bag was wet - our boots, pack, clothes, everything. I was really glad with the precautions that I made when packing. My food was saved and my spare change of clothing as well! But food was my first concern, without a decent lunch this trip would have been far less agreeable.

There were a few times where I lost my footing and some bumps and bruises on my legs and hands were a result. BUT, we made it!! After five hours of climbing, walking and swimming we had overcome the Manawatu Gorge and made it from one end to the other.

After getting a ride back to our car the trip was over and we had a celebratory drink at the Waterford. I decided that tramping the 'real' Manawatu Gorge Walk was well worth the effort and the bruises.

Not a club trip, but sure to be a classic.  
We were Warren Wheeler and Marjan Kloos.

## **3 February Roaring Stag Dave Grant**

Roaring Stag Hut on the Ruamahanga River in the eastern Tararuas was the destination this

Sunday for 5 of us, including Lorell and Johnny, two newcomers to the club.

We left PN at 7.30am in perfect weather feeling that this was a day to be enjoyed. Right from the start at Putara Road end, walking the track in the cool dappled light of the beech forest up the Mangatainoka valley with the river flowing clear beside us this feeling was reinforced. Took us about 1 ½ hours to reach the top of the hill with a couple of breathers on the way, and then a stop at the junction where the track splits with Herepai to the right and Roaring Stag to the left.

Time for a bite to eat and a drink and then we headed down the track towards Roaring Stag, pleasantly surprised at the dry condition of even the normally boggy sections. We did consider briefly whether we would head directly off track to Ruapae Creek to the west and follow southwards down to the Ruamahanga River and Roaring Stag, enjoying the hidden lake and the rimu forested river terraces on the way down, but decided to keep things simple and stick to the normal route. Still plenty of rimu to enjoy on the

lower sections here. *We duly arrived at the hut about midday with blue skies and little wind.*

Warren took his customary swim, Fiona bathed her feet, and then we relaxed on the verandah of the hut to eat our lunch.

Later we crossed over the swing bridge and worked our way a short distance through the riverside scrub to a very pleasant camp site Warren knew about. The river forms a deep clear pool against a rock face here where the flow swings sharply to the west. Time for another swim for Warren, joined this time by John, and Lorell dabbled her feet.

Then it was time to head home following the same route as we had taken to get here. We left Roaring Stag at 2 pm expecting for some reason to get back to Putara Road end somewhat quicker than we took to come in. However what with the heat of the afternoon and our increasing weariness it still took till 5 pm to get back to the road. We had a pleasant drive back to PN in the late afternoon sun, stopping of course at Eketahuna for the compulsory icecream.

We were John Gleeson, Fiona Donald, Warren Wheeler, Lorell MacDonald, David Grant.



*Big Tararua podocarp forest next to a big Tararua river swimming hole [Dave Grant].*

**9-10 February  
Mangahao Flats  
By Anna Astorga**

Everything started at Warren's place, where we left our cars and jumped into his old (70's) sky blue Renault. What an amazing car! I immediately had the feeling that this was going to be a very nice weekend. The group leader was Warren and we were three ladies: Marjan from the Netherlands, Sara from Bahrain and me (Anna) from Chile.

The first stop was Shannon Horseman's Café where we enjoyed good coffee and muffins. Then we were ready. The drive to the beginning of the track was a curvy little road with beautiful views and it took us 30-40 minutes to arrive at the third dam, where the track starts.



*Luckily Sara had spare shorts [Anna Astorga]*

After some minor problems (Warren forgot his shorts but Sara luckily had an extra pair) we got started and about ten minutes later decided to veer off the track and walk up the Mangahao River to the footbridge. This involved several shallow crossings and probably took about the same time as if we had followed the track the whole way, maybe a bit shorter.



*Mangahao rest stop [Anna Astorga]*

I had walked before in the Tararuas and recognized the type of track. Lots of little ups and downs, a little bit kind of "left wild", with lots of roots, not many people, but that's what I've always appreciated about the Tararuas. Especially this time since my most recent tramping had been 4 days on the Milford Track where it seemed like a well maintained highway! So I was happy to be back in the Tararuas.



*Raurenga/ Kidney fern, Mangahao Valley. Note delicate veins and the row of spores.*

Sara had no previous experience in tramping and clearly suffered in some parts. This made our tramping rhythm slower, but we enjoyed the relaxed pace by taking lots of pictures, learning the trees, and admiring all the different greens in one little patch of forest.

After 7 hours we arrived at the hut and, because we were following recent footprints, were surprised to find that we had it all to ourselves! It was a very nice, tidy hut on a terrace above the Mangahao River. Just a few steps away down by the river there was a patch of soft mossy grass where we had a lovely picnic in the afternoon sun.



*Lovely picnic at Mangahao Flats [Anna Astorga]*

After dinner we did some star watching on the deck, but soon for me it was time for bed and candle reading. But as I arrived at my sleeping bag, I was already falling asleep.

Next day Warren prepared us a delicious porridge. We were all feeling a little bit stiff in the beginning but soon warmed up and slowly headed back, again enjoying the landscape, which in the different light made it almost like new places. I especially enjoyed the morning light filtering through the kidney ferns and moss.

And the weather was just perfect for lots of swimming in the beautiful pools along the way. At the swingbridge we decided to cross over and take the track to see what we had missed by going up the river. New towers have been built

at each end so we were probably the last trampers to use the old bridge before its replacement. The track was certainly different to the river and featured a deep gully from a slip down a small stream, more boggy bits, another swingbridge, and a young deer right on the track, with its mother close by making it quite special. It was special for Sara too because although she (and Warren) missed the deer, she slipped off the track just 10 minutes from the end but luckily didn't hurt herself.

Again, it took 7-8 hours to get back to the car and it was nice to see the little Renault waiting for us. We celebrated in Shannon with an ice-cream and then headed back to Palmy feeling tired but Tararua happy.

We were Warren Wheeler (leader), Marjan Kloos, Sara Haddad and Anna Astorga.

### **9 February Rangiwahia Hut Malcolm Parker**

The day looked like it would be an absolute cracker, but then February should be I guess. A few of us were a bit concerned when we drove into the cloud. We were looking forward to see if there had been any work done on the slip track. It had been planned to have started "sometime" after Christmas. But by the state of the very last part of the road, the answer was no. It was quite rough. And the carpark was empty. Quite strange.

Off up the track, and there had been some work done on the bottom end of the track. But by the time we got to the detour it had run out. So it was the usual scramble up and over the slip, and then a stop for morning tea in the shade just over the bridge. From there on, it was a pleasant stroll up to the hut. By now the sun was really making its presence felt. It was warm!

After a pleasant lunch on the hut deck, a few headed off up the track for a bit of a wander. There were heaps of building equipment strategically placed around the hut all ready to start the new work there.

Then it was all downhill and back to the carpark. A quick look at the road down from the carpark to scope out the safest part of the road, then off to Cheltenham for an ice cream. It was an excellent day trip, and will be well worth a look again in a couple of months when all the track work has been completed.

We were; Malcolm, Michelle, May, Sook, Woody, Karen, Tanya, Lorell.

### **5-9 February A Short Spell up the Tasman Terry Crippen**

To avoid a two day trudge up the Tasman moraine, as most sensible people do, Ange and I decided to fly into Kelman Hut up the head of the Tasman Glacier (Mt Cook National Park). We teamed up to chopper in with a couple of Alaskan pilots filling in spare time between Antarctica and back home. Kelman Hut at 2460m sits impressively above the Murchison headwall and Tasman Saddle. Snow conditions were relatively good for this time of the year, although the Anna Glacier was too cut up for access onto Ellie. Hardly anyone in the huts in the whole of Mt Cook National Park – except for Mueller Hut.



*Angela on the summit of Aylmer. Peaks in the Murchison and Godley valleys to the right. [Terry Crippen]*

The second day we departed at the leisurely hour of 6.30am, planning to go up Aylmer and Hochstetter Dome, from the saddle between them. Once at the saddle the ridge onto Aylmer's summit was a bit cut up with a nasty schrund against the rock step. This took up a bit of time and some gymnastics to get over.

*The ridge was steeper than my last time here – very typical, something to do with age I expect – so the rope was used the whole way up.*

Once on the summit at 2699m excellent views were had; Mt Adams above the West Coast cloud, Mt Kensington up by the Garden of Allah and of course Mts Cook and Tasman.

To make things "interesting" we decided to descend via the SW face (a good steep way up); this took a bit of time as snow stake and ice screw anchors were required! So we decided to

leave Hochstetter till the next day. Back at the hut we helped an AGL party offload some of their fresh fruit and veggies, even though we had plenty of our own, as they were to fly out the next day.

Day 3, we had a later start and headed over to the east ridge of Hochstetter. This ridge was very easy, we used running belays to avoid the 1400m slide down the West Coast side into the Whymper, although the rope could have been put away. There was a nasty schrund cutting off access to the subsidiary summit to the west so lunch was had on top at 2827m before a descent the way we had come and a hot slog back to the hut.

The next day we occupied ourselves with rope and rock work on the face of "Mabel", the knob next to Able; together with some crevasse activity practicing prussicking and extraction methods.

As the weather forecast from the radio sched that evening was for deteriorating weather, we decided to team up with the Alaskans again and fly out the next day. This would save the trudge down the Tasman moraine in the forecasted rain (and save someone's knees). Ange was keen to

experience it; never having done it before. But the chopper ride was a nice option.

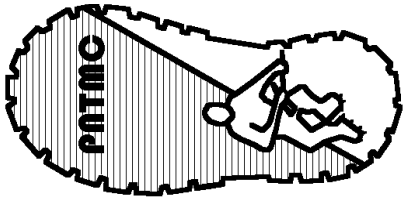
As it turned out the poor weather didn't arrive till three days later, so we could have spent more time up there. But we had a spell of rock climbing at Riverside Bluffs near Wanaka before heading down to Homer Hut in the Darrans (Fiordland National Park) to meet up with Don French and the arrival of the rain.



*Along the Tin Range, Rakiuru/Stewart Island. To hear more about tramping in this beautiful area, come along to Anne's talk. 25 April*



*Swimming the Irongate Gorge at the end of a medium day trip down the Oroua River. 17 February 2013. "Expect to get wet feet....." Photo Anna Astorga.*



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## PNTMC Newsletter March 2013

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

#### AGM 2013 details

- Tararua Trips: Mangahao, Roaring Stag
- Ruahine Trips: Pohangina, Maropea, Oroua, Rangī, Dead Dog, Iron Gates Gorge
- The Real Manawatu Gorge Trip
- The Southern Alps: Tasman Glacier

#### Articles for the newsletter

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

Get out and about with us!

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