

Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.

www.pntmc.org.nz

P.O. Box 1217, Palmerston North

Newsletter March 2016



Exploring the fantastic karst landscape of Mt Owen, Kahurangi National Park [Warren Wheeler]

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.

10 March

Heaphy MTB

Chris Tuffley

The Heaphy Track isn't merely a Great Walk: it's open to mountain biking between 1 May and 30 September, and it turns out it's a Great Ride too! Over three days last September we saw sun, drizzle, snow, sun, drizzle, hail, sun, drizzle and sun, and emerged at Kohaihai on the West Coast covered in grit and mud, and with enormous grins on our faces. Come and see the pictures.

31 March

Mt D'Archiac Summer '81

Peter Wiles

Back in 1981 Peter Wiles and three others climbed the south Forbes route of Mt D'Archiac, on the northern boundary of Mt Cook National Park. This blast from the past takes us back to the days of slideshows, remember those?

Upcoming Trips

5-8 March

Ruahine Corner M
Janet Wilson 329 4722

Some of you will remember taking part some years ago in the rebait of the traps in the Ruahine Corner - Te Potae - Colenso area.

This summer these traps are once again being serviced by volunteers. It is a fly in trip and probably a walk out. We plan to visit Ikawatea Forks – seldom visited by the club, as well as RC, Colenso, and Iron Bark Huts. I would like to do this over a relaxed 4 or 5 days – let me know if you are interested and we can talk over a plan. Fantastic opportunity to see that part of the Ruahines. Fly in places are limited so contact me early for this one.

6 March

Waiopehu Hut M
Peter Darragh 353 0922

A pleasant walk up to the bushline in the Tararua Ranges behind Levin.

12-13 March

Mangahao Flats (with MTSC) M
Warren Wheeler 356 1998

Depart 7.30am. A chance to help out and socialise at the Annual MTSC Work Party to Mangahao Flats Hut, which is in the northern Tararuas behind Shannon. The fastest group will do any required track clearing along the way. Once at the hut the normal cleaning will occur but we will focus most of our efforts on vegetation clearance from around the helipad/clearing below the hut. There is not a lot to do and many hands make light work. The usual extensive round of nibbles and drinkies will be followed by a light dinner and birthday cake (for Jean Garman – her Big Five-Oh). On Sunday we can help finish any outstanding work and there will be options to head out via the track, down the river or some combination of the two.

13 March

Coppermine Creek E
Janet Darragh 353 0922

A nice easy walk along the old pack track and up the stream to the magazine (a short tunnel - look for a family of cave weta) and other relics at this old mining site north of Woodville.

19-20 March

Toka Biv M
Geoff Phillips 356 4223

If people were keen and weather permitting we could go to Toka Biv via Tunipo or take the

quick way from Limestone Road end. I'll take a tent but most probably it would be a quiet night in the bivvie.

20 March

Manawatu Walking Festival
Rangi Hut E
Dave Grant 328 7788

Come and join me on this tramp I am leading for the Manawatu Walking Festival. I am looking for three or four club members to join me in hosting the Walking Festival visitors. This involves meeting with the visitors at i-Site in the Square, accompanying them on the bus trip (no charge), and guiding them on the walk to Rangi, sharing your knowledge on the way. We gather at the i-Site at 7.30am, travel to the Rangi car park, arriving at 9.30am and walk up to Rangi Hut for lunch, returning back to the carpark and the bus by 3.30pm. It's a nice easy day to wander through the bush up to the tussock slopes around Rangi Hut, enjoy those expansive views, and meet some new people.

If you don't want to be involved in hosting but would like to join the tramp, contact me to carpool from Milverton Park leaving at 8.00am.

25-28 March (Easter)

Kahurangi NP M
Grant Christian 354 5843

A trip to the Thousand Acre Plateau in Kahurangi National Park. We will start from near Murchison in the southwest corner of Kahurangi National Park and go past Lake Matiri to the plateau. We will be staying in tents.

Easter weekend day trip

25 March (or best weather day)
Stanfield Hut E
Duncan Hedderley 354 6905

Meet at 9am at Milverton Park for this trip into the hills behind Dannevirke. If people are keen, we can come back down the river; otherwise we will come back the way we go in, along Holmes Ridge. My plan is to go Good Friday (25th) unless there's a clearly better day weather-wise.

2-3 April

Neill Forks Hut M
Warren Wheeler 356 1998

Depart 7.30am. This updated Forest Service hut in the southern Tararuas is well worth a visit. From the Holdsworth Roadend near Masterton we head for Totara Flats, then a rock hop up the Waiohine River to Hector Forks and up to the hut, returning the same way or via the steep ridge track.

2 or 3 April

Farm Walk

M

Malcolm Leary

06 327 7825

This walk will take us across one or two of the rugged hill country stations west of Hunterville. Learn about some interesting farming history, experience expansive views unimpeded by trees and enjoy some rural hospitality afterwards. We will pick the best day weatherwise.

9-10 April

Arete Forks

F

Graham Peters

329 4722

Drive down to road end Friday evening. Tramp in via Blue Range, Cow Creek and Table Ridge. Down the permat track to Arete Forks Hut. Next day climb to the Bannister Ridge and return via Waingawa and Cow Saddle. An interesting and quite long trip using some less travelled routes.

10 April

Blue Range Hut

E

Woody Lee

357 2390

A nice walk in the Tararua FP near Masterton. It is a fairly steep hill at the beginning but a pleasant track, and there is a picnic table outside the hut for relaxing lunch. Return the same way to the car park and we might have an afternoon tea at the Mt Bruce café. Depart 8.00 am

10 April (postponed until 16 or 17 April)

Titahi Bay rock climbing

T

Peter Darragh

353 0922

A chance to try rock climbing at this popular spot, at the bottom of the sea cliffs north of Titahi Bay (near Porirua). Suitable for beginners and more experienced climbers. Club ropes and other climbing gear will be made available.

Trip Grading

Trip grades depend on many factors, especially weather and terrain. A reasonably proficient trapper 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.

Personal Locator Beacons – Free for trips

The club has purchased two PLBs for members' use. If you want to take one of these on a trip, contact Martin or Anne Lawrence on 357-1695. Note that this applies to any trip you are going on - it doesn't need to be a club trip.

Trip leaders

Complete the trip intentions form and leave with one of Overdue Trip Contacts or drop into 44 Dahlia St or email to pntmctrips@gmail.com with the date and trip name in the subject line. 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:

Janet Wilson 329-4722

Martin and Anne Lawrence 357-1695

Malcolm Parker 357-5203

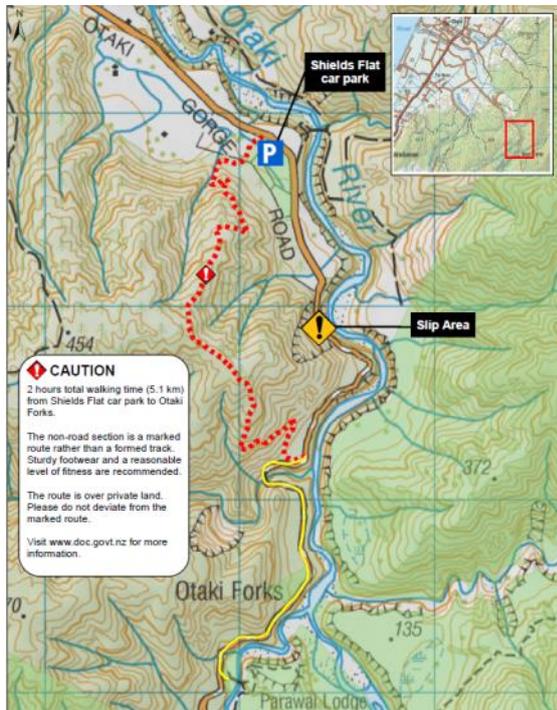
Articles for the newsletter

Send by the 20th of each month to Warren Wheeler, the newsletter editor, direct or via our web site <http://www.pntmc.org.nz/mail/>

Otaki Forks Road Closed

You may already be aware that the Otaki Forks Road has been closed due to a slip on Blue Bluff, 13km from SH1. The slip area is unstable with large cracks high above the road. Assessments are being carried out but the road is likely to be closed for a few months.

An alternative access track has recently been opened by DOC and goes well above the slip site, starting at Shields Flat Historic Reserve carpark. It climbs 300m up and down to the road again, with a DOC time of 2 hours for the 5.1 km to get to Otaki Forks.



Road Closure updates are on the web; Google "Otaki Forks Road Closed" or similar. There is a link there to the DOC website, which has a map (see above) and other track information.

New Member

Welcome back to Stuart Hubbard, who was a member over 10 years ago. Stuart enjoyed the Jubilee Celebrations so much he decided it was time to get out with us again.

His contact phone number is 06 951 0955.

Trip Reports

23 January 2016

Wandering around on Ruapehu Raj Palanisamy

We could wander around Ruapehu, Derek said on Wednesday the 20th of January, so when I phoned him up on Friday evening, to my disappointment he could not make up his mind, so the decision of wandering around was on hold with lots of if's and but's. Somehow he changed his mind and off we went towards Ruapehu on 23rd January.

After I settled in NZ, whenever I travelled northwards the majestic mountain always attracted my attention and raised the questions; how it would be on the top? Is there really a lake there with bubbling water? Why is the water that runs along the Whangaehu River grey? Is it easy to climb up the mountain all the way? Amateur thoughts of course!

I come from Southern India, the place surrounded with ranges that runs parallel to the western coast. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is one of the eight "hotspots" of biological diversity in the world.

The highest peak is "Anaimudi" (means Elephant's forehead) having an elevation of 2,695 metres, and also the highest point in India outside the Himalaya - Karakoram mountain range.



Anaimudi, highest peak in South India

Having lived just 20 km away I never thought about climbing the mountain, whereas when I was a kid I used to go around with the other boys to explore the nearby hills. I wonder what prevented me to do so, perhaps not so many people who I was with ventured out. Probably once you reach a certain level in your life you don't pursue those interests anymore, but here I am willing to do so after so many years with

the help of a like-minded person who is willing to encourage you to be whom you ought to be. Besides, the presence of the tramping club influences and encourages me as well.

Derek and I reached the car park of the Turoa Ski Field at around 4.30 pm. It was a beautiful day on Saturday and was very warm with clear skies. We started climbing from there towards the end of the ski lifts, as Derek planned that we would camp just above the ski lift and the next morning finish climbing the mountain.

For the first time I was using a big pack (75 litres), the one abandoned by Nigel Barrett and rescued and donated by Derek, felt heavy with all my 3 season clothing and with food. As usual we did not follow the road that runs along the ski field and of course who I am with, the master of cross country explorer Derek, so we decided to climb diagonally up through the naturally piled up, beautifully coloured rocks towards the Mangaehuehu Glacier.

Rock hopping is my favourite thing as I used to do that when I was growing up in a village surrounded by rocky hills, so I felt comfortable walking in that terrain without any problem. However the loose rocks tested my nerves as it was slippery and sliding causing few rolling rocks downhill. Derek was as comfortable as a "tahr" on the rocky slopes.

The evening was hot but the gentle breeze was soothing. We crossed a beautiful waterfall and after 2 hours or so we were there just above the end of ski field lift, overlooking the glacier. We were looking for a place to camp with running water nearby so that we could fetch water for cooking. After debating a few spots Derek chose a spot as if it was made for camping, overlooking the horizon on one side and the mountain peak on the other side, with some very small amount of water running from the melting snow about 50 meters away. So we happily settled down for the night. The day was still clear, except for Mount Taranaki which was covered with cloud.

We unpacked our bags and made our sleeping place comfortable. When lying down we could see Mt.Egmont on the horizon. It was getting dark, the evening dusk sky was streaked with different shades of orange, red and blue, and there it was - Mt.Egmont visible without any clouds and the whole horizon spread in front of us, bedroom with a view! We had our dinner and settled down into our bivvy bags. I couldn't sleep and I didn't want to sleep as I didn't want to miss any of happenings around me such as

the setting sun, changing colours in the sky, and the appearing man made high pressure electric sodium lights to indicate where humans were comfortably settled on the earth below the mountain. I wish I had an eraser to erase the ski lift pylons within my view for that moment to just nurture the nature without any man-made structures. I imagined that I did, and enjoyed my billion dollar view without lifting my head from my stone pillow, how magnificent it was. My companion Derek, a man of a million rules already wound up for his sleep, as if he heard the Big Ben chime nine times, his biological clock shuts at 9 pm sharp!!

There I was watching the stars appearing in the sky one by one, waiting to see the shooting stars, dozed off a bit and woke up when I felt something on my face. I thought I was dreaming and seeing a white light as if someone had beamed a powerful light on my face from the top of the mountain. It was the full moon which had risen behind the snow peaked, graceful mountain. It was a comfortable blanket-snuggling cold.

I wish I was awake all night, but slept on through until just before 6 am in the morning after hearing rustling from Derek who was getting ready to make a hot drink. He asked me to fetch water from the creek nearby which I had found the previous evening, so I went along after grudgingly coming out of my sleeping bag, to the creek but I could not find. The water was running no more because of the cool night.

I could hear running water further along, a hundred or two metres away, but in the middle there was a big snow patch and unfortunately I did not have mountaineering shoes on as I was climbing with my Mark and Spencer's rainy day dog walking shoes!!! I was scared to cross the snow so I came back with an empty water bottle worrying that what kind of comment would come from Derek to appreciate my lame attempt of fetching water. While walking back sheepishly towards the camp site I saw there was small trickle of water which appeared from the same creek much below where I last time saw the water, so I patiently sat and collected the water and then proudly headed back towards the camp!!

I am always amazed to see how Derek positions himself to sleep in such a way that without getting up from his sleeping bag in the morning, he unpacks his bag, sets the cooking things ready and makes coffee. He cooked his

famous brand porridge with dates, almonds and cinnamon, to which we added blueberry conserve, yum!

After having our breakfast we left all our sleeping and cooking gear at the camp site in an orange pack liner, and started climbing with our now light weight bags. We followed up the summit ridge, and it was comfortable to hop across the rocks except in a few places where, as Derek pointed out, that they were like dinner plates loosely arranged one over the other and were so slippery! Embedded rocks were good to place the feet and hop on, fun!

While we climbed we saw a man climbing where it was loose rocks and he was struggling to climb in the middle of slipping rocks. We were enthusiastically greeting the man but no response came from him whatsoever, so we repeated again when he was very near to us, at last he realised that we were trying to communicate with him, upon which he indicated to us that he was hard of hearing and he was climbing towards the summit. As we continued the climb to the top I was surprised to hear Derek say that I was doing well, as we had climbed 500 meters in one hour. In my experience it is hard to get that kind of comment from him!

We were on the summit just before 9 am as it took less than one and a half hours. Suddenly I realised we were on top of this beautiful sacred mountain, a wonderful feeling. We sat down and enjoyed the views and then we climbed down the summit rocks, towards the crater rim to look around. It was a rough climb that required careful manoeuvres, and once down we didn't get much farther along the rim, as we soon encountered snow which we couldn't cross because of my unsuitable footwear.

Over 30 minutes had passed, and still there was no sign of the man whom we had seen a while ago. Derek thought if we did not see him for another 10 minutes he was going to look for him. But before the 10 minutes was up, there he was, appearing behind the ridge. He was thrilled to reach the summit and he announced it was his 59th birthday and his name is Jiri a retired clinical engineer from Czech Republic, currently living in Whanganui. He asked us to take his picture on the summit with his brandy bottle in one hand and a Cuban cigar on the other hand.

After chit chatting for few minutes we started the climb down. I struggled a bit on the loose

rocks and Derek did not miss his chance to tell me that I was slowing down! (He was waiting so that rocks didn't fall on his head).

We reached the campsite and repacked our bags and headed towards the car park. Derek met a couple of young climbers who were very swift to go up and down at the same speed, very professional I assumed. Having seen them on their return, descending quickly through the snow, Derek abandoned me and had fun walking fast on the snow, leaving me scrambling among the rocks! After seeing him having fun glissading, I did play sliding down on the snow for a bit and it was fun indeed!

When we climbed the mountain we noticed the whole of the ski field was polluted with plastics, metal and different materials throughout and we felt sad. Materials like plastic bottles, beer bottles, massive sign boards on one of the waterfalls, and other sign boards scattered throughout, iron chains, mangled metal bars and posts, bamboo sticks, plastic foam pads the size of a single bed, plastic nets etcetera, totally looked like a junk yard if someone cared to look closely. Why.....why does this have to be like this? Why can't the people who run the ski field, who make millions in the winter season, spend a few thousand dollars to clean up the mess after the season just before summer every year?

I have heard people slagging off about rubbish and dirt in developing countries which is an absolute truth and understandable based on the fact that they are developing countries, but our own backyard is filled with rusting metals and poisoning plastics which is ugly and unacceptable in this beautiful and sacred world heritage site, which is also our first national park. I wonder whether the president of the club would take this matter to higher authorities, just to make them aware of how bad it looks, that would be greatly appreciated.

The trip, the climbing experience, the camping and the atmosphere in the night on the mountain, and scenery from the top still feels like a dream for me. I wish everyone should have this splendid experience if you have not done it already. Only then you realise that there is some super power that exists whom created these marvellous things for us to cherish, thank you Lord. Thanks to Derek for putting up with me and for the chance of an everlasting, memorable experience.

29 January - 1 February
Plan D – Up the Cameron Valley
Terry Crippen

Mumble; due to extremely poor weather (something to do with that tropical cyclone attacking NZ and some stationary fronts), Plan A (Lawrence Valley and Mt Arrowsmith); Plan B (Huxley and Elcho); Plan C (Mt Cook area), Ange and I dreamt up the idea of going up the Cameron, past Lake Heron, to Cameron Hut (CMC) on the east side of the Arrowsmith Range. We knew we had about 5 days of OK weather. Parking at the road end and filling in the intentions book. Then off up valley.

The route up valley is definitely not a DoC track - it's a CMC track/route. Initially it is OK to follow but by the time you are half way the route becomes harder to follow. Plenty of matagauri and Spaniard to attack you!



Head of Cameron valley and Arrowsmith range

The Cameron River was milky and running high – you wouldn't want to cross it today! There is one huge big fan that you have to scramble up then drop down into open river flats. From here on the route finding becomes hard. We followed the Cameron up on the TR then into a side stream. There are a few odd cairns and waratahs for route finding. Even though I had been to the hut three times before, route finding is still tricky. After about 6 or 7 hours, with plenty of rests, you clamber onto recent terminal moraine and go down to the hut situated next to some grassy flats. Nine bunks thanks to CMC. Still plenty of cloud/mist about.

The following morning the whole place was covered in mist, 4 cheeky keas hanging about. Eventually the mist lifted so we went up on the lateral moraine on the TR to look at the Cameron Glacier. The upper part of the lateral moraine has collapsed so it's not an easy route to use for Arrowsmith now. You wouldn't

want to fall off the edge of the moraine wall – it's a long way down - you would be dead! Then back to the hut for a late lunch. Plenty of Wilderness Mags to read.

The next day we headed up to the glacial lake below the Douglas Glacier. I decided to stop nearly there, been there before with Nigel Green attempting to climb East Horn – we rested and the route we were going to do suddenly collapsed, a huge rock fall – so we gave up. Ange headed on up – too cold for a swim. A lazing afternoon in the hut we did some easy walks and had a wash in a side stream. Very hot!!

The following day we got up early and the plan was to camp half way down valley. But by about lunch time it was too hot to pitch the tent. Ran into some other people heading DOWN valley but apparently heading to Cameron Hut!? So we headed out to the road end and off to Methven for a wash!

7 February 2016
Beehive Creek
Quoting the Kids

Leena (11):
"I loved running down the steep hills and splashing into the creek after that. The water was nice and cool and I enjoyed jumping off the tree trunk. Minami and I kept splashing each other so I was soaking wet in the end."

Kazuki (8):
"Before the creek when we were going through a farm, I was running down a very steep hill as fast as I could. I fell over at the bottom of the hill and just managed to avoid a big pile of cow poo!"

Natsume (7):
"I liked walking in the water. I splashed my sister and she splashed me even more. Some went into my eyes and mouth. It wasn't tasty."

Masaki (4):
"I jumped in the water and found gold coloured stones. I was so wet."

Annalise (7):
(Explaining why she was tired on the hill): "I collected 34 signatures of racing car drivers!" (she had helped with stock cars scrutineering the day before).

Conan (8):
"There was a really stinky part, and we had to

go like this (pulling T-shirt over his nose), like a gas mask. The water wasn't very deep, but sometime there were deeper parts and one of our feet would fall into them."

Minami (10):

"We made a really, really deep hole at the end (i.e. in the stream at the picnic area). Mummy picked lots of blackberries. Two dragonflies stuck together landed on my arm. The water wasn't as deep as last time."

The MacDonald family: Lochlan, Tomoko, Leena, Kazuki, Natsumi, Masaki

The Strachans: Donna, Annalise, Doug, Maho, Minami and Conan

Distances and times:

Stream: 6km exactly (4.5 on sign), 2hrs 10mins

Road (Lochlan & Doug only): 37mins, 3.4km



Maho with Minami "bleeding" [Doug Strachan]

21 February 2016 Ohingaiti Boulders Doug Strachan

40 minutes from Milverton, we stopped at Stormy Point Lookout. Ruapehu was hidden, so we studied the river terraces. I asked whether the wooden viewing platform we were standing on could be called a terrace. This

sparked a discussion about the difference between a terrace, deck, platform and gazebo.

On to the boulders, where we had a brief debate about whether they were left there by giants or gods. Solution: giant gods.

The kids enjoyed a game of hide and seek amongst the concretions. Have fun but stay away from the cliff.



One of the many Whitecliffs Boulders.

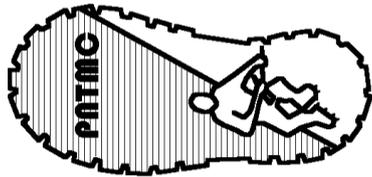
After an hour or so of exploring and snacking amongst the boulders, we returned up the steep farm track, mercifully under partial cloud cover, to the cars.

By the time we reached the Ruahine Dress Circle, we were ready for lunch and a dip in the stream. Warren conjured up another of the appropriately-shaped watermelons he keeps up his sleeve for hot trips.

After lunch, we enjoyed swimming, showering under the waterfall, and doing bombs off the shell-infused papa bank. Hesitant at first, Ruby became a little bolder in water over her head. Some of us explored a short distance upstream or downstream. The second swimming hole downstream was accessible by descending a fixed rope.

The final highlight of the day was the ice cream stop at Cheltenham, where a single scoop means 2 scoops, and Sally's flavour even had concretions sticking out of it.

The Whitecliff Boulder Bashers were: Yvonne van der Does, Sally Hewson, Fiona Donald, Peter Sebborn, Natalie Parlane and granddaughter Ruby, Warren Wheeler, Doug Strachan, Minami Strachan, Conan Strachan.



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PNTMC Newsletter March 2016

What's inside this month?

- AGM coming 14 April
- Otaki Forks Road closed – new DOC access track now open
- Ruapehu Camp and Climb
- Southern Alps - up the Cameron Valley
- Beehive Creek with the Kids
- Whitecliffs Boulders Ohingaiti
- Coming trips and more

Articles for the newsletter

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

Get out and about with us!

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