

Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.

www.pntmc.org.nz

P.O. Box 1217, Palmerston North

Newsletter April 2016



Rotorua Adventure Team "4 Tararua Trampers" take a break at Mid-Pohangina Hut [Yvette Cottam]

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.

14 April

AGM

See Notices. Dress up in your favourite gear (retro or new) and turn up at 7.30pm for a cuppa and cheese and crackers. We will start the AGM itself around 7.45pm. Supper with delicious cake will follow.

28 April

Mt Blanc Circuit

John Philpott

Join John (and Gaye) Philpott on a virtual 10 day tour around Mt Blanc. Great scenery, nice people and wonderful accommodation. You'll want to put it on your bucket list.

Upcoming Trips

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 Walls Whare Roadend near Carterton we head over Cone and down to the hut. Return via the ridge track to Totara Flats and back down the river 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

16 or 17 April (not 10 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. We will pick the best day to suit the weather and the group.

16-17 April

Southern Kawekas M/F
Bruce van Brunt 328 4761

This trip will be going to the Kawekas, weather permitting. The plan is to access the forest near the Napier-Taihape road (Lakes Carpark). We ascend the tops via the Rogue and head towards Mad Dog Hill spending the night either at Studholm Biv or the hut. The next day we exit via Castle Camp, Kiwi Saddle Hut, and Kuripapango peak. It is a fun introduction to the southern Kawekas and the tracks are mostly nice.

17 April

Tamaki West E/M
Dieter Stalman 027 4509 460

Postponed until later in the year. Note that Titahi Bay rock climbing is now the Day Trip for this weekend.

23-25 April ANZAC weekend

Aorangi Forest Park M
Terry Crippen 027 643 3637

Two options for this Medium grade trip.

1. Lost Tarn near Mt Barton, via White Rock Station. Some VERY steep climbing – hands and legs needed!

2. Washpool and Kawakawa Huts. Via stream, bush bash and track. Need a vehicle at each end.

For both trips (I decide which) we will leave on Friday night to get an early start Sat morning.

25 April (or other to suit)

Iron Gates M
Mike Allerby 323 8563

Depart 7.30am from PN or preferably Feilding and drive off to the Oroua Valley road end. Sidle along the river valley on the wet weather track, through magnificent Red Beech forest, with views of the pristine waters that are found in the upper Oroua River. We will stop for lunch at Iron Gates Hut, a great little backcountry hut sitting on a grassy river terrace. Head back out the same way and hopefully spot a Whio, Janet may reward you with an easter egg if you do, 'that's if Graham hasn't eaten them all'.

30-1 May

Dundas Hut M/F
Warren Wheeler 356 1998

A Tararua loop from Putara Roadend behind Ekatahuna up onto the tops of the Dundas Range and out via Roaring Stag Lodge. Alternatively we could return the same way over Herepai.

1 May

**Herepai Hut
Woody Lee**

**E/M
357 2390**

A trip into the Tararuas behind Eketahuna. We will start from the Putara roadend and climb steadily up the hill after the second swing bridge. Bring your cup for a hot drink at the hut. Depart at 8am.

7-8 May

**Leon Kinvig Hut
Janet Wilson**

**M
329 4722**

This western Ruahines trip takes us into the middle section of the Pohangina River. A good chance to see blue duck (whio) and help check the stoat traps there.

8 May

**Ridge Road Farm Walk
Dave Grant**

**M
328 7788**

Thought I'd show you what has been keeping me busy for the past few months. We have a place on Ridge Road between the Pohangina and Oroua valleys from where we will do loop, walking over rolling hills, westward through a couple of neighbours properties along the Oroua escarpment, dropping down to the river, then back upstream, finally climbing back to the start through reverting scrubland. Should be 6 hours or so. If we are lucky Gaewyn will have made scones if you would like to stop at our house on the way home. Leave Milverton Park 7.30am.

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.

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/>

Notices

PNTMC AGM 14 April 2016

Celebrate our 50th Annual General Meeting by wearing some of your favourite tramping gear, either retro or new or a combination of both. Turn up at 7.30pm for a cuppa and cheese and crackers and we will start the AGM itself around 7.45pm. Supper with delicious cake will follow.

As usual the AGM will involve the Presidents Report, Treasurers Report, Election of Officers and Committee Members as well as any items of General Business.

If you would like to be involved in helping with organising and running the club then ask a Committee Member to find out more and get yourself nominated. This is your chance to bring up any club related matters in an open forum, so think about any improvements or other issues and let the Secretary know so we can bring them up under General Business.

PNTMC Jubilee Book

Old Boots & Packs - The First 50 Years of the Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club (PNTMC) will interest and amuse mountain users, historians, photographers, hut baggers and tree huggers. Read about current and past members' exploits, which include climbing our highest peaks (sometimes with boots on the wrong feet) and powering a car on white spirits cooking fuel.



Order your copies directly from the editor Doug Strachan 353-6526 and get ready to put your feet up with this great read, all for only \$35.

(Also makes a nice gift to friends and family who might otherwise wonder why you enjoy tramping so much!)

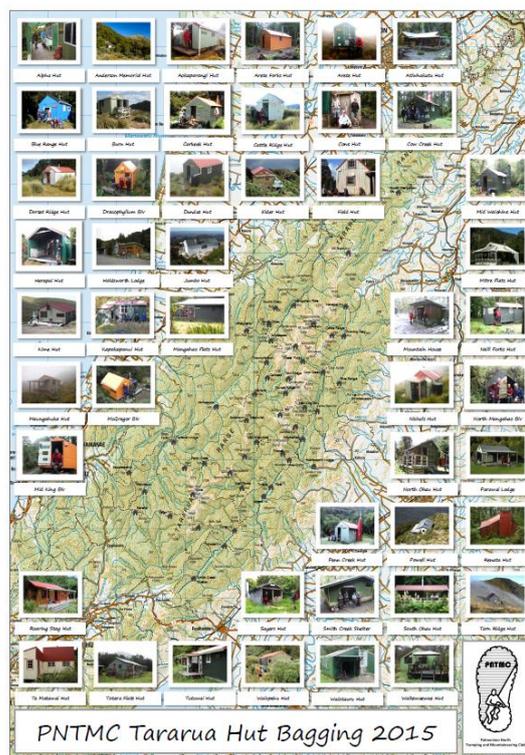
Otaki Forks Road Still Closed

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. Work has begun on removing some 45,000 cubic metres of material and the road is likely to be open in two or three months before winter sets in.

An alternative access track has 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 and other track information.

Tararua Hut Bagging Poster



Size	Members	Non Members
A2	\$8	\$12
A1	\$16	\$24

Post and tube is about \$15 extra depending on where it is being sent.

Also available is a similar Ruahine Poster.

Sale proceeds go towards our maintenance of Mid-Pohangina and Ngamoko Huts.

Contact Warren 356-1998.

Trip Reports

14 February 2016

Iron Gates Gorge

Overnighters report by Dieter Stalmann

Barney and I decided to get a head-start on the rest of the group, and made our way to the valley on Saturday afternoon. It was a great day, and the walk was easy-going, just Barney, myself and Ottis the dog. We found the campsite easily on the other side of the stream, pitched the fly, made dinner (roast chicken, Greek salad and buns with custard fruit pie for desert).

Sunday morning we traversed the ridge behind the campsite, after which we had poached eggs and bacon for breakfast. Shortly after that, Warren and the troop joined us at the stream. It was a casual walk, crossing the stream several times, and some of us doing a swim with our pack packs through the deeper ponds. At some stage we got soaked because of rain, but that didn't put us off too much.

At last we reached the Iron Gates Gorge. Great spot!

The last part was all uphill, but finally we reached the car park, some of us more exhausted than expected. Well worth the trip!

Note to self: Do not pick up rocks to take home. They cause a few days of back pain ...

14 February 2016

Iron Gates Gorge

Day Trippers report by Kathy Corner

We were an international group that set off on Warren's annual pilgrimage to Iron Gates Gorge. Woody bought 2 of his work colleagues, a young man from Germany and a woman from Iran (Shiva). Later in the day we met up with Dieter from South Africa and Barney from New Zealand. Warren brought his traditional watermelon (of course) half of which he dropped off at Janet and Graham's shed for us to consume later.

After a stop at Heritage Lodge for a drink and a chat to some women and their young kids, we sidled the river for another hour. Warren continued his customary role when tramping with new comers by being a botanical guide as we walked. We tested them on the plants at the end of the day!

Some parts of the track are a little tricky with a steep slip on one side. I feel DOC needs to upgrade the track if they want more families to be out and about tramping on this route. The first thing Warren and I did when we reached our lunch stop by the river was to have a swim and very refreshing it was too!! Our international companions obviously decided it was way too cold, Woody included! We met up with Dieter and Barney who had walked in the night before and camped by the river.

After enjoying our watermelon we all set off together downstream which involved lots of river crossings. For Shiva this type of travel was difficult as she was not used to this terrain. It took us a lot longer than expected to walk down the river. En route Warren (our teacher and guide) taught us how to do a river crossing and at one point I crossed the river by swimming and Barney did a swim with his big pack on his back. It started to rain quite heavily and did so for about half an hour. My raincoat was in the car as I felt I did not need it - silly me! Anyway at least it was warm so I we did not get cold.

By the time we got to the gorge it was 4.30pm so we decided not to swim through the gorge as planned. I must say the gorge does look pretty spectacular so I am keen to give it a go next year. It was getting late when we arrived back at Janet and Grahams. Shiva was so exhausted she could hardly walk but before we left we were rewarded with a magnificent sunset. Thanks for the company everyone. (By the way Shiva has not been put off tramping and she did go to work the next day!).

Barney Hyde (NZ), Dieter Stalmann (South Africa) , Woody Lee (Korea), Michael Brech (Germany), Shiva Amirkaveei (Iran) Kathy Corner (UK), Warren Wheeler (NZ) .



We made it!!

[Woody Lee]

**19-21 February 2016
Upper Makaroro Circuit
Janet Wilson**

Sometime you need a good excuse as motivation for a trip. Combining tramping in a great area with some conservation work is enough motivation for me.

A year ago I helped install some new DOC 200 traps in the Parks Peak/Upper Makaroro area. These extended the existing traps lines which now encircle the Upper Makaroro catchment and are part of the wider network of traps in the Northern Ruahines. I was keen to revisit and for us to help the Wellington TMC who have taken on maintaining the new traps.

Craig, Graham and myself took Friday off work and made it a long weekend. We had the usual pie for lunch in Dannevirke and headed up the hill towards Parks Peak (PP) at 2.30. It was nice to see a robin at Sentry Box Hut as we passed by. It's not a bad climb up the hill to the ridge - smaller than the climbs we usually do in the Oroua area. The traps start once you hit the ridge track and we started work. It is quick going with 3 people and we were at PP Hut at 5.15. A quick stop and we carried on down to Upper Makaroro, arriving around 7pm - nice track, easy going, great conditions, river very low. No catches in the traps.



Map reading to keep on track in the clag

Next day we continued up Totara Spur. It was claggy and colder at the bush line and it was parkas and balaclava's on. We could see Kylie

Biv on the next spur south but decided not to visit and carried on north. The WTMC trap line ends up on the tops and joins in to an older line which we were also rebaiting. This is a great area to visit, beautiful and covered in many small tarns but this was not the best day and we had to search for some of the traps in the mist. We did a small side trip heading up to the high point 1505 at the end of the line, from where you can carry on over to Potae/Ruahine Corner or the Ikawatea Stream. We then retraced our path back down and carried on towards Aranga.

We had planned to camp at the hunters camp and Pt 1396 but were disappointed to find the tarn nearly dry. I scouted around for water but could find none nearby so after a break we carried on to near the derelict Aranga Hut and camped. This made it quite a long day. Luckily the hut still has a small modern water tank which was full (NB guttering is very marginal - could do with some TLC). I have since heard that the small dry stream near the hut flows again not too far away.

Next day, Craig and Graham carried on along the easy ridge top towards PP, completing the traps and returning to the car via Sentry Box while I headed north along the trap line for some time, before retracing my steps and descending to Masters Shelter. I then walked out to the road and the others picked me up in time for a late lunch. Nice summer trip that I would like to repeat another time.

**5-7 March 2016
Pohangina River Revisit
Janet Wilson**

This trip was advertised as a fly in trip going to the Ruahine Corner area but due to low catch numbers in the traps in that area this summer, it was decided by the DOC coordinator to postpone this trip until later in April.

So I jumped at the opportunity to move back to the Pohangina River (traps and huts to check) and extend the trip out to include Monday, which just happened to be my birthday. It was also the first training trip that team "4 Taranaki Trampers" were to have all together leading up to our all womens adventure race in early April. Nearly a girls only trip of Ange McIntosh, Tina Bishop, Yvette Cottam and myself. Graham and his gun came along too (he doesn't make a very good "honorary girl").

It's some time since I took on the Mid-Poh sidle track and I can't say it's improved. Always seems longer than you hope for. From a lookout point early on, Graham and Yvette spotted a dead deer near the river bed. Not that far on we came across the hunters who were just heading off from their camp to retrieve it! We had lunch before the hut and got there early afternoon in time for a break before heading on up river to Ngamoko Hut. Yvette, Ange and I checked the traps while Graham and Tina carried on up to the hut - Tina reporting that "step-ups" at the gym aren't quite equal to tramping rough sidle tracks.



Tina gives Mid-Poh mattresses a good clean



Ready to rock hop down the river

In the evening Graham and I headed upstream to look for a deer. We were in luck and Graham shot a youngish stag not too far up river. A pair of whio were flying around. It was dark by the time we returned laden down. By then the others had eaten and were tucked up in their sleeping bags. Our dinner was had out on the deck, heaps of stars, a beautiful evening. Ngamoko Hut is looking great and the new meat safe proved very useful.

Next morning Ange, Yvette and myself headed upstream for a couple of km's checking traps while Graham and Tina dealt to the meat. We met back at the hut for a late lunch, then packed up and went back down to Mid-Poh. We were greeted by a noisy whio pair with one big sized fledgling - great as this baby hadn't been seen as a younger duckling. Tina, Ange and Yvette gave the mattresses a good clean and the bench area was well cleaned up by Tina. We bundled the accumulated rubbish in to a bag and left a note asking the next fly in party to fly it out with them. Hopefully this will happen during The Roar.

Next morning we had a leisurely start before heading back the way we came in. Graham did a rather spectacular fall into a small pool at one of the stream crossings. It gave us an anxious moment but he strode off soaking wet declaring all was well! Sometime later I headed off after him to check all really was well and somehow passed him unnoticed as he took a wrong turn - this led to some interesting "what-ifs" when we all met up again.

An excellent 3 days in the hills - lovely as always to visit the club huts and the Pohangina River Whio.



Rescue on Ohutu Ridge

6-9 February 2016
Northern Ruahines (MTSC Trip)
Report by Nicola Wallace

Tony and Mark arrived early, and after stopping briefly at the Colenso Memorial (which I'd never seen before), we arrived at the Mokai Patea roadend at about 9am, then followed the steep climb up through the farm. It was a steep gravel up Mokai Patea, but we

only went part way up before starting to sidle in an Easterly direction in order to meet up with the track to Ironbark Hut. The sidling was harder than I expected, as we had to negotiate manuka and scrub filled gullies. Eventually I decided it was easier to go up and around them. After what seemed ages, we were descending and were soon to the park boundary, and into the lovely beech forest and down to the deserted Ironbark Hut for lunch. Tony was very sensibly calling a rest break every hour, so wherever we were, we had opportunity to sit and enjoy the atmosphere.

After lunch we had a straightforward walk up the hill, but it was a very hot and humid day, so we weren't in a hurry. All was pleasant and straightforward till we got to the big slip just before the Unknown Campsite turnoff. Very steep, and rocky, rather than the soil type where you can get some grip, it was a difficult crossing, with Tony having to help me round a large and awkwardly positioned tree. We all got across safely, with a few cuts and scrapes. Another unusual feature before we reached Colenso Hut was a large clearing, filled with tall grass, and ongaonga round the edges. We reached the hut at 7pm, after a 10 hour day. We were ready for tea, and decided we'd visit Lake Colenso in the morning. The hut was very hot inside, so I went outside to sleep, but had to come in again as the mozzies were really bad!

The next morning, the lake was a lovely sight indeed, and two black shags were flying over the lake. We contemplated how lucky we were to be able to come to a place like this and not have crowds of people. Back to the hut, and off on a morning of river travel. After leaving Colenso Hut, we made our way to the Mangatera River, then up a side stream that had a very good track running up the side of it. Much of the travel was easy and very pleasant, but gradually it became trickier. Later in the morning we filled our bottles as we left the river system, and headed up the hill towards Potae. At a rest stop halfway up, we met 3 DOC workers who were voluntarily checking the stoat traps. They looked very fresh, like they were just on a stroll. They warned us that a party of hunters was due to be helicoptered in to Ruahine Corner Hut later that day, so we'd better get there and sort out our bunks.

We had lunch on Potae, under the "hat". It was a sunny day, and cooler and less humid than the day before. The track to Ruahine



Lunch views from Potae summit rock

Corner Hut looked flat on the map, we imagined a doddle, but it was quite up-and-down, and very interesting, with some very large rocks to pass by. The latter part was a wide, flat track through thinning bush. We arrived at the hut, sitting in the tussock but with bush behind, at 3pm. Time for afternoon tea!



Ruahine Corner Hut

We spent the rest of the afternoon outside. Lying in the dry golden tussock with the warm sun beating down was total bliss! This hut is in a really beautiful location. We had a very relaxing few hours, but gradually dark clouds rolled in from the East. Mark & Tony said that a helicopter wouldn't arrive with that cloud, and so it was, and no hunters came. I set up my tarp in a tussocky camping area near the hut. By bedtime, it was misty, but I slept very well outside.

The next morning I got up at 5.30, as we had a long day ahead. It was dark, with light drizzle, and had been like that all night. I carefully picked my way to the hut as it was pitch dark. We left the hut before 7.30am, and retraced our steps to Potae in fine but cloudy weather. Here we headed down the Waiokotore Biv track. I soon felt that this was the most beautiful track of the trip. We were soon in

beech forest, the track a gentle up and down, and lots of birds (riflemen and tomtits mostly). It was the kind of track you could wander along all day, but eventually we started descending to the Waiokotore Stream. Down towards the stream, the track got very muddy and steep. At one place there was a knotted rope to assist our descent between rocks. Just as I got to the bottom, a large brown bird flew silently out of the trees, and quickly flew back in again. Despite looking in the trees, I couldn't find him, but I think he was a morepork.

There isn't much left at the Waiokotore Biv site, just a sign and a few bits of wood. After a good long break, we crossed the stream and commenced the climb onto Ohutu Ridge. This bottom part of the climb was very steep and slippery with soggy, pale coloured mud. Soon we came to a lovely waterfall, not what you usually see in the Ruahines, very rainforest like. Tony had told us there was a ladder coming up, we all wondered what it would be like, and it was a really good angled wooden one – no problems there. The next hunk of rock was more of a challenge, but soon we were on to the more normal bush track – albeit a very steep one up to Ohutu Ridge. Oh how the calf muscles complained on the top half of this track, as the track surface was pretty flat, but the track was very steeply angled. Near the top it relented abruptly, as the top of this ridge is broad, and we had lunch at the track intersection at the top in the sun.

The plan was to descend Ohutu Ridge, an 800m descent, and go along the river and spend the last night at Ironbark Hut. The walk along the top of the ridge was great and it was a hot, sunny afternoon. Tony consulted his GPS at a rest stop, and decided we were making very good progress. Soon we started the descent of Ohutu Ridge. Even at the top, this was steep, and the further we went down, the steeper it would get. At first, the surface was hard-packed mud. Thereafter there was plenty of variety, with scrabbly bits in bush, a route round the left hand side of a huge slip, and the sound of a helicopter in the distance.....

In the last 300m before the river, the descent became very steep. I remember thinking this is too steep for people, but probably OK for deer. I also thought that going uphill would be nearly impossible with a heavy pack.

We were close to the river now, but a trap for me lay at hand. It was a rock face, not very high (I can't remember it well enough to make a height estimate). Tony had got down it successfully, and he said there were hand and foot holds. Flaxes etc growing at the top prevented a good look at the face of it, so I got handholds and proceeded to get footholds by feel. I'd found a foothold, but don't know what happened next as I fell vertically on to uneven rock at the bottom. *Pain shot through my right ankle. One look and I knew it was broken*, as my right foot was pointing off between 1 and 2 o'clock, and the foot tilted left side down and right side up - a terrible sight. It was now about 5pm.

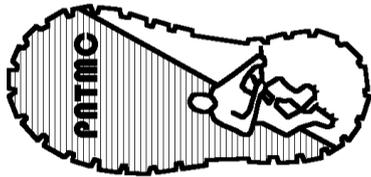
Mark and Tony were great, and with PLB activation a helicopter arrived 3 hours later. Daylight was running out, no time for winching, so with a Paramedic's and Tony's help I hopped to the hovering helicopter, which could not land and was hovering above the far riverbank. This entailed a hop across the river. Being hauled on board was the best feeling ever! The helicopter ascended, and staff injected me with painkillers and stabilised my ankle before flying me to PN hospital. I arrived at about 9pm.

Mark, Tony and the helicopter guys did a great job, and Mark & Tony did a great job the next day and took all my stuff out. I made a mess of my leg and ankle, with a broken fibula, broken end of the tibia, and ruptured tendon or ligament that meant my ankle had completely come apart. I stayed in hospital for a week waiting for the swelling to go down enough for an operation to take place, and had it operated on 16 Feb. I now have a plate and 8 screws holding everything together, and the plan is that they will stay in permanently.

Now I'm recovering on crutches, and am heartened that everyone I've dealt with has been so good and helpful. Even though I still have a cast on, it's good to see my foot pointing in the proper direction now!

Many thanks to all involved in my rescue.

On the trip we were:
Mark Learmonth (trip leader)
Tony Evans (driver)
Nicola Wallace



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P.O. Box 1217,
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PNTMC Newsletter April 2016

What's inside this month?

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- Otaki Gorge Road to Open before Winter
- Iron Gates Gorge - Oroua River Trip
- Upper Makaroro Circuit
- Pohangina River Revisited
- Rescue on Ohutu Ridge
- 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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