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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 February 2017

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Enjoying a rainy January day out up the Sledge Track near Palmerston North [Warren Wheeler]

### Club Nights

All are welcome to our club nights. These are held at 7:30pm on the second and last Thursday of each month at the Society of Friends Hall, 227 College Street, Palmerston North.

**9 February 2017**

**Navigation**

**Warren Wheeler**

An informative and fun night to develop your map reading and navigation skills. BYO GPS to share some tips and find out more about their many features.

**23 February 2017**

**Canadian Rockies**

**Woody Lee**

In September 2016 Woody travelled to Canada with his wife and his family. They stayed in Banff and Lake Louise where they climbed several mountains and also enjoyed hiking around lakes at high altitude. They visited Banff, Yoho and Glacier National Parks and one of the highlights was camping overnight at Lake O'Hara in Yoho NP.

**Note - California Adventures is now swapped to 27 April.**

## Upcoming Trips

### 4-6 February

**Waitangi Pouakai Circuit**      **M**  
**Kathy Corner**      **356 8186**

Egmont National Park's premier 2-3 day tramp offers spectacular views of Mt Taranaki and the surrounding countryside. The 25 km track passes through forest, alpine tussock fields and the unique Ahukawakawa Swamp. Leave from Milverton Park at 7.30am. Tramp to Holly Hut the first night. Take a walk to Bells Falls. The second day is a short day to Pouakai Hut and climb Mount Pouakai en route. The third day up for the sunrise - the classic shot of Mount Taranaki reflected in the tarn. A popular medium trip.

### Day

**Toka Biv**      **F**  
**Thomas Robertson**      **022 075 0864**

A seldom visited old 2-man "dog-box" bivvie on the side of the Ngamoko Range in the Ruahine Forest Park. A beautiful trip up onto the tops with expansive views in all directions. Date will depend on weather and what day you prefer to go.

### 11-12 February

**Mid-Waiohine**      **M**  
**Craig Allerby**      **323 7913**

From the carpark we will head up the Holdsworth Track, passing through excellent beech forest and alpine scrub to the top of Mt Holdsworth for lunch. Good rest breaks stops can be taken at Mountain House and Powell Hut along the way. We then descend off Mt Holdsworth down a steepish track to a great backcountry hut beside the Waiohine River. There is also good camping. Depart 7.30am.

### 12 February

**Iron Gates Gorge**      **M**  
**Warren Wheeler**      **356 1998**

Join us for a classic summer trip down the Oroua River to see the Irongates Gorge (and swim through, if you are keen). We first head upstream along the sidle track above the river and after an hour and a half stop for early lunch by a swimming hole. We then rock hop and crisscross down the river to the impressive narrow gorge. Expect to get wet feet and more. There is a shorter Easy option if you prefer.

### 18-19 February (see new trip)

**Smith Stream Circuit**      **M/F**  
**Hannah Lund**      **027 388 203**

*Unfortunately Hannah can not lead this overnight trip any more but she is instead*

*doing it as a Big Day Out next Saturday. See below.*

### 18-19 February

**Pohangina River Club Huts**      **M**  
**Warren Wheeler**      **356 1998**

*This trip has been reprogrammed after being cancelled due to the wet Anniversary Weekend.* Spend the weekend up the Pohangina River and get more familiar with Mid-Poh and Ngamoko huts. The club is responsible for maintenance of these two special huts. You might get to check some stoat traps as well.

### 19 February

**Ohingaiti Boulders**      **E/family**  
**Doug Strachan**      **353 6526**

An 80min drive to the carpark. There is an honesty box where you pay \$5 a head (children under 12 free) to access concretions reminiscent of Moeraki boulders. From the carpark, we walk for half an hour down and across open farmland to a remnant of bush (about 150m x 50m in area), where there is a flush toilet and the scattered boulders. There's also a geocache somewhere amongst the boulders if anyone is into geocaching. We will spend about an hour exploring the boulders and having a snack. Bring togs because we will go home via the Ruahine Dress Circle, which is a pleasant swimming spot. Bring something like sandals to wear when swimming as the stony stream bed is surprisingly hostile to feet. Camera, drink, snacks, lunch, sunscreen, raincoat, \$\$\$. Depart 9am from Milverton.

### 25 February

**Smith Stream Circuit**      **F**  
**Hannah Lund**      **027 388 2035**

This circuit up onto the Ruahine tops will be a big day/great workout. The plan is to go in from Mill Road up past Hinerua Hut to Paemutu then around and down to Smith Creek Hut and back to Mill Road via Hinerua Hut again.

### 25-26 February

**Top Gorge Hut**      **M/F**  
**Janet Wilson**      **329 4722**

If there is enough interest we will depart Friday late afternoon and walk up to Longview. The rest of the weekend will be spent exploring the upper Pohangina River - it has several big tributaries - and possibly installing some of the new gas powered A24 stoat traps. As Top Gorge only has 2 bunks we will most likely camp. Chance to find some Whio. Please

indicate an interest in this trip early in the week.

#### **26 February**

**Scanlyn Creek Loop** **M/F**  
**Dave Grant** **328 7788**

Somewhere the club seldom visits so take this opportunity to check it out. Give Dave a call to find out more.

#### **4-5 March**

##### **SAREX**

The annual Search and Rescue Exercise is being organised by Levin LandSAR this year. Palmerston North will provide two teams made up from the pool of local volunteers, including members from PNTMC. Apart from this weekend there are also evening SAR training sessions each month to refresh and learn new skills. These are organised by Andy Brook of the local Police. Contact one of our committee members to find out more about getting involved in SAR.

#### **4-5 March**

**Ponga Hut** **M**  
**Thomas Robertson** **022 075 0864**

This is your chance to stay in an old hunters bush hut built out of ponga logs and located in a secret spot in the northern Tararua Ranges.

#### **5 March**

**Centre Creek** **E**  
**Warren Wheeler** **356 1998**

A classic summer trip in the Pohangina Valley on the edge of Ruahine Forest Park. We will follow the track upriver to the Centre Creek confluence and visit the old biv site then return via the river. Expect to get more than wet feet! Depart 8.00am from Milverton Park.

#### **6 or 10-12 March**

**Te Potae Trap Lines** **M/F**  
**Janet Wilson** **329 4722**

If you are interested in coming on this great "Fly-in trip" to Ruahine Corner let me know asap as there are limited places on the helicopter. Chance to visit the more remote northern Ruahines including Ikawatea Forks. I am thinking of making this a longer trip starting early the week before - maybe 6th March onward so book some leave.

#### **12 March**

**Puketurua/College Creek** **M/F**  
**Dave Grant** **328 7788**

A little Tararua adventure for those keen on exploring some new ground in from the Mangahao No.1 Dam behind Shannon.

#### **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](mailto: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
Terry Crippen	356-3588

#### **Articles for the newsletter**

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



## Trip Reports

### End of December 2016 Tasmania Overland Track and More Esther Pothuis

After finishing my studies in NZ I am now officially ready to work the rest of my life. In no hurry to do that I decided to visit some places on the way home. The first stop was Australia. There were a few things I wanted to do: the Overland Track and the South Coast Track in Tasmania, and snorkelling at the Great Barrier Reef.



*Been there, done that.*

I enjoyed the Overland Track 'by myself' spending 9 days on the track and walking about 110 km. Around 40 people are allowed to start the track every day and everybody walks in the same direction, so you run into the same people quite often. I tagged along whenever I felt like I was in good company, went by myself when I wanted to cry about missing NZ or NL, and had cuddly wallaby friends everywhere.

Mount Ossa, the highest top in Tassie, was worth climbing and had the most incredible view I had ever seen looking out over an endless amount of wilderness and more mountain tops.

The track was gorgeous. It seriously seemed that every ten minutes the scenery was totally different, like entering a new world after every bend. Lots of different plants, rocks, wallabies, rivers, birds, hills, wombats, creeks, echidnas, beautiful huts, waterfalls, skins, campsites, grasses, snakes, lakes, trees, no trees, ups, downs, flat bits, and different seasons along the way.



*Fantastic views along the Overland Track.*

For the South Coast Track I joined up with three members (Andreas, Susanne, and Tom) of the Hobart Bushwalking Club. I was informed it would be a more serious and difficult 9 day walk with possibly horrendous weather, no facilities, no way out, and infinite amounts of mud. I was prepared to surrender myself to the mud as I was told that was the only way to manage. I waited and waited for mud but it just did not come. What a disappointment.

A lot of track work had been done so that may have caused the lack of mud. The weather may have contributed too. It was very un-Tasmanian with only one day of rain, warm and humid, it was almost tropical. This suited the track with its many bays and beaches perfectly. On the way we celebrated Christmas in a boat on the beach that we later used to cross the river.

Climbing and descending the Ironbunds was epic, but not so challenging as the name and other worn down walkers suggested (PNTMC trained me well). At Melaleuca we spotted some of the only 70 remaining wild orange bellied parrots in the world.



*South Coast flight back to Hobart.*

The flight back out to Hobart was good fun as we flew over the coast so we could see the beautiful track we walked from above. All in all it was a great summer holiday.

Snorkelling at the Milln Reef was a dream come true. Saw Nemo and his friends in real life. Cairns was too humid and hot, but oh well, you have to suffer a bit to appreciate the good things.

My next stop is India. One month there and then finally home sweet home.

## **December 2016 Ruahine Main Range Lindsay Middleton**

Geoff's enthusiasm for tramping the Ruahine Ranges is infectious. In September 2016, as we tramped the remote north-west of the Ruahines from the Mokai Patea Range to reach Ruahine Corner Hut, we were wondering what the open tops of the Ruahine Main Range to the east might look like in fine weather - at the time, we had five days of persistent north-easterly that kept the higher country closely shrouded with cloud and rain. Past Potae (altitude 1312m), the signpost indicating that the Main Range was only two hours away was most tantalising, but to tramp it would have to wait for another occasion. So, motivated by these thoughts and Geoff's enthusiasm, we left the road-end at Comet Hut (880m) on the Komata Range full of anticipation about a planned 7-day tramp the length of the Ruahine Main Range.

**Day 1:** Geoff had information that the Comet Track to the Taruarau River was severely damaged by trees fallen during a severe winter snow storm, so that the likely travel time was double the expected 3 hours. Fortunately, the track is sufficiently well used by keen trout fishermen that it is possible to clamber past the worst tangles of debris on the north-facing slopes above Comet Hut using their roughly-formed detours. This first section of the tramp is in Kaweka Forest Park: from the south side of the river we were in Ruahine Forest Park. It was pleasant having lunch by the Taruarau, watching a trout feeding in the clear water, with the most taxing decision being whether to walk across the river in boots or with bare feet - the prospect of having dry feet for the next 7 days along the open tops won out. About a kilometre up a side stream south of the Taruarau River is the intriguing Shutes Hut (470m), a rare example of a North Island hut

built of stone; also with a substantial hut log book that has been in use for more than 30 years. Then the climbing commenced, as we slowly ascended the ridge on the way to Taruarau Bivouac (1120m). Most days on the tramp I would eagerly anticipate being able to walk further than reality - the weight of heavy packs brought us to a halt after 8 or 9 hours each day. The bivvy is delightfully situated in the bush edge. We enjoyed our first evening meal, cooking at the bench set in the glade in front of the bivvy, sunshine streaming in.

**Day 2:** We set off full of expectation of a quick walk to Ikawetea (1413m) to the south - the map shows a broad ridge with a gentle rise over several kilometres, so we expected to make rapid progress. However, this route follows in part over land that has been transferred into private ownership, and all vestiges of track markers removed. So, instead of a relaxed stroll, we battled along the ridge, trying to find a route through a mixture of bush, dense sub-alpine scrub and open tops. After Ikawetea, we headed east, pleased to soon arrive at No Mans Hut for a lunch stop - except that we were not at No Mans, but at a private hut not shown on the Topo map. Self-belief in our navigation skills took a dive when we realised that No Mans Hut (1310m) was another 2 km further east, situated on the private access road that ascends to the top of the range up through Big Hill Station.

Beyond No Mans, the track is cleared and clearly-marked over Ohawai (1368m), past track junctions to Golden Crown Ridge and to Parks Peak Ridge, to the derelict Aranga Hut (1340m). Well-sited in the bush east of the ascent to the open tops, this hut would be a valuable asset to park users in this part of the range if it was in good condition. We hope that efforts to renovate this hut are successful. We made use of favourable camping adjacent to the hut. Both gutters feeding the water tank had dislodged from the hut, so that the only catchment was the sunken-in top of the tank. Surprisingly (or not?), the tank was full.

**Day 3:** We met the only other human on the tramp as we ascended towards Piopio (1437m) - Tony, an intrepid individual from Wellington, was checking a stoat trap-line and had camped out overnight on the open tops near Piopio. Tramping along in fine weather, we were treated to a gradually unfolding magnificent vista, like seeing the topo map slowly, slowly scroll past, but in the outstanding splendour of the reality - the closer detail of the splendid alpine vegetation, to the distant Ruapehu and Ngauruhoe, even

Egmont on one occasion, and the huts, streams, rivers, ridges, peaks and ranges – Ruahine Corner Hut, Gold Creek, Makaroro River, Papakiakuta Ridge, Mangaweka (1731m), Mokai Patea Range, etc, etc – we were having a sensory overload of magnificent scenery. As the north-wester increased in strength through the day, Geoff was persuasive about bypassing Kylie Bivouac and pushing ahead over Tupari (1527m), Te Atua Mahuru (1534m), Maroparea (1511m) and Ohuru (1475m), to Sparrowhawk Bivouac (1360m). This proved an excellent goal for day 3, as the typical 2-man biv has had an inspired annexe attached to the front: head height for standing, a cooking bench and bench seating, even a small tarpaulin for the dirt floor.

**Day 4:** Staying over in Sparrowhawk Biv with its additional space and comfort was a pleasure as the northwester roared overhead.

**Day 5:** We headed south (as always!) over Maropea (1481m), arriving on spot height 1499m to gain the view across Armstrong

Saddle (1369m) and Sunrise Hut with a sense of great satisfaction at reaching this point in the journey, still on schedule to complete the Main Range in 7 days. Bypassing the huts, Sunrise and Top Maropea, we chose to press on up to the bush-edge on Te Atuaoparapara (1687m) for a lunch stop.

Later in the day, with the plan of by-passing Waikamaka Hut and reducing the distance required for the next day's tramp, we pressed on up the ridge south from Waipawa Saddle (1326m) to camp out on the open tops in nearly still air and cloudless conditions. For additional water for camping, we first descended west from the saddle to refill our water containers from the first stream - the crystal-clear source of the Waikamaka River. To our pleasant surprise, we found an excellent sheltered campsite with adjacent tarns at 1600m, and Rangiateatua (1704m) as grand backdrop.

**Day 6:** We knew that this would probably be the most demanding day. We crossed over Rangiateatua and ascended to the highest



*Camping on the ridge south from Three Johns with Rangiateatua a grand backdrop.*

point of our Main Range trip, spot-height A6G4 (1715m) - at this point we crossed from Geoff's marvellous laminated maps number 3 to number 4 (out of 5 for the whole trip). Broken Ridge spread in front of us, with its steep rocky faces – could we navigate past this impressive, formidable obstacle, or would we have to turn back? It is possible to sidle the steepest pieces on the far (SW) side of the ridge.

We were relieved to stop for lunch after descending off Ohuinga (1686m), but with Sawtooth Ridge still to traverse. Even in clear air, Sawtooth Ridge presents navigation challenges – finding the best and safest route over and around each obstacle. Reaching the peak of Tiraha (1668m) at the south end of Sawtooth Ridge felt like a major achievement of the journey, as from that point we expected it to be easier going for the remainder of the Main Range. Yet again, the day's destination was close to the limits of our energy and enthusiasm - we were very pleased to reach Howlett's Hut (1365m) for the night.

**Day 7:** In order to arrive at the Oroua carpark (760m) for a scheduled pick-up time of 4pm, we concluded that a prompt start was in order – we stepped out of the hut at 6 am, into the cool, fresh wind of a strengthening North-westerly. Fortunately for our schedule, the wind eased, the cloud diminished, and the track along the ridges was well-enough worn and easy to follow. At midday we arrived on Tunupo (1568m) on the Ngamoko Range overlooking Manawatu – nearly home! Geoff was able to confirm our transport plans by mobile phone, synchronising arrival time for pick-up. By 3 pm, we had descended the Tunupo Track, and our transport, a much-appreciated ride back to PN, arrived shortly after. So that was it: the Ruahine Main Range – *an awesome, awesome tramp!*

**15 January 2017**  
**Sledge Track**  
**Fawwaz Ismail**

I was greeted by a genial gentleman (Warren) who was tall and wiry. For reasons only known to him, I was addressed as Phil. I was somewhat perplexed and thought I was more of a Sven. It certainly was not the first time someone had mangled my name. But I must admit it was unusual. I hopped into the vehicle and met Kirsty and Gilliam. And we were off to pick up the last of the intrepid crew Danielle.

A quick pit stop outside Danielle's place, allowed Warren to give us a quick rundown of the situation. The weather forecast had warned of less than sterling conditions. The trip to Ohau Gorge would not proceed due to the potential dangers that may arise in poor conditions. That was an unfortunate dampener on proceedings and to quote Mr Wheeler; a bummer. However, Warren is not without a Plan B; a trip up the Sledge Track. And thus it was decided to head to the Platinum Mines.

The heavens parted no sooner than 50 metres from our pit stop. Warren regaled us with stories to pass the time. It was not long before we arrived at Arapuke Carpark at the end of Kahuterawa Road.

The showers had made the ground soggy. The initial ascent was as smooth as one could expect in less than desirable weather. We passed the Swimming Hole and Mossy Rock amongst other landmarks. The subsequent elevation in gradient proved to be quite challenging. Wise words from Warren to plod along rather than to charge up the track, a necessary reminder to pace oneself. The journey up into Hardings Park was an arduous one.

Upon reaching Toe Toe Junction we were already drenched to the bone and were subjected to the prevailing winds which added to the chill factor. A quick photo and we were off.

The journey down was no less difficult with the muddy soil underfoot. The walk for me was not a total write-off but it was a damp squib. Nonetheless, I do look forward to other adventures.

Participants: Kirsty, Danielle, Gilliam, Fawwaz and Warren Wheeler (the only club member-Ed.)

**Post –Script by Warren Wheeler**

Three of us had another go at the Ohau Gorge the following Saturday but the river was still up so we were a bit anxious about carrying on for another 2 hours of cold rushing water. Fortunately any indecision was overcome when Gilliam found the river crossings a bit hard on a recent injury so we pulled out just at the start of the steep sided gorge proper. An easy exit quickly had us up through the bush to the track. We met a couple heading upriver to South Ohau and recommended they take Gable End instead. Wonder how they got on



*Ohau Gorge starts and stops here – too cold too high and nursing an injury. Exit Stage Left.*

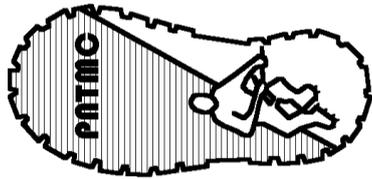
## Old Logos #2 - 1977



**PALMERSTON NORTH TRAMPING  
& MOUNTAINEERING CLUB (INC)  
P.O. Box 1217 Palmerston North**

12/77

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## PNTMC Newsletter February 2017

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

- Tasmanian Overland Track and South Coast Track
- 7-days Ruahine Main Range
- Plan B Sledge Track,
- Ohau Gorge Attempt #2
- Old Logo #2 -1977
- Coming trips and more

### **Articles for the newsletter**

Send by the 20<sup>th</sup> 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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