

---

# Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.

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

P.O. Box 1217, Palmerston North

## Newsletter October 2018

---



*Setting up an anchor on the Pinnacles, Mt Ruapehu.*

*[Christian Offen]*

### Club Nights

All are welcome to our club nights. These are held on the second and last Thursday of each month at the Society of Friends Hall, 227 College Street, Palmerston North. Doors open 7.15 pm for a cuppa before start at 7.30pm.

**11 October 2018**

**South Island Hutbagging**

**Chris Tuffley**

Over New Year I spent seven days hut-hopping in the Hokitika ranges with a friend from Auckland; and over Easter I did a six day loop through the Mātakitaki and D'Urville valleys with Elly Arnst. Between the two trips I visited a total of seventeen South Island huts. Come and see the sights! And learn just what is hut-hopping anyway??

**25 October 2018**

**Exploring Iceland**

**Kirsten Olsen & Stephen Legg**

Snow and ice at sea level in summer. Tramping at midnight in daylight over snowfields, mountain passes, river crossings to high cliffs and sea shores near the Arctic Circle to Hornstradir, in the northwest corner of Iceland. Forget about Reykjavik - it's far too touristy. Hear about our adventures and enjoy our photos of arctic fauna, minimalist camping and hunting for hot tubs.

## Upcoming Trips

**6-7 October**

**TNP Explorer M**  
**Warren Wheeler 356 1998**

Tongariro National Park has endless places to explore. Plan A is to head off on Friday night to stay in the cabins at Tongariro Holiday Park. From there we can go up to explore Ketetahi Hot Springs, North Crater and Te Maari Crater. Day 2 we could go off the beaten track and climb Pukekaikiore and/or Ngauruhoe. Alternatively we could go up Ruapehu. Plan B would be to explore the south side of Ruapehu, possibly staying at Sue's place in Rangataua, near Ohakune. Depends on weather and what group members want to do. We could split up and do a variety of different things too. Just call me.

**6 or 7 October (Best weather day)**

**Mt Ruapehu, Tahurangi FE/T**  
**Grant Christian 021 117 6921**

A climb to Ruapehu's highest peak along the ridge at the south east boundary of the Turoa ski field. A great place to view the Summit Plateau and Crater Lake on a good day. A rope is not required for this trip.

**7 October**

**Beginners to Sunrise E**  
**Anne Lawrence 0274 504 212**

This is the second in our series of Beginner Tramps being held each month until December. Suitable for all ages from youth to those getting into tramping later in life.

This day trip is to Sunrise Hut, on the Eastern side of the Ruahines, approximately 1.5 to 2 hours drive from Palmie. The track is relatively easy but does involve a steady climb which is rewarded with good views from the hut. We may carry on to Armstrong Saddle for even better views (this depends on those in the group as well as the weather). We'll leave from Milverton Park at 7.30am and be back late afternoon.

**13-14 October**

**Neill Forks M/F**  
**Craig Allerby 323 7913**

Depart 7.30am. The idea is to do this trip in a loop. We will head up the track to Cone Saddle (possible side trip to Cone Hut) then travel along Cone Ridge to Neill Forks Hut. Next day's route is down the Cone Ridge Track to Totara Flats Hut, and out along Totara Flats/ Lower Waiohine Track.

**14 October**

**Herepai and Beyond M/F**  
**Graham Peters 329 4722**

A chance to head up into the eastern Tararuas and bag Herepai, Ruapae and East Peak, as well as Herepai Hut along the way. This trip gets us above the bush and into the alpine scrub and tussock tops, with great views on a good day. How far we go will depend on the group and the weather.

**20-22 October**

**Taranaki Explorer E/M/F**  
**Warren Wheeler 356 1998**

Labour Weekend gives us three days to explore Mt Egmont/Taranaki. Options abound for all grades so what we do will depend on who wants to come on this little adventure. It can get very busy so we will head for less frequented huts. It would be nice to climb to the summit by moon light, but ice axe and crampons required.

**21 October Labour Weekend**

**TBA**

Leader wanted please. If anyone wants to go on a day trip on Labour Weekend (any day) please get in touch with Warren on 356-1998 before Friday 19 October.

**27-28 October Postponed to 24-25 Nov**

**Waiau Gorge Hut Family**  
**Elly Arnst 022 682 3136**

**27 or 28 October (Best weather day)**

**Waiohine Campsite to Cone Hut FE**  
**Grant Christian 354 5843**

We will travel to Waiohine Campsite in the south-east Tararuas the night before the tramp and stay there. The following day we will do a circuit via Cone Hut, Bull Mound, Omega, Tutuwai Hut, Reeves and then either back to the campsite or, if time and energy permits, we will do a side trip to Rocky Knob and then back to the camp site.

**3-4 November**

**Dundas-Bannister FE**  
**Elly Arnst 022 682 3136**

Starting from Putara Road, I'm planning to circuit the northern end of the main Tararua Range, passing through Roaring Stag, Cattle Ridge, Arete, Dundas & Herepai. Plenty of high points to be bagged, and a chance to be challenged on the Waingawa-Bannister section. Leaving Friday evening.

**4 November**

**Beginners to Field Hut E/M**  
**Anne Lawrence 357 1695**

This is the third in our series of Beginner Tramps being held each month until December. Suitable for all ages from youth to those getting

into tramping later in life. This trip in the western Tararuas is from Otaki Forks up to historic Field Hut. Option to go further up above the bush line to enjoy the alpine plants and amazing views from Tabletop high point. Leave Milverton Park at 7.30am. Back late afternoon.

### 10-11 November

**Sayers Hut** **M**  
**Richard Lockett** **323 0948**

Starting at the Holdsworth road end we will ascend the Gentle Annie track past the Rocky Knob lookout, before heading down towards the Totara Steam to pick up a marked trail along a ridge to intersect with the track down to Sayers. Return the next day via Totara Flats and the Totara Steam to the Holdsworth Road end

### 11 November

**Waiopahu Circuit** **F**  
**Janet Wilson** **329 4722**

A good Tararua trip to gain at least 9 points for the Huts and High Points Challenge, with 5 high points and a hut to bag. This circuit takes us up to Waiopahu Hut and around the tops before dropping down Gable End Ridge track and back. It is about an 8 hour tramp from Poas Road carpark, located behind Levin.

#### 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 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
Anne and Martin Lawrence	357-1695
Graeme Richards	353-6227

## Notices

### DOC News – Diggers Hut Washed Away

Sadly, Diggers Hut has been destroyed after heavy rain early in September. It appears that a slip caused a dam, which subsequently gave way, and washed the hut approximately 200m downstream. The hut has since been removed and consideration is being given to a new hut on a better site nearby.



*Diggers Hut washed away.*

## Club Photo Comp Results

Congratulations to the winners in our 2018 Photo Competition.

Thanks to our judge Udo von Mulert for his hints and tips and for selecting three best pics in each category for us to vote on.

Thanks also to Martin Lawrence for collating all the entries and running the show on the night, with assistance from Anne Lawrence.

Martin has now entered the first, second and third place-getters in each category in the FMC Photo Competition 2018 – they will no doubt give the other club entries from around the country some stiff competition.

Meanwhile, here are the results from our club competition, including the first place images. You can view all the winning entries at [Photo Comp 1-2-3](#)



### Above Bush with Human Element

1. Elly Arnst - Traversing Tararua Main Range
2. Kathy Corner - Jumbo Peak
3. Dieter Stalmann - Snowcraft



### Above Bush no Human Element

1. Catherine Jackson - Rangi in thickest snow
2. Elly Arnst - Mangahuia Fog Bow
3. Chris Tuffley - View South from Kahiwiroa



### Below Bush with Human Element

- 1= Catherine Jackson - Park Peak track with coprosma
- 1= Chris Tuffley - D'Urville Jetty at Dusk
2. Chris Tuffley- East Matakitaki Hut
3. Dieter Stalmann - Taranaki Tarns



**Below Bush no Human Element**

1. Kathy Corner - Taranaki Storm
2. Elly Arnst - Sunset at Anderson
3. Catherine Jackson - Layered bush mist, Cow Creek



**Topical NZ**

1. Dieter Stalman - River crossing
2. Kathy Corner - Old DOC Sign
3. Warren Wheeler - Pic-ing daisies



**Natural History**

1. Chris Tuffley - Celmisia Stowaway
2. Catherine Jackson - Sweet little fungi
3. Elly Arnst - Edelweiss
4. Kathy Corner - Cape Kidnappers gannet



**Overseas**

1. Chris Tuffley - Cherry Creek Canyon
- 2= Chris Tuffley - Tilden Lake
- 2= Chris Tuffley - Waterline

**Judge's Choice - Best in Show**

Elly Arnst - Traversing Tararua Main Range

**Interclub Photo Competition**

**27 September 2018**

First, second and third places in each category of our Club Photo Comp are to be entered in the Interclub Photo Competition, hosted this year by PNTMC.

Results in next newsletter.

## Huts and High Places PNTMC Challenge 2018

### Huts and High Places Challenge 15 Dec 2017 to 9 Dec 2018

Our PNTMC Challenge 2018 aims to inspire you to visit new places, support our club and have fun in the hills.

There are points to be earned for visits, bonus points for new places and bonus points if you are on a PNTMC trip.

To add more challenges to the fun, committee members have added their own challenges. Points for these can only be earned once.

#### Points for huts and high places

Visit to DOC or NZAC hut           1 point  
Visit a named high point           1 point

#### Bonus points for each hut or high point

If a club trip                           1/2 point  
If your first visit                   1/2 point

#### Bonus points for Committee Challenges

For a bonus of 5 points (once for each challenge):

- Pack float or swim a pool on a river (Warren's Challenge)
- Go on a club organised beginners trip (Anne's Challenge)
- Photograph a whio (Janet's challenge)
- Summit Tahurangi - Mt Ruapehu (Grant's Challenge)
- Visit Ngamoko or Mid Pohangina Hut (Martin's Challenge)
- Visit 3 or more huts on a trip (Graeme's Challenge)
- Camp above 2000m - not near a hut (Bruce's Challenge)
- Hut warden at Rangī Hut (Committee Challenge)
- Bring a new trampler on a club trip (Woody's Challenge)

Points to be gained fairly while visiting the DOC estate and in the spirit of the Challenge - talk to Janet or committee members if in doubt.

There is no restriction on how you can get to these places i.e. helicopters, boats, bikes etc acceptable.

Send your trip details, places visited etc to Janet or add them to the online spreadsheet which is now up and running for this challenge.

### Points to Date

There has been a bit of change in the top ranks this month with new member Catherine Jackson leaping into the third place. You can read her report of a great spring snow trip hut bagging in the Kawekas on page 10.

Name	Huts	Highs	Bonus	TOTAL
Elly	105.5	115	25	245.5
Chris T	104	102.5	30	236.5
Catherine	66.5	57	5	128.5
Grant	26.5	62.5	15	104
Warren	36	15.5	30	81.5
Hannah	27	35.5	5	67.5
Janet	35.5	14	15	64.5
Ash	17.5	41	5	63.5
Graham	25.5	15	15	55.5
Kathy	25.5	4.5	15	45
Martin	17	12	15	44
Mary	20.5	11	5	36.5
Annett	1.5	30	0	31.5
Anne	11	12	5	28
Woody	14	4	5	23
Bruce	6	5	10	21
Dieter	4	2	10	16
Sally	3.5	4	0	7.5
Penny	6	1.5	0	7.5
Yvonne	0	4	0	4
Dave	1.5	0	0	1.5

## New Member

Welcome to Catherine Jackson, a keen tops trampler and amateur botanist who enjoyed giving her club night talk on Know Your Alpine Plants so much that she decided to join us.

We wish you happy tramping with us.

## Trip Reports

### 28 August 2018 The Great Pinnacle Grant Christian

Trip Participants: Grant Christian, Alyesha Candy, Julia Norton, Christian Offen, James Vincent.

I was hiring crampons to Alyesha before Snowcraft Two and mentioned my trip to her. She had done Snowcraft with us last year and I found her to be always cheerful and enthusiastic. She had climbed Girdlestone with Christian and me last year and proved to be confident and dependable. She was interested but said she was not very fit. I explained it

wouldn't be an overly strenuous trip. Alyesha is completing her Masters in genetics at Massey and is a member of the Massey University Alpine Club (MUAC).

Christian, whom several of you will know, called up to say he wanted to join me. The German mathematics doctoral student had also been on a few trips with me. I know he is fit and also confident in the snow. He likes to have fruit and vegetables on his trips which I find hard to understand when I try to keep my pack weight as light as practical without skimping on the appropriate safety gear. Christian's accent makes him sound very formal. He is great company in the mountains. His pack seemed surprisingly light before we headed off so I handed him the rope to carry. I should've given him more because it didn't slow him down much.

Julia had just completed Snowcraft. She told me she was interested in the trip but also unsure about how fit she needed to be. She was always close to the lead person (me) when we went anywhere in Snowcraft, so I thought she would be fine. She had also completed Snowcraft with confidence and has had rock climbing experience. Julia works for the Defence Department teaching logistics.

James called me up to say he would like to join us. He told me that he had done rock climbing and some ice climbing. He is a friend of Alyesha's and another MUAC member. James is a vet student at Massey and comes from Utah. He is an ex-marine. Another cheerful and enthusiastic person. Still suffering a bit from a party the night before when we met him at Milverton Park.

And me, the semi-retired trip leader. An enthusiastic but somewhat reserved climber. Keen to show others the joy of the mountains. Also worrying about the weather and the avalanche conditions. Wanting to make sure everyone was safe. Ex-accountant, post cutter, pulp mill worker, business owner. *Trying to wring everything I can out of my later years and declining fitness.*

With the weather forecast changing every time I looked, I finally decided that the best day would be Sunday. The avalanche risk was considerable during the week but I was expecting this would drop with a bit of okay weather on Saturday. Next problem was finding accommodation, no easy feat in the middle of the ski season. I eventually managed to get two

cabins at Discovery Lodge, just before the turn off to Whakapapa.

We gathered at Milverton Park at 4 pm. James was a little late following a trip to Bivouac for meal supplies and a bit of confusion of where Milverton Park was. The trip up was uneventful. Our cabins, though basic and not well insulated, had been well warmed for us in advance and the heater kept us comfortable through the night. I had forgotten that these cabins had only a double bed and a single so I ended up sharing with James. Luckily neither of us snored and were not restless sleepers. It was raining on the trip up and overcast on arrival. I got up during the night and the moon and stars were shining, promising a nice day. I awoke at quarter to six in anticipation of the six o'clock alarm. Shortly after seven we headed for the mountain. I was expecting to beat the rush but soon found us heading slowly up the mountain in a long queue of vehicles. We had to park in one of the lower car parks.

We stopped on reaching the snow to put on crampons amid crowds of skiers, snowboarders, and sightseers. About as far away from the joy of the mountains as you can get. A thirty minute walk and we were at the base of Pinnacle Ridge, clear of the masses and enjoying the still and sunny conditions. The avalanche report indicated that the aspect of the ridge we were climbing should be low risk. Nevertheless I decided it would be good practice for everyone if we dug a pit to test the slope for stability. We chose a safe spot near the bottom of the ridge and dug out a block. The stability test did not produce any slide. Even using a shovel didn't move the block, so the indication was it was safe. A good kick of the top did knock off a block about one foot deep.



*Approaching the Pinnacle [Alyesha Candy]*

From here we headed directly up the ridge. Christian quickly left us behind. Rather than try and keep up with him, I was thankful that the others were a bit slower and I could take breaks to wait for them. James was at the back, complaining about his short legs but maybe not as fit as he was when in the marines. There was no problem with the speed, we had plenty of time and no set goals other than to enjoy the trip and gain experience.

From a distance the Pinnacles look impressive and somewhat forbidding, but once you are on the ascent you realise they are not as steep as they appear. Nobody thought we needed to use ropes on the way up to the ridge, and travel along the first part of the ridge was straight forward. From the ridge we had great views of Ngauruhoe and the North Eastern side of the ridge.

We came to an icy bulge that we chose to climb below. We decided to pull out the rope for this section, but once past here the rest of the route to the top of the Great Pinnacle was climbed without a rope, despite being exposed with steep bluffs below. From the top I had read that some people abseil to the saddle leading to the Second Pinnacle. Looking down to the saddle from just below the peak, I thought it looked like a long way down and it appeared to be undercut, making it a difficult abseil. Also there appeared to be little opportunity for a natural anchor, with just soft snow or rime ice. We decided to head back down and see if we could find the traverse route.

The snow was getting soft and the route near the top was looking a bit more unstable to climb down. Alyesha chose to climb down unroped, but I belayed the other three down a rope length. From there we climbed down an icy shelf and across a snowy section to a nice spot for a lunch break. After lunch we decided that, due to the softening snow, it would be best to head back down the way we had come. James was finding the soft snow a bit disconcerting after having a bit of a slide on a previous trip. We slowly made our way back down the route we had gone up, and gathered for a break at the bottom. Everyone had enjoyed the experience, although James said he preferred climbing ice to climbing in the soft snow that is unstable. From here we went back down through the skifield to the car.

On the journey to the mountain, James and Alyesha had made much of the virtue of the Blind Finch Hamburgeria in Ohakune. Better than Fergs in Queenstown, according to

James, whom I think had never eaten there. We decided to stop there for a feed on the way home. They certainly had a wide variety of gourmet burgers. I had the OMG (Ohakune) with Beef, Bacon, Fried Free Range Egg, Hash Brown, Smoked Tomato Relish and Cheddar Cheese. Delicious! Some of the other choices are Saigon Smile (Vietnam), General Lee (USA), The Stallion (Italy) and The Kamikaze (Japan). A wide variety of beers and cocktails available too. Highly recommended for your next trip.

After our meal we headed off home. The laughter and banter of James and Alyesha soon died away as they drifted off to sleep following the exertions of the day. Another fun day on the mountain.

### **1 September 2018 MTB Scotts Road to Arapuke Tina Bishop**

On a cold misty morning four of us met at the start of the gravel on Scotts Road ready to ride up to Arapuke Mountain Bike Park. It's a half hour grind up to the lookout, Grant said he hadn't been on his bike since February.... as he passed us and led the way. Another twenty five minutes of undulating gravel road saw us arrive at the new shelter on the edge of the park which is apparently well used by Te Araroa walkers.



*New shelter at top of Arapuke.*

We started on Ice Breaker where Grant had a run in with a corner and the ground. Up Riff Raff to the top part of Jack and the Beanstalk which winds its way up to the top of the park. It was very cold up there; the views were average and all the tracks greasy. About Time is my favourite downhill track which takes you back down to the pond but three of us cut into Billygoat which is a grade 4 uphill that Richard wanted to practice, we ended up having to push our bikes up some of it.

Another grind back up to the top again where we tried out the new track named Karearea (NZ falcon) this is a hand-built track and is not my favourite as it has lots of ruts, rocks and tricky bits which are nasty in the wet plus a sudden steep drop which my sister and I both chickened out on. Richard, Grant and I were at the end waiting for my sister's colourful language - she did not disappoint us - everyone except me had at least one "off" on that track - it's one to master in the dry!

By this time I was feeling a bit stuffed and quite cold and miserable even though I had three layers and a jacket on, so we rode back up to the container and exited down the bottom of About Time back to the carpark for a bite to eat and photos. It was a cold head wind heading back to the lookout making us have to pedal on some of the downhills. Back at the lookout the local roosters which people dump there were sussing us out. The fun descent back down to the bottom took about eleven minutes, with the guys leaving us in the dust!

We were Tina Bishop, Richard Lockett, Grant Christiansen and Tina's sister Adele Hillas.

### **14 & 15 September 2018 Tongariro National Park Grant Christian**

This trip started as a plan to climb Te Heu Heu and a few of the other Ruapehu peaks. It evolved into a two day trip with an opportunity to reach a few high points near the Desert Road. Some of these high points appear on my Tongariro Park Map from 1980 while others were on my 1982 Ruapehu Topo Map.

We left Palmy on Friday morning and stopped on the Desert Road opposite Waipakihi Road. We walked from here towards Ruapehu and a high point called Wharepu (1108m), which was a small bump around 2 km away. It was mostly Scottish heather but there was some bigger scrub to contend with in places, which meant slow going. We found the broken remains of an old wooden survey marker at the high point.

The next high point was Oturere (876m). This showed on my map as being very close to SH1, at a point where the park boundary extends past SH1. It is at the top of the rise after going through the first of the Three Sisters bends on SH1. We pulled off the road, and I was using the GPS to try and locate the high point. After a bit of searching in the wrong places, we found

a black & white post that was the survey point, within a few metres of the road and close to our vehicle. I decided that it was probably not on DoC land but was actually on land designated as legal road. A check on the WAMS website shows the high point is in the middle of the legal road. A shame, because it does not qualify for points.



*Oturere high point beside Desert Road.*

There are a couple of other high points on my maps that we didn't have time for, but Hyde (1174m) is about 1 km from the Tukino Road, so we walked to it on the way up the mountain to Tukino ski field. We found a large concrete marker at this point. The terrain was mostly flat open country, so was easy travel.

From the top of the Tukino Road, we loaded up all our climbing gear and walked up to Whangehu Hut where we stayed the night. Before departure, I reminded Christian to make certain everything was secured to his pack so nothing could fall off. On arrival at the hut, it was Julia who discovered her ice hammer had fallen from her pack.

We were up at 5 a.m. Saturday morning for an early start to make the most of firm snow conditions. From the hut we headed towards Te Heu Heu. It was a clear and still day, and the snow conditions were ideal. It was a strenuous walk up to the summit plateau, and Julia decided that she didn't think she was up to tackling Te Heu Heu. I intended to climb the southern face of Te Heu Heu, a reasonably steep route which the guide book said might take three pitches. I thought we could do it without a rope, and Christian appeared to be happy to follow. I front pointed up the slope, and noticed Christian struggling with his flexible boots, which make front pointing very difficult. He was kicking holes into the snow for grip, and making slow progress. I eventually assisted him by kicking steps in as I carried on to the top.

After Te Heu Heu it was a short walk on to Tukino and then we met up with Julia again, before continuing along the outer crater ridge to Glacier Knob and Dome. There was no sign of Dome Shelter and I assumed it was buried in snow.



*No sign of Dome Shelter in all this snow.*

From Dome it didn't look too far to Paretaitonga so we descended to the plateau, dropped our packs and climbed the 150 metres to the top. We then headed for the edge of the crater lake and Pyramid. An icy hump was in our path with a sheer drop down the other side, so we went back and sidled along the steep slope on the north side of this obstacle. Once we had negotiated this we looked back to see another group taking what was obviously the much easier route to the south side. From here it was a straightforward walk to the top of Pyramid.

Next to Pyramid, and guarding the outflow from the crater lake, is L, a small peak with a narrow ridge along the top. I had hoped to climb L, but the ridge looked like it would be more comfortable with a rope. We had left our packs a little way behind again, and so I decided we had done enough for the day.

Although it was only about 1 p.m., we still had to walk down to the hut, pack up our gear and return to the car. It was a great cup of tea I enjoyed back at the hut. On our way back to the car, we kept our eyes open for the lost hammer. As we approached a steep icy slope where Julia had slipped on the way up I noticed something pink in the snow. Thankfully it was the leash of the lost ice hammer. It had been another great day on Ruapehu.

Trip Participants: Grant Christian, Julia Norton, Christian Offen

## **14-16 September 2018**

### **Kaweka Hutbagging - Makahu to Ballard Hut Catherine Jackson**

Two planet stars hung near the quarter moon overhead as the increasingly hideous road was navigated bravely in the dark and possums with luxurious dark fluffy tails scampered around the pot-holes. The road-end Makahu hut was full, so we lay down before the embers on blow-up mats.

An exquisite pinky-purple layered dawn view greeted early risers the following morning. It was the most priceless, exquisite day of the year, as we took off up the relentless scrub slope at 7:40. Fresh morning views were seen down to the northeast, with skims of residual fog in the hollows. Cresting a rise just over an hour up the slope, little orange Dominie Biv suddenly came into view sitting amidst the whitest snow under a royal blue sky. Further up, gorgeous clean curls of snow lay in the foregrounds with rocky snow-spur views beyond. Gradually the snow covered every surface and the slope steepened.



*Dominie Biv high in Kaweka snow.*

Up at a little junction, Chris and I regrouped after photo-taking, and I put my cramponettes on. We crossed the smooth rolling squeaky snow to Kaweka junction, reaching it at 10:20. It was still the most perfect day. The volcanoes, with layers and layers of snow-tipped Kaimanawas, could be seen to the west, and to the south the snow-slathered Ruahines were bouncing light into the sky. Returning across the twinkling snow to the top of the spur we then carried along north, soon reaching untrammelled snow to Kaweka North summit and views of the 7-fold zigzag of ridge beyond to Whetu.

Chris stomped magnificent steps off the steep top slope of Kaweka North, getting us down safely where the cramponettes failed. After

puffing up the next peak opposite, the same operation was needed down the next dip. Pipits flitted over the snow, posing on rocky outcrops. It took another hour again to reach the next unnamed high point where we had a food break up on a small patch of warm dry tundra with a super 360° view. Clouds like kereru-underwear feathers were gathering and twisting above Kaweka junction, but it was still a day out of the box, with the cameras getting enthusiastic workouts.

Two more dips followed after lunch, before puffing up another reasonably big slope to Whetu junction which was reached just after two. 20 minutes of happy shutter clicking followed with views deep into the Kawekas. Heading west along the last ridge to Ballard Hut turnoff, a *Rachaelia* species (distant relative of vegetable sheep), that supposedly only grows in Marlborough, was spotted. The residual snow swept in smooth curves along the ridgeline with foregrounds of *Celmisia incana*, and backdrops of drama rocks leaning like bad teeth.

Chris lead the way again down the last steep 200m drop from the cairn through very deep soft snow sometimes up to the hip for one member of the party. The little orange 4-bunker DOC orange hut was reached around 1/2 past 3, with sunshine pouring down onto the far top bunk, making it nice and warm. While Chris went to dissipate more energy bush-bashing through deep, cold snow to gather photos of the sunset, one member luxuriated in a warm dry sleeping bag with a book.

After such a spectacular day, it was an unwelcome surprise to be greeted by mist below the bushline next morning. After breaky, chill dank clothes and wet socks were dragged on (gah!), to be away at 7:25. The firmed-up deep snow steps up the 200m slope were doggedly retraced in thickest mist. The wind became strong up on the ridge, and in full regalia we picked along the snow or small snatches of visible fellfield track. Whetu junction was reached in great time, but all was in whiteout and it was no place to linger. The slope beyond was battled down in fearsome winds, plondering through deep snow or scrubby vegetation. The poles were lost at the col, but another GPS check got us to the metal junction and with great relief we peeled off down the spur. Mist tore past over the ridge as we dropped off steeply down snow over shingle.

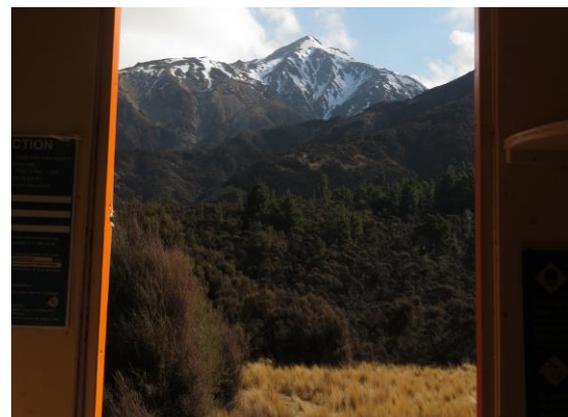
Just below the bushline we stopped for a hot drink and a piece of lemon cake, fudge and

luxury thin-slab Whittaker chocolate. Me oh my! After that, we scooted down the spur, spring cleaning the track with hyperglycaemic heartiness. Many admiral butterflies were puttering round and beautiful robins sang from the tall trees with their canary-like song, joined by classic grey warbler tremolos and chaffinch arpeggios. Chris also heard a kaka!

At Middle Hut Junction we dropped our packs and ploughed at speed to bag points. Middle Hut was just lovely – fitted with a wide sunny veranda and trim airy innards, including an old fireplace.

Carrying on south, great views of the ranges appeared to the right as the track drew near a high cliff edge. A 250m dry scuffly dip was then scuttled down to a reasonably big stream crossing with much evidence of recent water stress from the one-in-20-year floods in June. The track then bolted up rootlets at a tremendous incline almost like a ladder, before opening out into dry baking orange sandstone and slate.

Another hut bagging detour was taken to cute wee historic Iron Whare which had great atmosphere, half wedged into the side of a little hill surrounded by tussocks on one side and tall bush on the other. After lunch we returned to the main loop track and on to bag Kaweka Flats Bivvy which sat in the sweetest little tussock clearing with a huge view of snowy Kaweka North peak soaring above out the hut door. Kaweka flats turned out to be anything but flat, and we slogged up and down for some time before finally dropping back down to Makahu Saddle Hut, and returning to the car.



*View from Kaweka Flats biv.*

Chris used up a little spare energy collecting extra points climbing a 10 minute named peak by the side of the road-end, before we sped on our way as dusk began to percolate down over the land.

It had been an absolutely brilliant trip.

Trip participants: Chris Tuffley, Catherine Jackson.

**22-23 September 2018**  
**Iron Gate Hut**  
**Grant Allerby**

Four musketeers (Michael Allerby trip leader, Craig Allerby, Warren Wheeler, Grant Allerby) left Feilding at the gentleman's hour of 8am heading for the start of the track. Arriving at Janet and Graham's place about 9am.

A quick hot drink as we righted the woes of the world. Janet then took one look at the lightness of the packs the three experienced musketeers were carrying and decided 72 traps needed rebaiting as that would be easy work for those blokes.

The weather was great, a slightly overcast spring day. Janet grabbed her day pack joining us for the section to Heritage Lodge.

The saving grace for me as the guest was that loading up Warren, Craig and trip leader Michael slowed them down to my pace. *It had been 20 years since I had ventured into the Ruahine's and it was great to be back.*

We soon got into a rhythm as Craig the chief trap clearer, Michael, I hope you guys do this correctly and Warren the rebaiter took on leading roles. I got the most important job of scribe.

The track was pretty weather beaten with tree debris in a lot of places and the occasional slip to navigate.

We made good time and eventually took a lunch break around 1pm at Tunupo Stream.

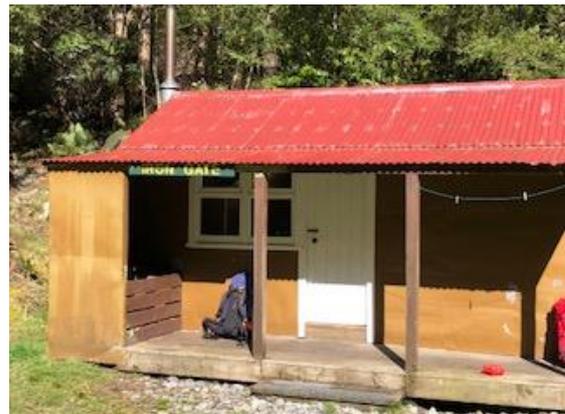
Trip leader (Michael Allerby) had obviously had a tough week and decided to take a wee nap in the sun.

The next section was uneventful until Craig decided that it was time I christened my new boots and rather than skipping across the bog took me straight into it. A bit of a heavy load on one foot until the next stream (yuk).



*Meditation Rock at Tunupo Stream.*

We arrived to a very peaceful Iron Gate Hut at around 2.30pm. Not such a peaceful trip for the 12 rats and 1 stoat we managed to clear along the way.



*A very peaceful Iron Gate Hut.*

Later in the day we were joined by two further parties consisting of four members of the Rangitikei Tramping Club and one friend who had travelled over from Rangi via Triangle Hut. After a few snacks and dinner everyone called it a day for an early night.

A brisk and stunning spring day for our Sunday start. Packed up and ready to go by 7.30am. A party of two had left the hut about 7am surely not driven out by the snoring or Cecil the possum who dived on the Hut roof about midnight as fun sport.

With the word to do a quick check on the freshly set traps the pace was a quick stroll. Then just as we were getting into a boring routine, Warren decided a quick jaunt down the old track to Cumberland Creek was in order.

With the call of it's down here somewhere he sidled down the slip with ease. The rest of the musketeers maybe a little slower. Soon at the bottom we managed to surprise the two early starters from the hut.

After a quick break and astonishing views that managed to provide glimpses of both Mt Taranaki and Mt Ruapehu we were in the car and heading home.

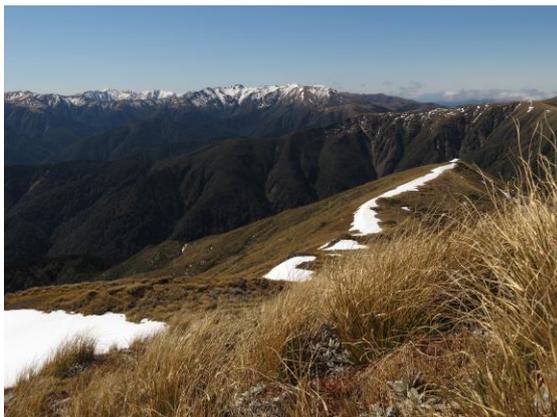
A fantastic spring tramp with it culminating in a quick pint for everyone (but the responsible driver) at the Apiti Tavern just as the sun hit the yard arm.

**23 September 2018**  
**Tunupo**  
**Ernie Cook**

The usual suspects gathered to re-bait the Oroua Whio Protection Project trap line up to Tunupo Peak. Overhead a beautiful day was in prospect and underfoot the track rated Dead 6 which is 3.3-3.5 on the Penetrometer Scale.

We were soon into our work checking and re-baiting the 52 traps that line the ridge to the peak. Six rats and two stoats were removed from the traps as we went.

The ridge undulates quite gently with some level sections. Only once clear of the leatherwood does the incline of the track begin to steepen. There were small pockets of snow here and there along the track.



*View north along Ruahines from Tunupo.*  
*[Catherine Jackson]*

Once at the summit we relaxed in the tussock and enjoyed our eagerly anticipated lunch. The views to the north were as rewarding as promised. The behemoth that is Ruapehu clearly visible and resplendent in its winter overcoat. Beyond, the cylindrical Ngauruhoe

also adorned with snow. Just as we were finishing our lunch we were joined by our photographer for the trip, Catherine Jackson, who generously shared some of her lunch with us.

Eventually we had to drag ourselves from our comfortable repose and begin the gentle descent to the river.

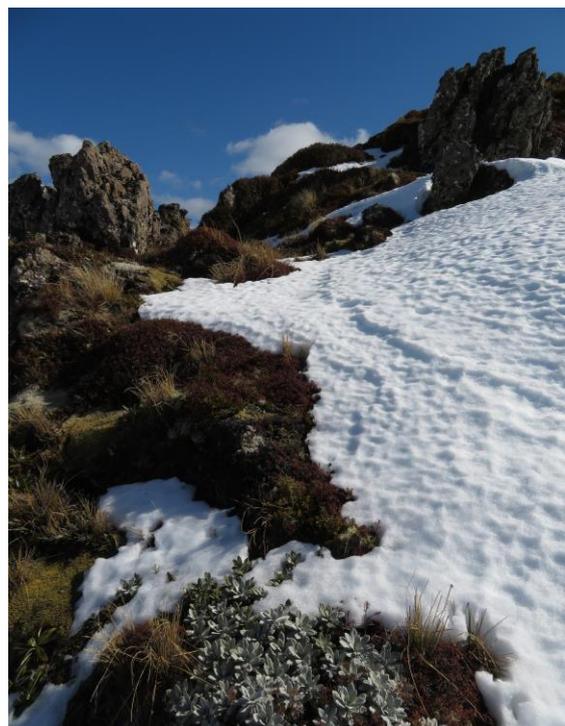


*Trappers return.* *[Catherine Jackson]*

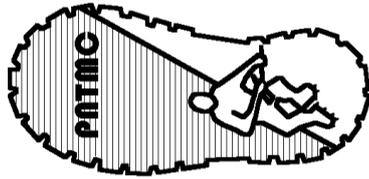
The afternoon was concluded with a very welcome cup of tea and snack at the hospitable abode of Graham and Janet.

The usual suspects comprised Graham Peters, Ernie Cook and Bruce Dog.

**Good-bye Winter**



*Last ridge to Ballard Hut [Catherine Jackson].*



**Palmerston North  
Tramping and  
Mountaineering  
Club Inc.**

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

P.O. Box 1217,  
Palmerston North

## **PNTMC Newsletter October 2018**

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

- DOC News – Diggers Hut washed away
- Trips to Ruapehu - The Great Pinnacle, Te Heu Heu and crater lake peaks
- MTB up Scotts Road to Arapuke
- Kaweka Hutbagging Makahu to Ballard
- Trampoline tramps to Iron Gates and Tunupo
- 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!**

**Send to  
PNTMC  
PO Box 1217  
Palmerston North**

### **PNTMC Contacts**

President	Janet Wilson	329 4722
Vice President	Bruce van Brunt	328 4761
Secretary	Grant Christian	021 117 6921
Treasurer	Warren Wheeler	356 1998
Webmaster	Peter Wiles	358 6894
	Martin Lawrence	357 1695
Membership Enquiries	Warren Wheeler	356 1998
Gear Custodian	Grant Christian	021 117 6921
Newsletter Editor	Warren Wheeler	356 1998
Trip Co-ordinator	Janet Wilson	329 4722
	Anne Lawrence	357 1695
Snowcraft Programme	Grant Christian	021 117 6921