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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 November 2018

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*Enjoying a snowy trip into Neill Forks, Tararua Forest Park.*

*[Woody Lee]*

### 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.

**8 November 2018**

**BYO Pics**

**Martin Lawrence**

Show us what you have been up to over the last 6 months or so - out there, tramping and mountaineering.

**29 November 2018**

**South Island Mega Tramp**

**Warren Wheeler**

How to "do" the South Island, tramping for 6 weeks or so? Start with the Great Walks, hire a car, then check out a few easy-medium 2, 3 or 4 day trips up the West Coast, Arthurs Pass, Lewis Pass, Nelson Lakes and Whangapeka. It all adds up to over a million steps - a Mega trip.

**13 December 2018**

**End of Year BBQ**

**Warren Wheeler**

Our annual get together at Ashhurst Domain picnic area, including presentation of Annual Awards and winners for the Huts and High Points Challenge 2018. BYO food and drink. From 6.15pm.

## Upcoming Trips

**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 Poads Road carpark, located behind Levin.

**17 or 18 November (Best Weather Day)**

**Mitre to Baldie**

**FE**

**Grant Christian**

**354 5843**

A good stretch of the legs and lots of hut and peak bagging points available from this ambitious day trip in the eastern Tararuas.

**17-18 November**

**Mangaturuturu to Whakapapiti**

**M**

**Kathy Corner**

**027 618 5722**

I have completed most of the Round the Mountain track except for this section so that is

why I chose this trip. We'll start at the Ohakune Road. One option is go up Friday night and stay at Mangaturuturu Hut then walk to Whakapapiti Hut (5 hours 30 according to the website), stay the night and walk back the same way. Weather dependent of course. The other option is to leave early on Saturday morning. If interested give me a call.

**24 or 25 November (Best Weather Day)**

**Te Atuaoparapara**

**F**

**Chris Tuffley**

**359 2530**

A classic loop in the Eastern Ruahine Range, up past Sunrise, over Te Atuaoparapara to Waipawa Saddle, and out down the Waipawa River. If there's energy and enthusiasm we might do an extended remix to pick up some extra huts and high points along the way. For an early start without the early early alarm we'll drive up the night before and spend the night at Triplex.

**24-25 November**

**Kaweka Explorer**

**M/F**

**Bruce van Brunt**

**328 4761**

This trip is a good opportunity to bag plenty more huts and high points before our Challenge ends this year.

**24-25 November**

**Waiaua Gorge Hut**

**Family**

**Elly Arnst**

**022 682 3136**

Ever wondered what "Ladder" on the Taranaki map referred to? Come and find out! It's a gentle climb up an old road from Ihaia car park to the hut, which has great mountain views. Possibility of side trip to Brames Falls. Guaranteed ice cream stop on the way home. Plan to depart Whanganui 8:30am-ish. Text or call if you want to come and find out why this is my kids favourite Taranaki trip.

**1-2 December**

**Lake Dive, Taranaki NP**

**E**

**Kathy Corner**

**027 618 5722**

Nestled on the shore of Lake Dive, Lake Dive Hut is a popular overnight destination. Calm days offer great reflections of Fanthams Peak in the lake. It is a 3-4 hour walk to the hut and depending and on the weather we can take the upper track one day and the lower track the other. Leave at 7am on Saturday.

**2 December**

**Beginners Rangi Deadmans Loop**

**E/M**

**Anne Lawrence**

**357 1695**

This is the final in our series of Beginner Tramps this year. Suitable for all ages from youth to those getting into tramping later in life. This trip in the western Ruahines is up the Deadmans Track to the tussock tops and back down via Rangiwahia Hut. Enjoy a good walk with impressive views and summer flowering

alpine plants. Leave Milverton Park at 7.30am. Back late afternoon.

### 8-9 December

**Bike Packing Adventure** MTB  
**Richard Lockett** 323 0948

Leaving from Feilding mid-day Saturday and heading out to explore the backcountry (gravel) roads of the northern Manawatu. Camping beside a river for the night before returning to Feilding early afternoon. You will need to be able to carry some gear on your bike such as a tent and sleeping bag and be comfortable riding with a small back pack as a minimum requirement to fully enjoy this trip.

### 9 December

**Naenae/Arawaru** M  
**Dave Grant** 328 7788

Come and enjoy this new route into the northern Tararuas from the eastern side. Follows a paper road up Nae Nae Stream to join with the Otangane loop (runs from the Platinum Mines track in Hardings Park) thence to Pukenaenae (the Nipple) for morning tea then on to Arawaru for lunch. See picturesque waterfalls on the Naenae Stream, varied bush, and great views on a fine day over the Mangatainoka valley from the top of Pukenaenae and Arawaru. Leave Milverton Park at 7.30am. Should be back by 4pm.

### 15-16 December

**Cow Creek** M  
**Ange Minto** 027 472 0660

A classic Tararua trip, in Saturday via Blue Range Hut and out Sunday following the Ruamahanga River track.

### 16 December

**Short Knights** M  
**Warren Wheeler** 356 1998

Depart Milverton Park at 7.30am. A must-do pre-Xmas work-out to celebrate the longest day (almost). This western Ruahine loop takes us up Shorts Track and along the tussock tops to Toka high point and then down Knights Track. Great views and lots of alpine plants should be flowering.

### 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

## InterClub Photo Comp Results

The annual Interclub Photo Competition was hosted this year by PNTMC on 27 September. Entries in each category consisted of the first, second and third places from the separate club competitions held by PNTMC, MUAC and MTSC – the crème de la crème of local tramping and mountaineering photography.

The results listed below show that each club has some excellent photographers, but in the medal tally PNTMC came out top, followed closely by MTSC and MUAC.

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

#### Above bushline no human element

1. Richard Lander MTSC - Lake Tasman and Mt Cook
2. Catherine Jackson PNTMC - Rangī in thickest snow
3. Beth Martin MUAC - Mt. Ngauruhoe in Red

#### Above bushline with human element

1. Shelby Brothers MUAC - Fanthams Peak
2. Howard Nicholson MTSC - Near Lancaster, Tararua
3. Kathy Corner PNTMC - Jumbo Peak

#### Below bushline no human element

1. Catherine Jackson PNTMC - Layered bush mist, Cow Creek
2. James Vincent MUAC - Galactic lactic
3. Hazel Phillips MTSC - Lake McKerrow

#### Below bushline with human element

1. Chris Tuffley PNTMC - East Matakitaki Hut
2. Catherine Jackson PNTMC - Park Peak track with coprosma
3. Richard Lander MTSC - Frankton Jetty

#### Fauna & flora

1. Richard Lander MTSC - Tui
2. Catherine Jackson PNTMC - Sweet little fungi
3. Kathy Corner PNTMC - Cape Kidnappers Gannet

## 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 trumper 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.

#### Points to Date

Just over one month to go and the leaders will be hard to catch up to from here. Still plenty of club trips to boost your placing between now and then so get out and about and enjoy.

Name	Huts	Highs	Bonus	TOTAL
Elly	123.5	139	25	287.5
Chris T	115	123.5	30	268.5
Catherine	84	76	10	170
Grant	31	71	15	117
Warren	44	29	30	103
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
Martin	18.5	12	15	45.5
Kathy	25.5	4.5	15	45
Mary	20.5	11	5	36.5
Annett	1.5	30	0	31.5
Anne	12.5	12	5	29.5
Woody	22.5	14	10	46.5
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

## Trip Reports

### 2 September 2018 Beginners to Atiwhakatu Hut Michelle Barnes

I was dropped off at 8am on the Sunday and was surprised to see about 20 people gradually emerge from their vehicles and into the light rain for the first beginners tramp of 2018. We made our way down to Mt Holdsworth Track in 4-5 cars, which gave us newbies an opportunity to get to know one another a little.

The first thing I noticed on arrival was the beautiful native bird song. Then it was time to test out my (as yet unused) waterproof pants and how my decade old raincoat was going to hold up in the rain. As we started the walk it was interesting to see the variety of native flora (accompanied by a guided tour of the plants – courtesy of Warren).



*All geared up to deter the rain. [Chris Tuffley]*

The track to Atiwhakatu Hut was relatively flat with puddles here and there, some areas of boardwalk, sections of stairs and a wait at a couple of bridges (one person at a time). Holly, the Labradoodle was also very obedient and followed this one-person-at-a-time limit across the bridges extremely well.



*Safe load 10 people so no delays at this one. [Chris Tuffley]*

For myself, the track was friendly enough to continue on with some of the conversations that had started on the drive down. We appreciated the appearance of native trees covered in raindrops and I tried on some natural lemonwood (tarata) perfume. I ate the corner of a horopito leaf (very peppery) and even overheard another brave individual downing what sounded like 10 of them at once!



*Lunch time at Atiwhakatu Hut. [Warren Wheeler]*

Then at last – the hut, some lunch, some photos and a traditional tramping song sung by Warren...This went something like 'we're here because we're here, because we're here because we're here'...

As we made our way back, the rain became heavier but the conversations continued on. By the end of the tramp I had a reasonably good idea of what I would need to take with me for the next outing (especially in the event of rain). My waterproof pants had done the trick but I may need to think about my raincoat - my armpits were soaked with rainwater. A waterproof cover for my pack might go a long way, as well as some more waterproof bags for my lunch and gear, a decent change of clothes next time and some tissues...Would definitely do again though.

### 29-30 September 2018 Leon Kinvig – Apiti Track Trapline Catherine Jackson

Trip participants: Janet Wilson and Graham Peters, Richard Lockett, Catherine Jackson.

Out behind Norsewood, Graham swung the trusty van round, parking beneath swishing pines on a blustery day with the snowy tops covered in misery. We crossed the sunny farm at 10 to 9, padding up the clay track through a huge grove of sweet very early Ourisia blooms dusted with purple. After an hour we came out

onto a brief open slope with a grassy track, where a large, low rainbow crouched over the hills to the southwest.



*Blooming lovely.*

A whitehead was tootling fruity notes when we re-entered the bush and the track was followed beneath much wind-hooshing in the canopy. Richard tossed and rolled aside many dozens of arm- and calf-thick branches off the track as we made our way around what seemed a very long sidle. Three nasty areas of track-crumble required a steadying arm for one member of the party, but the others seemed to float over the feeble track remnants like mountain mist. Little grey warblers shivered their trembly songs along the way as the ferns became more numerous and the moss more beautiful. Beneath tall trees decorated with luminous green epiphyte fountains, a delightfully sun-dappled spot was chosen for lunch.

After lunch there was much puffity-puffing up jewel green mossy rootlet slopes with more grey warblers, before coming out into the leatherwood corridor with views back to the sunny farmlands. Higher up, the track became speckled with small side-slivers of snow. The top junction with the track from Longview was reached at 10 to 2. We had a brief break in the nose wateringly cold wind ripping off the brooding, snow-slathered tops. Parka, hat, scarf and gloves had to be wrestled on before going much further.

Carrying on, cries of excitement were whipped away into the wind as the screw-driver was applied to the stoat boxes and prize after double-prize was found in almost every wooden trap along the top ridge. 2-3 month old stoat and weasel carcasses were hoiked out with delight [yerch!] and the bait refreshed with squares of 'stoat chocolates' made of ground up dried rabbit. (Nyam nyam!) While the troupes attended to each of the traps in turn, the steep route was clambered down through

rippling overgrown grasses, intermittently shining in the sun.



*Stoat carcasses cleared with delight.*

Coming out onto the little grassy terrace by the rustling baby Pohangina River, Leon Kinvig Hut was found to be bulging with men who had staggered over the tops via Toka, with tales of wind and woe, whiteout and snow. Happily I had my tent, which was quickly put up by the dog kennel. Our guide informed us there was a 100% chance of sighting a blue duck at Leon Kinvig, and proposed a little walk up the river to spot them. Seized with 'bonus points fever' I went with her as far as possible without getting the boots wet in the icy waters. When no ducks were seen we retreated to the hut veranda for a very satisfactory second afternoon tea of slurpy shared things including iced buns like the ones we used to buy at the tuck shop in the 60's, crisps, duck-shaped shortbread and rice crackers with slabs of camembert cheese.

At dusk Janet and I stood on the river bank, watching for whio. "Patience would be rewarded" was the instruction, but after standing some time in the perishingly cold wind, the faithless disciple slunk into her tent. Not two minutes later, a male whio flew downstream with a wheezy whistle. [Hhhh...] With more layers on I rejoined Janet on the little sandy shore of the green pool nearest the hut. The men were sensibly gathered around the smoky fire, Graham scoffing a burger (!) given to him by the over-the-top guys. The vigil was eventually abandoned as darkness folded into the valley. Immediately on crawling into my sleeping bag I heard the bonus points fly back upstream. Grrrr!

The river rustled on through the night. Moon beams seeped through the tent fabric as the clouds shredded off the peaks. At 5 am a whistle sounded from the river. Boots were fumbled on and breakfast accoutrements

grabbed. In the dim light the large bottom step to the pool was misjudged, clanging together the metal breakfast accoutrements and efficiently frightening away a female bonus point that must have been sitting only a few feet away! (Waaa!)

After long lingering, bodies started emerging from the hut. It was time to pack up. Suddenly a whoo was heard downstream. Dashing to the river bank with the camera, the rocks were searched, and there they WERE!! The shutter was clicked – HURRAH!! A second coffee was needed after all of that, supplied by the kindness of others.



*Click – HURRAH – time for another coffee.*



*Ready to leave Leon Kinvig Hut.*

We were away at ¼ to 9, coming into sun-twinkle some 20 minutes up the slope. After concerted uphill padding we emerged out of the trees to find the wind wasn't as severe as yesterday, and the glum stormy clouds were lifting a fraction from the tops. Packs were left at the junction, and Janet, Graham and Richard methodically checked the traps northwards almost to Te Pohatu, again 'marvellously' full of trophies. After returning to the junction much toil ensued, staggering down the slope to the junction to Cattle Creek for lunch, then up and

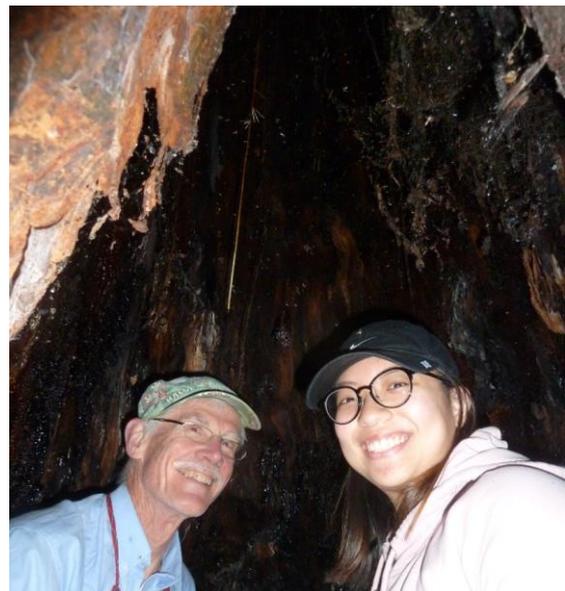
on through the long sidles. A warm sunny afternoon rest was had back on the grassy hill path, before the last hour of clay track to the car.

It had been a really good tramp – indeed, a silk purse of a trip out of a sow's ear of a weekend.

### **30 September 2018 Blue Range Hut and Te Mara Peak Stephen Legg**

A polycultural group of six tramped to Blue Range Hut and Te Mara Peak in the Eastern Taranukas, on Sunday 30 September. Initial confusion with the location of the peak - some thought it was to Te Mata Peak near the wineries near Hastings - was promptly clarified by trip leader Warren Wheeler. The cultural poly added to the interest of this tramp. PNMTTC members Warren (NZ), Stephen Legg (UK/NZ) and Kirsten Olsen (Denmark) were joined by Anita (NZ) and three Massey food technology exchange intern students, 'LJ', Audrey and Maru (all from Singapore), all keen to experience the Kiwi bush for the first time.

Our first exciting experience of the NZ bush was a hole in a tree. It was a big hole, in fact it was a large hollowed trunk. The riddle about how many elephants can you fit into the back seat of a mini was immediately answered by several of us squashing into the hollow, all fear of bugs and monsters dispelled by our hilarity and our leader.



*Inside hollow rimu en route to Blue Range Hut  
[Stephen Legg]*

It soon became apparent that we not only had a polycultural group, but also a bi-fitness group.

Whilst, in fine weather, the PNMTTC and NZ members easily tripped up the trail, they found themselves frequently waiting for the Singaporeans, only one of whom had any tramping experience. LJ, it transpired, had been a Singaporean Commando parachutist. He was as lithe and probably fitter than any of us, but being an extremely polite young gentleman, stuck with his fellow students, giving many a helping hand when needed, and it was needed a lot. Shortly, one of the NZ contingent fell back to provide further assistance, lending a walking pole, cutting an extra walking stick and encouraging the visitors, who despite their struggles, seemed to be thoroughly enjoying their first experience of tramping in NZ. Warren provided expert bush commentary en route, so eventually we all arrived safe and sound for lunch at the beautifully bright blue Blue Range Hut.



*Using a microscope – oops a camera – to find Te Mara trig. [Stephen Legg]*

Our leader, of course, led us on a merry dance off route down a steep slope to rejoin the track, whence we eventually caught up with the split party near the road end at the end of our bi-fit polycultural trip. As Shakespeare wrote, “All’s well that ends well”, and a good time was had by all.



*Where is Blue Range Hut? [Stephen Legg]*

**13-14 October 2018  
Neill Forks Hut  
Catherine Jackson**

Participants: Craig Allerby (leader), Woody Lee, Catherine Jackson.

Driving south down Highway 2, low mist was shredding away from the mountains, revealing a dusting of fresh overnight snow down to the foothills! The Waiohine car park was left at 9:45 in the glimmering light beneath an overcast sky. A spray of clematis flowers was tumbling over the tall trees at the far end of the massive bridge over the Waiohine River. Far below, the water was still a clear jewel green. Snowy air nipped at the face as we padded along the rootletty track between the pretty mosses, draping grasses and nikau palms. All the bush smells had been rinsed sweet and clear by the overnight rain. Craig nobly removed a dead possum from the track along the way. By the junction back to Cone it had begun to hail, adding some colour to the day for 15 beautiful young girls on their way to Tutuwai Hut from Totara Flats for Duke of Edinburgh awards.



*Here it is - Blue Range Hut [Stephen Legg]*

Anita, who, it transpired, was an ultra-marathon runner, volunteered to accompany the less fit party directly back down the rooty wriggly track to the road end and the safety of our cars. The rest of us, with an enthusiastically liberated LJ trogged up through fairy forest to Te Mara Peak on a partial track, finding an almost imperceptible trig at its bush clad summit.

The river was low enough to nip up the river shortcut to the grassy flats, and after a quick GPS check we sloshed diagonally over the river to Sayer Hut, arriving in another shower at 12:30. This dear little old-world shelter was one of the highlights, with all the hand-adzed rafters and posts. Sun began to push through the dusty windows lined with old bottles, and shone

in the buttercups strewn across the grass as we left. A wood pigeon watched us retreat to the river. Woody and I enjoyed a hearty bout of loud wailing recrossing the snow-fed waters when bone-pain set in a third of the way across. Craig, also with bone-pain, maintained a phlegmatic silence. The last of the lovely grassy flats was strolled through to reach Totara Flats Hut just before 1:30.

After their lunch, Woody pottered and Craig studied the map, while rain pattered on the translucent veranda roof and a piercingly sweet grey warbler trembled a sorrowful song that sounded like Gershwin Blues. The large hut was left just after 2pm to ascend the stiff climb through more Clematis, entwined rata, then vast armies of new lime-green kidney ferns, holding up their brave little shields over the tree roots. Tomtits tweedled and tui song rang down through the trees.

As the long spur shouldered out, the track became somewhat soggy. Cold views of ghostly spurs were seen over towards Aokaparangi. Snow lay round on the mossy branches and Blechnum ferns, pockmarked by the rain. The temperature slipped to 3°C and a hail shower passed through. Arriving at the signpost at last, the startlingly steep track was descended down snow-covered rootlets, with occasional splatters of sun.

The snowy twin peaks and Mangahuka were seen briefly, and late afternoon rays caught the beech mast on Concertina Spur, turning it a rich golden orange.



*Maungahuka sprinkled with snow.*

The hut was finally reached with the knees feeling somewhat more elderly than in the morning. Soggy parkas and pack covers were divested in the useful antechamber before getting on with the serious business of Tea. The boys then got the fire going while I read a

book – an excellent division of labour, really. Stars had come out by the time we sat round talking in the candle light, sipping Woody's pinot noir.



*Neill Forks Hut.*

*[Woody Lee]*

Next morning down at the jade-green pool for teeth duty, a black shag flew up the river. Blue sky could be seen singing far above the deep, narrow valley. Mist began rising out of the bush as the first warm yellow rays poured down into the trees. We were away in soggy chill clothes at 8, with sun twinkle meeting the bottom track corner by the small splashy pool. The earnest ascent then began through tomtit song, while half way up a baritone crawl-crawl noise high in the canopy might have been a kaka!

Alas, the beautiful start to the day didn't hold, and by the top junction it was snowing prettily. Craig led the way as we then slushed and slithered onwards through the goblin forest in deeper snow, with the wind rising, and passing hail showers clattering companionably against the parkas. Snow sat on the mossy tops of all the wiggly branches, while icicles hung beneath.



*Snowy goblin forest.*

*[Woody Lee]*

Emerging from the bush 3 hours from the hut, Cone was in thickest whiteout with wind

whipping across the snow and the picturesque wiggly tarns. After checking the map to make sure we could claim points for Cone, it was a slow trip picking with care off the top. Lunch was had on the hoof in the middle of an anonymous howling slope somewhere.



*Wiggling tarns on Cone.*

Down at the low track junction the question of nipping along to Cone Hut for an extra point was mooted. Treacherous words like “stuffed” and “cold” were heard passing the lips of the party with most interest in harvesting points, followed by light sniggering from the least-interested quarter. Woody consoled himself with the prospect of 5 bonus points for bagging 3-huts-in-one-trip.

Weather continued as we staggered on to the car through more lovely kidney ferns and mosses.

On the drive home we rewarded ourselves with high fare at the marvellous Mirabelle Bakery in Carterton. Despite the weather it had been a really enjoyable weekend.

#### **14 October 2018 Herepai and Beyond Kirsten Olsen**

Stephen (Legg) and I rang trip leader in absentia Graham (Peters) early Saturday morning to announce our interest in the trip to Herepai and beyond, planned for Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> October. We knew that we were a bit late and we were, because nobody else had contacted him to express their interest, so he had decided not to go. We decided that we would go anyway. We took in all the hints Graham and Janet gave us about the trip, amongst others that the weather forecast for the Tararua was windy and frosty. Janet volunteered to be our safety contact. Stephen and I had not been to Herepai peak, not even to the hut before so we

looked forward to the trip. It definitely turned out to be as good as we could have hoped.

We left the Putara Road end just past 9am. It was nice, calm sunny and around 6°C. We had a daypack full of warm clothes, cold and hot water, lunch and snack so we felt well prepared. It was an uneventful walk along Mangatainoka River to the second swing bridge (45 min). Then we started the climb, which we knew from an earlier trip to Roaring Stag Hut. We took our time with a small visit to a hollow tree.



*On the way up to the T-junction [Kirsten Olsen]*

Just before we arrived at the T-junction we met a group on their way back to the road end who were on a Duke of Edinburgh challenge. They had had a nice sunrise on the top of Herepai with a bit of snow. When we arrived at the T-junction at 10:30 we had a sip of water and a snack and continued up to the hut. It was a bit muddy in places but not really something to write home about. It was a bit cold along the ridge to the hut. At the hut, we found a small snowman (10 cm). As it had started to drizzle, we went into the hut to drink a cup of coffee and to let the shower pass.

We found the track leading up Herepai peak. This was the steepest part of the trip through nice forest, but not difficult to follow the track. After a while, our heads poked out over the tree tops and we could see Herepai Hut when we looked back.

The route became a bit more challenging when we came out of the forest. Tussock and small trees covered the track and it was difficult to see where we planted our feet and whether we were planting them in/on mud, a stone, a hump or a

hole! It was not difficult but it slowed us down. We reached the peak of Herepai at 1pm.



*Herepai Hut seen from above [Stephen Legg]*

We continued towards Ruapai for 30 minutes, down from Herepai over a few saddles and then up to a mini peak with a nice hollow, where we had lunch in the sun and enjoyed the views of the valleys and the peaks.

We started our descent at 2:10pm and arrived at the hut at 3:30, where we had our second cup of coffee - this time on the deck in the sunshine.

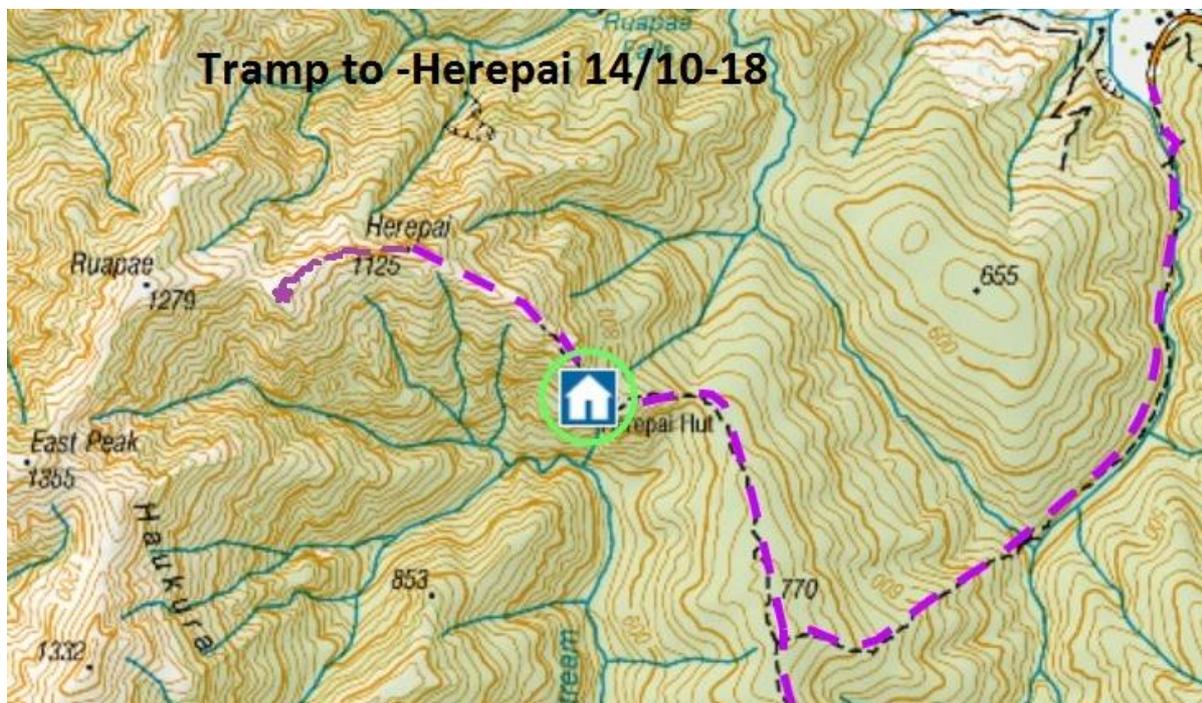
We were surprised that we were just as slow going down as we had been going up.



*Looking back at Herepai from the lunch spot [Kirsten Olsen]*

After the coffee we continued back to the T-junction and then to the road end where we arrived at 5:45pm. Then the 1 hour 15 minutes' drive back home.

I really enjoyed walking along the ridge towards Herepai and beyond towards Ruapai.



**20-21 October 2018**  
**Egmont Explorer**  
**Warren Wheeler**

Participants: Mark Le Bas, Warren Wheeler.

It is becoming a tradition for intrepid Egmont explorers to first climb the Hawera Water Tower before coffee and then stop off at Opunake Beach for lunch and to see where all the rocks and runoff from the mountain end up. From Opunake we continued along the Surf Highway to Rahotu, where we turned off and travelled on a narrow, sealed road past grassy fields in a strange lahar debris mound landscape to the park boundary.

The tramping eventually started at 12.30pm. Half way up the easy 2 hour bush track to Kahui Hut we met a party of New Plymouth trampers who were heading out after giving up on their Around the Mountain Trip instead of heading on to Holly Hut. They (or at least one member in particular) had been very slow through the snow on the high-level track above Lake Dive, having to come down in the dark on the steep and slippery Brames Falls section before finally reaching the Waiaua Gorge Hut at 10pm - some 15 hours after leaving Dawson Falls. A tough choice to quit, but obvious under the circumstances.

Despite our late start we were at the 6-bed hut about 2.30pm, settling in and contemplating nearby high points to bag. Kahui Hill 845m was within easy reach and turned out to be a short bush bash down an obvious ridge that leads off the Round the Mountain track to the north of the hut. We left this tree covered high point just after 3.15pm and headed back up to the track and our next objective, another bush clad point, Maru 1045m, across the Okahu Gully to the south.

The first part was easy as goat cullers had clear cut their track up the ridge to get to the moss fields above. This track starts about 100m up from the hut, complete with sign saying No Access Conservation Management Only. (This offers an alternative route via Okahu Gorge to climb Egmont.) The track narrows down to a knife edge where we dropped off into the gully. At 5.30pm, after some steep bush bashing, we were on a ridge looking across to Maru and much the wiser about the route to take. We had probably gone too far down the dry gully bed and with hindsight should have headed straight up opposite our drop off in to the gully. Running out of light was a distinct possibility so we reluctantly turned back and managed to slip

slide our way back along our tracks to emerge once more in the dry gully – the stony ground is so porous that any snow melt was soaking underground. The gully is not a place to loiter, with visibly fresh rock fall from the steep unstable sides above and the flattened vegetation and patches of snow indicative of avalanche activity.



*"The worst bush bashing I've been on". Really?*

Despite our lack of success, we were happy with our efforts for the day. Dinner at the hut was quick and easy using Mark's Jet Boil cooker for hot water – he had a dehyd Backcountry meal and for me, a pumpkin crouton soup with chopped celery, instant potato and Noble cheese chunks stirred in. We shared the hut with a father-daughter and their male friend who had arrived from Puniho Road, the shortest way up to the hut from New Plymouth. We hoped for a nice sunset over the ocean and a bright red mountain but a thin layer of cloud on the horizon smothered the effect. A beautiful calm clear evening nevertheless.

After breakfast on Sunday we headed off a little before 8am with high hopes of bagging up to five high points. We started out north on the Around the Mountain Track to the junction with the old Pyramid Track. This track was closed due to a massive gully washout a few years ago and sure enough there is an old sign warning Track Closed. It looked overgrown but 15m in there was another new sign No Access Conservation Management Only, beyond which

the track had been freshly cut to 2m wide. This was much easier travel than the “maintenance overdue” condition of the ATM track so in short time we reached a deep washed out gully, which appeared to be where the old track disappeared. Here the cut track detoured about 100m downstream to where a route had been found to get down and back out the other side.



*Blue marker on rock – no worries then.*

By this stage Mark was finding it hard to keep going as an old hip injury had painfully flared up and was not settling down as it usually did. As we carried on up, the alpine scrub was thinning out into the famous moss gardens and tussock country. This meant less vegetation to cut and the track became harder to follow., but it seemed to be heading straight up and to the right of the direct line to Black Rock and the Pyramids. Presumably the goat cullers veered around to the south to meet up with their other track down to Kahui Hut. Mark was now in such pain that he could not carry on upwards, so he stopped to rest to see if the drugs would kick in while I ventured off to explore the route up to Little Pyramid with the promise that I would be back in an hour.

Carrying on upwards, I reached the level of Little Pyramid peak 1225m and started to sidle towards it, but immediately discovered a small gully washout that was obviously much worse further down on the direct line via Black Rock. It was also obvious that the best route over Big Pyramid 1458m was to carry on up further above the washout gullies and sidle across to the south saddle.

At this level however it was quite straightforward to find a crossing point and it then took just a few minutes sidle through the tussock, including several minor watercourses filled with snow tongues, to get to the small leading ridge connecting Little Pyramid to Big Pyramid and on to the high point of Little Pyramid itself. From here there was an amazing view of the devastation below that is

Pyramid Stream gully, where deep erosion made it impossible to cross. Impressive, but the view was rapidly disappearing as cloud came in and thoughts turned to finding my way back (or not) to Mark in a whiteout.



*Egmont before the cloud came in for the day.*

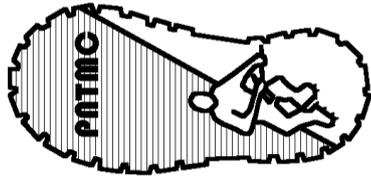
Fortunately the cloud lifted enough to see my way clear although I still ended up veering off route to the left and was happy to spot Mark hobbling upwards only a 100m away on my right – he had started getting cold from just sitting and tried carrying on to see if his hip was better after the rest. It wasn't, but 10 points for trying. It was now only 10.30am but we decided it best to return to Kahui Hut and go home.



*A bit sketchy dropping into the gully.*

Just as we reached the hut a bunch of Duke of Eds arrived from Holly Hut with their “shadows” and a couple of ring-ins. All the way from Northland. Contingency plans were discussed when we told them about the snow on the high level track (and the poor condition of the low level track). One of the ring-ins had twisted his ankle and despite feeling better it was decided that he should exit too, especially as we were able to offer him a lift back to their van at North Egmont.

So, although our Labour Weekend was reduced to only 2 days, it was a good result all round, with our exploration of the Kahui area setting us up nicely for future expeditions.



**Palmerston North  
Tramping and  
Mountaineering  
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## **PNTMC Newsletter November 2018**

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

- Interclub Photo Comp Results
- Beginners Tramp to Atiwahakatu
- Leon Kinvig Hut via Apiti Track stoat trapping and who spotting
- Blue Range Hut and Te Mara Peak
- Neill Forks and Cone Loop in snow
- Herepai and Beyond to Ruapae peak
- Egmont Explorer – Kahui and Beyond
- 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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