

Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.

www.pntmc.org.nz

P.O. Box 1217, Palmerston North

Newsletter December 2018



Beginners Tramp to Sunrise Hut, Ruahine Forest Park.

[Martin Lawrence]

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.

13 December 2018

End of Year BBQ

Warren Wheeler

Our end of year social event at Ashhurst Domain, including presentation of our Annual Awards and results of Huts and High Points Challenge. (As this newsletter was published after the event you can see a list of the recipients under Notices).

31 January 2019

Beginning of Year BBQ

Warren Wheeler

Start the year with us at the picnic BBQs beside the paddling pool in the Victoria Esplanade. BYO food and drink. From 6.00pm until dark.

Upcoming Trips

12-13 January 2019

Tararua Botanising M
Janet Wilson 329 4722

If you have an interest in alpine plants, this is a trip for you. January is a great month to partake in this slow form of tramping, where one assumes a rather head down, bum up posture while observing and perhaps photographing the profusion of interesting and possibly rare native plants flowering in the alpine zone. I am assured I will be accompanied by our clubs most enthusiastic and knowledgeable amateur botanists. Location is likely to be Cattle Ridge where, given good conditions, we will try to camp up high, but if the weather dictates, we may move elsewhere, perhaps the Ruahines near Rangi Hut or Shorts Track. Please reply nice and early so I know you want to come. Departing time TBA.

13 January

Beehive Creek Family
Doug Strachan 353 6526

This Pohangina walkway, opened in 1983, is just 30km from P.N. Our 11 year old son has walked this track every year of his life, as has our 13 year old daughter (the first time in the womb). The creek is generally ankle-deep and sandy-bottomed, making this ideal for all, including families and first-time trampers. Kids like to jump in the deeper bits, so leaving a change of clothes in the car for them is advisable. No dogs allowed. It can still be a workout for anyone who wants to walk the road section (3km, 40mins) of the loop. The walk will be followed by lunch at a picnic spot across the road from the cars. Good social tramp, and you'll still have the afternoon free to mow the lawns. 9am start from Milverton Park.

19-21 January (Anniversary Weekend)

Te Potae Stoat Trapping M/F
Janet Wilson 329 4722

There are limited spaces available on this trip - please get in touch with me ASAP to indicate your interest. We plan to fly in to Ruahine Corner (no cost) and then walk out via Colenso and Iron Bark Huts. There are plenty of DOC 200 traps that need rebaiting along the way - so some experience necessary or I will try to pair you up with someone more experienced. If you would like to know more please get in touch - this is a good opportunity to volunteer and visit a lovely part of the Ruahines. If you wanted to you could extend you stay and walk out whenever you choose to. Departing early Saturday 19th.

19-21 January (Anniversary Weekend)

Tararua Southern Crossing M/F
Chris Tuffley 359 2530

A classic route, with fantastic views south over Wellington to the Kaikōura ranges if we're lucky

with the weather. I've arranged a key swap with a friend walking west-east, so we'll walk east-west from Waiohine Gorge to Otaki Forks over three days, staying at Alpha and Kime. Not the usual eastern end, but a shorter drive...and a shorter first day. Leaving 7am Saturday.

26-27 January

Totara Flats E
Kathy Corner 027 618 5722

A nice introduction to tramping in the Tararua Forest Park, with a mix of uphill and downhill, metalled and muddy sections, narrow and wide valleys, forest and river flats. Plenty of time to find the best swimming holes near the large hut.

27 January

Waipawa Loop M
Warren Wheeler 356 1998

A Ruahine trip with lots of variety up past Sunrise Hut and down the north branch of the Waipawa. Hopefully the mistletoe and alpine plants will still be flowering. Enjoy the run down a scree slope and the relatively easy stream travel, but expect wet feet once we meet the main Waipawa River. Depart 7.30am.

2-3 February

Pourangaki Hut M/F
Craig Allerby 06 323 7913

There are several approaches to this hut in the western Ruahines. Depending on weather and river conditions we will probably do a loop including a climb up to above the bush line to Pourangaki peak before dropping down to the hut and the next day following the river back out.

3 February

Iron Gates Gorge M
Warren Wheeler 356 1998

A summer favourite that could be done as a shorter Easy trip depending on participants. We follow the Iron Gates Hut track past Heritage Lodge and stop at the "Tunupo" camp site for an early lunch stop and optional swim in the Oroua River. We then head downstream for some 2-3 hours of easy river travel that is sure to get your feet wet. At the Iron Gates Gorge itself we will either swim and/or pack float through or return via the Stoat Trappers Track. Depart 7.30am.

9-10 February

TBA M/F
Elly Arnst 022 682 3136

Location yet to be confirmed (depends on ankle recovery), but I'm thinking Mid-Waiohine (Eastern Tararua) or a similar jaunt in the Eastern Ruahine.

10 February

Mania Track M
Anne Lawrence 027 450 4212

North of Rangiwahia, Mania track heads up into the Ruahines. The lower levels pass through

dense mixed beech-podocarp forest. Higher up there are awesome views down huge slip faces into the Pari Stream leading down the Pourangaki and upper Kawhatau River terraces. The plan is to climb onto the open tops of the Whanahua Range. From there we could carry on to Rangiwahia Hut if we can arrange a car to pick us up at the Rangi carpark otherwise we will return the way we came. Leaving Milverton park at 7.30 am.

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 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 - Daphne Hut Upgrade

Renovation of Daphne Hut was completed at the end of October with new roof, flooring and deck, thanks to Army Engineers working alongside DOC.

From the President

As I write this, the club challenge for this year is coming to an end - it certainly has inspired some of you to get out on a lot of trips - well done, I don't know where you find all the time?

Using the online recording makes running a challenge easy and so your committee will be looking at restarting another next year, perhaps with some new special challenges - how does from our AGM date sound?

Thank you to everyone who has offered to lead trips for the next 6 months - the trip card has just been produced and it's great to see that we can continue to offer 2 trips on most weekends.

It is now that time again - to look ahead with excitement to this summer's trips away. If you are going climbing, tramping, cycling, camping or simply a road trip, I wish you the very best of times.

Merry Xmas and Happy Tramping for 2019.
Janet Wilson



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

Additional 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 tramper 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.

Final Points

The final points are set out in the table below for those who have joined in the fun of the Challenge and continued to update your points - we know some of you didn't bother but it is still a fairly good indication of how active we were this year.

Congratulations to Chris Tuffley and Elly Arnst, whose many joint trips and solo efforts throughout the year resulted in their top ranking in the points table. Elly also visited the most huts for the first time (55) and the most peaks for the first time (68).

Catherine Jackson's well deserved third place belies the fact that many of her points were earned on solo trips before she even joined the club in August.

Grant Christian visited the most high points on a club trip (45), reflecting his preference for mountaineering trips.

Warren Wheeler visited the most huts on club trips (34) and scored the most Bonus points (35) by completing seven of the Committee Challenges.

No-one gained Bonus points for camping above 2000m and only Bruce claimed Tahurangi summit, with bad weather hampering other attempts.

If you didn't enter into the fun of the challenge but wish you had, then look out for the one next year...or just Get Out There and enjoy.

Name	Huts	Highs	Bonus	TOTAL
Chris T	132.5	140	30	302.5
Elly	130	145.5	25	300.5
Catherine	105.5	117	10	215.5
Grant	41.5	104.5	15	161
Warren	54	34.5	35	123.5
Janet	41	14	15	70
Hannah	27	35.5	5	67.5
Ash	17.5	41	5	63.5
Woody	27	17	15	59
Graham	27	16.5	15	58.5
Martin	24	15	15	54
Kathy	27.5	5.5	15	48
Anne	18	16	5	39
Bruce	22	13.5	10	45.5
Mary	20.5	11	5	36.5
Annett	1.5	30	0	31.5
Dieter	4	2	10	16
Penny	8.5	2.5	0	11
Sally	3.5	4	0	7.5
Yvonne	0	4	0	4
Dave	1.5	0	0	1.5

PNTMC Annual Awards 2018

The following awards were announced at our end of year BBQ at Ashhurst Domain on 13 December 2018 (where the rain stopped at 6.00pm and a good time was had by the crowd of 25 attending).

Cinderella Award – Warren Wheeler, for the burnt sausage rolls at the AGM.

Dead Tasty Award – Woody Lee, for having his delicious kimchi mistaken for a dead mouse under his bed while sharing basic accommodation in Bluff.

Little Lucifer Award – Warren Wheeler, for the gas fireball while replacing his cannister on the picnic table at Mangatainoka Hot Springs mid-winter party.

Chocks Away Award - Grant Christian, for the front wheel of his 4WD flying off into the dark on the way back from Snowcraft.

Fear and Loathing Award – Elly Arnst, for doing Snowcraft despite fear of heights and dislike of cold.

Lost in Space Award – Kathy Corner, for (temporarily) losing a carload of people en route to the start of Beginners Tramp #1.

Copy Cat Award – Kathy Corner, for duplicating her points into Warren's tab for the Huts and High Points Challenge.

Ahead of the Pack Award – Chris Tuffley and Elly Arnst for tramping by headlamp late into the night to keep ahead in the Challenge.

David Attenborough Wildlife Presenter of the Year Award – Janet Wilson, for her starring role in a whoo video documentary.

Lady Di Best Dressed Award – Catherine Jackson, for the pearls and black ensemble she wore to dinner at Sayers Hut.

Sticky End Award – Catherine Jackson, for leaving her walking stick in the car after the Sayers trip.

Just Gremlin Award – Grant Christian, for injuring his shoulder and taking a tumble while "just taking a short cut" down from Baldy to Mitre Flats.

Tail End Charlie Award – Anne Lawrence, for jumping up after being spiked sitting on a

tussock clump and having her knickers pulled out like a tail through the hole in her shorts.

Dave Hodges Award for Excellence in Pursuit of Forgetfulness (our most prestigious award) – Derek Sharp, for being stranded at Sunrise carpark after leaving his steering lock key at home.

Dave Hodges Award Runner Up – Richard Lockett, for forgetting his lunch, crackers and brie on the Sayers trip.

Tararua Trophy for Best Newsletter article – Elly Arnst, for her cartoon Kaweka Crazyness @ Queens in the July newsletter.

Congratulations to our winners and may there be many more memorable occasions to celebrate in 2019.

New Member

Welcome to Alex Guadagnin who hails from Italy but currently lives in Sanson.

We wish you happy tramping with us.

From the Webmaster

Completing the Record

Yes, folks at long last, there is a complete set of all known issues of the monthly newsletter available for all to delve into and read. Read about the mega trips of the past. Read about the club's legends. And more, much more.

Over the 50+ years of PNTMC newsletters there are about 3 missing issues. It is unclear whether someone forgot to keep a copy, or whether they were never issued.

This goal of making the full series available came about via a request (enquiry actually) from Warren: Where are the rest of the newsletters prior to 2000? Good question. Answer: Years ago, Inspire gave us free hosting – something that we should always remember and acknowledge, but it came with a significant caveat – we were limited to a maximum storage allowance of 300 MB for the entire website. Tiny by today's standards, but that was the deal 20 or so years ago. So we went and asked them what it would cost to give us a few GB of storage? The answer was Nothing! They were still willing to have this extra stuff on their server for free. Many thanks to Inspire. Over the years they have been extraordinarily helpful to us.

So all the issues were uploaded. Then I looked at the outcome. Weird! Only the issues since 1970 showed up. How could that be? The issues from

1967 to 1969 were there alright alongside all the rest (over 500 of them), but would not show up in the table. I could not see any problem with the code that I had written years ago to list them. Then I thought about it for a few days. Maybe I should study the program a bit more closely. Nothing obvious. Then something occurred to me. Computer operating systems have a starting date – e.g. Microsoft's world as far as any date calculations are concerned start from 1 Jan 1900. I looked up the manual. But, our site is running not on a Microsoft system, but a Unix (Apache) system and the Unix world was born on 1 Jan 1970! And sure enough, I had used a date function that knows nothing about the world prior to that date. Some recoding eliminated the problem and now behold the full series.

Enjoy folks and thank you again to Inspire.

Peter Wiles

[A huge thanks to Peter Wiles for typing up all the earlier non-electronic newsletters, so they can be searched on-line – Ed.]

Trip Reports

7 October 2018 Beginners to Sunrise Hut Adele Towgood / Jenny O'Donnell

After the first beginners tramp I, Adele, was keen to share the experience with my work colleagues. So the following tramp there were three of us that arrived at Milverton Park to join 10 others on a crisp Sunday morning, ready to stretch our legs and see some new parts of NZ.

We arrived at the start point having enjoyed the scenery and conversation on the way, keen to get started.

The first small part of the walk took us over rolling farmland with lambs bounding, a picture-perfect start. Spirits were high as we entered the trees, birds joining us in our chatter. The track was wide and well maintained, no real tricky bits or worry about climbing over or around anything. It is a constant steady climb and the higher we went the more amazing the views. We stopped often in the last hour, to catch our breath. Maybe next time we won't aim for such a quick pace and spend more time taking photos.

On reaching Sunrise Hut there was a small part of me that was relieved we had made it and a huge part that was amazed with the view and impressed with the DOC Hut. What a lovely place to stay overnight. Waking to the sun

hitting the Ranges, and the smell of hot coffee, would be hard to beat.



*Cold and windy at Armstrong Saddle – loving it.
[Martin Lawrence]*

We were not staying, so after a trip around the side of the hut to a more exposed Ridge and the ensuing blast of cold wind, those more intrepid (here read as young) took off to check out Armstrong Saddle, and the rest of us began the stroll back down the track. On the way back there was plenty of opportunity to relax and enjoy the views as they popped out from the trees.

Gathering back at the car it was clear everyone had enjoyed the tramp. Finally the trip was capped off with a coffee stop at Ongaonga. A wonderful Sunday all round.

20-22 October 2018 Tatarua Peak Bagging Chris Tuffley

H-K the Hard Way - Labour Weekend 2018

Note: S-K refers to Schormann to Kaitoke, a traverse of the Tararua Ranges from Schormann Roadend to Kaitoke. Schormann Road no longer exists, so the northern end is now Putara Roadend. There are three routes: the valleys route, and two tops routes, via Tarn Ridge or the Main Range (the hardest of the three).

The original challenge in the 1960s was to complete the traverse in a weekend; now the challenge is to do it sub-24, and the record for the Main Range route is 19:20 (Chris Swallow, 2016). Our goal for the Labour Day weekend was to complete the Main Range route in a "leisurely" three days. Leisurely only by comparison - we were still expecting 12+ hour days. At any rate, that was the plan...

The Tararua Ranges were stunningly clear as we drove the length of the Wairarapa to drop a car at Kaitoke. Looking good for our planned Main Range S-K traverse! Or so we thought...but there was a harbinger of things to come on our arrival at Putara Roadend at 2030, in the form of winds gusting up to 24km/h. Or so said my latest toy, a tiny handheld anemometer, bought just for kicks... The headlamp-lit walk in to Herepai went quickly, and arriving at a darkened hut with a line of boots outside at 2320 we unpacked on the porch, then crept in with lights on red to settle down and sleep on the floor. Several surprised "When did you two arrive??"s the next morning testified to the success of our stealthy entrance. Go us! Peak recorded wind speed at the hut at 2330: 43km/h.

As the world grew light again, I tried to convince myself the gusts shaking and rattling the hut were growing weaker and less frequent...but the clouds on the hills and a peak wind speed reading of 56km/h just outside the hut told another story. Having still not purchased the lead boots required to avoid being blown away on windy Tararua days such as this we were in no rush to leave, and hoping to wait out the wind we whiled away the morning variously knitting, flicking through the hut library (complete catalogue: one back issue of Rod and Rifle), checking the wind speed (peak reading: 61km/h) and chatting with the revolving cast of characters passing through the hut. Ballistics and firearms with the resident party of hunters...trail running with a runner also hoping to wait out the wind...and the 1080 debate with a pair of women from Carterton. One was rather put out to learn there's 1080 in tea but finished her cuppa nonetheless...

Finally, there was no denying that sufficient progress towards Kaitoke for the day would require the use of a vehicle, and at 1300 it was back down the hill to drive to Holdsworth and walk in to Tōtara Flats for an extended Holdsworth-Kaitoke remix via Neill Forks, Maungahuka, Kime, Alpha and the Marchant Ridge. Far from the standard H-K route(!). Arriving at Tōtara Flats a smidge after headlamp o'clock we were greeted by a full hut and a friendly warden. "Got mattresses?" "Yep, sure do!"

A second night on the floor of a hut and then we were out the door again by 0730, up Cone Ridge and onwards to Neill Forks in sunshine and peak windspeeds in the low twenties. Lunch at the hut by the Hector River - lovely - then on again, across the bridge and up up up

steeply up to Maungahuka, Elly rationing herself to checking her GPS only every fifteen minutes. The wind briefly reached 38km/h as we passed through a small saddle between Maungahuka peak and hut, but otherwise stayed light; and then there we were at the hut at 1625. *A perfectly reasonable time to call it a day, you might think...*but to reach Kaitoke the next day we had to press on to Kime.

So a quick read and sign of the hut book...a quick scarfing of snacks...a chat to the three in the hut...and then it was out the door again and back up Maungahuka towards the 25m steel ladder of the Tararua Peaks. Exciting! Fun! And um yep, step carefully there...okay, phew, that's all the tricky stuff done well before dark! A dramatic cloudscape to the west turned a glorious gold as we pressed on south, points for the trip finally coming thick and fast as we toiled up and over McIntosh..Yeates..Vosseler (headlamp time)...



Descending Tuiti, only 5 hours to Kime



Sunset descent of McIntosh, towards Yeates

then on over Boyd-Wilson Knob...Bridge Peak...Hut Mound...our points tally for the day finally reaching 13 on our arrival at Kime at 2300. Much better than the 3 point total for the previous two days...hurray for excessive naming of peaks in the Tararua Ranges. Dinner by red headlamp in the boot room so as not to wake the sleeping hut, then we slipped inside for a third night on our mats on the floor. This was becoming a bit of a habit.

Camera talk with a trumper carrying even more photo gear than me (I really should have left the little tripod behind this trip) meant we weren't away until 0745 the next morning - a quarter of an hour late - but then the points started rolling in rapidly again as we enjoyed peak winds in the low teens and views south over Wellington to the snow-capped Kaikōura ranges.

Field Peak...Hector...the Beehives...Atkinson...Aston...Alpha. A thirty-minute lunch stop at Alpha Hut; down through Hells Gate and up to Omega; then the point rate slowed to a crawl as we set off down the Marchant Ridge. Which goes on. And on. And if we really must go up and over yet another bump, can't it at least have a name so we can get a point for it??? Okay okay, so we had to use the GPS to locate the Marchant high point in the middle of some scratchy bush, but come on now people!!

As the sun settled towards the distant horizon so too, we finally neared the second car, one headlamp coming out for the last few hundred metres while one member of the party remained in staunch denial of the gathering dusk. A welcoming party of five sheep rushed to greet us as the car finally appeared at 2020, the only one left in the car park. Apparently sensible people were all home already! Boots were pulled off feet tired and weary from 59km of walking with 5600m of gain, then we hopped in the car for the long drive home - and soft mattresses to sleep on for a change this time!

We were Elly Arnst and Chris Tuffley.

4 November 2018 Beginners Tramp #3 to Rangī Robyn Christensen

I woke in the morning relieved to realise the rain had stopped, but with the forecast for gale force winds I wondered how the day would be, especially up above the bush line where we were heading.

After heading over to Palmerston North, I found a small group assembled at Milverton Park, which then became nine as others arrived. Two carloads then set off to make our way up to Renfrew Road and the carpark at the start of the walk. There was lots of evidence of strong winds in places, with the road strewn with leaves, twigs and even small branches. At the carpark we were joined by three more people and a dog; Warren having spent the previous night at the hut and walking down to meet us.

After getting ourselves ready, we set off on the very pretty first part of the walk through the bush, predominately beech – beautifully green with interesting mosses and ferns everywhere as well. With a leader and a tail end Charlie making sure we were all managing ok, we set into our preferred pace, with Bruce the dog, running backwards and forwards checking on us all as well.



Nice beech forest at the start. [David Soong]

I had vague memories of doing this tramp over forty years ago with my brother; memories mainly of having to negotiate a huge slip, rapidly followed by a swing bridge high above the river – both a little scary at the time. I had been assured things had changed since then, and although we still had to cross a small area of slip at the top of the original one, *there was the comfort of having trees to stop you if you slipped, rather than going all the way to the river.*

No problems for anyone there though, and soon we came to the very picturesque wooden bridge which replaced the old bridge of my memories. Time for some photo opportunities before continuing on our way, up through smaller shrub species and eventually breaking out into

the tussock, and in what seemed a short time we were at the hut. We had been relatively sheltered from the wind on the way up, but even at the hut the wind wasn't as strong as I expected, although it was definitely cool.



Crossing new slip – no worries. [David Soong]



"New" arch bridge (built 1988). [David Soong]

It was a little overcast to get the best view, but certainly a vista spread out below us. After utilising the artfully decorated toilets and time for morning tea, we carried on up through the tussock some way further. It was quite wet underfoot, but not as hard going as I remembered from the past, when we were in knee deep snow at times.

Some of us opted to go a little further on, as others decided to head back to the hut for a

welcome lunch, and eventually we were all fed and ready to make our way back.



Overcast up into tussock. [David Soong]



Cloud lifts – a little further then? [David Soong]



A cold send off from Rangī. [Woody Lee]

After the obligatory photos, we set off at our own pace down, and in what seemed a short time we were back at the carpark. All in all, a very enjoyable day with the chance to meet and chat with new people, and I think, less of the wind than seemed to be evident on our return to the city!

Thanks to Anne for leading the trip, and to all my fellow trampers for their company.

There were 12 of us plus Bruce the Dog.

10-11 November 2018
Sayers Hut Loop
Catherine Jackson

Participants: Richard Lockett (leader), Jo and Lawrence, Kirsten and Stephen, Geoff, Warren, Catherine.

Arriving at the Holdsworth car park, a chill went through the car as we saw numerous people and packs clustered around a Wellington Tramping Club bus. We eyed each other with anxious smiles but they transformed into real ones when it transpired they were going to Mid Waiohine Hut.

The gravel was crunched across in light drizzle at 20 to 10. Blechnum discolour ferns were just starting to grow their central lettuce-green drumsticks and lots of *Libertia grandiflora* lilies were out, fluttering swatches of white over the edges of the tracks prettily. We plodded up Ungentle Annie in sombre light, but on turning down the rootletty Totara Flats track sun began to twinkle down and grey warblers trembled their tunes through the multitudes of lovely ferns. At the top of the last big slope down to Totara Creek we stopped for lunch. Poor Richard then found out he had left behind his bacon and egg pie that he'd spent quite some time looking forward to. Warren was eating a past-expiry-date-camembert wholemeal sandwich which sounded very exotic. The sun had gone in again and it was growing chill.

Rising to leave at 1-o'clock, we branched off the track to pad randomly uphill initially between thin tall trees. We then threaded along the ridge that runs east above Sayer Hut, partly along animal tracks, partly following pieces of cream foil, wrapped with unnerving inconsistency around the odd branch here and there. We crept along over large mossy logs, through goblin forest dripping with epiphytes and between moist tightly knit shrubs, all to the sweet sound of tomtits and grey warblers, and the less sweet sound of rustling of maps and compasses.



Some direction (gasp!)

A couple of little lookout spots added interest, one with a few rocks surrounded by colourful *Dracophyllum filifolium* proving a nice place for a spot of afternoon tea, though our view was mizzled out with curly mist sucking around the tops.



Successfully meeting the main track again.

Successfully meeting the official Mangatarere track at long last was cause for rich internal celebration. The subsequent superfluously long 600m descent to the hut was enlivened with spiky rewa-rewa flowers sprinkled over the upper mossy track and a close encounter with a kaka half way down.

Meanwhile down at Sayer Hut, a young hunter called Joe sat quietly smoking a roll-your-own in his private kingdom, blissfully unaware of the impending doom about to descend upon his weekend hideaway. He turned out to be one of the two people who had put the new roof on last season. Having crossed the waist-deep Waiohine River in the morning, he had lit the fire, which flickered merrily as more and more of us barged in filling every nook and cranny with dinner-making and talk.

While I put up my tent, billies were being kindly boiled and we had extremely welcome hot drinks, before moving seamlessly on to dinner. Geoff unbelievably made a cheesecake for us all at the little tin bench, Richard handed round a big bag of salt and vinegar chips, and Warren had actually brought an entire heavy bottle of red wine for us [*light weight plastic bottle – Ed.*] Eventually Joe went off hunting with his curly-haired black and white dog that had a bit of spaniel in him, and when another party of 5 turned up I crawled off into the tent, very happy to rest after a bigger day than expected. Moreporks hooted and sent hunting-trills into the darkness as the river rustled on through the night. Apparently back in the hut, the dog decided Lawrence was best companion-de-la-nuit, and tried to share his bunk.

The river had dropped a foot overnight, and an exquisite mist-show was watched from the river bed as the billy was boiled for quiet early morning porridge and coffee. Swallows fluttered

over the rocks and a kingfisher's piping call could be heard over the other side.

Eventually the others clattered across the boulders and we got going, linking together in the prescribed way to wade with wonderful security across the widest part of the river which was still thigh-high for the vertically-challenged. The lovely Totara Flats were glowing in a rare splash of sunshine as we swished through the grass heads along to Totara Flats Hut, with yellow-hammers zip-zip-zeee-ing from the kanuka by the river and tui bing-bonging from the bush to the left. At the hut people spread out and lounged around the long sunny veranda.



Crossing Waiohine River [Warren Wheeler]

The long swing bridge beyond the hut was crossed single file, glancing through the netting at the swift deep teal waters below. The track then wiggled up to the recently repaired bridge over Totara Creek, before a long slog up a spur.

A happy communal feast of chocs, crisps and nuts was enjoyed at the top of the rise, before pushing on through the ferns then up the last stiff rootletty slope to the Y-junction with Powell Track. Geoff and Stephen sang "mud songs" as we approached the junction – Rule 1: sing "mud" to each note of famous orchestral music. Rule 2: when run out of tunes, move on to Christmas carols, replacing mud for each word. Rule 3: probably best avoid Shepherds In Their Fields Abiding – the mud tends to get a bit sticky in the Gloria section...

The junction seats, so often spurned when tramping solo, made an excellent place for a large group to eat lunch at and ensnare unsuspecting passers-by into conversation. After crunching down to the cars by 2:20, a super diversion was suggested for the return journey home, both cars stopping for enrichment of coffee and cakes at Mt Bruce Bird Sanctuary, where fat takahe and (yawn –

another) kaka were seen from the eatery balcony.

It had been a unique trip to the lovely old world hut, which many of us could never have attempted without the reassurance of a guide with the local knowledge.

Blood, Sweat and Tears in the Ranges

Grant Christian reports on three solo trips he did into the Tararua and Ruahine Ranges, plus an FE club trip over Mitre and Baldy.

26 October 2018

Cone Hut, Bull Mound, Omega, Tutuwai Hut

The phone remained silent as I waited to see if anyone would want to join me for the trip from Waiopehu Campsite to Cone Hut, up to Bull Mound, along to Omega, downhill to Tutuwai Hut, up to Reece, and down to the start.

I have not visited this part of the Tararuas before and was keen to visit somewhere new. As the forecast for Friday was better than the weekend, I decided to bring the trip forward. The conditions were still cloudy and damp as I set out from the car park at 8:15 a.m. I was travelling light and fast. While heading to Cone Hut I ran into a school group coming out. They were surprised at how little time it had taken me to get to that point. I had a quick break at the hut. I understand it is the third oldest hut in the Tararuas and is made of totara slabs. Lots of character.

A quick climb up to Bull Mound and I was out of the bush, although there were scattered patches about. I had intermittent views of the surrounding ranges as the cloud parted and closed in again. It was easy travel and not far to Omega. From Omega it was downhill to the river, across the river, and downstream to Tutuwai Hut. I had a longer break at Tutuwai before setting out on the final climb to Reece. Once Reece was passed the track lead down to a fork, the left of which took me back to my start.

I expected to see a sign indicating Waiopehu Campsite or something similar. I reached a point where there was a sign saying 'The walkwire across Coal Stream has been removed'. There were some odd coloured markers to the left but minimal signs of a track. Probably trap lines I thought. I carried on and soon began descending from the high point I

had reached. I knew that I should've been turning at a high point so retraced my steps to where I had seen the other track. I assumed this must be the track I should be on, so headed that way. There was more sign of use and there were regular markers, but not the usual orange ones. Maybe it was marked unofficially. The track, as expected, took me to Coal Creek. Thankfully, it presented no problems for crossing and I was soon back at the start.

Total time for the circuit was 8 hours 45 minutes.

10 November 2018 Matanginui, Maharahara & Oruakeretaki Stream

The good thing about not been employed is that you can get all your jobs done during the week. The weather on Saturday looked okay and I wondered what I should do. I had told Janet I would do the Waiopahu Circuit with her on Sunday. I thought a short walk into Maharahara would be good for a few hours exercise. I could even drive up the stream to the start of the track.

I drove to the end of Kumeti Road and found the access to the stream bed had washed out. I probably could have driven it but there was little sign of other vehicles driving in there or up the stream, as I had seen in the past. I decided to walk from the road end. After a 15 minute walk up the stream the track heads steeply up the side of the ridge. Once the top of the ridge is reached it is a nice track that gradually climbs to the peaks of Matanginui, and then a short distance on to Maharahara. The peaks were enveloped in cloud, so there was no view. It was a little under two hours to reach Maharahara.

Although I didn't want too hard a day, I had thought about also visiting Kiritaki Hut. I knew the track up to the hut from the stream was quite steep. On the way back down I decided I would go to Kiritaki, so took the side track. It is a pleasant downhill for a while, and I slowly ran that part. The track then becomes steep and treacherous. It took me a lot longer than expected to reach the Oruakeretaki Stream, from where you climb up another 250 metres to the hut. At that point I decided my day was going to be long enough and turned back, *a bit annoyed with myself for coming down this far*, and for not bringing any food. I had 500 metres to climb back up. I kept thinking I must be nearly at the turn off and

finding that the track disappeared further into the cloud.

Once I was back onto the ridge it was mostly downhill running all the way to the stream and then a quick run/walk along the stream bed to the car park. Total time was just over five hours.

11 November 2018 Gable End - Waiopahu Circuit

Janet was going to be leading this trip, but was in the middle of household renovations, so chose not to come. I set out running slowly across the farm and along the track by the river, to the start of the Gable End Ridge. *Once on the ridge I eased off to a quick walk or slow run* on the flat and easy downhill sections. I ticked off the three high points on the way to Twin Peak, encountering many muddy spots on the way. The weather was cool and cloud was coming and going from the tops. By the time I reached the tops the cloud had cleared and I enjoyed the views from on top of Twin Peak. On the way down from Twin Peak I met a couple that were leaving the car park at the same time as me. They were doing the complete circuit in the opposite direction, and were making good time.

From Twin Peak it is a short distance to Waiopahu Peak and then downhill to Waiopahu Hut. I stopped at the hut for a quick lunch and then headed along Waiopahu Ridge, which seems to go on forever. It is undulating for a long time and I kept thinking I must be at the downhill part, near the end of the ridge, only to find myself on an uphill section again. Later than expected, I reached the bottom of the ridge and headed back to the car park. While crossing the farm I came across a young woman who was concerned about going through the young cattle in the paddock, so I walked with her until we passed them. She was the daughter of a couple I had passed coming down the ridge.

The circuit took me six hours.

17 November 2018 Mitre, Three Kings, Baldy Grant Christian

Trip Participants: Grant Christian (leader), Ange Minto, Alex Guadagnin

I foolishly put this trip on the calendar as a day trip, but had always intended to stay the night

before in Mitre Flats Hut. I thought later it should have been put down as an overnight trip. I made my intentions clear before the trip date, and offered a more manageable day trip around Holdsworth – Jumbo if preferred. When Angela Minto rang me and said she was keen to do the Mitre – Baldy trip I told her what my plans were. She was keen to do the whole trip in a day. I decided I could manage it if she was keen. A couple of days later I had a call from a new member, Alex Guadagnin. I told Alex it would be a long and hard day, that he needed to be very fit, and we would be leaving the car park at 6 a.m. Alex was not put off (I think it made it even more appealing for him) and wanted to join us.

I slept in the back of my car in the car park on Friday night. The other two turned up Saturday morning and we were on the way shortly after six. A brisk walk to Mitre Flats Hut saw us arrive there about ¼ past 8. There were a lot of people at the hut, including Julia who had done Snowcraft with us this year, and had been on two other climbing trips with me. Many of those there were heading up to Tarn Ridge Hut.

After a break we headed uphill to Peggy's Peak. The wind was very strong and as we struggled on to Mitre we discussed if it would be wise to complete the circuit. Once on Mitre we agreed to continue to Brockett and reassess the conditions there. The cloud was covering Girdlestone and beyond. Once on Brockett, the cloud lifted from our route to the South and enticed us on. The wind seemed to relent a little as we made our way on to Girdlestone. Adkin was next and then North King. By this time the wind picked up again and I considered putting on leggings and another hat, but pushed on because South King and the route off the ridge was not far beyond. We had a break and food in a sheltered spot and then set off to Baldy. More of a dip than I remembered.

From Baldy I had decided to head down the North East Spur. It heads more directly to Mitre Hut than the formed track, which heads south before linking up with the track between Mitre Flats and Te Matawai. There used to be a track down this ridge, which is marked on my old Tararua Park map. We struggled through some dense small trees before the bush opened up.

We found a few older markers but then lost all trace of the old track and struggled through increasingly difficult and steep country. I was finding it hard to stay on my feet and eventually slipped and hurt my shoulder. My arm was wrapped around a tree for support and got

wrenched back as I slipped. With a painful shoulder I found it even more difficult to support myself while going down the steep and slippery slopes. *I slipped again and rolled head over heels downhill*, crashing into branches and other debris.

Fortunately nothing was broken, just bruised and battered, with a bleeding shin. Ange urged me to take a break but I was keen to get out of there, so we continued on more carefully. I wondered if it was my big feet that made me more prone to slipping than the other two. I was using my GPS to keep us on track and eventually said "we must be very close to the track now" (the Barton Track cuts across the spur at about 600 metres altitude). Alex looked around and said "there it is" we were just about standing on it.

It was a relief to be back on a track. It had probably lost us half an hour going the short route. We headed off quickly, aware that we still had a few hours to go. We arrived back at the bridge, just before Mitre Hut at 6 p.m. 12 hours on the go and still a couple to go. We had more to eat and Ange gave me a few painkillers for my shoulder. I was pleased at how energetic I was still feeling on the way back to the car park. I decided I was a lot fitter now than I had been earlier in the year, when I struggled along the Main Range in hot weather.

We arrived back at the car park at ¼ to 9, 14 hours 40 after leaving that morning. Tired but satisfied at a great day trip.

And was Alex fit enough? I told him that if he got a bit fitter he might be able to join us again, but really, it was Alex that spent a lot of time waiting for Ange and me.

SPRING - the Season of Thwarted Plans

Elly Arnst reports on her trips with (and without) Chris Tuffley to add even more points in the Huts and High Points Challenge.

The Spring tramping fling started with a vengeance - we high point hopped our way around the Pouakai Circuit, managing to choose a weekend with reasonable weather and plenty of spare bunks at the hut.

We even made it back to the car on dusk - no headlamps required (for a change).



Chilly, but a nice view from the Hump

The next weekend we tackled Warren's hut warden challenge, taking Misha and Toby to Rangiwahia for two nights. They had great fun checking and rebaiting traps on the way up, tackling the new slip without fuss. The hut was thoroughly scrubbed over the course of the weekend, in between wandering up to Mangahuia for lunch, and playing in the snow.



Serious cleaning at Rangiwahia Hut

The weather deteriorated at the end of September and some forecast scrutiny sent us into the Tararua's for a windy weekend with only a light smattering of drizzle - enough to keep most people at home. We walked into Cow Creek Hut on the Saturday (arrived by headlamp), then down the valley to Mitre Flats and out to Holdsworth on Sunday (no headlamp required).

Four days later I was in the Kaweka Ranges on a mid-week mission into Middle Hill Hut. From here plans started to go awry. I had a lovely walk into Middle Hill, accompanied only by a myriad of bird life. I was off early the next morning and made good time up Camp Spur, planning to go back to Makahu Saddle via the tops.

It was a bit windy, so I put on extra layers and broke out of the tree line. The further I climbed, the windier it got. This was not the forecast. I

pressed on, until just below the ridgeline when I was having trouble staying on my feet. I had no choice but to beat a hasty retreat. All day the blue skies and clear tops teased me from the valley, the occasional gust of wind reminding me why I was down there.

And so, the theme continued...

For a while I've wanted to walk S-K (Putara Roadend to Kaitoke Roadend) and Labour Weekend seemed an opportune time. We found ourselves on a Friday lamp-lit walk up to Herepai, but Saturday blew and blew and blew, so I devised a "shortened" version which Chris named "H-K the hard way" [see separate trip report in this newsletter – Ed.]

All tramping plans were completely thwarted at the end of October, when I badly sprained my ankle training for The Goat. After four weeks of intensive rehabilitation I figured I'd be able to attempt an easy trip and Parks Peak looked like a short tramp. It was a showery and windy weekend, and after a detour to Master's Shelter, we set off up the hill. However, by the time we reached Rocky Knoll my ankle had had enough and the decision was made to quit while I was ahead. Thwarted again – at least we were back at the car well within daylight hours!

The Highlights

- Watching the sunset on Taranaki from the Hump;
- Hut wardening at Rangiwahia with Misha & Toby;
- Listening to the birds at Middle Hill Hut;
- Nibbling on Whittaker's Dark Salted Caramel on the not-SK trip;
- Traversing the Peaks in the setting sun;
- Actually managing to finish some walks before pitch black.

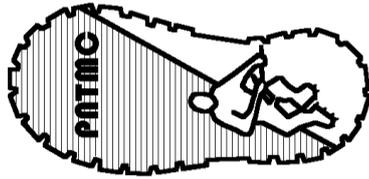
The Lowlights

- Trying not to get blown off Camp Spur and having to abort my Kaweka Tops trip;
- Sitting in Herepai Hut waiting for the wind to die down;
- Spraining my ankle :(

Favourite Hut: Middle Hill - nestled in a clearing on the edge of the beech forest with plenty of birdlife and dry firewood.

Favourite High Point: Hump (Pouakai Circuit) - uninterrupted views of sunset on Taranaki.

Worst Hut: Masters Shelter is a bit of an unattractive, graffitied spot to stay at, not to mention all the bulls!



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PNTMC Newsletter December 2018

What's inside this month?

- Annual Awards presented at EOY BBQ
- Huts and High Points Challenge Results
- Old Newsletters Now On-Line
- Beginner Tramps to Sunrise and Rangi
- Tararua Peak Bagging – the Hard Way
- Sayers Hut Loop – local knowledge helps
- An Epic One Day Mitre-Baldy Loop
- Blood Sweat and Tears in the Ranges
- Spring – a season of thwarted plans
- Cartoon – Labouring the Tararuas
- Coming trips and more

Articles for the newsletter

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

Get out and about with us!

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