

Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.

www.pntmc.org.nz

P.O. Box 1217, Palmerston North

Newsletter March 2019



Hot on the Mania-Rangiwahia trail, 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.

14 March 2019

Richmond Ramble and Sabine Saunter

Catherine Jackson

Catherine will showcase a solo summer trip she did over 2 weeks last year in the northern South Island. She will firstly tell us about the route and trip highlights and then we can all sit back and enjoy a film for 40 minutes.

28 March 2019

Huts and High Points

Chris Tuffley

Chris Tuffley and Elly Arnst topped last year's Huts and High Points Challenge, with just over 300 points each. Chris will show pictures from one favourite joint points-gathering trip to each of the Ruahine, Tararua, Kaweka, Tongariro and Egmont Forest/National Parks. Come along and see traverses of the Pohangina River, Tararua Peaks, and more; learn the art of the points-gathering detour; and find out just how many times did they end up walking by headlamp anyway??

Upcoming Trips

2-3 March

TBA **M/F**
Janet Wilson **356 1998**

This weekend was originally programmed to tie in with the annual SAR exercise. SAREX places are limited and few if any club members will now be involved so this weekend is now open for suggestions. Contact Janet if you would like to be the leader or a participant on either a Saturday or overnight trip.

3 March

Manawatu Walking Festival **E/M**
Dave Grant **328 7788**

PNTMC and the Oroua Blue Duck Protection Project are hosting the Oroua -Tunupo Tramp for the Manawatu Walking Festival. We welcome PNTMC club members to join us in looking after the visitors. Leaving Te Manawa at 8am we will travel by bus to Heritage carpark on the western edge of the Ruahines. We will walk down to the Oroua River to see blue duck (whio) habitat and hopefully the birds themselves. We will have lunch at Heritage Lodge and then venture up the Tunupo Track, as far as time allows, to enjoy the mixed beech and podocarp forest up to alpine scrub and tussock. We will be back at the bus by 3.30pm, and in PN by 4.30pm.

9-10 March

Crow Hut **M/F**
Warren Wheeler **356 1998**

Unless access permission is obtained, we will first be obliged to walk a couple of hours upriver to Kawhatau Base before scrambling out at the cableway and climbing 2 hours up onto the tops before dropping back down to Crow Hut. Sunday we will walk out all the way down the river (5 hours-ish) back to the cableway...and another 2 hours down the river. Expect more than wet feet. Depart Friday night or 6.30am Saturday.

10 March

Toka **M**
Janet Wilson **329 4722**

This loop walk in the western Ruahine Ranges near Apati involves a circuit up Shorts Track, along the tops to Toka high point and back down via Knights Track with an option to boulder hop down the creek for the last section. Variety and views.

16-17 March

Waipakihi Hut, Kaimanawas **M/F**
Grant Christian **021 117 6921**

Meet in Palmy at 7 a.m. Saturday and travel to the end of Kaimanawa Road. From there our route is over Urchin and down into the Waipakihi River. We travel up the river to Waipakihi Hut where we stay the night. On Sunday we complete a loop by travelling out over Umukarikari and Tara o te Marama.

17 March

Tunupo **M**
Graham Peters **329 4722**

This trip above the Oroua River has some of the most beautiful forest in the western Ruahines and the stoat traps means there are more birds too. A chance to do some Applied Tramping by checking the traps all the way to the summit. Awesome views on a fine day.

23-24 March

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

This trip did not go last October, so hopefully this time the weather will be kind. 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.

24 March

Kapakapanui **M**
Anne Lawrence **027 450 4212**

This track goes into the Tararuas behind Waikanae. It is a nice circuit and the summit of Kapakapanui provides one of the best viewpoints in the Tararua Range (on a good day anyway!). We'll leave Milverton Park at 7.30am.

30-31 March

Leon Kinvig Hut **M**
Graeme Richards **353 6227**

A nice place to visit beside the Pohangina River in the Ruahines, especially with the resident whio there. The plan is to park at the Kashmir Road end, travelling along the tops via Longview Hut hopefully enjoying the stunning views on a good day. Then it's all the way down to the hut. Out the same way.

31 March

Scandlyn Creek **M**
Dave Grant **328 7788**

Here's your chance to visit a less popular area of the Whanahuia Range south of Rangiwahia/Deadmans track, doing a loop around Scandlyn Creek headwaters. We will follow rough hunters trails up onto the open tussock tops of the Whanahuia. Great views on a fine day. Back down along the ridge north of the creek. Leave Milverton Park 7.30am. Back by 5pm.

6-7 April

Maropea Forks **M/F**
Graham Peters **329 4722**

This is a classic trip into the central Ruahines. Up the Sunrise Track to the tops, then down past Top Maropea Hut into the south branch of

the Maropea River and all the way down to the forks. Stunning area and lovely river travel. Return the same way. Probably avoid an early start by leaving on Friday night and staying at Sunrise Hut.

7 April

**Pohangina Gorge
Warren Wheeler**

**E/M
356 1998**

This is a fairly easy river trip suitable for adventurous beginners. We first follow a poled route across farmland to the Ruahine Forest Park boundary, then follow the sidle track upvalley before branching off back down to the river. Heading downstream we soon come to a narrow gorge that has a pool which involves a bit of a swim or pack float. The fun continues with more boulder hopping and wading at another couple of spots before we return back to the cars. Leave Milverton Park at 7.30am.

13-14 April

**Pureora Explorer
Richard Lockett**

**M
323 0948**

Not a case of third time lucky but fourth maybe. To catch a kokako we'll fly camp under its roost and hopefully catch a glimpse or catch a verse or two of its song! So let's make it happen this time.

13 or 14 April (Best Weather Day)

**Farm Walk
Malcolm Leary**

**M
06 327 7825**

An opportunity to explore the Hunterville hinterland with a local who knows all about the rich farming history of the large high-country sheep and cattle stations. We follow ridge line fences and farm tracks for spectacular views and plenty of exercise. You may well be rewarded with some of Edith's rural hospitality back at their homestead. Best weather day.

Trip Grading

Trip grades depend on many factors, especially weather and terrain. A reasonably proficient tramper 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

New Member

Welcome to John Salisbury.

We wish you lots of happy tramping with us.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Hannah Lund for placing 3rd in the Solo Open Women 18-39 division of the recent Coast to Coast Race. Her time over the two days of cycling, mountain running and kayaking was 14hr 55min 52 secs. Awesome effort for her first time competing, and less than 10 minutes behind second place. Well done !



From the President

I hope you have been enjoying the lovely settled weather this summer. Club trips got off to an unusually well supported start this year - so far this year there have already been family, botanical, trapping, gorge floating as well as the usual day and weekend trips to familiar local destinations. Thanks to everyone who has helped to make our trip programme so successful.

Your committee has decided to continue with our Club Challenge using the same format as last year. There are a few changes to the special 5 point bonus challenges - check these out. I hope it continues to inspire you to get out tramping and perhaps visit some new places. Start date is our AGM - the 11 April to finish at our AGM 2020.

Last week I attended a Ruahine User Group meeting hosted by DOC PN. The exciting news for the Ruahines is that construction of the new Iron Gate Hut is due to start on the 29th April. RUG members were consulted on the design of the hut and I am pleased to say that the final plans include most of our suggestions. If you would like to say farewell to the old hut, I suggest heading up that way sometime soon.

For any of you who are interested, the new Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) for the Wellington Region (2019-2029), after a long period of consultation, became operative on the 20th January. This is an interesting document which can be found on the DOC web site - put aside an hour or two.

Happy Tramping
Janet

PNTMC Challenge 2019

Huts and High Places Challenge 11 April 2019 to AGM 2020

Similar to last year, our PNTMC Challenge 2019 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)
- participate as a volunteer on a stoat trapping line in the Ruahines (Janet's challenge)
- Summit Tahurangi - Mt Ruapehu (Grant's Challenge)
- Visit Ngamoko or Mid Pohangina Hut (Martin's Challenge)
- Visit 4 (recognised) huts on a trip (Graeme's Challenge)
- Camp above 2000m - not near a hut (Bruce's Challenge)
- Hut warden at Rangī Hut (Committee Challenge)
- To stay one night in a South Island recognized DOC hut or New Zealand Alpine Club hut (Penny's Challenge)
- bring a new tramper on a club trip (Woody's Challenge)

Points are 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 will soon be up and running for this challenge.

Trip Reports

19-21 January 2019

Maropea - Waikamaka - Waipawa Loop Chris Tuffley

I had a key swap lined up with a friend for the Tararua Southern Crossing over Wellington Anniversary Weekend...but with gales still in the forecast on Thursday afternoon we scrapped that plan and I was left looking for another

destination for the weekend. The best option was clearly a Ruahine river trip: "When the wind goes high, we go low!" Hmm, didn't we make the same decision for the same reason Anniversary Weekend last year too?? The Maroepa, Waikamaka and Waipawa rivers beckoned as a nice three-day loop: the winds weren't supposed to pick up until later on Saturday, so we'd have time to go in over Armstrong Saddle before they hit; and we'd only have to stick our heads above the parapet briefly to come back out over Waipawa Saddle on Monday. I impressed on Christian and Fredrik, a visiting masters student from Norway, that the new plan meant we'd be getting wet feet. Really wet feet. They were okay with it, and off we went!

At the Triplex junction last year's Huts and High Points Challenge would have dictated taking the short detour to sign the book and bag a point...but the challenge was done and dusted now so we could stroll straight on by and carry on up to Sunrise for lunch. Yes! Ruapehu was in clear view in all its glory as we continued on over Armstrong Saddle in sunshine, but there were already hints of the winds to come, with my trusty anemometer reporting gusts over 40km/h.



Route from Armstrong Saddle to Top Maroepa

Good thing we were planning to stay off the tops! Down the steep track into the Maroepa we went, and then splish-splashed our way down to Maroepa Forks. Easy river travel, beautiful green pools and a whio with three ducklings along the way - wonderful!



Whio with 3 ducklings in Maroepa River

Reaching the hut we met Dylan and Carlton from Wellington, who had the same route as us in mind for the weekend. At least that was their original plan...now they weren't feeling so keen on further river travel, and were contemplating heading back to Sunrise via Te Atua Mahuru and the tops instead. I had my doubts...but I guess we'd see what the morning brought. Dinner cooked and ready to serve, it transpired that neither Christian nor Fredrik had brought bowls. Wot, no bowls?? But what luck - a rummage on the shelf below the cooking bench turned up some mismatched but fetching crockery bowls.

The sound of strong winds up high kept me awake during the early hours of Sunday morning, and then at 6:30 came the additional sound of heavy rain outside. Ugh! But fortunately short-lived; and later dawn brought the more welcome sound of a whio's whistle. Leaping out of my sleeping bag and into some clothes, I grabbed my camera and dashed outside to spy a pair of whio on the pool outside the hut. One flew off at my approach, but the other stuck around and I spent some time watching it and taking photos.

By the time we were ready to walk low cloud had cleared to blue skies and sunshine, but it was still very windy up high. We set off along the track to Wakelings Hut in the footsteps of Dylan and Carlton, who'd abandoned thoughts of tops travel and were sticking with their original route. A leisurely lunch in the sun at Wakelings, then on we went up the Waikamaka River towards Waikamaka Hut. More easy river travel and beautiful green pools, but trout sightings instead of whio this time. Having walked this section of river in miserable drizzle once, I can attest that it is rather more pleasant in sunshine!

At Waikamaka Hut we had the additional company of Ben aka Weka and a mate, who popped out for a hunt and a look-see for the elusive Ruahine mountain dolphin while we got our dinner under way.

The hut crockery collection ran to mugs instead of bowls, but Christian and Fredrik were able to put these to good use too, drinking their cups of tea from them as they ate dinner from pots. Then Carlton, Dylan, Fredrik and Christian got down to the serious business of several rounds of hearts, while I got down to the equally serious business of several rounds of knitting.

Monday's rain started an hour earlier at 5:30...and lasted rather longer than Sunday's,

but still managed to more or less stop by the time we got under way. The low cloud lingered though and gusts blew up the valley, so it was jackets on as we travelled up the creek towards Waipawa Saddle in Dylan and Carlton's footsteps once again. Strong winds pushed us over the saddle, and I nearly lost my hat when I went back up with my anemometer to measure the windspeed. 92.1km/h - a personal best! And one I have no wish to beat...



Descending from Waipawa Saddle.

Gusts followed us the rest of the way down the Waipawa, but the cloud gradually cleared until finally we were in sunshine again by the time we got back to the car.

We were Christian Offen, Fredrik Pfeil and Chris Tuffley.

**3 February 2019
Iron Gates Gorge
Fredrik Pfeil**

Great summer trip and not too hard either. We followed the river in the mountainside. After walking down to the riverbed and having a nice break with some mandatory watermelon we followed the stream down to the Iron Gates and went for a small swim with backpacks and everything. Great fun if you manage to ride the stream on you backpack.

Participants: Christian, Fredrik, Kathy, Brendon, John, Warren (leader).



Getting there was half the fun. [WW]



Iron Gates Gorge short swim #1. [WW]



Iron Gates Gorge swim #2. [WW]



Drying out below the Iron Gates. [WW]

10 February 2019
Mania - Rangiwahia
Michelle Benton

Five of us met at 7:30am at Milverton Park with the expectation of a hot and sunny day for our jaunt up the Mania track, across the tops of the Whanahuia Range and down the Rangiwahia Hut track. Marty deserves special mention as his efforts closed the loop for the rest of us as he dropped us off at the Mania Rd end and then drove over to the Rangi carpark to pick us up.

We started up the track at 9am and enjoyed an initial ramble at a pretty gentle incline to about 900m through beautiful beech-podocarp forest for an hour or so before the serious work of climbing up began. The orange topo lines packed up tight and we used hands and feet to clamber up the next 400-500m. En route we enjoyed a couple of lookout points over the slips into the Pari Stream and admired the bush campsite someone has made which is gradually accruing mod cons. This time there was an enamel mug on a wire hanger on the tree, a big water bottle, and a groundsheet to go with the fireplace. Hopefully when these things reach their use-by dates they will get packed home again by their owner.

We climbed out of the bush and were impressed(!) by the vigorous summer growth obscuring the track. There were quite a few Spaniards in full bloom looking their pointy, golden best. By the time we made it up onto the peak at spot height 1514m we were ready for a sit-down lunch. We dropped off the side of the ridge to shelter from the breeze and spread out on the shrubbery, sharing binoculars to look for Marty on the opposite ridge. We found him above Rangi Hut and with the wonders of modern telecommunications he and Anne mapped out a proposed schedule for meeting up.

The steepest climb was well over but the route across the tops was practically trackless so we high-stepped our way across the knee-high alpine shrubs up another 100m or so. The cloud lifted off Ruapehu in the distance and we enjoyed fine views. We rounded the section of the Whanahuia Range above the headwaters of the Mangawharariki River and met Marty at the junction of the Deadmans-Triangle and Rangiwahia tracks. The track down to Rangi is a tramper's highway so we sped homeward, stopping briefly to introduce Vern and John to Rangi Hut. We were back at the carpark just after 5pm, having had a very enjoyable day. We (John, Vern and me) were ably led by Anne.

Thanks for the excellent company and all the interesting yarns!

See pic on cover page – Ed.

9-10 February 2019
McKinnon Hut
Elly Arnst

My PITC (Partner in Tramping Crime) was unable to join me and no one had contacted me by Thursday night to go to Mid-Waiohine Hut. My persistently niggling ankle twinged in nervous anticipation at the thought of the steep, rooted descent from Mt Holdsworth and there was potential for moderately strong winds on Sunday. I started contemplating other destinations. The Ruahine forecast looked near perfect – clear with light winds – magic conditions for tops travel.

The last few weeks had been hectic and my ideal trip involved seeing no one all weekend. A partially off-track route from Purity to McKinnon along the Hikurangi Range would be perfect. A quick call to the Gorrings confirmed I was the only one wanting access that weekend – yes!

Note: I have never found obtaining access to Purity problematic. Richard is extremely accommodating, and mutual respect goes a long way. The first couple of kilometres cross directly through his farm (starting with stockyards) and he likes to keep groups small and space out the frequency. Having seen first-hand the stocks' reactions to me sneaking quietly and slowly along the fence line, I can completely understand why this is important. The upside being that it is completely possible for one to have this corner of the Park almost entirely to themselves.

The climb from the farm track to the Park boundary is always brutal (140m gain in about 350m horizontal) and it was hot. Entering the trees provided some shady relief, but the air was still, the ground crunchy with fallen beech leaves. Areas of old windfall have been filled in, not with new saplings, but with deep patches of hook grass, scratchy ferns, and bush lawyer. A recent entry in the Purity Hut book revealed DoC had paid a helicopter visit to the hut for routine maintenance, but the track looked as though it is heading for the "no longer maintained" list.

A quick lunch was eaten on the deck of Purity Hut before I set off up the poled route which became an intermittently poled route, then just

a well-worn footpad. It's relatively easy walking to Wooden Peg, with its glorious views into both the Pourangaki and Kawhatau Basins encompassing the smooth rolling tops of the Whanahuia Range, across the distinctive sharp faces of Te Hekenga, Sawtooth Ridge, and Te Atuaoparapara, to the flat tops of the Mokai Patea Range. The mountains of the Central Plateau were on full display.

Someone had installed blue marker pegs between Wooden and Iron Pegs – personal experience can testify to the difficulty of route finding (without a GPS) in heavy clag. I sipped slightly stagnant water from the tarn, unable to avoid the inclusion of extra protein. The sign here declared seven hours to McKinnon Hut and had a warning about the need for good visibility. I hoped it wouldn't take that long, not because I would run out of daylight, but because I simply didn't want to walk for that long!



Tarn at Iron Peg

After some photographic dilly dallying, I headed off towards Mangaweka. Boot prints told me someone had been here recently – could even be as recent as yesterday – I crossed my fingers that they weren't at McKinnon. Past Mangaweka the foot pad was less obvious, but it was easy underfoot and I made good progress.

There were several saddles to dip through and a bit of easy sidling to avoid unnecessary climbing. Most of the time I walked on the eastern edge of the tops, the odd cairn dotted here and there indicated others had passed this way.

The Hukurangi Range is riddled with tarns, deer sign, and devoid of humans. I thought it was devoid of tussock wading and speargrass too, until I neared Hukurangi. From the saddle south of the highpoint, the tussock thickened and became much taller. It wasn't necessary to go over the highpoint, so I sidled on the western side at around 1650m.

Ahead of me I could see a straight line of ridge leading to the distant track sign on the horizon. However, getting to the lip revealed the only patch of speargrass I'd seen all day. This required some more tussock wading to the west to circumnavigate.



So, that's where all the speargrass is hiding! Saddle between Hukurangi and McKinnon track

Cresting the final rise, the sign appeared in front of me – left to K Base, right to McKinnon. Heading down the spur, I scrutinised the ground; there were some prints, but not fresh enough to mean anyone had walked in from this direction in the last couple of days – fingers still crossed! The descent was steep, the track overgrown in places, but soon I was standing outside the hut, nestled on the bush edge, no sign of inhabitants – yay! It had been nearly seven hours since I left the car, and thankfully only three and a half from Iron Peg (with a detour off the ridge for some more protein rich tarn water).



The perfectly sited McKinnon Hut

It was warm and cosy inside the hut, and I had great views from the window over the Mokai Patea Range and down the Kawhatau Valley to the sunset colours on Mt Ruapehu.

A quiet evening of reading and sunset photography ensued. The day had been hot and I had got somewhat dehydrated, so figured that getting up early and walking in the cool of the morning was a good plan.

Waking at 5:45am, I was up and out before 7, taking my time to climb up the 225m to the tops. The air was fresh, the light stunning for photography. Below me in the tussock basin I spied a deer.



Sun rising over the eastern Ruahines

Retracing my steps from the day before was relatively easy, although I could see how it would be possible to become disorientated in cloudy conditions, particularly as numerous spurs run off the main ridge and slight changes of direction are needed to stay on the correct path.

Showery looking clouds were encroaching rapidly from the east and by the time I reached Iron Peg the views were gone and the fog rolled in.



No view from Iron Peg

I was soon back to Purity Hut and before long being attacked by bush lawyer, and not much later being greeted by a myriad of farm dogs. A fabulously quiet weekend out in a less frequented part of the Ruahines.

Final count = birds: not many, although heard one cuckoo, deer: one, humans: just me!

Pros and Cons of Cookers

On Mountaineering and Tramping Stoves By Bruce van Brunt

Over the last few years I have had the opportunity to use a number of stoves during tramping and mountaineering trips. This short article represents my experience and opinions about various stoves. It is not meant to be comprehensive. I will neither talk about stoves such as the old reliable Primus as they are no longer easily available, nor special armed forces stoves, which the public cannot buy. I will focus on the stoves that are still around and easy to get, or their immediate ancestors.

Liquid Spirits vs Butane/Propane Canisters Here is my take on this basic question.

Liquid Spirits (White Gas...)

Pros:

1. These are easily the cheapest stoves to run;
2. A number of models will burn anything including white spirits, petrol, diesel and kerosene. This is important when going abroad.
3. These stoves are much more reliable in extreme conditions (cold and high altitude).

Cons:

1. They take a bit of practice to get them to work quickly and reliably;
2. They are generally not as light and compact as butane/propane stoves once the fuel bottle and pump are included.
3. The warming of the stove involves a significant open flame, which might prove stressful in the vestibule of a tent or in a small/crowded hut.
4. They are generally more expensive than butane/propane stoves.
5. Normally, brand X stove gives a stern warning that you should use only a brand X fuel bottle with the stove. Normally I ignore these sorts of warnings, but given the pump is designed for the bottle and there is an open flame involved, I generally feel compelled to get their bottle (more \$\$).

Butane/Propane Stoves

Pros:

1. These stoves are often cheap and lightweight;
2. They are easy to operate, fast and convenient;
3. The open flame is small and well controlled: perfect for crowded huts or in a tent vestibule.

Cons:

1. They do not work well in extreme conditions;
2. The gas for these stoves is not readily available in some countries;
3. Long term use is much more expensive than the other stove and the user must dispose of canisters;
4. Most of the designs are inherently unstable for larger pots.

My Experience

I have used a number of stoves over the last 20 years and have definitely centred on a few that I like and some that I "like less". In short, regarding the liquid fuel/ gas canister stoves:

1. If you are tramping and staying mostly in huts or at least below the snow and high wind, then the canister stoves are certainly the most attractive option. This is true particularly if you have only a few trips per year and the expense of running a stove is nominal. I have gradually turned to gas canister stoves for a lot of tramping in the Ruahines. They are much easier to carry and use in these moderate conditions.
2. For mountaineering, gas canister stoves are of limited use unless you are basing yourself in a hut, out of the wind and cold. NZ is not so high as to impair these stoves unless they are out in the "elements". In such adventures you never know where you might be stuck. I generally chose a liquid fuel stove for mountaineering.
3. If you are planning to use the stove abroad, then think about the availability of fuel. Certain models of the liquid fuel stoves will burn most anything.
4. The stability of a stove is important whether in a bivvy or a hut. If you are cooking for a group and a larger pot is needed then this is an important concern.
5. There are some stoves such as the MSR Dragonfly that use temperature control as a selling point. You are supposed to be able to simmer stuff on these stoves as opposed to merely boiling water. Here you must ask how many times you really need this control. Do you need a stove to fry things and perhaps make omelets? Porridge on any tramping/mountaineering stove is a "black art", but I never had trouble with a basic stove once I learned how to do it.

Particular Models that I have used

I am keenly aware of the advantages that both types of stoves offer and have no problem

exploiting the best of these stoves. Here is my limited experience with certain stoves.

Butane/Propane Cannister Stoves

1. **MSR Pocket Rocket and Micro Rocket:** These are relatively cheap and lightweight stoves that are utterly reliable except for extreme conditions. At the moment they are an "industry standard" for stoves and I understand why. I never had a problem with them and continue to use them tramping in the local hills. The only problem with them is stability when a larger pot is required for group cooking. I have also used various cheap stoves like these. Their main claim to fame is their price and sometimes their weight (slightly less than the MSR's). These stoves worked fine for the undemanding tasks of heating water in a hut.
2. **Jetboil:** I must admit that this cooker disappointed me because it was so very limited in what it could do. The forte for this stove is that it can boil a limited amount of water very quickly. I found the stove unstable to use for anything other than boiling the attached cup of water and mostly a "fiddley" sort of stove. It is, however, reliable and can boil that cup of water. The cup is small and can be filled only to about half level (following directions). I believe MSR puts out a similar (and more expensive) super-efficient and fast stove with the same or perhaps greater limitations.

Liquid Fuel Stoves

1. **MSR International:** This is easily the best stove I ever owned. I used one for at least 20+ years and it always proved a reliable instrument in any conditions. It has been used in NZ, Asia, North America and Europe without a hitch. I got this stove because the normal MSR stove was limited in what fuel it could burn. I was stuck in Colin Todd Hut for a few days surrounded by plenty of kerosene without a stove that worked. This is where the International really makes its mark. I note that MSR is still making this winner. A great feature of the stove is the shaker jet that cleans the nozzle as you tramp. My International dates from 1995 and is still going strong. I have done almost zero maintenance on it and it keeps going!
2. **Optimus Nova:** This stove came to me as a gift from my brother. It is perhaps the

most beautifully made stove I have encountered and certainly durable. What puts it at a lower peg than the MSR International is the need to carry a special tool to keep the jet clean. In addition to this, the stove took some getting used to because of its aggressive flame when warming up. I wound up doing all the cooking on one trip to Fox Glacier because nobody else could face the stove (even I was scared of it in the beginning).

3. **MSR Dragonfly GTX stoves:** These stoves had high specs and certainly a lot of people in the hills bought them. I hated these stoves as they were extraordinarily noisy and seemed to do no more than the much quieter International. Perhaps their strength lies outside NZ in the Himalayas, but they certainly are irritating in NZ in any hut. If you like having dinner with a Saturn V rocket launching nearby then I recommend these unsociable stoves, particularly if you do not wish to hear yourself or anybody else at dinner.

Recommendations

If you are looking to get a stove, consider what you will be mainly doing with it.

1. If this is mostly tramping in the local hills for short trips than a simple and cheap canister stove is the way to go. A weekend trip in the Ruahines seldom requires more than a simple canister stove. It is convenient, light and reliable.
2. If you are going to use this for mountaineering outside the comforts of huts then consider a liquid fuel stove. Canister stoves are useless in very cold weather and higher altitudes. You cannot control the pressure.
3. If the stove is to be used to boil/heat large pots, then consider stability. Most butane/propane stoves are not good at this.
4. It is easy to get into the "buy one stove that does everything" mode. This is just like getting the pack that does everything etc. The nature of your trips will determine the best stove for the job. You may have trips that are very different in character. It is not silly to have a stove dedicated to certain types of trips. Recently I purchased the **MSR Universal** stove at a huge discount (1/4 NZ price delivered). The stove is claimed to burn almost any flammable substance and has a special fitting for gas canisters. I am always suspect of such claims...is this really an improvement given

that its NZ price is probably greater than the MSR International + Pocket Rocket price? I got it really cheap and will try it. One thing I can say is that the stove certainly solves the stability problem with canister stoves.

5. The control of temperature is always a selling point with stoves. You must ask yourself at this stage what is important and what the stove will be mostly used for. If careful simmer control is needed, then either splash out and get a stove that claims it can do it, or simply order your food out (free delivery). An alternative, of course, is to learn how to use the more basic stove to achieve some temperature control. All these stoves are really crude compared to the cheapest kitchen stove in any house. The real skill is to learn how to use the stove you have on the tramp to cook what you want.

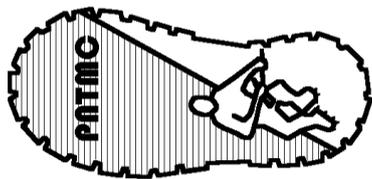
Where will you go next?



Easy access to the tops behind Purity Hut



Wading up the Waikakamaka



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PNTMC Newsletter March 2019

What's inside this month?

- Coast to Coast success
- New Iron Gates Hut coming soon
- Huts and High Points Challenge 2019
- Maropea-Waikamaka-Waipawa Loop
- Mania-Rangi Loop – a hot day out
- Iron Gates Gorge day trip and swim
- McKinnon Hut via Mangaweka Peak
- Pros and Cons of Different Cookers
- 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/>.

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