

Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.

www.pntmc.org.nz

P.O. Box 1217, Palmerston North

Newsletter June 2019



Looking forward to a fine half day out in Arapuke Park, Kahuterawa Valley.

[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.

13 June 2019

Walking in the Kumano Kudo

Richard Lander

The Kumano Kodo pilgrimage route in the Kii mountain range in Japan was designated a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site in 2004. The route takes pilgrims between the major Buddhist shrines in the Kii mountains and has been walked by Emperors, Shoguns, Samurais and other pilgrims since the 7th century. You will have heard about the Way of St. James (Camino de Santiago) in Spain, now come and find about the Kumano Kodo.

27 June 2019

Norway to Zion & Bryce Canyon, USA

Peter Wiles

Let's Go Globetrotting: Norway cruising (with the midnight sun), northern Scotland, Utah - Zion National Park, Bryce Canyon. A real mix of topographies visited in July-August 2018 accompanied with gorgeous summer weather.

Upcoming Trips

1-3 June

Queens Birthday Coastal Classic All
Janet Wilson 329 4722

“Taking on the Southerly” – this year’s trip is to be based at DOC’s Coast Road Cabin, south of Wainuiomata. We will travel down on Friday 31 May, either during the day or in the evening. Plenty of coast to explore, great mountain biking and if the southerly really hits we can retreat to the relative calm of the Orongoronga Valley tracks. Usual format with shared meals. Limited places available – room for 3 more on this social early winter long weekend.

Queens Birthday Day Trip

TBA

Anyone keen to run a trip please let Janet know.

8 June

Murderers Hut M
Bruce van Brunt 328 4761

Murders hut is also known as Ellis Hut among other names. This hut is located at the edge of the Ruahine Forest and is easily the oldest hut in the forest (built in 1884...this makes Shutes Hut some 40yrs younger!). The hut is built of pit sawn timber along with hand dressed timber: this accounts for its remarkable survival for well over a 100 years. Recently, DoC has restored this hut keeping in character with the original structure. I first assumed that any hut like this would be at best a desperate place to sleep, but having visited it recently I found it a charming hut with good camping nearby if needed.

The plan for this trip is to leave from the Makaroro River carpark and tramp to the hut via the Yeoman's track (ex logging road, but now an interesting if comfortable bush walk). One can return either the same way or use the nearby logging roads. The plan is that people can either stay the night in the hut or simply return to the cars. I plan to spend a night in the hut, but it is a quite doable day trip (6-7hrs) for those in a hurry. Depart 8:30 am from Milverton Park.

9 June

Maharaha Crossing M
Warren Wheler 356 1998

A classic crossing of the Ruahine Ranges, with a couple of high points to bag. One party would start from No.1 Line in the west and the other from Tamaki Roadend in the east, swapping car keys in the middle. Lovely bush and interesting tops travel through the leatherwood. Great views too. Depart 7.30am from Milverton Park.

15 June

Beach Walk E
Tina Bishop 027 480 3342

Come for a wander through the forest, onto the beach and around the point. Meet at my place 9am. Please ring or txt me by the Thursday night if you are keen.

15-16 June

Iron Gate Hut E/M
Janet Wilson 329 4722

Yes the hut is still open – the new hut build delayed until at least September. So come along and enjoy what will probably be your final visit to the old IGH. You can pick up 5 bonus points for helping with the trap line as we walk in - so all beginner trappers welcome on this E/M trip. Departing from PN 7.30 Sat am or come up and join Graham and me at our road end shed on the Friday evening. An M/F day trip is another option.

22-23 June

Kahui Hut - Egmont NP E/M
Warren Wheeler 356 1998

Kahui Hut is an easy 2 hours up through the forest on the west side of Mt Egmont. From there we will explore the moss fields higher up and bag the local high points including Pyramid. Option to climb Taranaki itself. Depart early Saturday or Friday night.

23 June

Dam Buster MTB
Richard locket 323 0948

Cycle up the gravel road behind Shannon to the dams that supply water for the Mangahau Power Scheme. Depart 8.00 am.

26 June (Wednesday)

Snowcraft 1 Intro and Briefing
Dieter Stalman 027 450 9460

Booking essential. See details in Snowcraft Notice below.

29-30 June

Snowcraft 1 T
Dieter Stalman 027 450 9460

Booking essential. See details in Snowcraft Notice below.

29-30 June

Ellis Hut to Parks Peak Hut
Upper Makaroro Hut M/F
Janet Wilson 329 4722

Change of trip. Due to the short days and a longish drive, this will be a long weekend trip departing Friday, to either walk in to Parks Peak Hut or Upper Makaroro. The plan is to deploy listening devices to try to find kiwi in the Totara

Spur area above UMH so there is also the possibility of a visit to Kylie Biv. Departure time will depend on those going. Please let me know early if you are keen to come along.

30 June

Burn Hut **E/M**
Craig Allerby **323 7913**

A winter hike to a northern Tararua hut in the back of Shannon. Can stop for a coffee and cake on the return home. Depart 8am.

6 or 7 July (Best Weather Day)

Otangane Loop **M**
Anne Lawrence **357 1695**

This route provides opportunity to get to the tops without going far from Palmerston North. After taking the Sledge Track up the Kahuterawa to the Platinum Mines junction and the Toi Toi Loop, this track follows a loop around the southern branch of the Otangane Stream with a short diversion to the top of The Nipple aka Otangane. Depart Milverton Park at 7.30am.

6-7 July

Powell-Jumbo **M**
Warren Wheeler **356 1998**

Let's be some of the first to stay in the new Powell Hut, with twinkling night time views out over Masterton and other towns in the Wairarapa. Hopefully there will be some snow on the tops between Powell and Jumbo Hut. Ice axe and crampons advisable. Depart 8.00am from Milverton Park.

10 July (Wednesday)

Snowcraft 2 Briefing Night
Dieter Stalman **027 450 9460**

Booking essential. See details in Snowcraft Notice below.

13-14 July

Snowcraft 2 **T**
Dieter Stalman **027 450 9460**

Booking essential. See details in Snowcraft Notice below.

14 July

Pohangina Walkways **E**
Warren Wheeler **356 1998**

Explore the easy walks in the Pohangina Valley. Options include Fern Walk, Old Coach Road, Totara Reserve, Kahikatea Walk. Depart 8.00am from Milverton Park.

Trip Grading

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

New Editor

Anne Lawrence will be taking over as Newsletter Editor from 1 July 2019. Warren will carry on in a back-up capacity as Sub-Editor.

Iron Gates Hut Replacement Delayed

NZ Defence Force now plan to commence work in September 2019; a start date is yet to be confirmed. In the meantime, the hut remains open for use.

New Powell Hut Opening Soon

The new hut is expected to be opened any time soon. Tony Gazley from WTMC has been regularly visiting the site and his collection of photos can be found by clicking on the links in his forum comments <https://wtmc.org.nz/forums/topic/powell-hut-no-longer-accessible/>

PNTMC Facebook

I would like to remind you all that we have a new facebook page which you can check out at <https://www.facebook.com/Palmerston-North-Tramping-and-Mountaineering-Club-1577289419011545/>

Snowcraft Programme



Learn safe mountaineering skills with us this winter.

Why put aside your tramping boots just because it's winter and there is snow on the top of the local ranges?

Have you been wanting to do some South Island tramping that involves crossing snow covered passes?

Do you want to learn the skills of basic snow and ice climbing using the correct equipment?

Learn new skills or upgrade your current ones by enrolling in PNTMC's Snowcraft Instruction programme.

29-30 June

The Basics - Snowcraft 1 (SC1)

Enjoy the alpine snow slopes? Are you confident that you understand the special requirements of travelling safely on snow?

Learn to confidently walk on snow, use an ice axe, cut steps and use crampons. What if I fall? Master self arresting and more ...

13-14 July

Building on the Basics - Snowcraft 2 (SC2)

Learn the important skills of rope work, anchors, belays and the basics of snow and ice climbing. Begin the rudiments of alpine climbing and avalanche awareness.

27-28 August

Alpine Climbing - extend your skills - Snowcraft 3 (SC3)

Get a more complete set of skills for alpine climbing. Practice makes perfect. Tackle the snow slopes, glaciers and peaks. Prepare yourself for the magic of the Southern Alps.

Interested?

Each level is a prerequisite for the next. However, some participants may find completing SC1, or the first two levels, adequate for their intended outdoor activities. Others may want to advance through SC3 and beyond. Some may wish to do SC1 this winter and SC2 next winter, or refresh their skills. Some people with previous snow or alpine experience may enter at SC2.

Wednesday Briefing Sessions

Note that on the Wednesday preceding each weekend there will be an Intro and Briefing-Ropework Evening held at the Quakers Hall, 227 College St, PN.

Costs for each weekend

The fee covers weeknight venue, transport (if required), gear hire, accommodation for Friday and Saturday nights and instruction. Meals will be your own responsibility.

Members \$90

Non-members \$100

(Deduct \$25 if using your own transport).

For more information on costs etc please visit our website [Snowcraft](#) page or contact the course organisers Dieter Stalman 027 450 9460, or Grant Christian 021 117 6921.

PNTMC Challenge 2019

Huts and High Places Challenge AGM 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)
- Bring a new trumper 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.

You can update your points by entering trip details, places visited etc in the online spreadsheet.

Current Points

Janet has a runaway lead with Bonus Points for stoat trapping, Pohangina Huts and four huts on one trip – Rangī, Triangle, Iron Gates, Heritage (Alice Nash Memorial). Join in the fun and see your points add up over the next 10 months.

Club Member	Huts	Highs	Bonus	TOTAL
Janet	12.5	2.5	15	30
Chris T	7	6	10	23
Graham	7	3	10	20
Elly	6	6	5	17
Grant	9	0	5	14
Woody	5	1	5	11
Mary	3	1	5	9
Warren	6.5	2	0	8.5
Richard	5	3.5	0	8.5
Ernie	4	2	0	6
Catherine	2	2	0	4
Anne	3	1	0	4
Martin	3	1	0	4

PNTMC Hut Bagging Posters

Posters are still available for both the Ruahine Huts and Tararua Huts that were produced following our Hut Bagging Challenge in 2012 and 2015 respectively.

Size	Members	Non Members
A2	\$8	\$12
A1	\$16	\$24

Post and tube is about \$15 extra depending on where it is being sent.

Sale proceeds go towards our maintenance of the Mid-Pohangina Hut and Ngamoko Hut in Ruahine Forest Park. Contact Warren (06) 356-1998.

New Members

Welcome to Dennis & Lynette Price and family.

We wish you happy tramping with us.

Want to Join the Club?

All you need to do is pay the subs and fill in the Membership Application that is available at club nights and on our website. Enquiries to Warren 06-356-1998.

Trip Reports

13-14 April 2019
Pureora Explorer
Richard Lockett

Catherine, Warren and I were able to travel up to Pureora Forest Park on the Friday afternoon, the plan being to give us more time for exploration on the Saturday. With tents pitched and dinner eaten at the Ngaherenga camp site we headed along to the bush canopy tower down the road just as darkness fell, a tad too late to catch the evening chorus of bird song but we did have a very close encounter with a ruru (morepork) which made the tower visit worthwhile. The bird life at the camp site is pretty darn good with kaka flying overhead and robins feeding on the bugs we stirred up around our tents. I haven't seen any kokako here as yet; apparently they reside just down the road!

The plan for Saturday was to head to the Northern Pureora up Waitaramoa Road to the start of the Okahukura Mountain Bike Track which we would walk a few kilometres along before heading up the Mangatutu track and onto the Rangitoto Range and the Ranginui high point before dropping down a 4WD track to the Owawenga stream catchment and hopefully see or hear kokako.

Lots of new pest control trap lines originating from the mob loop track heading into the bush but no signage indicating the Mangatutu track turnoff so we had to resort to the use of a map and GPS to suss out that we had over shot the junction by about 400 metres, not that there was a junction to overshoot just a trap line with pink tape but on entering the bush an obvious track marked with permolat, old permolat at that, and then briefly orange triangles which just took us to the trap line start which headed away from the Mangatutu track.

At this point we were left with no obvious ground trail, just the very old permolat nailed to the trees or not i.e. covered in moss or lying on the ground or tree fallen over. Between the three of us we got our eye in at spotting permolat from a distance and eventually crested the Rangitoto Range onto a very narrow ridge with a bit of ground trail along it. Using some old windfall branches we placed a block across the ground trail at that point to ensure that when we returned the following day we wouldn't overshoot the position as there was nothing to indicate that there was a track heading off the range at all.

The permolat continued to lead us along the range towards Ranginui and after 500 metres of easy travel we arrived at a small clearing all of 20 metres square, a good spot for lunch. Got a GPS fix on the clearing and to our surprise found that it was marked on the map, a little green dot just under the G in Rangitoto (NZ Topo50 BF34 Benneydale).



Tiny clearing, but marked on the map. [WW]

With Ranginui only 1 km away we set off to claim our 2 points each for this named high point of 978 meters which turned out to be a most unattractive spot with no views because of the vegetation around the edge of the flat cleared top and with probably NZ's ugliest building positioned 30 metres from the trig along with a communication tower much like the one up on Whariti, but with a distinct Soviet Union feel to it. Must have been the result on some 1970's barter deal over Waikato butter - I don't want to go back there.



Ranginui high point – a most unattractive spot

The service road down off Ranginui brought us onto the southern part of the old Rangitoto Station which is now owned by the NZ Native Forest Restoration Trust and is being allowed to revert back to bush and hence DOC 200 traps placed along the road. Heading off up the road on an old farm track marked on the Topo Map led us to a large grassed area where we had difficulty picking where it headed down. We then had to deal with 20 plus years of regrowth

on it, with horopito, bush lawyer, blackberry and waist-high crown fern to boot, so our enthusiasm had waned towards the bottom at which point this track intersected with another marked farm track, which turned out to be a road. Not just any old road but one that you could drive a logging truck along no problem which meant that we had a very quick 2 kms trot to our destination Wildlife Hut.

This hut turned out to be a disappointment, with vehicle access to its door, which as we know is never a good thing. It had a rundown look and feel to it but it did have a sofa which I found very comfortable until the cramp set in. It was only a four bunker and with bags already laid out we would have to pitch a fly and tent round the back. The other thing of note was birds - no song and no presence just a ruru calling in the night, strange.

Sunday saw us retrace our steps, which went well until up on the Rangitoto Range past the Soviet embassy, blindly following the permolat markings expecting to run into the block placed on the ridge to indicate our descent off the range - except that we didn't run into it. It took a while to realize that something was amiss. A steep descent did the trick forcing us to return to a known position, in this case the dot just under the R in Rangitoto. We didn't have to go that far before we sussed out what was happening, a tail of one track becoming two tracks with possible marked junction or not. Once we were on the correct old permolat trail we meet the block which I was glad to see. So back down the hill and the Okahukura MTB loop track and with that birds and bird song.

Participants were Warren Wheeler, Catherine Jackson and Richard Lockett.

[Additional pics are in the May Newsletter - Ed]

3-5 May 2019 Applied Tramping Pohangina Valley Ernie Cook

Originally gazetted as being Upper Makaroro 4-5 May, applied tramping and using acoustic recorders to try to find kiwi in the area, this trip became a visit to Ngamoko Hut to re-bait the traps both upstream towards Leon Kinvig Hut and downstream to Mid Pohangina and beyond. Rain early in the week meant that the conditions of the rivers had to be taken into consideration when determining the eventual destination for this excursion. Certainly the view westwards from the tops vindicated this as opposed to the cloudy looking tops to the east.

We departed Pohangina at around 7:00 a.m. and picked up Janet from Pohangina Valley East Road where she had parked a vehicle to allow some flexibility if someone was to exit via the Mid Pohangina track route. We then continued on to the park at Limestone Road end. From there we ascended the Shorts Track, pausing for complimentary almond croissants along the way.



First lunch at the tarns [Catherine Jackson]

We continued on to Whaingapuna high point (1405m) finding a reasonable path through the leather-wood and on to the spur that would take us down to Ngamoko Hut, where we were to take up residence for two nights. A luxury that I was certainly looking forward to. The track down is adequately marked though care must be taken at a large tree fall to veer to the right.

Disconcertingly the undergrowth of ferns is very overgrown making it difficult to see where one is placing their feet. By 4:30 p.m. we were all ensconced in the hut, the early arrivals having a nice fire going and fire-wood added to the existing supply.



Home at last [Catherine Jackson]

Morning brought a frosted grass and the promise of a lovely day. Catherine was to spend the day giving the hut a thorough wash down

and autumn clean. Janet, Graham, Ernie and Bruce Dog set off up river winter proofing the traps with the slow release chocolate flavoured bait and replacing any expired gas cylinders.



Off to the traps. [Catherine Jackson]

A highlight was the sighting of a male whio with two juveniles. With Ernie being the only one with a camera the resulting photo left a lot to be desired. Travel was relatively straight-forward in the low flows, nothing deeper than waist height and only a 2 metre or so high road block to be negotiated. We surveyed a nice sunny bank for lunch but by the time we reached it the sun had hidden itself behind a cloud. The return down river was quicker as expected and we arrived at a welcoming fire-warmed and glistening hut at about 4:30 p.m.



Clean up in progress. [Catherine Jackson]

The exit strategy elicited quite a bit of debate as to the composition of the teams and it was resolved that the hares would return the same way over the tops with Bruce and the tortoises would re-bait the traps downriver to Mid Pohangina Hut and the few traps beyond.

Mid Pohangina Hut was reached in time for lunch and while Ernie boiled the billy Graham slogged up to the trap on the way to Cattle Creek Hut. With wet leggings removed we then proceeded to tackle the seemingly never-ending sidle track out to the road end.

A lot of deer sign evident along the way and two deer sighted. In drawing a comparison between this track and the one between Cow Creek Hut and Arete Forks Hut in the Tararuas it is the

writers considered opinion that the extensive tree-fall and the six creeks to be climbed in and out of, while varying in hardship, make the sidle to Arete Forks Hut more arduous though that trip was made in February of last year.

We took a break at a lovely look-out and Graham pointed out some of the visible features. The car was reached at about 6:30 p.m. The note with the welcome bag of chips advised that the tops travellers had passed that way some four hours previously.

Trip participants were Catherine Jackson, Ernie Cook, Graham Peters, Bruce Dog and Janet Wilson leader.

5 May 2019 Arapuke Loop Sally Hewson

We assembled at Milverton Park at 9am, then departed for the Arapuke Park/Sledge Track in three cars – Team PNTMC, Team Fonterra and Team Korea.

Arapuke is a popular mountain biking and walking area. We did a 7km circuit, going up the Back Track, then down to the Kahuterawa Stream and over the swing bridge that joins into the Sledge Track. Woody had arranged great weather, so it was a very pleasant walk up the gentle gradient through the bush.

Back Track is a shared MTB/walking track so the odd biker puffed past. Warren pointed out the thick glades of “Taniwha’s Cloak” growing in the shady areas. Said it would be a great place to spot glow worms. We mused about doing an evening glow worm spotting walk sometime in the future.

After the track levelled off there were good views, then it was time for a snack at the 1500km midpoint mark of the Te Araroa Walkway. Hadn’t taken enough food to get to Cape Reinga or Bluff, so we continued on and descended down to the Kahuterawa swing bridge, and back along the Sledge Track to return to the car park.

On the trip were: Woody, Warren, Nicola, Duncan, Weiping, Amy, Aekyung, Esther, Jo, Hyungsun and Sally.

12 May 2019
Toe Toe Loop Track / Platinum Mines
Christian Offen

As the weather promised to be better right here around Palmy compared with the Otaki area, Warren, Sishu and I changed our plans from finding the Mick and Ventura Wreck near Otaki to going up the Sledge Track, connecting to the Toe Toe Loop Track and seeing the Platinum Mines.

The holes dug in the 19th century for exploration have never led to any actual mining activities and the nature in the Tararua is thankful for that. While the holes are well known to me and Warren, for my office mate at Massey, Sishu, who joined us about half a year ago from India to commence his PhD studies in mathematics, it was the first time to see them.



Any creepy crawlies down there? [WW]

We had fun climbing down the ladders into the holes with headlights to see some weta and glow worms (they were not glowing, though). Moreover, while I had shown some native plants to Sishu already, this time he got a proper introduction to our native bush by Warren including creative anecdotes. Thanks to our trip leader Warren for this fun trip!

18-19 May 2019
Jumbo Hut
Wendy Yale

My First Overnight Trip.

I have wanted to try an overnight trip for a while. As a trumper newbie, I have been on quite a few trips with a friend. Sometimes we stopped by a hut for lunch or a break and I wondered what it would be like to stay the night. I bought a sleeping bag a couple of months ago and it was quite exciting that finally I am going to use it.

It was very kind of Warren to come and pick me up at 8:00am on Saturday. Our team of two headed to the east side of Tararua Forest Park. We stopped at Pukaha café for morning tea (actually we both ordered coffee), where Warren explained to me how pest control traps (displayed there) work to capture rat, possum and weasel etc. That was new for me since I have only seen these on TV.

When we arrived at Mount Holdsworth carpark, it was almost lunch time and Warren found the Holdsworth Lodge Log Book showed there were many trampers that had the same destination as ours – Jumbo Hut. Could be a fun night, Warren said. The track from the car park to Atiwhakatu Hut was relatively easy. It says 3 hours track and it did take us a similar amount of time, with lots of stops when Warren shared his knowledge of trees and berries. Also listening to birds singing was another amusement while walking.

It was tougher from Atiwhakatu Hut to Jumbo Hut. The track was very steep and not that obvious. Tree roots were steps and they are sometimes slippery. Quick elevation gain made my breathing shorter and I had to rest from time to time. Warren was patient waiting ahead of me each time. After two hours hard climbing – ascending about 800m – we finally arrived at Jumbo.



Hooray - almost there now. [WW]

Luckily there were bunks still available and we were not the last ones to get there.

Warren cooked our meal – first time experience for me as well to enjoy tasty dinner in a hut. We made plans for next day and went to bed quite early – nothing else to do with no electricity power and limited mobile signal, to be honest. Wind was extremely wild that night. I woke up multiple times in my brand-new sleeping bag. Managed to get some sleep though to gain enough energy.



Fine morning at Jumbo Hut.

Next morning was a good weather day. We got up early and had breakfast. Warren even took a funny sunrise picture before we left. We took the same route back but the track never looked the same as the one we came up. We managed to get back to the car park as scheduled. Stopped at Pukaha café again for lunch and back to Palmy at exactly the planned time.

Thanks very much to Warren for taking care of me and sharing his knowledge. I really appreciate. It was a very interesting trip. I may have other overnight tramps in the future. First time experience is always unforgettable, isn't it?

24-26 April 2019
Macaulay Valley, Canterbury
Grant Christian

I was on a four-wheel drive trip of the South Island and the trip was getting close to the finish. There was an excursion planned up the Godley & Macaulay Valleys with a night to be spent at Macaulay Hut. While studying the map

I realised it would be a great opportunity to do some tramping in an area I hadn't visited before. Annett was able to join me in Tekapo and we joined a group of eight other four-wheel drive vehicles that headed up the eastern side of Lake Tekapo and over the Macaulay River.

The water washed over my bonnet on the way through so I knew there wasn't a lot of room for higher water levels.

We drove through Lilybank Station and well up the Godley Valley where there were great views of the Southern Alps and many glaciers including Maud Glacier at the top of the valley. We stopped for lunch at Red Stag Hut on the return trip and then went up the Macaulay Valley to Macaulay Hut. Between the two valleys is the Sibbald Range, dominated by Mt Sibbald at 2804 metres. A worthy climbing goal for another trip. It is also home to Mt Erebus.

Macaulay Hut sleeps 14 and has solar powered lights, gas stove, an oven under the wood stove and a great wooden slab table. It was built in 2000 and has a stone exterior. With 21 of us arriving we had a number of people camping outside.

The next morning Annett and I left the hut at around 8 a.m. to climb the ridge across the valley, and perhaps get to the top of Mount Ross (2362m). We saw the rest of our group drive away at about 8:30. There appeared to be a straight forward path to the tops but after scrambling up some scree and tussock slopes and some crumbly, steep rock we discovered our path was cut off by a deep chasm.

We continued up a ridge and then walked across a large plateau area towards Mount Ajax. This area was covered in boulders which were covered in soft snow. It was slow going because you couldn't see what was under the snow but our feet would go through the snow until they met with whatever boulders lay beneath.



4WD heaven and a full house at Macaulay Hut.

We reached the edge of this plateau and there was another steep drop down and back up the other side to reach the ridge to Mount Ajax. An easier route could be seen further up so we attempted a ridge to the west that lead to the easier route. The rock on the ridge was covered in soft snow and we soon found it too slippery to continue.

The weather was perfect but we were conscious of the need to turn around before long. We decided to head for an easier route to the top of a nearby ridge so we could enjoy the views. The slope steepened as we headed up over loose scree covered in soft snow. The steeper it got the more the scree moved under our feet. I was struggling to keep up with Annett. She got to a view point that was still about 50 metres short of the ridge and I gave up about 10 metres below her. It was time to head back down.



Snowy boulders in the Two Thumb Range.

We crossed the snow-covered boulders again. The climb back down the crumbly ridge was a lot more unnerving than coming up. It was a slow and careful descent for a while. Once we reached the scree it was a lot quicker.

Unfortunately I was caught out by the scree changing to a hard dirt patch as I was descending quickly. I couldn't slow down on this surface and fell on to my back. The rest of the descent was straight forward and we arrived back at the hut around 5 p.m.

It blew hard and rained heavily overnight. The next morning we spoke to a climber who had done Mt Sibbald the day before. He was bivvying up higher but had packed up and come to the hut after the rain arrived.

The weather was fine and clear in the morning so we went for a walk to the top of the valley. It was straight forward and we enjoyed the spectacular scenery. When we arrived back at

the hut about 4 p.m. it was still fine. There was rain forecast for the Main Divide but we thought we would be safe to leave the next morning.



Crossing a side stream of the Macaulay River.

That was a bad decision because the rain started about 6 p.m. and continued, pretty much non-stop, for 24 hours. We could see the river was up in the morning and we thought it wise not to attempt driving out. We spent the day in the hut reading magazines and were resigned to spending an extra night. There was a mountain radio forecast that night and our optimism for getting out was not helped.

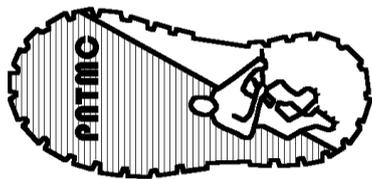
Thankfully the rain did not return that night and we were relieved to see a clear sky in the morning. We packed quickly and were driving back down the riverbed by 8 a.m. We arrived at the crossing of the main branch of the river and I was thankful there was a vehicle on the other side looking to cross. The river was still higher than when we had crossed the other day, and dirty. I scouted about for a shallower crossing point.

The other vehicle decided to cross and went in well over the bonnet.

I asked him to wait while we crossed. I chose a different spot to cross and it proved to be only half the depth. We were safely back on the right side of the river and could relax as we headed back to Tekapo.

Trip Participants were Grant Christian & Annett Paetzold.

[Another excellent adventure down South - Ed]



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

www.pntmc.org.nz

P.O. Box 1217,
Palmerston North

PNTMC Newsletter

June 2019

What's inside this month?

- Snowcraft Programme – Enrol Now
- Pureora Explorer – Wildlife Hut
- Applied Tramping Pohangina Valley
- Arapuke Loop – close to town
- Platinum Mines – another local walk
- Jumbo Hut – first overnight trip
- Macaulay Valley 4WD and climbing Mount
Ajax, Canterbury
- Coming trips and more

Articles for the newsletter

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

Get out and about with us!

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