

Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.

www.pntmc.org.nz
P.O. Box 1217, Palmerston North

Newsletter September 2020



Tutuwai hut

Club Nights

Club nights are held on the second and last Thursday of the 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. All welcome.

10 September

Something Old, Something New

Warren Wheeler

A Show and Tell Night for members to bring a favourite piece of Old and/or New tramping gear and tell us all why you like it (or don't).

24 September

USA Northwest Parks

Chris Saunders

Chris will talk about some of the national parks in the south west of the USA that he visited on an FMC Travel Club trip in 2016.

PNTMC Jubilee Book

Old Boots & Packs - The First 50 Years of the Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club (PNTMC) will interest and amuse mountain users, historians, photographers, hut baggers and tree huggers. Read about current and past members' exploits, which include climbing our highest peaks (sometimes with boots on the wrong feet) and powering a car on white spirits cooking fuel. Order your copies directly from editor Doug Strachan (ph 353 6526) and get ready to put your feet up with this great read, all for only \$35.



Upcoming Trips

BWD 5th or 6th September

Cattle Ridge Hut Return F
Angela Minto 027 472 0660

Meet at Eketahuna 8am, head to Putara Rd end, up the 400m steady climb and then descend down 300m to picturesquely placed Roaring Stag Hut by the Ruamahanga river. Then a steep climb of 700m-ish to Cattle Ridge hut above the trees even more picturesque if we can see! Will be a longish day there and back.

Sunday 6th September

Tramping for Beginners 1 All
Anne Lawrence 357 1695

This is the first of our Beginner series. From Holdsworth Roadend we follow the track to Atiwakatu Hut for lunch. The track is relatively easy but has plenty of variety with some interesting bridges to cross. We'll leave from Milverton Park at 7.30am.



Beginners tramps: 6 Sept, 4 Oct, 1 Nov, 6 Dec

12-13 September

Mitre M
Warren Wheeler 356 1998

Depart Milverton Park at 8.00am. We turn off in Masterton to the Pines carpark and tramp along the Barra Track for 3-4 hours to Mitre Flats Hut. Next day it is 3 hours uphill to Mitre, highest peak in the Tararua Ranges. Hopefully there will still be some snow and ice to enjoy above the bush-line. Return to the hut after lunch and back out to the Pines.

Sunday 13th September

Sayer Hut M/F
Ernie Cook 027 303 1363

Tramping in from Mangatarere Road end. Lunch at hut and returning the same way. Depart 7:30 A.M. from Milverton Park.

19-20 September

Cattle Creek or Mid Poh M/F
Graham Peters 329 4722

Ideally this trip would go to our club hut Mid-Pohangina, but if the weather conspires against us we'll stop at Cattle Creek. Graham is thinking of making this a 3-day trip, heading off on the Friday.

Sunday 20th September

Knights/Shorts (Toka) M
Warren Wheeler 356 1998

Depart 7.30am from Milverton Park. Out past Apiti township there is this nice loop in the western Ruahine Ranges, up Knights Track to Toka peak and along the ridge to come back down Shorts Track. Practice your bird watching and give your heart-beat monitor a work-out.

26-27 September

Ohakune: Fun in the snow
Bruce van Brunt 328 4761

The lockdown has scuttled our normal snowcraft programme. We still want to play in the snow, and this trip is geared towards reacquainting trampers with snow conditions that require an ice axe and crampons. The idea is to use the best weather day of the weekend and do some basic snow skills on the lower slopes of Ruapehu. Numbers may be limited, and people must organize their own gear. Crampons and ice axes can be hired from the club.

Sunday 27th September

Herepai Hut M
Richard Lockett 323 0948

3-4 October

From the Putara Road end we shall walk along a benched track beside the Mangatainoka River before climbing up towards Herepai Hut, gateway to the northern Tararua Range Tops. Depart 7.30am from Milverton Park.

3-4 October

Ngauruhoe Plus M/F
Warren Wheeler 356 1998

Ideally we will leave PN on Friday night and stay at Sue's place in Rangataua, near Ohakune. This trip is a commemoration of the Grandstand View trip of 1996 when Ruapehu erupted. On Saturday we will head up the western face of Ngauruhoe using crampons

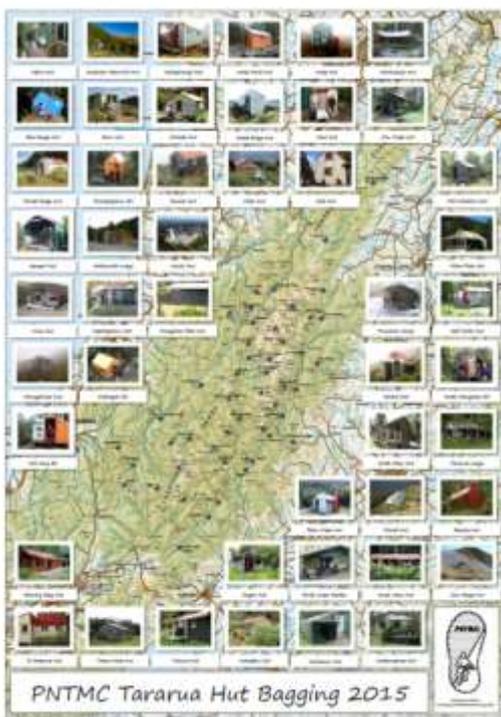
and ice axe to explore the crater and summit ridge views. On Sunday we will climb to Mt Tongariro via the South Crater rim... or any other option that takes our fancy.

Notices

First Aid Course 7th-8th November

Our committee has been successful with an application to the Eastern and Central Community Trust resulting in the Trust giving the club a \$2000 grant to be used for first aid training. We are organising a two-day First Aid Course on 7th and 8th November this year. Venue is DOC base at Pohangina. Cost is \$30 for members (\$60 for Non-members). Please contact Graeme Richards if you are interested in attending.

PNTMC Hut 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	Cost for Members	Cost for Non-Members
A2	\$12	\$18
A1	\$24	\$30

Postage is about \$15 extra depending on where it is being sent.

Proceeds from poster sales go towards the club's maintenance of Mid-Pohangina Hut and Ngamoko Hut in Ruahine Forest Park. Contact Warren (06) 356 1998.

Lancaster - name now official Letter from Warwick Smith

To the members of PNTMC,

The NZ Geographic Board (NZGB) have now published notices in the DomPost (below) and Sunday Star Times this weekend which confer that Lancaster (mountain in the Tararua Ranges) has been assigned an official name from my submission to them last August which included the feedback you provided to me by your club.



Lancaster had been a recorded name since 1909 and the NZGB Secretariat published a good background history on the webpage noted on their public notice which went through the public submission process late last year, then with public feedback to the NZGB Board in April 2020 and finally to the Minister of Land Information.

The NZ Gazetteer information on Lancaster has also been updated with a short biography on my great-grandfather Ernest Lancaster - <https://gazetteer.linz.govt.nz/place/26325> I retain his photo albums from February 1909 and March 1911 of his 1st & 2nd crossings with Leslie Adkin from Levin to Masterton via the Northern Crossing route of the Tararua Ranges.

Thank you for your email of support (from club secretary Janet Wilson and provided to me on 30 July 2019) as part of the consultation process I undertook to meet NZGB requirements in July-August 2019.

Regards,
Warwick Smith, Wellington

DOC Annual Hut Passes

A reminder that anybody with a current hut pass over the lockdown period you can get two extra months added to that pass by visiting the local DOC office.

New members

Welcome to two new club members:

- Toru Mizokawa who is here from Japan and working at Fonterra with Woody Lee.
- Waldron Martis, fresh out of Auckland and keen to get up into the snow while it lasts.

Trip Reports

Levin Trig Walkway

25 July 2020

Report & Pic: Woody Lee

Twelve of us met on a fine Saturday morning and we split into three groups before carpooling towards Levin. Everyone was ready to leave the information board at the beginning of the walkway at 9am and we took the shared walkers/mountain bikers track as planned. It was an easy zig-zag track through the pine forest which only took us about an hour to reach the top of the road. Another 10 minute walk took us to the lookout where we had a relaxing tea break with panoramic views of Horowhenua.



We walked back to the main junction and continued south towards the Trig. At 11am we reached the 377m Trig point and enjoyed different views of the Tararua Range peaks. It did not take us long to walk back down to the carpark and we stopped in Shannon on the way home for lunch and hot drinks under the sun

and some of us visited the Shannon Railway Station Museum.

We were Ernie, Richard, Daniel, Warren, Pat, Rachel, Johan, Adele, Sally, Toru, Xiaoyu and Woody.

Iron gate hut

15-16 August 2020

Report: Kirsten Olsen

We were ten keen trampers attending this wonderful trip. Three of us had stayed Friday to Saturday at Janet and Graham's shed close to the beginning of the Iron Gate Hut track. The rest of the party arrived Saturday around 8:30 am. It was a beautiful sunny and frosty morning with views to Mts Taranaki, Ruapehu and Ngauruhoe. We were on the track at 9am.



Beginning of the Iron Gate Hut Track. Ruapehu and Ngauruhoe in the background (Photo by Kirsten Olsen)

It was a multipurpose tramp. The DoC 200 traps were rebated. Dead stoats were collected for scientific analysis. Birds were identified, counted and entered into the New Zealand Bird Atlas via eBird. The track was cleared from windfallen trees. We enjoyed the tramp and the wonderful company of other keen trampers.



The track starts with a descent over grassed farmland to the entrance to Ruahine Forest park and further to the bridge over Umutoi Creek. From here the track undulates up to Alice Nash Memorial Heritage Lodge. We had a short brake here to make sure all were comfortable and ready for the more adventurous part of trip. Several of us took off our polyprops, now we had warmed up.



The bridge over Umotoi Creek (Photo by Stephen Legg)

The track undulates gently from the Lodge until a steep decent to Cumberfield Creek. At the Creek we had a short morning tea break, crossed the creek and climbed the somewhat steep ascent from the creek. From here, the track passed several old slips where the track was narrow. In places we had to hold on to tree roots to climb up and down.



Holding on to tree roots when climbing up after crossing one of the small creeks on the way out. (Photo by Stephen Legg)

We had lunch at Tunupo Creek. The water level was very low and we had no trouble crossing it. The track then undulates with some steep ups and downs. Several windfalls were cleared. The last part of the track is flat and goes through a nice open part of the forest with some muddy patches. We arrived at Iron Gate Hut at 2:30 pm and were ready for a quick cup of tea before some of us took a 'stroll' up towards the ridges.



Just arrived at Iron Gate Hut (Photo by Stephen Legg)

Being a party of 10 we were a bit concerned that we would take up all the beds in the hut, so four of us slept under fly and in a tent. However, we did not need to worry because we were the only ones in the hut. It was a very cold night. Good that the new spacious hut has a nice wood burner.

We woke up Sunday morning to the whistling from a pair of Blue ducks foraging in the Oroua river just below the hut. What a nice way to wake up to a nice frosty morning. The water in the pipe from the water tank was frozen, so water for cooking and washing had to be collected from the river as was the usual way to collect water before this new hut was built.



Blue Ducks, Oroua River at Iron Gate Hut (Photo by Kirsten Olsen)

We had all had breakfast, packed, cleaned and were ready to leave the hut by 9 am. We enjoyed a nice sunny day while we retraced our steps back towards Alice Nash Memorial Lodge. In a trojan effort, Richard did one last double cut of a large windfall tree. We stopped for lunch at Tunupo Creek where we basked in the sun for a while.

At the end of the trip we enjoyed Janet and Graham's hospitality at their shed (see photo).

Thank you to Janet for organising such a nice trip and keeping track of all of us and all of our multi - activities.



*Relaxing after the trip at Janet and Graham's 'shed'.
Photo by Stephen Legg (missing in the photo)*

We were Janet Wilson, Michelle and Neil Benton, Adele Singleton, Kirsten Olsen, Sue Moore (first trip with the club), Stephen Legg, Roy Rolston, Richard Lockett, Graham Peters and Bruce the dog.

Ross Peak

23 August 2020

Report: Bruce Van Brunt

Ross Peak is a modest hill (1050m) located between Wharite and Maharahara in the Southern Ruahines. It is the closest named peak to my house near Pohangina Township, yet it took me some 25 years to go visit it. My excuse for this oversight is that there is no track on any map to the summit, and, like all of the Southern Ruahines, this peak is clothed heavily in leatherwood. One does not go lightly on untracked expanses in this area unless you have a lot of patience, energy and time. The deal changer here was that I learned there was in fact a decent track up to the summit.

One can access the track to Ross Peak from No 2 Line, in the Pohangina Valley. No 2 line is just south of the N. Awahou school and the access is signposted. You simply drive up No 2 Line until you reach a point where there is a clear DoC sign on a gate that marks the road up to the "carpark". The road to the carpark can be soft after rain, so one might prefer an all-wheel drive/ 4WD for the ½ km spur to the carpark. The carpark itself is just a flat spot: the only evidence that it is the car park is a few dilapidated DoC green posts lying on the ground.

We gathered at 9am on a less than promising morning. There was a wetting rain at this time, but the promise of better weather as the day progressed. I suppose this forecast motivated us to meet near Pohangina at 9am rather than earlier. There were four of us all arriving in

different vehicles, but we consolidated in two vehicles that would have the clearance for the short spur to the carpark. The weather quickly improved as we got started on the tramp.

The beginning of this tramp is marked by white poles through the farm. The stiles are not that good (DoC clearly spent their budget on the carpark gate sign) and some care must be taken across the farm. Having been through this section before, I knew the general layout of the passage through the farm. It is well marked and not too bad to follow. The beginning of the ridge leading towards Ross Peak is marked with another modern sign indicating that you are entering the Ruahines. This is the last evidence you will see of DoC

We followed a "track" up the narrow ridge towards the bushline. The track is unmarked and is more or less a stock track. The bushline begins around 750m. Here the track dissolves but with a little patience one can find the track as it is pretty clear though unmarked. We had no trouble finding this track and following it up to the summit of Ross Peak. We saw the occasional ancient tape on trees, but the ground trail was clear enough in any case. Once in the leatherwood, the track was very clear to follow.

We had a leisurely ascent up to the summit. The farmland sported some lovely views of Ruapehu and the Pohangina Valley. Phil took the opportunity to watch and listen for various birds to help with the bird atlas. The trig at Ross Peak is not a comfortable place for lunch, but there is clearing on the track nearby that affords some good views and comfort. We had been lucky up to now as the rain had stopped early on in the tramp. True to form, however, it started to rain as soon as we sat down for lunch. We descended down the track and back to the farmland. Although there are virtually no markers aside from some old tape on the way up, I noticed that there were a few markers visible on the way down particularly near the bushline.

All up, it was a nice day out and the weather was mostly pleasant. We were Rachel, Phil, Penny and Bruce.

Mid-winter Get Together

8th - 9th August 2020

Report: Anne Lawrence

There were 27 members attending over the weekend – Janet and Graham, Michelle and Neil, Kirsten and Stephen, Anne and Martin, Llew and Jenny, Grant and Vicki, Kathy and Jon, Jo and Lawrence, Yvonne, Sally, Bruce, Chris T, Graeme R, Catherine, Penny, Roy, Woody, Warren and Mick.

Saturday morning saw a small group investigating the track from Poh Base down to the Pohangina river. It had recently been cleared and marked with tape so was pretty easy to follow... and it is definitely worth following as it passes through some lovely forest. A bit of exploring by the river then back to Poh Base for lunch.

In the afternoon, a few of us drove down the road to do the Kahikatea walk – a short circuit, but, again, worth doing for the lovely forest it passes through. We then had the Gumboot throwing competition. This proved to be hotly contested with debate about the best gumboot hold, the best gumboot to throw, etc.

Dinner was a potluck affair, interspersed with conversations and a variety of slide presentations. Stephen and Kirsten set up their telescope for some planet gazing. Jupiter and its moons were surprisingly clear as was Saturn.



Sunday's event was a trip up Takapari Road to A-frame hut. The plan was for everyone to go up in 4WDs with a small group biking down. There was some discussion about the state of the road and what sort of vehicles would be able to navigate it. The road turned out to be more challenging than anticipated – it was muddy, slippery, rocky with occasional large holes. This was a nice challenge for the drivers with everyone managing to get to the top Well

done to the drivers: Neil, Grant, Graeme, Jon and Graham.

The condition of the road along with the weather which was cold, wet and windy even before we got to the top led to the bikers becoming increasingly reluctant to actually get on their bikes. In the end Stephen Legg was the sole biker – he got dropped off a little way down from the top and had great fun negotiating the road at some speed. The 4WDs had to let a large group (25?) of vehicles from the Wellington 4WD club come up the road.

Thanks to Janet for organising a great weekend.

Interclub Quiz

Thursday 13 August 2020

Report: Warren Wheeler

Everyone learned something, including the Quizmaster with some Maori spelling corrections. Everyone was a prize winner with chocolate Snickers, Moro, Bounty bars and Whittakers Choc Bars handed out at the end.



The quiz included General Knowledge, Where Am I, Birds and Berries, Rope Me Up (one handed bowline in pairs race), Pack Up and Go (team event) are all available on-line for those who did not attend to enjoy. To equalise the scoring a "novel" (fair?) approach to the supposedly easy Birds and Berries questions was to select the team to answer based on whether they were first, second or third to tap a spoon on their climbing helmet to indicate they had the answer and matching that placing with a card chosen from 9 playing cards (3 x Ace, 2 and 3) laid out on the table (Ace = first tapper etc)...a real equaliser, not the usual fastest anyway...maybe the jury is still out on whether it was better !! The results of that section were PNTMC 12, MUAC 10, MTSC 8 which was probably closer than it would have been otherwise and reflected the final results.

Rope Me Up times for 2 pairs/4 bowlines were MUAC 1m11s, MTSC 1m58s, PNTMC 2m2s (5, 4, 3 points respectively)... wrist traps slowed

PNTMC badly. Pack Up and Go was very close - MUAC 4m31s, MTSC 4m34s, PNTMC 5m6s (10, 8, 6 points)... good to know that you should be able to pack your bag in about 5 minutes if the chopper arrives unexpectedly.

Final results were:

PNTMC 63 points (winner of the Trevor Bissell Memorial Billy Trophy)
MUAC 53 points (thanks in part to the ring-ins from PNTMC)
MTSC 41 points

Thanks to Warren for organising the quiz.

Ruapehu Snow Skills

26 July 2020

Report: Roy Rolston

Pics: Warren Wheeler

Knowing that a snow-craft course was not going to be on the Club calendar this year and keen to learn some snow and ice travel skills I called Grant to see if he could help me. After some discussion a proposed trip to Ruapehu was cooked and when a good weather window early in the week of 27th July opened up and the trip was confirmed. Warren and I joined Grant in his loaded car and Headed off Sunday afternoon traveling to our two nights stay at patrons Sues holiday place at Rangitoua just before Ohakune. We were joined later in the evening by 3 Massey students, Christian Offen and two of his friends that were also keen on some snow instruction and after the fitting of crampons and a gear checklist, a plan was hatched for Monday on the mountain.

Monday morning was crisp and frosty but the day promised to be fine calm and sunny perfect for newbies on the snow. Malcolm arrived to join the clan for the day and help with instruction duties. The drive up to Turoa Ski-field was straightforward lining up in the car park next to all the car loads of skiers for the day. Grant then started with his first lesson, warning us of the danger getting out of the car. Yes ICE!! Watch your step. Gingerly we got out and donned our backpacks from the boot of the car containing gear and food packed for the day. However, our boots were no match for the slippery ice and embarrassingly we all struggled to stay upright. I come close to arsing up a few times as we made our way across the carpark towards the ski lift. Grant however did take a tumble

brushing his elbow, which I could see was an annoying start to the day.

We all assembled near the chairlift and the plan was to walk up to the left of the ski slopes to find a gully to learn some skills. Grant looked at the slope to climb in front of us and immediately it was crampons ON. With trepidation this was it, chomp chomp chomp up the slope with these big spikes under my feet. It was surreal, these things really do have you stick to the icy snow. Luckily the slope up was not too steep following a ski and snowmobile path but further on Grant had his gully in mind that presented a different story. Up, down, sidling Grant backed up by Malcolm show us how to do it using different methods depending upon degrees of slope and snow conditions. All very helpful and I was getting the hang of it. Then it was crampons OFF. A different story again and more skills were shown on methods to get around with only your boots. Then the most important part, self-arresting! basically how to best save yourself if you loose your footing and career off down an icy snow slope into oblivion.



Grant showed us how it was done and we all followed his example practicing. It was tricky at first, the slope we practiced on was safe, short with a good run off but you still had to make yourself fall over and fall over we did, backwards, forwards and on your back and the most difficult on your back head first arhhh! With a few tries of each we all managed to get the ice axe to dig in to some degree and stop ourselves falling on the beginner slope. Grant however sternly informed us that self-arresting is an ongoing practice and an important skill to perfect and not one you can master in a couple of hours if you want to be a serious snow and ice climber.

Lunchtime now it was now a very good day sunny and warm and I was roasting. We all took some layers off for the afternoon session of practicing what we had learnt now with our crampons back on, Not self-arresting though, very dangerous if you don't get it right. I was wearing leggings with long johns underneath and I was pretty warm but I regretted not removing my leggings as the afternoon sunny weather had me cook even more. Our Massy students were great and we all got on really well. They had a ball in the snow however they had to cut their day short as India, the only girl in our group had an important appointment back in Palmy so they parted and headed back while we finished off the day exploring up some steeper slopes before returning to the car also later that afternoon, by then I was pretty rung-out.



Day two started with another stiff frost. From the Turoa Ski field carpark, Grant, Warren and I dropped off the side and walked up a ridge to the right of the ski slopes this time and explored and found some iced waterfalls. Along the way we found more slopes to practice on and from Grants successful demonstration I took on climbing a steep slope by front pointing with two ice axes. It was bloody steep alright but I felt ok taking it easy making sure my two front prongs were biting in. I was pleased with myself to finally climb to the top of a leading ridge but I realized too, it's bloody hard work! Warren amused himself by digging a snow cave well- just a small one which I couldn't fit in, but it did create a photo opportunity.



By mid-afternoon we looked at the snow covered slopes and ridges above and considered tromping our way up there but I conceded that my petrol was getting low and we agreed to make our way back down via the edge of the ski slopes and the under the chair lifts. For a weekday plenty of skiers were enjoying great weather on the slopes and it was great to see kiwi families out there with their children in some cases giving it a go. Very pleasant indeed all round.

On reflection two great days in the snow. All this was new to me and one hell of an experience, I learnt so much. I came away having a much greater appreciation of what alpine mountaineering is all about and the skills and stamina required to master it. Many thanks for Grant for organizing the trip and leading the course of instruction and Malcolm for sharing his experience and skills also. Very much appreciated.



Beach Walk

1 August 2020

Report: Janet Wilson

Pics: Martin Lawrence and Warren Wheeler

Winter is a great time for beach walking and this particular day turned out to be perfect - cool, with a gentle tail wind.

We all travelled down to Otaki Beach, parked 2 cars in the foreshore car park and packed in to 2 vehicles for the drive to the start of the walk at Hokino Beach. We were away walking by about 9.20am. The tide was on its way out, the sand was firm, and we made good progress.



Along the way we found a couple of small sharks abandoned by fishermen and still alive, so they were put back in the sea. Further along there was a tangle of fishing net, full of living things including some crabs which were also rescued. Some plastic rubbish was collected by Warren - the level of rubbish was generally not too bad and I assumed (hoped) that the locals with quad bikes and 4WD's were cleaning the worst of it up. Along some parts of the beach there were many washed up shells, some beautiful, some still with their inhabitants intact inside - a sign that a storm had stirred up the sea recently. We started a competition to find the most beautiful object.



The crux of the walk was to be the Ohau River - I could find little information on how deep this was likely to be so everyone was prepared to get somewhat wet. It certainly appeared to be quite wide as we approached. Richard

waded in first and nearly crossed - turned back by a deeper channel near the far bank. We waded down the river, moving closer to the sea until a shallower crossing was found - somewhere about mid-thigh for most of us. It certainly is a different beast to the small river you cross it on SH1.

Beyond the Ohau we had lunch on the top of a sand dune. Maps were consulted and it was interesting to see how the course of the river had changed over time.



As we approached the next river and small settlement of Waikawa, we started to meet more people. A local helped us locate the track through the sand dunes to the bridge over the Waikawa. We found useful public toilets here and had a break before heading on down the coast to Otaki.

Nearing Otaki Beach, the Wellington Arts Festival "little hut" was found still intact in the dunes at the south end of the beach. Back at the carpark, our "beautiful objects" were laid out for judging - some really lovely shells - and some keen competition. I can't remember who won - was it Michelle or Kathy or maybe Warren?

I reckoned this was to be an approx 16km walk. Rachelle measured it at around 20km. It took approx 5½ hours to complete. Well-earned ice creams were devoured outside the local Four Square before we headed off back to Hokino to pick up the other cars. Thanks to everyone who came on this enjoyable walk - perhaps you will join me next time on the next leg of the journey from Otaki to Waikanae.

We were Warren, Michelle, Rachel, Martin, Richard, Toru, Kathy, Adelle, Garth and trip leader Janet.

From the Archives - 50 years ago

There is a gold mine of entertaining reading in the Archive of Newsletters on our website.

September 1970 has a recipe for Stew and three trips reports, one of which is reproduced here, complete with a sketch of their overloaded car.

8-9th August 1970

MANGAEHUEHU HUT, TONGARIRO NATIONAL PARK.

Anyone who thought that Mt. Ruapehu is just a one-sided, snow covered facade on which noisy and over-enthusiastic annual Club trips in a bus vie for space to fall over, surely had their eyes opened on August 8th, when 14 members of the club explored the southern side of the mountain. There is a wealth of tramping country, for us made more beautiful by a light fall of snow and the clean, cold weather which turned waterfalls to vast ice-sculpture and sharpened the edge of Girdlestone Peak, an ever absorbing and challenging spire which dominated the clear blue sky.

The Ohakune Mountain Road is usually open and suitable for most vehicles. We drove to the lower car park at about 4,000 ft. through rimu and beech forest. The track starts in the beech and crosses several small rivers, some with spectacular water-falls, including the highest in the Park which tumbles over an ancient lava flow for over 100 ft.

A protracted stop was made for a brew, the magnificent view of Girdlestone seen up the valley and a discussion of the use of icicles in a perfect murder. After 1½ hours the track emerged into open tussock and ended - our guide, Ranger John Clay left us here, and we relied on trip leader David Ryrie from there on; a successful method, though some might question his sense of timing - possibly due to the fresh snow and frequent stops to admire the almost impossibly beautiful mountain.

The Mangaehuehu hut is at 4,200 ft., discreetly hidden till you get there but well sited in every way. It represents the high aims of the Park Board, with accommodation for 24 in three

rooms, running water, an excellent stove, carbonettes and an extensive cheese cooler, all for 50c a night.

The evening passed in animated cooking, appreciative eating, discussions on vertebrae, radioactivity etc. and plans for an early start, pre-dawn if I can see the stars from my sleeping bag.

In the morning we split into three parties with three different intentions, but basically they all did the same thing at different times throughout the morning.

We walked out by a high level route, gradually climbing to 5,500 ft. through the snow and descending via the Blyth Ridge to the Massey Alpine Club Hut. The route is unmarked but through quite open country and took between 2 and 3 hours. Under the conditions it provided the perfect second day, magnificent views of the Kaimanawas, the Ruahines, Mt. Egmont and the snow whipping off Girdlestone in soft, feathery plumes that indicated a wind of about sixty miles per hour - this prevented any ascent by the after all not so early starters.



The going was easy, varying terrain but with a little ice work to satisfy the mind. It was one of those very satisfying trips where no one got wet or fell in a hole or burnt the stew – nothing to remember it by, except for the mountain.

Footnote: It should be mentioned here that shortly after starting on Saturday morning there was an incident to remember. How could one forget? One member's Anglia having broken down between Waituna West and Rewa and a certain Cortina station wagon happening to arrive at an opportune time, it was decided to set a new world record for cramming people into a car. So the Anglia's passengers were conveyed to Ohakune. Owing to pressure from the top layers of bods it was impossible to count heads, so arms and legs were counted and divided by four. The tally thus arrived at was 38½ persons in one station wagon!

Trip members: Leader, David Ryrie, Lawson Pither, Sue Streeter, Heather Crabb, Bill Olsen, Joy and David Olsen, Adrian Turner, Malcolm Watson, Peter Sutcliffe, Angus Lonie, Mark Annabell, Kevin Pearce, Peter Baxter.



PNTMC Newsletter

September 2020

What's inside this month?

- Trip reports
- Upcoming trips
- Beginner Tramps
- And more....

Articles for the newsletter
 Send to Anne Lawrence,
 the newsletter editor, via the club website
<http://www.pntmc.org.nz/mail/>.



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Get out and about with us!

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Gear Custodian	Warren Wheeler	356 1998
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