



# Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club

[www.pntmc.org.nz](http://www.pntmc.org.nz)

P.O. Box 1217, Palmerston North

## Newsletter May 2021



On Henry's peak, Egmont National Park. Photo taken by Kathy Corner on the Pouakai circuit in March this year. See inside for full trip report.



Iron Gates Gorge looking good. Photo taken by Warren Wheeler on club trip on 14<sup>th</sup> February this year.

## 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.

**13<sup>th</sup> May**

**Tour Aotearoa or Bust**

**Richard Lockett**

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February 2020 Richard set off from Cape Reinga and headed south for Bluff 3000 kms away Bikepacking. Come along to hear as to why he'd want to do that and how he got on.

**27<sup>th</sup> May**

**BYO Pics**

**Martin Lawrence**

Come along and share your pic of what you have been doing over the last 12 months. Be selective – just choose your best shots to show so there is time for everyone.

## Upcoming Trips

### 1<sup>st</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> May

**Tukino** **Fit&Technical**  
**Grant Christian** **021 117 6921**

Meet at Tukino Road 2wd car park at 9 a.m. Saturday morning. Drive to the top of the road and walk up to Wangaehu Hut where we will stay the night (fees apply). We can leave our overnight gear at the hut and climb further up the mountain. If anyone is keen, we could do some rock scrambling on steeper rock with a rope - or stick to the easier stuff if you prefer. May need crampons if there's been some early snow.

### 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> May (Best weather day)

**Maharaha Crossing** **Medium**  
**Warren Wheeler** **356 1998**

This trip is one of the shortest crossings up onto the leatherwood tops and over the Ruahine Ranges. The group will split in two and start from each side, swapping car keys in the middle. Depart Milverton at 7.30am.

### 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> May (Not the best weather day)

**Birding in Ashhurst Domain** **All**  
**Kirsten Olsen** **027 354 6010**  
**Stephen Legg** **027 647 0095**

If you would like to practice using eBird and contributing to the Bird Atlas, join us in Ashhurst Domain for a couple of hours on Saturday 1st or Sunday 2nd May 9am. Contact Stephen or Kirsten for more details.

### Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> May (BWD)

**Navigation workshop** **All**  
**Chris Tuffley** **359 2530**

Need help finding your bearings? Then this workshop on navigation is for you! On Thursday 6th May we'll meet at the Quaker Hall at 19:30 for a theory session, talking all things maps, compasses, and electronic navigation aids. Then we'll make use of the best weather day at the weekend for a practical session outside, to put it into practice. Please email Chris at [cptuffley@gmail.com](mailto:cptuffley@gmail.com) to indicate your interest.

### 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> May

**Triangle Hut** **Fit**  
**Richard Lockett** **323 0948**

Nestled beside the Oroua River in the upper head waters, Triangle Hut offers a superb base to explore the Oroua. Travel in via the Rangī

tops and out via the trapline spur up onto Mangahua. Possibility of some trapping work. Richard is keen for a Friday start.

### 15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> May

**Howlett's crossing** **Fit**  
**Warren Wheeler** **356 1998**

A classic crossing of the Ruahines from Rangiwahia Hut across the tops route via Te Hekenga to Howletts Hut and out along the tops to Longview Hut and Kashmir Road.

Depart Friday night to stay at Rangī Hut (if that suits everyone keen to come), allow 2 hours by torch.

### Sun 16th May

**Pukenaenae - Arawaru** **Medium/Fit**  
**Dave Grant** **021 684 050/326 7788**

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

### 22<sup>nd</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> May

**Iron Gate Hut** **Medium**  
**Janet Wilson** **329 4722**

The trip to Iron Gate Hut is a classic Ruahine tramp. If you haven't already visited the new hut here is another opportunity. Suitable for all levels of fitness, the trap takes between 3.5-6 hours. We will most likely be checking the traps as we go so no need to hurry. Departing PN 7.30am or from Janet and Graham's Apiti Shed at 9am. Overnight visitors on the Friday evening welcome!

### 29<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> May

**Northern Circuit – Tongariro** **Medium**  
**Grant Christian** **021 117 6921**

This trip is a complete circuit of Mt Ngauruhoe. We will meet at the Tussock Bar & Restaurant car park, Whakapapa Village at 10 a.m. The first section of the track will take us to Mangatepopo Hut and then on to a section of the Tongariro Crossing until just past Red Crater. We take the track down to Oturere Hut where we will spend the night. On Sunday we

will walk back to Whakapapa via Waihohonu Hut and the Waihohonu Track. We can visit the historic old Waihohonu Hut on the way.

### Queen's Birthday weekend 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> June

**Motutapu** **All**  
**Janet Wilson** **329 4722**

This year the Queen's Birthday trip is to Motutapu Island (next to Rangitoto) in the Waitamata Harbour – yes, that's Auckland! We don't venture up that way often so, to make it more worthwhile, there is also a trip going to Waiheke Island for 3 nights beforehand. So, Waiheke from 1<sup>st</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> June and Motutapu from 4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> June. This is a social trip suitable for everyone. This trip is held over from last year and there is still room for a few more people. You will need to organise your own way to Auckland – maybe some limited transport available. If you want to know more, please contact Janet by 2<sup>nd</sup> May at the latest.

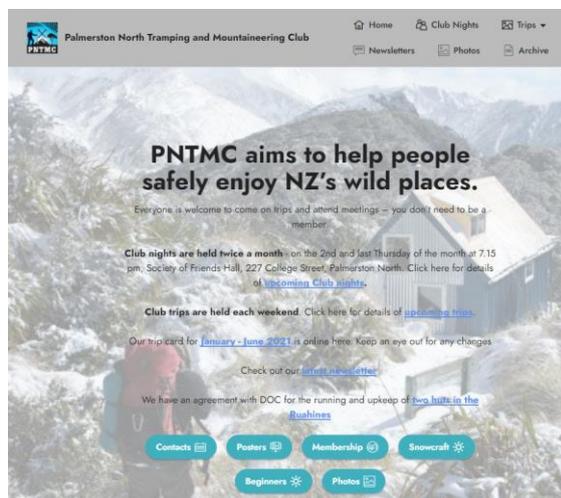
## New members

Welcome to new members: David Soong and family, and Joanne Clark. See David's photos in the Pouakai trip report.

## Notices

### New look for PNTMC website

Our website has had a makeover. It is now mobile-friendly and things should be easier to find. We are pretty happy with it, but it is a work in progress - have a look (The address is unchanged [www.pntmc.org.nz](http://www.pntmc.org.nz)) and send feedback to Martin Lawrence. [martin.lawrence.nz@gmail.com](mailto:martin.lawrence.nz@gmail.com)



### Trip card

[The latest Trip Card](#) is on the club website. We are keeping it on the website as a 'living document' so it can be kept updated with any changes. You will also find a copy of the latest version for June on the back page of this newsletter.

We are getting underway with trip planning for July to December. Contact Janet Wilson if you have ideas for trips, want to lead a trip, or grab a date.

### Subs due

At the AGM held on 8 April 2021, the subs were set the same as last year.

Subscription	Individual	Family*
eSub	\$35	\$40
Full Sub	\$45	\$50

\* add \$15 for an additional FMC Card

Payment options:

- on-line to PNTMC 030 726 0485 393 00
- cash to Warren Wheeler at a Club Night
- cheque to PNTMC, PO Box 1217, Palmerston North 4440.

### Keeping it Local - Club challenge for 2021

Enter your own points on the club spreadsheet (or get someone to enter them for you). Any problems, contact Martin Lawrence.

Here are the latest tallies:

Club Member	Huts	High Points	Bonus	TOTAL
Michelle	139	114	7	260
Elly	63	69	3	135
Chris T	46	66	3	115
Anne	44	56	0	100
Martin	44	56	0	100
Ernie	47	26	3	76
Janet	51	19	0	70
Neil	22	42	0	64
Kirsten	24	29	0	53
Warren	28	17	3	48
Dieter	14	9	0	23
Graham	2	8	0	10

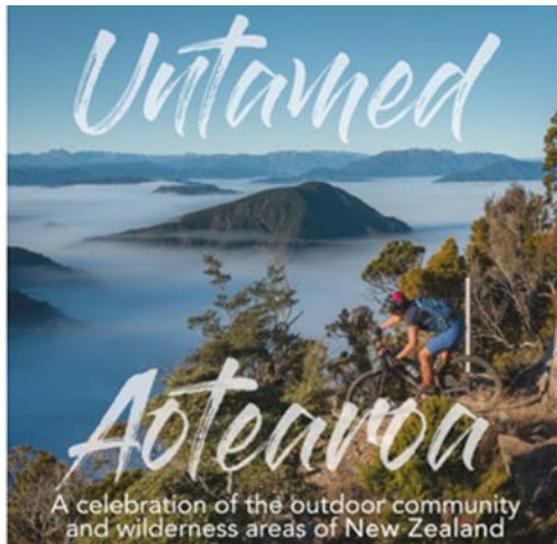
## Congratulations to Don French



Don is the first person to complete the 100 Peaks Challenge. With his ascent of Unicorn (2557m) on 21<sup>st</sup> February this year, Don ticked off the last peak of the 100 Peaks Challenge, succeeding in a challenge 30 years in the making.

You can read more about Don's 100 peak obsession on [ExplorersWeb](#) or the [Alpine Club website](#) which also has the complete list of the 100 Peaks in their Challenge.

## Untamed Aotearoa Podcast



From mountaineering to bikepacking; Brian Alder has had some marvellous accomplishments. This conversation traverses his evolution as a climber through to organizer

of the first Tour Te Waipounamu Bikepacking brevet.

[Listen to Episode 8 online](#), or search for Untamed Aotearoa Podcast on your favourite podcasting app. FMC is sponsoring this podcast; good conversations with good kiwi adventurers.

## Hut and Track closures

- Coppermine

DOC have recently completed track work and vegetation management along the Coppermine tracks. These are now all open and safe for recreation.

- Sunrise Hut and Track

DOC have extended the closure of Sunrise hut and track until the end of April. The other huts in the area will remain open but access will be closed via the Sunrise Track.

- Makaroro access

If you are planning to use the Makaroro access to Ellis Parks Peak or Poutaki huts, note that the PanPac forest is sometimes closed. Check DOC site for up to date info.

- Otaki Gorge emergency access

Otaki Gorge Road is closed to vehicles and pedestrians indefinitely. DOC has opened an Ōtaki Forks temporary walking access track which starts 11 km from SH1. This emergency track allows you to gain walking access to Tararua Forest Park. Wellington Tramping Club have got more details at <https://wtmc.org.nz/uncategorized/otaki-forks-temporary-walking-access/>

## President's Report July 2020 - April 2021

Our club's *raison d'être* is to provide a common ground for people interested in tramping, climbing and related activities to meet, discuss, plan and participate in these activities. The primary goal is thus to achieve this common ground. Another goal is to introduce people to new outdoor experiences. Above all, we hope that somehow in all this we have a lot of fun. We achieve our goals through club nights, trips and instruction, and our success can be measured in part by these activities. It is on these outward signs that I focus. Owing to the Lockdown last year, the 54<sup>th</sup> President's report covered up to 23 June, which is well past the normal coverage to late March. This report covers from June to the beginning of April.

It is my pleasure to present the 55<sup>th</sup> President's report.

### Membership

The membership of our club is generally quite stable from year to year. The membership for 2020-2021 is 78 (depending on how you count it). This number includes 75 financial members and 3 life members. What the numbers do not highlight is the flux of new members into the club. We have had 8 new individual members and 1 new family member. It is great to see this trend.

### Activities

This year the club has been engaged in many activities including a range of evening talks, club trips and instruction focussed activities. If there is a theme to our activities this year it might be "keeping it local". The Covid pestilence has strongly influenced and impacted our activities. What is remarkable is that it did not slow us down but rather forced us to focus our energies in more local activities.

#### Club Evenings:

Each year our club manages somehow to get a wonderful variety of talks about places all over the globe. This year, our range of talks reflects the worldwide Covid crisis and, in particular, the limited travel opportunities for members. Nonetheless, we did get talks on USA Northwest Parks and the Colorado Trail.

An important part of our club talks has always been to present local adventures and information/instruction of interest to the club. This year we had a variety of local talks including:

1. Golden days of Matukutuki and Hermitage;
2. Beyond Snowcraft;
3. What's up DoC?
4. What do we do now?
5. Ooh aah Oruoa
6. Te Araroa local overview.

Club nights were also used for other social activities. We had BBQ's, BYO slide nights, and a night on navigation. Club members also attended/participated in various quizzes and interclub events. We won the interclub quiz this season (see September newsletter).

The club photo competition was held in August and well subscribed by members. A special thanks goes to Martin Lawrence for helping to organize the images and judge Harley Betts along with his daughter Alex. The results are summarised in the October newsletter. The

winners went on to the interclub competition held in September, where we made a respectable show (November newsletter). Well done PNTMC photographers. Chris Tuffley's photograph of Dominie biv (Kawakas) was a runner up in the FMC photo competition (see December newsletter).

Thanks are given to all the speakers and organizers of these nights. A special thanks to Warren Wheeler for organizing these club nights and to Penny Abercrombie for always making sure we had tea and biscuits. It is surely a good sign that we can consistently field such a spectrum of social activities.

### **Club Trips:**

A considerable suite of tramps/climbs was offered to cater to the diverse interests of members. Activities included long and short trips in the Ruahine and Tararua ranges, and climbing/tramping trips in Tongariro National Parks among other places. The trip activities included mountaineering, beach walking, farm walks, mountain biking, bird spotting, trapline maintenance, 4WD trips and, of course, tramping.

Here are some quick statistics and comments from Warren:

"COVID disrupted our trip programmes this year with all the trips in April and May cancelled and a cautious restart in June and July with fewer trips programmed than usual. Overall we ended up with 45 trips actually going out of a total of 77 trips programmed (58%). Of the trips that went, 49% were in the Ruahines, 15% the Tararuas and 36% elsewhere. Average numbers on trips ended up being much higher than previous years, bolstered by large numbers on the Beginner day trips and the overnight Mid Winter Celebrations at Poh Base, as well as fewer trips in the wetter winter months. This meant that we ended up with an average of 7.2 people on day trips and 6.5 on overnight trips."

I add there were 4 Beginner tramps, which were heavily subscribed and the mid winter celebration at Pohangina Base was attended by 27 members. Clearly we were feeling fairly social! I note also that the club initiated a Southern Ruahine Challenge starting in December. This certainly influenced some of the trip choices from December to April.

Thanks are due to all the trip leaders, who made these trips possible. Special thanks are due to Anne Lawrence and Janet Wilson, who organized the trip card. It is no small feat to gather trip leaders and craft a trip programme that balances easy, moderate, fit trips along with day and overnight trips. You may have noticed that the trip card is evolving more and more into a "living document" useful for planning but liable for changes as conditions dictate. The "less permanent" character of the trip card can be traced back to the months post lockdown, when it was not clear what might happen. Nonetheless, the new character also recognizes the dynamic nature of trips, planning and it allows greater flexibility. Easier communication of changes via the website and e-mail facilitates this flexibility.

Finally I would like to thank Warren for taking over the rôle of gear custodian

### **Instruction:**

A key rôle of the club is to teach people tramping and climbing skills.

### **Snowcraft:**

The Covid situation and uncertainty post lockdown pretty much killed the formal Snowcraft programme for 2020. I would like to thank Dieter Stalman, who organized what was to be the Snowcraft programme.

This is the first time in at least 25 years that the club did not run a full Snowcraft programme. In its stead, club members rose to the occasion by offering casual beginning snowcraft days on the mountain. Thanks go to Grant Christian and Warren Wheeler for alpine trips where a day or so of instruction was in the budget. A huge thanks to our patron Sue Pither for letting the club use her cottage as a base for these (and other) trips near Tongariro.

### **Beginners Tramps:**

The club ran 4 beginners tramps. These tramps were aimed at introducing (or in some cases reintroducing) members of the public to tramping in a friendly and safe environment. The idea was that a person could progress through some or all the tramps and feel a certain level of confidence to do at least some modest walks in the local hills.

These tramps were hugely successful and well subscribed. People were introduced to the Tararuas and Ruahines and visited places like Sunrise hut and Gold Creek hut. A concrete benefit of these trips is that they are a good source of recruiting new members. Thanks are given to all the members that helped with these trips and especially to Anne and Martin Lawrence, who did the bulk of the organizing and planning.

### **First Aid:**

The club organized and partially subsidized a First Aid course, which was held at Pohangina base in November. The club secured the bulk of the funds from the Eastern and Central Community Trust, and with the club subsidy we were able to offer a full first aid course at a fraction of the cost. We gratefully acknowledge the support of the Eastern and Central Community Trust in this endeavor. The course was attended by 12 students. Thanks go to Graeme Richards for organizing this event.

The club also had a navigation instruction night in February. Thanks Warren for organizing and running this course.

These activities are a success because our members take their own time to contribute their knowledge and enthusiasm.

### **Newsletter**

The newsletter is a lasting document of our activities. I am happy to see again that this publication is growing from strength to strength. The "normal" newsletters resumed in July after the lockdown. We have consistently produced a balanced newsletter with variety, good photographs, and useful news. It is here you can find news on trips, trip reports, recipes, gossip, book reviews, among other items. It is a big job editing this newsletter and we owe Anne Lawrence a big thanks. I would also like to thank the numerous writers and photographers that helped make this a success.

### **Website**

The PNTMC website is the "public face" of the club. This website has been constructed over several years and has become a valuable resource for members and the public. The website now contains a lot of archival material along with other material of interest to members. More and more this site is becoming a one stop place to learn about the club and access material such as newsletters, hut information, and contacts. In addition, with the change in the nature of the trip card, members are turning to this website for the most up to date information for trips. The construction, maintenance and updating of this site is largely the

effort of the webmasters Peter Wiles and Martin Lawrence. We owe them a big thanks for all this hard work putting PNTMC on the cyber map and keeping it there.

## **Our Huts**

Our club is responsible for the upkeep of Ngamoko and Mid Pohangina huts. We have taken this obligation seriously and have had several visits to the huts with a view towards keeping these huts tidy and useable. Some visits have been integrated into club trips, others have been linked with activities such as stoat trapping. One need only turn to the newsletters to get a flavour of what is being done for these huts by club members and their friends. We maintain a hut maintenance fund (for Mid Pohangina and Ngamoko) that is growing through hut fees and poster sales. We are awaiting revised agreements with DoC on these huts and operating under the latest agreements.

## **Community and Outside Activities**

Several of our members engaged in activities related to tramping that helped the community. We have members contributing their time and experience to SAR and FMC activities among other things. Thanks to everybody for these wonderful contributions. Here, I wish to note more specifically the activities concerning Whio protection.

**Whio Protection:** Our membership is involved significantly in Whio Protection thanks largely to the prodigious efforts of Janet Wilson. The newsletter and trip card reflect the efforts of members in addition to a lot of work that went unrecorded (by us at least). Our club has a solid corps of helpers with the trap lines.

It is with great pleasure that I note that Janet received recognition for her efforts over many years in the form of a Queen's Service Medal. The citation is for "Services to wildlife conservation" and mentions a number of activities she has been involved with over many years. And yes, PNTMC is mentioned specifically in the citation. We are all proud of her efforts!

## **Acknowledgements**

We all know that it is the members of a club that makes it what it is. Our success this year is due the efforts of the members. It is to them that I give thanks first.

Although administration is seldom a glamorous task, this work needs to be done to ensure a smooth-running club. The committee has been instrumental in the operation of the club. This group met monthly to discuss all matters pertaining to the running of the club and helped plan various strategies for the club's direction. It is from this group, for example, that a programme of speakers and the trip cards come into being and decisions on gear purchases are made. This is where, as a club, we respond to various proposals from DoC and suggestions from the FMC.

I gratefully acknowledge the enormous help given to me by all the members of the committee: thank you Warren Wheeler, Janet Wilson, Martin Lawrence, Anne Lawrence Graeme Richards Michelle Benton, Roy Ralston and Penny Abercrombie. A special thanks also to Don French, who reviewed our accounts.

Bruce van Brunt,  
President PNTMC, 8 April 2021.

## Trip Reports

### Sawtooth ridge

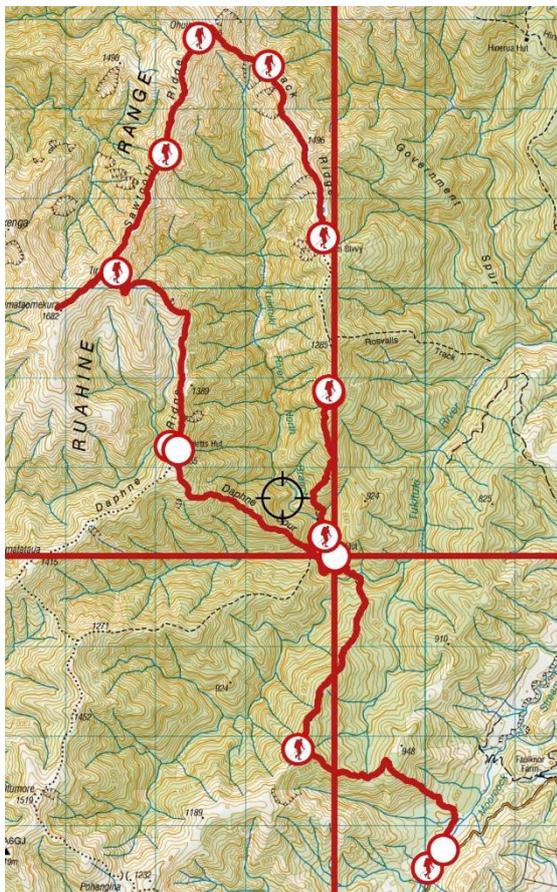
26<sup>th</sup> -28<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Trip leader: Elly Arnst

Report: Kirsten Olsen

We were seven keen trampers and a dog on this wonderful trip: *Stephen Legg, Anne Lawrence, Kirsten Olsen, Michelle Benton, Christina Beckmann, Martin Lawrence, Elly Arnst (trip leader) and her dog Tucker.*

The trip was recorded by Stephen on NZTopo50 map (except for the descent from Tarn Bivvy to Daphne hut).



*Recorded route, Kashmir Rd., Daphne hut, Howletts hut, Daphne ridge to Tiraha, detour to Taumataomekura, Sawtooth Ridge to Ohuinga, Black Ridge to Tarn Bivvy, Daphne Hut and back to the car (screenshot of Stephen Legg's phone)*

### Day 1

We all met at Ashhurst at 8am and drove to the Daphne carpark off Kashmir Rd. We left the road end at 10am. The weather was fine and we got really hot on the way up the first hill towards Daphne hut. We had a snack on the top before descending to the Tukutuki river. The descent was less steep than the first

ascent. At the river we stopped for lunch and enjoyed the sun before our walk up the river to the turnoff up Daphne Spur.



*Walking up the Tukutuki River (Photo by Elly Arnst)*

The water level in the river was low. It only reached to below the knee. But as long as the river level is higher than the boots it will fill up the boots! Some of us had listened to Stephen's explanation about weight distribution and energy expenditure and remembered that 100g on your feet is approximately equivalent to 1kg in your backpack, so Michelle and I emptied our boots and wrung the socks, while the rest relaxed before we headed up Daphne Spur.

We had expected Daphne Spur to be harder than the first ascent - and it was. Elly kept our spirits high by giving us regular information about how far we had climbed and how much further we had to climb. It was nice to see the bright orange and blue Howletts Hut (7 hut points!). We arrived at 4:30pm.



*Howletts Hut (photo by Stephen Legg)*

### Day 2

We planned to leave Howletts Hut at 8am but we were ready at 7:45. It was a lovely sunrise as you can see on Christina's Photo.



*Getting ready to depart Howletts hut  
(Photo by Christina Beckmann)*

There was a light breeze when we left the hut and walked up the ridge to Tiraha (8 points for the club challenge) so we all had a windproof or an extra layer on. It was reasonably flat or a gentle climb at the beginning, then it started to become steeper, but it was only a 200m climb. From Tiraha we detoured to bag another '10 points' by walking up Taumataomekura. It was a gentle ascent without our packs.



*The party at the top of Taumataomekura  
(photo by Martin Lawrence)*

Back on Tiraha and on with the packs. Now we faced what we all looked forward to: traversing the Sawtooth Ridge. I was a bit nervous. I do not like walking on narrow ledges with a steep drop to the side, but Elly assured me that it was not really that scary as long you just took your time and were careful. Martin and Anne had previously attempted the Sawtooth ridge but had had to turn back because of bad weather. Likewise, many other trampers have had to turn back because of the weather, but we were lucky. We had really fine weather. There were some narrow parts where I just looked where I put my feet and only afterwards looked down to the sides.



*Crossing the Sawtooth ridge  
(photo by Kirsten Olsen)*

In places we sidled along below the tops. Some parts were a bit slippery and others were a bit overgrown with tussock and leatherwood.



*Sidling along one of the teeth on Sawtooth Ridge (photo  
by Christina Beckmann)*

At the end of Sawtooth Ridge, we faced the 200m climb to Ohuinga (8 more points) where we had lunch and a rest before our descent to Black Ridge. I found Black Ridge just as challenging as Sawtooth Ridge. There were several places where it was narrower and there were also places where the sidling was nearly as challenging. It was nice to be able to look back towards Ohuinga and see how much we had descended. I am pleased that we did Sawtooth Ridge from south to north so we did not have to walk up Ohuinga from Black Ridge. It flattened out as we got closer to Tarn Bivvy.



*Looking back towards Ohuinga from Black Ridge  
(Photo by Elly Arnst)*

We had a rest at one of the tarns and discussed whether we should continue all the way to Tarn Bivvy or camp at a tarn just north of the Bivvy. We had seen a helicopter land at Tarn Bivvy from Ohuringa and take off 20 minutes later, so we expected that some hunters were staying there. There was not really space for our five tents at that tarn so we ended up continuing to Tarn Bivvy (7 more points) where we found three hunters (two in the Bivvy and one in an adjacent tent). We erected our tents on a flat spot near the Bivvy at 4:30pm.



*Camp at Tarn Bivvy (photo by Martin Lawrence)*

### Day 3

We woke up to a beautiful sunrise over the thunder box (the open-air toilet) on Sunday morning around 7 am. We had the tents packed and breakfast eaten quite fast, so were ready to leave at 8:40 am.



*Sunrise over Hawkes Bay from the Thunder box  
(Photo by Kirsten Olsen)*

We walked along the ridge and had a group photo in front of the Sawtooth ridge before descending steeply through the forest to Tukituki River and Daphne hut (5 points), where we had our morning snack. We had finished our circuit.



*The proud and happy party in front of Sawtooth ridge on the way from Tarn Bivvy to Daphne Hut.  
(photo by Elly Arnst)*

We continued along down the river where we found a couple of big water spiders. This time, more of us emptied our boots and wrung our socks, before continuing up our last 500m ascent to the junction with the track to the carpark. It felt like it went on forever. We had lunch at the top and were back at the car at 3pm.

Some stats for the trip:

Day 1: (Car/Kashmir Rd to Howletts) 8.5 km, ascended 1416 m, 6.5 hours. Day 2: (Howletts

– Tarn Bivvy incl. detour) 11.2 km, ascended 810m, 8.75 hours. Day 3: (Tarn Bivvy – Car/Kashmir Rd) 10.2 km, ascended 715m, 6.25 hours. Total: 30km, vertical ascent and descent 2941m!

Thank you to Elly for organising the trip, being flexible in relation to the party's ability, and keeping our spirits high. The trip was amazing.

**Pouakai Circuit**  
**19<sup>th</sup> -21<sup>st</sup> March 2021**  
**Report: Jon Atkins**  
**Photos: David Soong**

Our esteemed leader Kathy had paid homage to the weather gods and we set off for a 3 hour drive before arriving at the foothills of the Pouakai Range. A half hour of traversing under cover of forest akin to the Tararuas, we had lunch before the Kaiuauai shelter. The two Poms and one French Canadian scratched their heads pondering how to pronounce one consonant followed by 6 vowels. And so it began: the ascent of Henry's Peak 1224 metres. Not knowing the climb was a blessing!.Kathy leading in the true British Military style from the rear. Strider "2 sticks" Jon pressed on taking the lead, his mantra was 'stairway to heaven". Emerging to full sunshine from the bush mistakenly thinking this to be Nirvana, he was passed by Liette 15 hundred and counting (oh those steps).



Having summited Henry's Peak we took in expansive views round the coast of Egmont National Park to the west and north . We circumnavigated Maude Peak arriving to view Mount Taranaki reflected in the tarn. A short

walk along the newly built boardwalk brought us to Pouakai Hut. David and Liette strode back to catch numerous great photos from the tarn at sunset. The fully booked hut was snug and warm. The kindly DOC worker at the hut took on the task of fixing a loose sole on Jon's boot which was in imminent danger of coming off entirely. The final solution was holes poked through with a red-hot nail and tied up with cord.



We rose prior to dawn and were rewarded by some great shots of a really crisp Mt Taranaki in the tarn, having dived with death on slidey unfinished frosted boardwalk. After breakfast we dropped our packs at the junction to Pouakai Peak. The view was quite glorious, the entire coastline of Taranaki laid out before us at the peak.



We descended down the Ahukawakawa track across the wetland to a teeming Holly Hut, a journey of 4 hours or so. Having bagged a bunk, Jon had a snooze, then we took off to Bells Falls. Kathy and Roy waded across Stoney River to the base of the falls. Coy Roy stripped to his undies . Kathy was seen by all gathered taking to the water in Germanic style totally naked (again). Back at the hut we cooked our evening

meal out on the grass in front of the hut and watched the sinking sunshine. David gave us a conducted tour of his Bivvy Bag which he had elected to sleep in.



Day 3 still in sunshine and shirt sleeves we ascended diagonally circumnavigating the base of Mount Taranaki. Roy had helpfully bound Jon's Dodgy boot wrapped in tape - a belt and braces job! Unfortunately, Jon found himself overdressed and needed to loosen his long trousers. Jon and Roy fought hard to get those trousers off- a strange feeling Jon said, the fight captured on camera by Kathy. At our lunch stop we looked down upon our travels. Quite a trip and highly recommended, but remember to take the good weather.

We were Kathy, Jon Liette, David and Roy.

**10<sup>th</sup> April 2021**  
**Top Gorge Hut**  
**Report: Monika Coles**



*Top Gorge Hut (Photo by Monika Coles)*

Top Gorge Hut – the trip was scheduled for best weather day – Saturday or Sunday. The weather forecast wasn't great, with Sunday looking slightly better, but decision was made - the trip will go ahead on Saturday, as there was going to be less wind. Seven people were penciled in to come on the trip. When Saturday morning came, it was raining as predicted. It was raining at 5am, it was raining at 6am and it was still raining when we met at Milverton Park at 7am. Five people turned up, either in raincoats or with umbrellas. Do we still go? Yes! Let's go and see how it is when we get to the car park. The whole car ride it did not stop raining, but the closer we got, the lighter the rain seemed to be. By the time we were driving on Kashmir Road, only a few drops were landing on the front car window. We reached the car park, got out and the rain stopped.

We got ourselves ready and started a gentle climb up. The track was very well formed making for easy going. Before we knew it, it was time for a first stop. Still no rain. After a quick snack energy boost, we carried on up towards the ridge, that will lead us to Longview Hut, which we could see already from the track. Clouds were now mainly below us. We could see patches of dark clouds, which indicated an area that was getting heavy rain, but not for us. Around us was mostly clear with great views. We made it to the Longview Hut in a couple of hours and had a stop to admire the view and to have some more to eat. After the brief stop, we returned to the ridge junction and carried on towards Rocky Knob.



*Looking into the sun on Rocky Knob  
(Photo by Warren Wheeler)*

Once there, we left our backpacks on the track and climbed a short distance to the top at 1226m. We found more amazing views with some very swiftly moving clouds. Being on the top of the rock created some great photographic opportunities and Warren was quick with his camera directing us to pose. The photo is stunning. Great idea and great memory of the day.

We dropped a bit down and stopped in a small saddle in the middle of the track. The only give away, that there might be something else happening, was a simple iron pole sticking out of the ground. Once we were all there, we turned right of the track and headed down a hunters' track to Pohangina River.



*A bit steep down to the Pohangina River  
(Photo by Warren Wheeler)*

Once we reached the river, we were following, crossing and walking through the river for about 40 minutes until we reached the Top Gorge Hut. Along the river we noticed a few good size spiders just resting on the rocks or on the water itself.



*Big water spider on a small pool  
(Photo by Warren Wheeler)*

At the hut, we made ourselves comfortable outside, some taking the opportunity to take off and dry their boots while having lunch, chatting and resting.

After a very pleasant break we headed off towards a spur following a bio-diversity (stoat trappers) track. The climb went really quick and we were up at the top on the proper ridge track in no time. We headed back towards Rocky Knob and Longview Hut.

The walking was going well until Warren stopped, looked at me and asked me if I knew where I was. I had to be honest and said that I had no idea. But then it was made obvious that I should know and I recognized the iron pole! We were back at the small saddle under Rocky Knob where we turned right to head down to the river. We had now done a loop and came back to the same place.

We still had no rain. Michelle had made a great observation: she said it was like we were walking all day in this protective bubble of good weather. We could see black clouds around us, below us, we could see the rain in the distance, but everywhere we went, we were fine. We were in our bubble.

We carried on retracing our steps back past Longview Hut and down to the carpark at the end of Kashmir Road. Very enjoyable eight hours spent hiking with a great bunch of people. This was my first time in the Ruahines and I learnt a lot. Warren has been great pointing out different types of leatherwood to me, different tracks all around that we could

see and challenging me to notice and pay attention to what I see, so I know my whereabouts without looking at my GPS, which is a great skill to have and something that I am more than happy to work on.

Thanks all for a great day, see you on the tracks again soon.

Participants: Warren Wheeler (leader), Michelle Benton, Graeme Richards, Dieter Stalman, and Monika Coles

**3<sup>rd</sup> April 2021**  
**Schormann-Kaitoke (SK) Main Range**  
**Hannah Lund & Ashley Graham**  
**Female unsupported team**  
**23 hours 35 minutes**  
**Report: Hannah Lund**



It all started back in uni when I needed a memorable 21st present for my mate so I entered us in the Tararua Mountain Race (TMR). Overconfident and underprepared. This was when mountain/trail running started for us and when we learnt of the SK and became captivated by stories of the trials, successes and failures of sub24hour attempts. We made a pledge that one day we would do it.

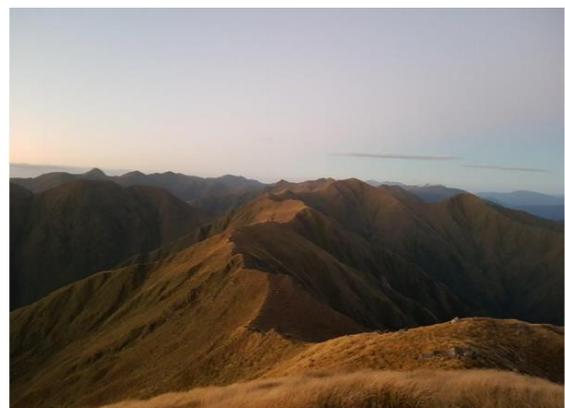
Fast forward a few years its 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2021 and if not now, then when? It's a clear starry night with a light breeze and the silhouette of the hills tower above us as mum drives us to Putara road end from Dannevirke. I've come to this

road end many times and I can only recount one where the weather was this good.

3am looms, we are all amped up with nervous excitement. Mum counts down from 10. It feels like the start of a race but it's just us. We are off only to do 5 strides before we have to fumble to open the gate. It takes a little to settle into a pace. I assure Ashley that at this speed we will be on track to Herepai but I can tell in her voice she thinks we are too slow. As we climb higher the breeze gets stronger. 59minutes and we are at Herepai hut. Feeling good and relief to be on track to the target splits. Finally, I feel settled.

As we climb above the hut, we were pleased to find the wind had given the tussock a nice blow-dry but it wasn't long before the jackets were on. Crisp air shortened our breath and made our eyes water. We climbed along the ridge taking in the starry sky and the lights of the townships below us. It was really beautiful. I try to make conversation but the wind was taking our words away. We travel in silence.

East peak 5.02am. Still dark. Still windy. Moving well and feeling positive. Dundas 7.20am. The sun is broaching the tops and the tussocks are on fire. Welcome warmth on our backs and the wind dropped letting the tears dry. It's a perfect Tararua day. How lucky are we!? I point out Mt Crawford to Ashley. Last time we were here together there were no views. We could even see Mt Hectar on the horizon miles away. I point it out to Ashley and grin. She doesn't seem too perturbed. I love that she shares my unjustified confidence that we've got this.



Our first set of antlers appear, an 8 pointer trotting along the ridgeline 50m ahead. Ashley's frustration is setting in as its mid roar and the rifle is at home. "Sweet, lets come back here tomorrow." she says. So naïve. The next stag is standing perfectly broadside 20m away not moving and staring at us. Just typical. Oh god, fourth deer, at least it's a hind. Better run faster so Ashley hasn't got so much time to look at the wildlife. I'm very grateful she's come all the way from Whakatane to join me on this adventure. This is such a tease.

Drac biv 9:44am. This was our first water top up and time for a radix breakfast. On the go of course, we have a job to do. Just before Nicholls we bump into a hunter crouched in the tussocks. "You girls are going well to get here from Drac Biv this early." We chuckle. "We started at Putara road end." He looks surprised, maybe confused. "Where are you going?" he asks. "No sleep till Kaitoke!" we yell back behind us. 11.30am we pass Nichols. Ashley asks to pull back the pace so she can eat. She's experiencing her first pain cave. Maybe I haven't given her enough time to recover from Godzone just three weeks ago. And maybe I underplayed how hard this would be. But I needed a friend. I'm scared of the dark.

Andersons, 1.04pm. Refuel get more water. Turn on the dot. We trudge through the bush and there is a big deep roar. Sounds close. "that's a big old stag" I say. Ashley replies "sounds like a shitty human." At that moment a hand appeared from the bush. An awkward acknowledgement. Our cheeks flushed – possibly his did too.

Aokaporangi 2.46pm. Something is changing. Suddenly the sky is full of clouds and before we know it we are in a white out. Jackets beanies and gloves on with the wind picking up again. 4.11pm we get to Maungahuka hut. 45km in. The first GPS watch dies. The weather has changed and our perfect Tararua day is no more. We dress up some more and have a good feed. We give a hurried explanation to the concerned trampers of why we are carrying

on. A couple young guys understand what we are there for and explain the idea of the SK to the rest. One guy comments "Are you actually gonna walk for 24 hours?" We tiredly reply "Yea. Well hopefully a bit less." "Are you trying to break a record or something?" "Well yea, we are trying." But deep down we know that although we have been slightly ahead of the fastest female splits from Lou Beckingsale all morning, the gap is closing. We are fading and the weather is changing.

I recount our conversation last night where I showed Ashley the forecast and how Saturday the wind was good, maybe 20-30km in the afternoon but Sunday rising to gale. Ashley replied with a laugh and said "What does the wind like change from 20km to 80km at midnight?" And I replied; "well I hope so."

We leave the hut with a whoop and a cheer from our new friends at the hut. Thanks guys. We come to the infamous Tararua peaks. The wind is swirling, clouds funnelling. It's quite dramatic. Ashley tells me "I'm not feeling strong, lets stick really close". We move carefully and don't say much. We later discussed that at this point we were starting to question the safety of our mission and the madness that is trail running in these unpredictable mountains when we are ill equipped to spend the night. We have a PLB but no chopper would get to us in these conditions.

We get to the turn off to Penn Creek and find a cardboard note attached to a stake reading "Good luck Hannah and Ashley. BSR." A much-needed pick me up when we needed it most.

It's a slog up to Kime in the fading light but we are getting acclimatised to the cloud and wind. Ashley tells me I can pick up the pace. I try to spring and my left leg screams back at me. The cramping starts. It's my turn for the pain cave.

We reach Kime at 7.07pm and immediately put our headlights. Stepping in to the normally freezing Kime hut felt warm. We put on all the clothes we had with us: 2x thermals, puffer jacket, rain jacket, hats and gloves, thermal

longs and over-trousers and dry socks. We sent a text to Dad to say "leaving Kime see you soon." It's 7.35pm. We are now 20min behind target. But we have run this before, surely we still can.

It is still windy but it thankfully feels like it has relented slightly. It is very claggy and while not raining, wet. Even with fresh torches it's hard to see far. We trudge up to Hector and then at the cross where I had envisioned us savouring a stunning sunset we are instead met with relentless wind which ripped our hoods off. Heads down. We push on. The track is actually in great nick but we have to keep two feet firmly on the ground to prevent getting blown over. There were small moments of solace behind the beehives where we had a quick check with each other that we were both doing OK. This section was miserable and our mental limits were being tested. We both had dark thoughts creeping in. You start thinking that this is where it goes wrong in the Tararuas. We are tired and fatigued. If something happens to us now, what will the newspaper say? Are we making good decisions? Do we really have a choice?

It is taking forever to get to Alpha Hut and we have to be careful to keep the trail in poor visibility and our footing in punishing wind. My leg is cramping again. I down another gel and wish I brought more. It was not long after the turn off to Renata hut and it felt like we were thankfully losing elevation that a wind gust suddenly hit from the east blowing us to the ground. We grabbed the tussocks and I turned to look at Ashley, wide eyed, it was a unanimous F\*\*\*! It was like in that moment the wind really did change from 30km/h-80km/h. We need to get out of here. Adrenaline was taking over. Pain was masked by fear.

We felt incredible relief to reach Alpha hut and the safety of the bush, the trees crashing around us. It's 10pm and we are 23 minutes behind target but there is still hope we can finish in under 24 hours. I really hope we do otherwise it will all feel like for nothing. I think the female FKT is safe. I'm really wondering

why I thought this was a good idea. This is so tough both mentally and physically. I hope Ashley forgives me.

Wet weathers off. Down Marchant ridge. We need to catch up on lost time. Second GPS watch dies when we need it most to help the mental game and track our progress down the never-ending Marchant. In the saddle of Hells Gate my second head torch dies. I hate the dark. It was supposed to last longer. I fumble with new batteries. Almost 12hours of technical terrain in the dark requires very good headlights. We run as much and as fast as we can but cramp is knocking on our door. My left leg. Ashley's hip. The cramp spray is running out. I thought this ridge was all down, but it feels like a lot of up.

Block XVI we have been moving OK. Just 4 minutes behind the target splits now. Time is moving so slowly. Where is the finish? We come into the open point of Marchant ridge and are met again with our nemesis the wind. Very glad we are not on the southern main range anymore. We start to descend more steeply. There's a loud crack and I hear cursing behind me. Ashley is down. Shit. Is this over now? This girl's tough but I have never heard her curse like that. She could be really hurt. I stand stunned a second and then cautiously say "Are you OK? That was just a stick, right?". She's up. She is hurting and her legs are trembling. We hobble on.

We keep thinking we are nearly there, but it goes on and on. It doesn't seem this long in the TMR. We come to a sign and it says 1.5km to the carpark. Are you serious!!! This is actually torture. We drop down some stairs and pass the obstacle course and hear a booming "hello, hello" from dad and I yell back, elated. We enter the final shoot to the gait of glory and dad is cheering like we are two racing horses sprinting to the finish line. "You made it!" "Thank F\*\*\*" we scream. Dad and Kate are so happy for us. We are jaded. Relieved to be finished and overwhelmed with how hard the last few hours have been. Very, very grateful to have made it into the sub24hour club in 23 hours and 35 minutes at 2.35am. We are



powered transport. Do not light a wood stove in a hut, drive only electric cars/utes to road ends. It looks like helicopters are definitely out in this scenario so avoid as best possible any situation that requires helicopters.

I am sure that there are yet more takes on how we might address the problem.

I do not presume upon our membership: I can but hope that we find some accommodation in the 3rd option. How can we mitigate our carbon footprint? Unlike earlier times, we have a more focused lifestyle that often precludes long breaks that allow, for example, one to cycle to remote locations and spend weeks climbing. I think we need to consider some practical solutions. These measures might not solve the big problems, but they might mitigate them. I thus invite the club to submit suggestions on how we might reduce our carbon footprint whilst promoting tramping and mountaineering. It is a knotty problem, but I am sure that we are up to the challenge!

## Recipes

### Survival bread from Kirsten Olsen

When I started tramping in Sweden back in 1990s, I found a Danish cookbook for outdoor people by Rolf Lund. The book had calculation of the energy and the distribution of the calorie on carbohydrate, fat and protein. There was particularly one recipe that I have used ever since and it is called Survival bread.

Stephen and I had that for lunch every day on the three great Walks we did this February. We had the leftovers for lunch on the Sawtooth tramp led by Elly Arnst. It last really well 😊. This is a translation of the recipe with my added spices and a little more oil:

**Survival bread.** *Weight 1,6 kg. Make it at home. 27400 kJ. Energy distribution: 20%fat, 71 % carbohydrate, 9% protein.*

#### Ingredients:

100g sugar,  
100g honey,  
230ml oil [I have added the 30 ml to the recipe),  
200ml milk,  
1-2 tsp salt,  
300g dried fruit (for example apricots, figs, raisins),  
400g wheat flour,  
300g whole grain flour,  
200g rye flour,  
100g grated coconut,  
100g almond (or other nuts).  
[I also add: 2 tsp cinnamon, 1 tsp cardamom and ½ tsp clove]

#### Instructions:

1. Add sugar, honey, oil, milk and salt to a large pan with a thick base and heat it until sugar salt and honey are melted.
2. Cut the dried fruit finely
3. Add the dried fruit and the rest of the ingredients and mix well.  
Note: The dough is very dry – that is how it needs to be. Further it is not a mistake that there are no added rising agents.
4. Press the dough into a greased baking tray (25X35 cm<sup>2</sup>) and bake at 180oC for approximately 1 hour.
5. Cut the bread in 10 pieces while it is warm.

Each portion weighs 160g and contains 3000kJ which should be equal to one main meal. Eat it as a snack or lunch. Remember to drink a lot while eating it. Survival bread keeps for weeks in a plastic bag. The crumbs can be used as muesli.

Enjoy!



## PNTMC Newsletter

### May 2021

- Keeping it Local: The Lower Ruahine Huts and High Points Challenge
- Trip reports
- President's 55<sup>th</sup> annual report
- Upcoming events
- The GreenSpace is launched

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