



Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club

www.pntmc.org.nz

P.O. Box 1217, Palmerston North

Newsletter July 2021



Photo: Woody Lee.

From left to right: Kathy, Martin, Sally, Warren, Anne, Richard, Jo and Lawrence emerge from Whakanewha Regional part to the lookout on Trig Hill Road, Waiheke during the Queen's Birthday trip. You'll have to wait for the next newsletter to read all about it!

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.

8th July

Summer in the Southern Alps

Malcolm Leary

Come and see the places Grant and Malcolm have been in the Southern Alps in the last two years. Sometimes they are successful and sometimes not, but there is no better place to be when the weather is right. Come on this year's trip and climb 21,000 feet over five days without breaking a sweat!

29th July

Tasmania

Catherine Jackson

Now that the travel bubble has opened, what could you do in Tasmania? Come along for a tour of this jewel of an Isle, to see photos from multiple small and moderate tramps and tourist tips from someone who lived there for 7 years.

Upcoming Trips

4th July

Beach walk All
Janet Wilson 329 4722

This beach walk is a continuation of Janet's exploratory trip down the coast south of Foxton. This time we will start on the south side of the Otaki River and head towards Waikanae. If the wind is not in our favour, we may do it the other way around. Logistics etc to be decided when we know who is coming and what direction the wind is blowing in – we may need to do a car swap. We will be out for approx 6 hours walking - no hills other than some sand dunes. Depart Milverton Park 7.30am.

11th July

Wellington skyline walk M
Anne Lawrence 357 1695

Situated in the capital city, this track is more adventurous than what you might assume. The track is 12 km long, running along the ridge from old coach road in Johnsonville to the Makara Saddle in Karori. Stunning views of Wellington, and some great ridge travel. We'll park vehicles at Raroa Station. At the end of our walk, we'll catch the Johnsonville train from Wellington city to Raroa.

18th July

Atiwhakatu Hut E
Warren Wheeler 356 1998

A popular easy day walk up the delightful Atiwhakatu valley, from the Holdsworth Roadend, behind Masterton. A slightly longer alternative is via Pinnacle Ridge, with views of the snow covered Tararua hills on a good day. Depart Milverton Park 7.30am.

25th July

Kiritaki Hut M/F
Richard Lockett 323 0948

Kiritaki Hut is a hut in the Eastern Ruahines that not many people visit. This is a chance to go there! Contact Richard to find out his plans.

Trip Grading

Trip grades depend on many factors, especially weather and terrain. A reasonably proficient trumper should expect to do the trips in the following times:

Easy (E):	3-4 hrs
Medium (M):	5-6 hrs
Fit (F):	about 8 hrs
Fitness Essential (FE):	over 8 hrs

Other grades:

Family (Fam)
Technical skills (T)
Instructional (I)

BWD = Best weather day of a weekend

Trip participants

Contact the leader at least 3 days in advance. Trips usually 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, over-trousers, 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.

Overdue Trips

If a club trip is late returning, please do not worry as there is probably a good reason for the delay. If you are in any doubt, please phone one of the Overdue Trip Contacts:

Martin Lawrence	357 1695
Graeme Richards	353 6227

Members: New and Old

Welcome to Monika Coles, who joins us from the North Shore Tramping Club in Auckland and has been on several club trips already.

Farewell to our illustrious Mick Leyland, who has resigned from the club after many years, together with his wife Marion.

Mick, a very keen trumper, was renowned for his Fit trips. He was a club stalwart who served on the Committee from 1991 to 2009 and was also the Gear Custodian for many years.

There are many tall tales from Mick's backcountry adventures. Not to mention an

award for Fastest SAR rescue after his heart valve transplant operation, alone across the Ruahines to Howletts, feeling a little off-colour after some manky billy tea offered at Iron Gates (?), neglecting to let the better half know that he was feeling fine again, and stepped out for a long day back across the tops via Tunupo just as the chopper arrived to "rescue" him.

There is also his deer hunter tale of finding the source of a weird humming was a swarm of maggots crawling all over a rotting deer carcass lying in a stream just 3 metres up from where he had just taken a drink. Who knew that maggots could hum?

These days you will usually find Mick in his garage workshop making tools and precision molding patterns, even though he has formally "retired" from all that.

Farewell, and all the best to Mick.

Notices

Trip card

Planning for our next trip card is underway. Go to <https://tinyurl.com/Tripcard-Jul-Dec2021> to see what is planned so far. Contact Janet Wilson if you have ideas for trips, want to lead a trip, or grab a date.

PLBs Available to Club Members

The club has two personal locator beacons (PLBs) for members' use. If you want to take one of these on a trip, contact Martin or Anne Lawrence on 357 1695. There is no cost to use these. This applies to any trip you are going on - it doesn't need to be a club trip.

Keeping it Local - Our new club challenge

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

Trip Reports

Triangle Hut

7-9 May 2021

Report: Janet Wilson

May is the month in which I try to get all the self-resetting traps in Oroua and Pohangina Rivers serviced before winter sets in. The auto lure pumps used dispense lure over a 6month period and so the traps are good to go until the next visit in late Spring. This trip was planned to get all the Oroua river traps done, from approx 2km above Triangle Hut to the Oroua Gorge.

Plan A to go in via Rangī Hut turned out to be a no go on the Friday with a strong and cold southeasterly wind deterring us from travel along the tops. Instead we headed up the Oroua Valley past Heritage Lodge, heading for Triangle Hut. This plan B meant quite a bit more walking up and down the valley, but we were keen to go while the river level was still very low. We were carrying quite a few kgs of extra trapping gear and, by the time we got to Iron Gate Hut, we had come up with Plan C - base ourselves at that hut and work from there - meaning a very long day on Saturday but less distance to carry our full packs. We spent Friday afternoon doing some up-river traps and I did a few downstream while the lovely new hut was warming up. I was rewarded by a who pair landing in a pool beside me.

Saturday morning saw us heading as far as 2km up-river of Triangle Hut, servicing traps all along the way. It was quite a big ask to get back to IGH before dark when the days are short. When we departed Triangle Hut I was doubtful that we would complete the line before our agreed turnaround time but we had a good run and no trap problems. The return journey went well, and I was looking forward to getting back to a warm hut - alas there was no one else there - surprising for a Saturday night. The who pair were heard flying around in the evening.

On Sunday we travelled back down the river. Three who were seen approx 1 km down river from IGH and the 2 males were seen near the

Tunupo Fly Camp where they are often found. Another bird was probably seen further down river. Great to see a good number of whio - I am not sure if was 6 or 8 different birds.

It is wonderful to have a number of committed club members regularly helping out with the Ruahine Whio Protection Projects. There is no formal arrangement with the club but these trips provide the opportunity to help out with a worthwhile project, provide an incentive to get out in the hills and encourage visits to some lesser known and travelled routes. Thank you all on behalf of the Whio.

We were Richard Lockett (leader), Graham Peters and Janet Wilson (scribe)

Not Iron Gates Hut 22/23 May

Report: Janet Wilson

Photos: Chris Tuffley

When all possible takers for a trip to Iron Gate Hut changed their plans, we went to Plan B - an overnight trip to Top Gorge Hut - with the added bonus of doing some trap maintenance en route. Top Gorge is a great place to visit - always a little adventure to a rustic and remote feeling hut, within an easy walk from Longview Hut.



The forecast wasn't great with southeasterly weather and possible strong winds on the Sunday. Longview Hut was in the clouds when we arrived, so we didn't hang around for long with no views to enjoy. We took advantage of Chris's recent experience and headed directly down the route into the headwaters of the Pohangina River. His local knowledge meant we took a scree route that avoided the slightly tricky first waterfall.



The river was low but not low enough to keep our feet dry for long. Once we were past the next 2 waterfalls travel became easier. The traps start well down this section - there are not too many before Top Gorge Hut and we made good time in quite cold conditions.



After a short break, Chris headed off downstream to do the remaining river traps, where he was rewarded for his efforts when he spotted a male whio. Michelle and I went up the recently cut track towards the Ngamoko Tops to do the 7 traps up that spur. By the time we got back we were all looking forward to a nice warm fire. It wasn't too long before 2 hunters joined us. We got a good fire going

and enjoyed a pleasant, though rather smoky, evening together.

Next morning dawned damp with the cloud well down. We headed back to the tops via the very efficient " biodiversity line" - a great alternative route to the river. The weather wasn't that nice for the walk back to Longview but not bad enough to stop us taking a brief detour to Rocky Knob. We didn't hang around up there. After lunch at the hut we did a quick descent back to the car and got home quite early. Thanks Chris and Michelle for being so enthusiastic about helping out with the trap maintenance.

We were Chris Tuffley, Michelle Benton and Janet Wilson

Purangi
East Taranaki Environment Trust,
24-26 April 2021
Report: Stephen Legg



*Richard, Bob, Graham, Janet, Kirsten and Stephen with the truculent 4WD 'trucklet' before it got stuck.
Photo: Chris Tuffley*

Purangi is 40 Km east of Inglewood and home of the East Taranaki Environment Trust which looks after a thriving population of kiwi. Our mission was to lay two new predator control trap lines. The owners, Bob and Karen, allowed us to use their bach as a base. Bob drove us to the start of the new trap lines in a small but truculent 4WD 'trucklet'.

On the first day we established a new dual trap line of A24 traps in two teams, returning to

base for a mouth-watering afternoon tea of cookies and cakes, celebrating birthdays for two of our team. At night we explored the half hour 'Hidden Valley' walk, which during the daytime is open to the public. It is absolutely enchanting. You should go and check it out. We heard kiwi calling.

On day 2 the truculent trucklet became stuck in a ditch, so we reverted to tramping mode, carrying DOC 200 traps by hand and packs to deploy them. Rope skills were then deployed to retrieve the vehicle, only for it to fail to ascend the very next hill, becoming stuck once again. Resorting to footslogging mode, we ambled (though some strode stridently) back to base, counting avifauna (for the current national bird survey) and photographing mushrooms en route. At night we listened for rare native bats with a 'bat-box' audio recorder, but heard none, though they have apparently been heard there.



*The lonely truculent 4WD trucklet stuck in a ditch. We left it there whilst deploying traps.
Photo: Chris Tuffley*



*Kirsten (left) and Stephen (right) deploying A24 and DOC 200 predator control traps
Photos: Chris Tuffley*

The morning of the last day was spent checking and rebaiting an existing trapline along another public track - the Otunahe walk. This was an equally enchanting walk starting along a narrow verdant gorge-let, then with varied terrain and occasional splendid ridge views of Mt Taranaki. On our return to base we found that Bob had hauled out the irascibly truculent trucklet with a tractor.

We were: Janet Wilson, (Leader), Chris Tuffley, Graham Peterson, Richard Lockett, Kirsten Olsen, Stephen Legg (Trip Report Scribe)

Ruapehu Climb
May 1st and 2nd 2021
Report: Roy Rolston
Led by Grant Christian

It was just after 7am on Saturday morning when Monika arrived at my place to pick me up for our drive north. The plan was to meet Grant at the turn off to Tukino Ski-field a few kilometers north of Waiouru at 9am. Taking 2 hours we arrived to meet Grant as planned and we followed him up the road to a car parking area, then we transferred into Grants 4x4 for the rest of the journey to the Ski field itself and the start of our Ruapehu adventure.

The weather was clear but a little windy and a bit chilly. Starting off we crossed the ski area, void of snow as it was too early in the season

but we could see further up the mountain that there had been a recent dump so we knew we were going to be using our crampons that we had on board at some stage. Our mission was to get to Whangaehu Alpine Hut some 2 hours away where we would stay the night and use it as our base for our climbing weekend.

After initially clambering over lots of volcanic rocks we negotiated more patches of snow in between. Further on while standing on a rocky ridge we could see the hut perched on a small flat terrace above the very steep looking Whangaehu Stream. To get there we first had to carefully descend an icy southerly facing slope before finally making fresh tracks in the snow up to the hut door. It was now around mid-day, so we made ourselves home and tucked into some lunch.

After lunch we gathered up a few essentials and Grant guided us up a ridge above the hut then sidled around a steep rock outcrop that lead to a pinnacle rock we saw from ski field far below. I couldn't help but notice as we climbed there seemed to be lots of precarious-looking rocks on tops of other rocks with others seemingly barely holding together with cracks all over them. A scary thought did cross my mind that many of those rocks were just one earthquake or volcanic eruption away from hurtling down on top of us.

It took us a couple of hours to ascend the dominant pinnacle, Grant picking the route and making steps in the soft snow with his boots as he went. A mix of rocks and snow meant that we progressed without crampons but we exercised some caution in parts where it was a bit icy and steep. On making it to the base of the pinnacle we found we couldn't go much further as we quickly came to a steep drop off. It was certainly a case of straight over rover. Looking back on the pinnacle one could say it was climbable but 'no way Jose'. It looked far too fragile and steep. We paused there for a while resting up and having a bite to eat while taking in the magnificent scenery in the now late afternoon sun. We then retreated back to the hut that we had to ourselves and settled in for the night knowing

that with no heating and an inevitable overnight frost, we were in for a cool night.

We got up early the next morning, our plan was to spend the day climbing up to the Summit Plateau and beyond if there was time. The day dawned clear and sunny. We set off just after 7am again following Grant led, climbing upward at first then across to the base of the Mangatoetoenui Glacier. It was at this point we put on our crampons and set off zigzagging up the glacier. Just as we set off some rocks came from nowhere and rolled down the slope towards Monika who was about 30 metres ahead of me. From my viewpoint it looked like she may have taken a bad hit but, luckily, she escaped any serious injury.

We carried on, passing some menacing looking crevasses before finally cresting the saddle to look over onto the Summit Plateau. What a sight to behold. One wouldn't believe there was such a big area of snow and ice up here. Grant said later during the winter the plateau completely covers over with a thick layer of snow but for now we see a wave of snow and rocky terraces. We traversed down a little and make our way across the plateau. On the way Grant led us down and into one of many little ice tunnels dotted around. We easily walked through one that snaked for a short distance to exit on the other side. It was amazing! magical like!

We continued across the plateau then as we crested a small rise, I was very surprised and delighted to be standing on the crater rim looking into the crater lake. I never thought we would make it this far and was very pleased to be able to chalk this up on my mountaineering cv. Monika was equally delighted and we bathed ourselves in the iconic scenery we had before us taking photos and video to record our efforts. As we did, we saw other climbers: two of note came bounding down from a peak above the lake to meet us. Two young guys with plenty of energy and enthusiasm as one of them said they just tried to climb Mount Taranaki but it was too icy. Their inexperience was of note that while they were wearing hired crampons they had no ice axes. Grant pointed

out their omission and said it was very dangerous to wear crampons without any means to stop yourself if you have a mishap slipping on ice.

It was now about 12.30pm and it had taken us over 5 hours to the crater but now after some lunch it was back down the way we had come. Grant said it would be quite a lot quicker going down and he was right especially down the snowy glacier. We made it back to the hut just before 3pm and after a quick bite to eat we loaded our packs up and headed back out.

We made good time in the dimming light as the sun was starting to set, making it back to Grants 4x4 just after 5pm. It was a big day, one that I will never forget. In confidence I think I can say that Monika greatly enjoyed the whole weekend adventure also. To make two climbs, one to the Ruapehu Crater and back in a weekend greatly exceeded our expectations and it was made possible with great thanks to Grant who guided us so well, leading by example and experience.

We were Grant Christian, Monika Coles and Roy Rolston

PS Roy has made a video of this trip, which can be viewed by clicking on the link below or by searching Ruapehu Climb May 2021 on YouTube <https://youtu.be/A5g-7mkLrBk>

The Green Space

This Green Column is a way of keeping the 'Carbon Footprint' discussion progressing. Members are invited to send in comments – we welcome your ideas, concerns, suggestions to mitigate our carbon footprint, etc.

Swapping the car for walking, cycling and e-biking even just one day a week makes a significant impact on personal carbon emissions in cities.

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2021/02/210208104624.htm>

Measure your carbon footprint

<https://www.futurefit.nz/>



PNTMC Newsletter

July 2021

- Keeping it Local: The Lower Ruahine Huts and High Points Challenge
- Trip reports
- Upcoming events
- the Carbon footprint debate continues in the GreenSpace

Send articles to Anne Lawrence,

the newsletter editor at pntmci@gmail.com



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