



Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club

www.pntmc.org.nz

PO Box 1217, Palmerston North

Newsletter May 2022



Hut maintenance team enjoying a break at Ngamoko Hut.

Pic by Martin Lawrence

COVID-19

Covid Update: The Committee has agreed that under Orange Alert level, there is no longer any requirement for vaccination passes for club nights, and/or club trips.

Safe practices of mask wearing, hand-washing and physical distancing are recommended.

See DOC website for more details regarding huts and trip planning.

Club Nights

12 May 2022

Antarctic Survival

Stephen Legg

How cold can you get in Antarctic water and survive? Stephen Legg (retired professor specialising in environmental physiology at Massey and ex Squadron Leader) will tell all and entertain you with science and stories, based on his two trips to Scott Base, where he also visited Scott's and Shackleton's huts.

26 May 2022

BYO Pics

Martin Lawrence

What have you been up to over the last six months or so? Bring along some of your best pics on a memory stick for Martin to load into the laptop so you can do a show and tell for everyone to enjoy.

Trip Grades

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

Easy (E):	3-4 hrs	Other Grades:
Medium (M):	5-6 hrs	Family (Fam)
Fit (F):	about 8 hrs	Technical skills (T)
Fitness Essential (FE):	over 8 hrs	

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 Martin Lawrence 357 1695 or Graeme Richards 021 149 8267

Upcoming Trips

1 May 2022

Pinnacle Ridge

E/M

Warren Wheeler

356 1998

This easy ridge runs along the eastern boundary of the Atiwhakatu Stream, with an informal track that is often used as a shortcut for trips further inland. We drop off the ridge down to Atiwhakatu Hut and out via the main track back to Holdsworth Carpark. Depart Milverton Park 7.30am.

7 – 8 May 2022

Top Gorge

M

Chris Tuffley

359 2530

A trip to Top Gorge from Kashmir Road for the six-monthly check and rebait of the upper Pohangina who protection trapline. Conditions permitting we'll travel via the river in one

direction, and the Ngamoko tops in the other. A lovely spot, a reasonable chance we'll see who, and a great opportunity to give conservation a helping hand.

8 May 2022 Arawaru M Stephen Legg 027 647 0095

A lovely local day trip. From Sledge Track we will take an uncommonly used route involving a steep scramble from Quartz creek up to Arawaru peak, where we will enjoy 360 degree views at lunch. Return via the Otangane loop. Meet at Milverton Park at 0730 or (by arrangement) at Sledge Track Carpark at 0800.

14-15 May 2022 Hidden Lake E Warren Wheeler 356 1998

This unique spot in the western Tararuas near Roaring Stag Hut is barely discernable on topo maps. There is a nice fly camping spot there to relax and enjoy or we could stay at Roaring Stag Hut. Depart Milverton Park at 7.30am. NB – an option if it suits people better, is to do this as a Medium-Fit day trip.

15 May 2022 Mangahao Manoeuvres M Richard Lockett 323 0948

The road into the Mangahao Dams behind Shannon offers plenty of options for river exploring or venturing up onto the tops. Contact Richard for an interesting day out. Depart Milverton Park 7.30am.

20 - 22 May 2022 Triangle Hut M Janet Wilson 329 4722

An "Applied" tramping trip combining an interesting tramp with some trap maintenance. We plan to make it a 3-day trip (or perhaps 2.5 days with a Friday night start up to Rangī Hut). We will explore the river above Triangle Hut on the Saturday and use the biodiversity line off Mangahua high point to make a circuit. Travel is on tracks and river beds. There is a chance this trip will change to go to Leon Kinvig Hut in the Pohangina River. Please let me know early in the week (Monday!) if you are thinking about coming along.

22 May 2022 Maharahara E/M Ella Parkinson 027 914 7529

Maharahara (1020m) is a rather non-descript high point on the Ruahine skyline, north of Ashhurst, but is famous for the "cat slip" visible from Palmerston North. Access is via Opawe Road, off the Pohangina East Road. It is a steady climb up the DOC track through some big rata and rimu, then beech and finally leatherwood at the high point. A bit steep in places but a thoroughly rewarding trip. Depart Milverton Park 8.00am.

29 May 2022 Stanfield Hut E Roy Rolston 027 476 7188

Come and check out the upgrade of this Ruahine hut on the West Branch of the Tamaki River.

28 - 29 May 2022 Mitre Flats Hut E Ernie Cook 027 303 1363

Travel in to Mitre Flats Hut from the Pines Road End on Upper Plains Road. This is a serviced hut. Please contact Ernie no later than Wednesday evening May 25th.

4 - 6 June 2022 Queen's Birthday Coastal Classic – Ohope All Janet Wilson 329 4722

Janet's annual Coastal Classic trip this year heads to Ohope Beach in the sunny Bay of Plenty. Robyn and Warren will be our hosts at Robyn's beach house. Plenty to do in the area including a visit to Moutohora (Whale) Island. We will head up there on the Friday. Most people who have indicated an interest in this trip already are making the most of the long weekend and will be travelling home slowly and taking an extended break. If you are interested in joining this trip please let me know asap.

Notices

BIRTHS and MARRIAGES

It's a boy for Esther Pothuis and Rick van den Bosch in Wageningen, The Netherlands.

Esther was a keen club member while here for a six months internship in 2016. Rick was only able to be here for August on holiday but made the most of it, enjoying high winds above Powell Hut and deep snow up to Sunrise Hut among other adventures.

Esther came back to NZ in late 2017 to "do the South Island" with Warren Wheeler on what became fondly known as the MegaTramp - some six weeks of exploring Great Walks and DOC huts, followed by a few weeks tramping back in the North Island before she headed home to The Netherlands on Christmas Eve.

Esther and Rick were married on 21 April 2021 in a simple ceremony with immediate family during COVID lockdown, ostensibly to simplify the future purchase of a house in Wageningen.

Their baby boy was born on 28 January 2022 and they named him Tom Warren van den Bosch. Yes, Esther chose Warren as his second name, "a reference to a pretty cool kiwi guy, my mountain

friend. Maybe Tom will grow up loving nature and adventure as much as you. Hopefully."

The pics were taken mid March after receiving a NZ gift package at about six weeks. Note the expandable cup with "I love PNTMC".



Interclub Quiz Results

On Tuesday 5 April 2022 the MTSC were the hosts for the belated 2021 Quiz, which was postponed last year due to COVID restrictions. An enjoyable evening ensued, with quizmaster Tim Swale doing a great job – especially the mystery item pics - and the lovely Linda keeping track of the points. Our own Graham Peters opted to help out the girls at one of the MUAC tables "to even out the numbers...it just seems more fair". The final points tallies were:

PNTMC Ruahine Rascals 127, MTSC The Variants 100.5, MUAC Probably Gonna Lose 92, MUAC Young Yetis 72 and MUAC Cockroach Club 69.5.

Well done, PNTMC – the Trevor Bissell Memorial Billy Trophy is once again engraved with your name - view at Bivouac in the Square, PN.

New Members

Welcome to Ria Holmes, Ross Thomson and Lee & Chris Byford-Daynes.

Presidents Report 2021-22

Prolegomena

A primary goal for our club is to provide a common ground for people interested in tramping, climbing and related activities to meet, discuss, plan and participate in these activities. 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.

The Covid pandemic has certainly impacted our activities (as it did last year) not only in tramping trips but club nights and other social activities. As a club we had to make potentially divisive decisions about QR scanning, wearing masks, and vaccine passes in keeping with the government. We are a robust club, however, and, as this second year of pestilence ends, we can look back with some pride on our achievements.

It is my pleasure to present the 56th President's report.

Membership

The number of members for our club is generally quite stable from year to year. The membership for 2020-2021 was 79; the membership for 2021-2022 is 80. The latter number includes 77 financial members and 3 life members. The numbers do not highlight the flux of new members and into the club and the loss of members. We have 11 new individual members and 3 new family members. We lost 12 individual members.

Activities

The club has been engaged in programmes that include a range of evening talks, club trips and instruction focussed activities. Once again, the impact of Covid is felt through the local character of most of these activities and the changing schedules for events owing to lockdowns etc.. I believe that it is to our credit that we adapted to make the best of circumstances and gleaned pleasure from our local parks.

Evenings:

Normally our club manages to get a 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. We definitely kept close to home with our talks. The only talk on a place outside NZ was one on Tasmania.

Talks about "exotic places" around the world always attract interest; however, we showed that talks about local adventures are equally entertaining and often useful for the trumper/climber/cyclist looking to go to certain places. We had talks on cycle touring NZ, exploring Tongariro, Arthurs Pass, climbing in the Southern Alps, and other South Island adventures. We also had a talk on e-birding and how to paint a hut, and we heard Don French talk about the "100 Peaks Challenge". Club nights were also used for other activities. We had BBQ's, BYO slide nights, photo competitions and a night on navigation.

The club photo competition, normally held in August, was postponed until late September when meetings could resume. The competition was well subscribed. The quality of entries grows each year. A special thanks goes to Martin Lawrence for helping to organize the images and the photograph judge Harley Betts. The results are summarised in the November newsletter. The winners went on to the interclub competition held in October, which this year our club hosted. The competition was stiff, but we held our own. Unfortunately, MUAC was unable to hold its photo competition and so the competition this year was PNTMC vs MTSC. The results are summarized in the December newsletter. Thanks again to Martin Lawrence for organizing and collating the entries and thanks to the judge Paul Gummer from UCOL.

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 and Roy Rolston for always making sure we had tea and biscuits (when we could do it under the various traffic lights). It is surely a good sign that we can consistently field such a spectrum of social activities.

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. Certainly, a feature this year was the trips offered to the Kaimanawas. Trips were offered to Cascade hut, Thunderbolt and Waipakahi hut.

The trip activities included mountaineering, beach walking, farm walks, bird spotting, trapline maintenance, and, of course, tramping. The venues ranged from the super local Ashhurst Domain and “new” Saddle Road, to the Wellington Skyline, Tongariro, Kaimanawas, Taupo, and all the way to Motutapu!

Here are some quick statistics and comments from Warren:

“Last year despite COVID restrictions we still managed to programme 79 trips, of which 30% Did Not Go. 73% of day trips did go and 65% of overnight trips. Of those that went 40% went to the Ruahines, 7% to the Tararuas and 53% other places such as TNP, Taranaki, Kaimanawas, local walks. On average there were 6.9 people on day trips and 6.0 people on overnight trips. The Wellington Skyline Walk was the most popular with 19 people, followed by Mid-Winter Taupo with 17 and Queens Birthday Coastal Classic at Motutapu with 16. “

Certainly, one trend to note is that of the trips (that actually went) the Ruahines seem to dominate those to the (equally close) Tararuas. This year it is 40% vs 7 %; last year it was 49% vs 15%. The COVID issues are the same. Is this a reflection of the weather, the Southern Ruahine Challenge, or just membership interest?

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 cards. 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. Special thanks also to Woody Lee for keeping track of the what tramps went and how many went on them.

Trip Cards:

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 era of the printed trip card is coming to an end. We have been thrown lots of challenges by COVID, and perhaps this accelerated the new approach to trip cards, but we also have a lot of useful technology that allows us flexibility and communication that we scarcely could dream of in the 1990’s. The new “trip card” provides a first iteration and overall planning document. Even trampers need to think a few days/weeks ahead and plan a longer trip a few months ahead. As weather and other conditions evolve, trips change closer to the date they are planned. This was always the case, but now we have the advantage of modifying the card as information is gathered. It is a “win-win” combination.

Instruction:

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

Snowcraft:

COVID and Snowcraft do not play well together. Last year I wrote:

“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. “

This year, we have done better due largely to the efforts of Grant Christian and Dieter Stalman along with our corps of alpine instructors. We managed to offer Snowcraft 1 just before travel and trips became awkward/impossible. We had a great turnout of 10 students for Snowcraft 1 (served by 4 instructors). Snowcrafts 2 and 3 were an immediate casualty of COVID, but we managed to at least salvage a small, combined course in mid-September (3 students, 4 instructors).

I thank Dieter Stalman, who organized the Snowcraft programmes and did the general administration, and Grant Christian, who led these courses. I would like to acknowledge the other instructors Dwight Swainson, Malcolm Leary and Chris Rayner. A huge thanks goes to the club patroness, Sue Pither, who let us use her cottage for accommodation. This help made Snowcraft viable and attractive to members.

Beginners Tramps:

The beginners tramps had to be rescheduled for this year to begin in February.

These tramps are 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.

The two tramps so far this year were hugely successful and well subscribed. People were introduced to the Tararuas and Ruahines and visited Atiwhakatu and Sunrise huts. The different timing might prove beneficial for some of these trampers. The club is offering a number of easy tramps in the late summer early autumn season to complement and supplement the beginners tramps.

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.

Navigation:

A navigation instruction night in February is generally an annual event. Thanks again to Warren for organizing and running this course. In addition, Chris Tuffley ran a navigation course that also included a "field trip" to practice these skills. Thanks Chris for organizing this event.

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. 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. We also saw the introduction of a "Green Space" and articles on the carbon footprint associated with tramping that reflect the environmental concerns of the membership. It is a big job editing this newsletter and we owe Michelle Benton and 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 year you will have noticed that the website has been substantially redesigned: we have a "new face". 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. Our website continues to be a valuable resource for members and the public. Thanks Martin and Anne Lawrence for all the work on our website.

Although the website got a total “facelift” we should note that archival material has been preserved. Gathering and collating this material represents the labour of many years of dedicated work. Here I would like once again to thank Peter Wiles and Martin Lawrence for this work.

Our Huts

Our club is responsible for the upkeep of Ngamoko and Mid Pohangina huts. We have taken this obligation seriously and have had or at least planned 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. We maintain a hut maintenance fund (for Mid Pohangina and Ngamoko) that is growing through hut fees and poster sales.

This year we signed off on the revised agreements with DoC on these huts and thus continue our commitment.

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 whio protection/stoat trapping among other things. Our club has a solid corps of experience trappers led by Janet Wilson. Some of our club trips such as that to Te Potae were dedicated to trapping. Thanks to everybody for these wonderful contributions.

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 (save for August, October, and January) 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.

This year we were challenged with COVID related issues concerning club nights and club trips. We aimed to satisfy the requirements of the government (including DoC) whilst keeping the essential fabric of our club. This is easier said than done, and we found ourselves having club nights without a cup of tea, scanning in with some wearing facemasks, and having to require a vaccine pass. Let us hope these days are behind us.

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
31 March 2022

Trip Reports

13 March 2022

Ohau Gorge

Report by Warren Wheeler

We had a beautiful day for this “Easy” trip so it was a pity there were only four of us to enjoy the adventure, with two keen young people and my old friend John making me the only club member. From the carpark at the end of Poads Road, behind Levin, we followed the usual poled route across the paddocks and entered the Tararua Forest Park after about 15 minutes. After another 20 minutes or so heading along the sidle track through the lowland forest above the Ohau River we came across a small slip that had washed out the track and required a bit of a scramble to get up around and back down. The adventure begins! We crossed the Blackwater Stream swingbridge and found the overgrown track down from the old Ohau Hut site to the confluence with the Ohau River and a sunny spot in the riverbed where we took a break and “zoned in” for the river travel ahead.

The river level was low but it was still good to practice mutual support for ease of crossing the slippery rocky riverbed. After criss-crossing down the stony riverbed for a while we entered the gorge section itself, where climbing back out up onto the sidle track is more difficult, if not impossible – we were committed! Soon after we came to our first deep pool – see the cover photo on last month’s newsletter and the one



here. John led the way, up to his armpits at times, with Grace taking hilarious video on her phone. Perhaps it would be better to cross above the pool first, yes a bit easier, but still chest deep.

We met a couple coming upstream and they seemed to be dry, which was quite encouraging, but after some easier travel and wading some shallower pools we came across a very deep pool that we couldn’t see a way around. They must have dropped into the bed from off the track above.

At this point Indranil, who had told me he couldn’t swim, slipped in and was helped out by Grace’s outreached hand. Unfortunately he dropped his Leki pole, which we could clearly see lying on the gravel about 3m underwater. Without further ado, John dived down and retrieved it. He then got Indra to hold onto his pack for extra flotation and towed him the short distance across the pool. We quickly swam across and joined them for a rest to warm up and dry out in the sun while having lunch. The rest of our 3-hour trip down the river was straightforward as the river opened up and became more gravelly. We soon passed the old water intake structure before exiting the riverbed at the bend downstream and finding the old benched access road leading up the terrace to the paddocks, and back along the poled track to the carpark.

We were John Philpott, Indranil Ghosh, Grace and Warren Wheeler (leader)

10 April 2022

Farm Walk Turakina Valley

Report by Kirsten Olsen

Ten of us set out in two cars from Milverton Park in Palmerston North at 7:30am on a sunny Sunday morning, heading to Bruce Park in Silverhope where we would meet Malcolm Leary (our trip leader) and the last two of our party. We arrived there at 8:25. Malcolm arrived at 8:30 and handed out a description of the route to the beginning of the walk to ensure that nobody drove the wrong way up the Turakina valley to the start of the Farm Walk. The description also contained information about the farms we passed on our way.

The walk began just before Turakina Valley Road crossed Turakina Stream. There was good space on the right side of the road to park the cars and it was shaded by the big trees. At 9:20 we began walking up the true right side of Turakina Stream on a gentle uphill, nicely formed farm track. There was good space to spread out as you can see on the photo. On the way, Malcolm told many good stories and described who

owned the different farms that we passed. It was very informative but too much to include in this trip report. At 10am we reached a beautiful waterfall that might have had a name but Malcolm did not know it. I am sure if it had been easily accessible, Stephen would have jumped in it for a swim, but there was just as steep a drop on the side where we stood as there was on the opposite waterfall side. Shortly after the waterfall we had our morning tea. We heard a strange noise, a screechy sound. We soon realised that two large bright white sulphur-crested cockatoos were sitting in a nearby tree. At first, we could not see them, but luckily, we caught sight of them when I approached the tree and they flew away.



We continued up the stream and crossed Turakina Valley Road. We then followed a paper road up a scenic valley until Malcolm told us to change direction to take the long - but not so steep - route up to the ridges. We had some amazing views down valleys as we slowly climbed to the tops. Fortunately, the sun had gone behind some clouds, so we did not get too hot. It was interesting and funny to see how the sheep formed white lines

when they walked along the steep hillsides.

At the top of the ridge, we turned right and sat down to eat our lunches, just as the sun came out from behind the clouds. We had a nice view over the hills on the other side of the ridge. The sun came out, just at the right time.



Malcolm had a clear plan about where we were going. He wanted to get to a little crop of trees where he had never been before. I thought it looked very far away, but Malcolm assured me that it wasn't if we just took it little by little. We now walked along the ridges and we had the most wonderful views of the hills and, in the distance on the skyline, a hazy Mt Ruapehu. We also had a good view over a largish pond. It looked like some people on the pond were preparing for the duck shooting season. We arrived at the crop of trees around 2:40pm where we enjoyed a small afternoon snack.

We had succeeded in reaching the point that Malcolm was aiming for. However he did not have a specific plan for the descent to our parked cars. There were two options. We could take the steep route straight down the fence line or we could back-track a kilometre or two, to descend via a less-steep farm track. We chose the steep option. It was very steep to begin with. It took a long time before we all gathered at the bottom of this steep section. After this it was a gentle downhill slope on grassy tracks until we reached Turakina Valley Road. From there it was just a short walk to the cars. Malcolm asked us how long we thought the walk was. Our estimates (without looking at the GPS) ranged from 16 to 22 km. when we looked at the GPS, we found that it was 18km, which was a bit longer than I had expected when we started out. There were no tree roots to stumble over on this walk - but there



were lots of cow pats. It is always good to have something to keep you on the toes. Stephen recorded the walk on TopoMaps50. A screen shot of it is here:

We all clambered into the cars around 4pm and drove to Malcolm's and Edith's homestead where the kettle was boiling. We feasted on wonderfully tasty muffins and cakes. Most of the edibles were supplied by Edith. We had a lovely time at Malcolm and Edith's house eating cakes and drinking tea or coffee and chattering about this Farm Walk, and many other tramps.

Thank you to Malcolm and Edith for their hospitality and to Malcolm for leading a fantastic walk. I highly recommend this kind of walk/tramp. It adds variety to the tramps that the club offers. It also gave me the opportunity to observe/count birds on private land where it is difficult to gain access and to enter the counts into the New Zealand Bird Atlas (the current NZ national bird survey). This was a great contribution to the national survey. It is only on this kind of tramps that we have access to farms such as this. We saw or heard 30 different bird species on the Walk. You will find an eBird Trip Report on this link: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/47497>.

We were: Malcolm Leary, (trip leader), Monika Coles, Ernie and Ann-Marie Cook, Sally Hewson, Anne and Martin Lawrence, Stephen Legg (photographer), Graham Peters, Roy Rolston, Janet Wilson, June Soh and Kirsten Olsen (reporter and photographer).

17 April 2022 The Deerford Loop - an Easy Easter day trip Report by Janet Wilson

The Deerford Loop is a great local walk for an **e**asy micro adventure. One this day, being **E**aster **S**unday, it featured an **E**arly **E**asy stream crossing, **E**aster **E**ggs and an **E**xtra **E**xuberant **E**asterly.

Six + Bruce dog enjoyed a morning walk around the loop. We had morning tea a little bit early to avoid the wind which was very strong near the junction with Shorts Track. Once there we didn't hang around. Apart from a few tree falls to avoid it was straightforward and we were back at the cars at 12.30pm – approximately 3 hours from start time. We drove the short distance up to my Petersons Rd Shed for lunch out of the wind. A very pleasant short day out. We were Graeme Richards (leader), Verity, Chris, Lee, Rebecca, Bruce dog and Janet (scribe).

Anzac Weekend 23-25 April 2022 Pohangina Hut Maintenance Report by Ernie Cook

Our annual hut maintenance trip for the two huts PNTMC manages for DOC on the Pohangina River. Eight became seven with the late withdrawal of a member due to experiencing sore throat symptoms. Friday's expected rain cleared overnight and a fine Saturday dawned. It was decided to go from the Tamaki West Road end rather than the alternative route over the Ngamoko Tops. A fortuitous decision as it turned out. After collecting Ernie in Woodville we proceeded to the road end.

As always it was great to be able to share the experience with a couple of members who had not previously tramped into Mid-Pohangina Hut via this route. A couple of shallow stream crossings and we were climbing up onto Holmes Ridge. A veritable highway as we rolled along before dropping into the Tamaki River West Branch. A short section of river travel had us at the recently refurbished Stanfield Hut for morning tea.

Another spell in the river bed brought us to the bush edge and a climb up to another ridge, initially in the bush but soon out to open tops in a stunted corridor of wind ravaged vegetation. Group members regaled each other with experiences of severe winds encountered on previous excursions. Today however we sat ourselves down on the track for lunch and looked down upon Cattle Creek Hut below.

We descended reasonably steeply down into Cattle Creek and having decided to leave a visit of the hut for our return journey continued on down the creek bed. There was no wind funnelling up the narrow sections today as can sometimes be experienced. The creek bed begins narrower but broadens out further down nearer the Pohangina River.

Graham scouted a pretty good path and it is just a matter of crossing from side to side to where the going appears to be better. There are a couple of "nip" points that require a little more care and one section where a chain is made use of to sidle above where the creek drops down. Further downstream it is possible to travel over some terraces.

The exit from the creek is a scramble up a fairly steep face using the vegetation for hand holds and to secure footing. A short descent down the other side had us at the deserted hut at about 3:30 p.m. One couple were happy to camp and another couple made use of a Club fly leaving three of us the use of the four bunks in the hut.

After a bit of discussion about what required to be done by way of improvements we headed outside and cleared vegetation away from the sides of the hut. It seems that Leon Kinvig Hut is due to have its open fire replaced by a log burner in the near future and such a project if successful may be able to be replicated in Mid-Poh Hut. No matter how we looked at it we could see no way to easily increase the number of bunks.



The next day we planned to head up river to Ngamoko Hut and carry out an appraisal of its condition. It's not practical to walk past any traps so after a refresher we set about rebaiting the Good Nature traps with long lasting lures to see the traps through winter and replacing any gas cannisters that had run out. It was gratifying to see how effective the traps are with a freshly killed rat adjacent to one. The river was low enough to facilitate easy travel with bottoms of shorts about as wet as it got.

We found a couple staying at the hut and they immediately set about preparing fancy coffees for those of that persuasion. I was happy just to have some hot water for my cup of soup. Janet single-handedly cleared leaves from the spouting and the filter in the water tank (she was holding on with her other hand) while Graham cleared vegetation from around the hut walls.

After lunch we headed back down stream and were organised into work groups. Martin and Anne on the measuring tape, Kirsten and Stephen clearing and cleaning a shelf of rubbish and left-over food and Graham, Janet and Ernie doing traps downriver and along the sidle track where a couple of deer were seen and another heard barking at our intrusion. There had been a couple of heavy showers during the day but fortunately the worst of them had been while at Ngamoko Hut and after our return to Mid-Poh.

Rain overnight had the Pohangina River well up and dirty in the morning raising some slight apprehension as to how Cattle Creek might be affected. However any concern quickly evaporated when we crested the hill on our way out. We saw a lone male whio in the creek and he reluctantly flew ahead of us for a few pools before deciding enough is enough and flying back downstream to his territory. Rain coats were unanimous as a drizzly rain came and went.

It was a bedraggled mob that arrived at Cattle Creek Hut for first lunch. Second lunch at Stanfield Hut was a little more pleasant. The notion of continuing down the river rather than climbing back onto Holmes Ridge was quickly kicked into touch. The climb led to a layer needing to be removed on gaining the ridge.

We reached the road end and agreed a stop in Woodville was merited. A very successful and enjoyable trip was had by all.

We were Janet Wilson (leader), Graham Peters, Anne and Martin Lawrence, Stephen Legg and Kirsten Olsen and Ernie Cook.

A small group of 5 set out from the Coppermine Road end at just before 9am on Sunday 24th April to climb Wharite peak the long way round.



This was despite DoC's sign indicating the track was closed by a "major" slip. A 30m wide slip had indeed taken out the benched track some 15 minutes from the start, but with care all the party were safely able to cross.

The Wharite track departed from the benched Coppermine track soon after. The track rose steeply over the first few hundred metres, requiring careful foot placement to avoid slipping, however the gradient slowly eased off as we climbed. The re-growth bush providing protection from the strong winds and plentiful displays of berry laden plants. We emerged

from the bush into the leatherwood and fern at the top of the first rise, buffeted by the wind, but with views out over the Tararua plains below.

The 'false' peak which appeared tantalizingly close hid our final destination. The remainder of the walk was a series of short steep ascents clambering over rocks and tree roots and longer grassy sections heavily overgrown with ferns, sedges and flaxes. Tree roots and occasional boggy areas required careful foot placement to avoid losing balance.

As we neared the peak we ascended into the clouds, losing the view but were greeted by the imposing Wharite tower rising eerily above us into the clouds with the wind shrieking through its superstructure. We arrived at the gated off trig point, just after midday. A creditable 3 hour climb given the conditions.



After a lunch seated at the side of the track in the lee of the wind, we set off back just after 12.30 pm.

The return trip was made challenging by the overgrowth, sharp ends of trimmed leatherwood bushes and fallen trees as well as the strong wind gusts on the exposed high points. There was the occasional slip or mis-balance not to mention scrapes from the leatherwood branches and ever lurking bush lawyer. We regrouped several times reaching the Coppermine track just under 3 hours later.

Back at the road end there was time to wash hands, knees and boots in the stream, before beating a hasty retreat from the sandflies back to Palmerston North. The variation in terrain, gradient and track condition made it a challenging day walk. It will go on the list for a return visit in fine sunny weather to get the view from the top. It was great to have Marian and Randall join us for their first outing with the club.

Trip participants were Warren Wheeler & Robyn Boocock, Randall Bess, Marian Dean & Robert van Bentum (leader).



PNTMC Newsletter May 2022

- President's Report 2021-22
- Births and Marriages, Quiz Results
- Trip reports: Ohau Gorge, Farm Walk
Turakina Valley, Deerford Loop,
Pohangina Hut Maintenance, Wharite

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