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# Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club

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

PO Box 1217, Palmerston North

## Newsletter March 2023

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*Relaxing at Tutuwai Hut, Tararua Forest Park.*

*Pic by Blair Petersen*

### Club Nights

*Club nights are generally held on the second and last Thursday of each month at the Quakers Hall, 227 College Street, Palmerston North. Doors open 7.15pm for meeting start at 7.30pm. All welcome.*

**9 March 2023**

**Ongaonga - a Prickly Relationship**

**Doug Strachan**

A talk with a bit of a sting to it. Come along and hear Doug talk about *Urtica ferox* (aka Ongaonga, tree nettle) a plant that has stung many an unwary trumper. It is an interesting plant and some of the information will surprise you.

**23 March 2023**

**AGM**

**Janet Wilson**

Note that our AGM is to be held on 23<sup>rd</sup> instead of 30<sup>th</sup>, a week earlier than our usual club night, to suit other commitments. Agenda includes Presidents Report, Financial Report, Election of Officers and any General Business that members wish to raise. Supper to follow. See Notices for more details.

## Upcoming Trips

**3-5 March 2023 Maungahuka Hut Extended Trip M/F (F) Janet Wilson 06 329 4722**

A classic 3-day Tararua loop from Holdsworth Roadend with lots of huts and high points to bag for the club scrabble challenge. Planned route is via Mt Holdsworth, Mid-Waihone Hut, Maungahuka Hut, Neill Forks, Totara Flats and back to Holdsworth. *NB- previously a 4-day trip.*

**5 March 2023 Beginners Tramp #2 E Anne Lawrence 06 357 1695**

My original plan for the second beginner tramp was to go to Sunrise Hut but given cyclone damage have changed the plan. Instead we are going to Rangiwahia Hut in the Western Ruahines with the option (depending on people's fitness and conditions) of exploring beyond the hut towards Mangahua, a high point offering extensive views in good weather. The carpark is approx 1½ hours' drive from PN. From the carpark, the track takes you straight into the forest and then climbs steadily with the occasional steep bit. The bonus is that it gets you above the bushline into the tussock tops and offers the chance to get great views (assuming good weather of course!). There is some bird life that can be seen or heard from the track. We plan on having lunch at the hut and we'll return to the carpark along the same track. Let me know if you are able to join us.

**11 March 2023 Stanfield Hut E Woody Lee 0210 444 552**

An easy tramp to the eastern side of the Ruahines. We will start from Tamaki West Rd and follow the Holmes Ridge track and an unmarked riverbed route to the hut. After lunch we return the same way. We will leave from Milverton Park at 7.30am. *This trip is rescheduled from 19 Feb.*

**12 March 2023 Ohau Gorge E Warren Wheeler 06 356 1998**

A summer favourite, a bit of a fun challenge. Let's see how the lower Ohau River has changed since the last floods. Hopefully there will be some pools to swim/pack float across..or not. Depart Milverton Park 8.00am.

**18-19 March 2023 Maroepa Forks M/F Adam Matich 022 358 8062**

We will head up through Sunrise Hut to Top Maroepa Hut, from where we drop down into and follow an unnamed branch of the Maroepa River, a solid 6 km, all the way down to the hut. Wet feet are guaranteed. Maroepa Forks Hut as shown on the DOC website is not what I remember; when I last visited its latest incarnation it had a verandah. Next day it is out by the same route.....but in reverse.

**19 March 2023 Coppermine Creek E Verity Elder 021 260 1885**

This delightful walk just north of Woodville follows a nicely graded old pack track along Coppermine Creek to historic mining exploration sites. To avoid a slip section some years ago DOC marked a new "kids adventure" track upstream to the Magazine site, where cave weta can be found inside this short (but wet) tunnel. A further 10 minutes uphill takes us to the old mine entrance, now covered over for safety reasons. Depart 8.00am from Milverton Park.

**25 March 2023 Intro to Trapping E Janet Wilson 06 329 4722**

Ruahine Whio (Blue Duck) Protectors are volunteers who maintain the large trap network in the Ruahines. If you have ever thought that you might like to help out but don't know where to start, this easy day trip is suitable for anyone who thinks they might like to give trap maintenance a go. We will walk into Alice Nash Memorial Heritage Lodge and down to the Oroua River. You will have the opportunity to learn how to set the traps and to learn more about what the Whio Protection work is all about. No commitment to future volunteering – just come and enjoy a day out. Meet Peterson Road carpark time TBA – carpooling can be arranged from PNth.

**25-26 March 2023    Roaring Stag Plus    E    Warren Wheeler    06 356 1998**

Enjoy fly camping beside a swimming hole in the Ruamahanga River, downstream of Roaring Stag Hut, a nice 3-4 hour walk from Putara Roadend. Spare time in the afternoon will include a side trip to find Hidden Lake. Return the same way or off track via the Ruapae Stream. Depart Milverton Park 8.00am.

**1-2 April 2023    Mt Climie- Remutaka Rail Trail    M    Adam Matich    022 358 8062**

Although I haven't travelled this route myself, I am copying from someone who has. You won't catch me doing anything original. The tramp starts from Plateau Road in Upper Hutt, from where we follow the vehicle track, south, to Climie Peak, then backtrack a bit and head off-track E to pt 828, NE to pt 857 and wander in an easterly direction to pt 399 before dropping into the Pakuratahi River. A short climb out of the river will put us on the Remutaka Rail Trail and just before the summit tunnel is a place we could camp, with a shelter and public conveniences. Next day we head maybe 6 km down the rail trail before climbing NW up to Tunnel Peak, NNE to Goat Rock, and then down onto the vehicle track that will lead back to the car. See route map Page 9.

**2 April 2023    Beginner Tramp #3    E    Anne Lawrence    06 357 1695**

Join us on this, our third beginners tramp. Phone Anne for details or refer to Trips on our website.

**7-10 April 2023    Easter Tararua Crossing    M    Roy Rolston    027 476 7188**

A classic way to end the summer months – across the tussock tops from Otaki Forks to Kaitoki, visiting various huts along the way but taking tents and flies in case the huts are full...which is likely.

#### **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	Other Grades:
Medium (M):	5-6 hrs	Family (Fam)
Fit (F):	about 8 hrs	Technical skills (T)
Fitness Essential (FE):	over 8 hrs	Inst (Instruction)

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.

### **New Members**

Welcome to Chris Parker and Damon Facoory.  
We trust you enjoy getting out and about with us.

## Notices

### Annual General Meeting 23 March 2023

Venue: Quakers Hall, 227 College Street, PN.

Time: Doors open 7.15pm for meeting start at 7.30pm. Supper to follow.

If you would like to help with the running of the club we welcome your nomination to join the Committee. Nomination forms will be available on the night.

If you are unable to attend please send your apologies to Anne Lawrence, Club Secretary or any other Committee Member.

### DOC News – Huts and Tracks Closed Leon Kinvig Hut Lost



*Leon Kinvig Hut destroyed by flooding of the Pohangina River due to Cyclone Gabrielle  
Pic from DOC*

Cyclone Gabrielle has caused severe damage due to flooding, slips and fallen trees so DOC has taken the extraordinary step of closing virtually all tracks and huts in the Ruahines until inspections have been completed. Until such time it is advisable to postpone any trips into these areas or at least be aware that tracks may be more than a little damaged and progress may be much slower and more dangerous, especially where slips are still active or unstable.

If you do venture into the backcountry and discover any damage that needs to be repaired please inform the local DOC office.

### 50 Years with PNTMC

Congratulations to Peter Darragh whose first trip with PNTMC was a Bushcraft Course in 1972 when he was a keen fit teenager. He went on to become one of the most enthusiastic and experienced members of the club. He served on the Committee in 1976, 1977 and 1981 before being elected President in 1982.



*Peter Darragh, Ruapehu, 1996 From Old Boots and Packs – the first 50 years of PNTMC p.93*

He has been actively involved in Search and Rescue and has enjoyed many memorable tramping and mountaineering trips over the years. He is still keen to get out and about, even, like many other members at present, it is not as often as he would like.

*Excerpt from January 1973 Newsletter*

*“6-7 January 1973 Coppermine Hut...In the evening we enjoyed a three course meal which was made by two experienced professors of stewology.....” (Fun times; two women and four men including Peter enjoyed this Easy overnight trip to this hut, which no longer exists – Ed.).*

## Trip Reports

4-6 February 2023

Tauherenikau Valley

Report by Blair Petersen

Rachel Price, Neil Benton, Roy Rolston and myself (Blair Petersen) set off early on Saturday 4th Feb, picking up our trip leader Ernie Cook in Pahiatua, then down to Kiwi Ranch Rd, for what promised to be a fun Waitangi Weekend in the Tauherenikau valley, picking up plenty of Scrabble Points along the way.

The original plan was to head up Marchant Ridge, picking up Marchant high point, then down Block XVI track to Tutuwai hut. Unfortunately our leader turned out to be blind and missed the turn off, so we ended up going over the Puffer Saddle and on to Smith Creek Shelter for an early lunch.



*Smith Creek Shelter ideal for early lunch*



*Nice to have a bridge across Tauherenikau River*

From there it was on to Tutuwai for the night. In hindsight, it was just as well we didn't go up Marchant, as it turned out to be a very hot, tiring day. The dip in the river below the hut was very welcome.



*Historic Cone Hut*

Sunday saw an early start, heading to Cone Hut, then up Bull Mound Track, lunch at the turn off to Alpha, over Omega highpoint, down Omega track and back to Tutuwai for the 2nd night. Steep going up and steep going down, two river crossings and wet feet twice.

The hut that night was almost full, with a group of four from the UK and 2 guys from Wellington who had come from Maungahuka Hut that day, having started at Otaki Forks on the Saturday. Two big days, but they were still full of life and energy and stories to tell.

It rained that night, so the trip back out to the car on Monday was wet underfoot.

20 Scrabble Points collected, an area I hadn't been to before, and an ice cream in Featherston on the way home really topped off a great weekend. Thanks Rachel, Neil, Roy and Ernie.

**5 February 2023**

**Beginner Tramp #1 to Atiwhakatu Hut**

**Report by Vicki Coffey**

Advertised on a bulletin board "Beginner Tramps" I had seen it other years and even enlisted one year but never made it. This year I was determined to join it. I have lived in the Manawatu for six years now and have not entered the Tararuas or the Ruahines. Time to make amends leave the paint brush, a quick trip to Kathmandu and meet with the other newbies at 7:30 at Milverton Park.

After introductions and a tour of Anne's pack, 16 of us set out for Masterton on a beautiful day with the friendly Anne Lawrence as leader. Being Waitangi Weekend the Holdsworth Camp Site was fairly busy with families enjoying all on offer.

Anne in front and Marty as tail-end Charlie we made our way through the forest, advised by our leader that the track is mostly flat. There was also some discussion about the number of bridges and what constitutes a bridge. I think at least 14 walkers would have a different idea of mostly flat than Anne and the idea that was offered there are 4 bridges on the track was gone in the first hour. Everyone found their stride and enjoyed the tramp through mostly bush and many bridges following the Atiwhakatu Stream to the hut. A leisurely lunch and we were on our way back to the car park.

For a beginner tramp this was ideal. It offered enough challenges for people to find out if they are fit for more tramping. Best priced and sized ice creams on the way home at Renall Street Store was greatly appreciated. Thanks Anne and Marty for your organisation and guidance on this first tramp of the Beginner Tramps.

I will be back for more.

**12 February 2023**

**Iron Gates Gorge Walk**

**Report by Lee Byford**

It didn't look too bad when we left Milverton Park at 7:45, a bit overcast, but warm and dry. The weather forecast was on our side, so we were hopeful for a great day of river walking.

As we neared Alice Nash car park, the palette of the sky changed to ominous grey, and we were reminded that a cyclone was indeed on the edge of our shores. Parked up, we stepped out and seriously considered returning home, as the horizontal drizzle cut our cheeks, and the sky cloaking the ranges strongly suggested a rain that would fill the river beyond exploration level.

Deciding immediately that we would shorten our original six-hour planned walk, we felt comfortable walking the short distance to Alice Nash Memorial Lodge. Once we crossed the lovely arched bridge, the winds subsided and the skies cleared a little. The rain disappeared. It's a gorgeous and easy walk to Alice Nash Hut - a fabulous one to take your little kids on as an introduction to tramping.

Feeling comfortable now with the weather, we walked down the track from Alice Nash to the riverside, marvelling at the logging history of the area, the ragwort covered in caterpillars, and the freshness of being amongst the trees. The river levels were low, and though the original three hours of river walking was no longer on the plan, an hour's walk from the campground to Iron Gates was definitely achievable, so off we went.

The next hour was a delight. We followed the river's edge, 'off roading' and following deer tracks on occasions when the river was too deep. The river was crystal clear and changed its ice-blue tonal range depending on its depth. The hillsides, in places, were newly scarred with slips, and there were the occasional scrambles over sharp and newly exposed rocks.

Chris and I were taught some river crossing techniques, and the rock hopping and pool wading brought back some of my most treasured childhood memories. This was so much fun. Reaching the Iron Gates, was fantastic. It is a gorgeous place, and I felt ridiculously lucky to be sitting there eating my lunch, feeling incredibly grateful.



*"Occasional scrambles over sharp and newly exposed rocks."*

*Pic by Warren Wheeler*



*"Reaching the Iron Gates, was fantastic. It is a gorgeous place."*

*Pic by Warren Wheeler*

Our trek home saw us crossing back over the river and following pink triangles and ribbons up the Stoa Trappers Track - amazing. This is a beautiful path, and one of the things we love about being with PNTMC is that we get to learn about these paths and places. The lookout point was worth diverting to (shortest 10 minutes ever). As well as being a great viewpoint, you could see down to the Iron Gates and it reminded

you how far you can walk in such a short time. Our stoat count was two, and Roy very kindly removed them and showed us how the traps work.

We capped off a fabulous day with a drink at the Apiti Tavern where we ran into, and joined, Monika and her mum :)

Participants were Warren, Roy, Chris, and Lee.

**26 February 2023**

**Herepai Hut and High Point**

**Report by Ernie Cook**

Originally programmed as Ruapae Falls. Another gloomy week-end weather outlook had turned my attention from tramping so I was pleasantly surprised to be asked to visit Herepai Hut on Sunday. I was duly collected by Graham, Janet, Warren and Robyn and we met up with Brent and Julie at the Putara Road end.

The track was quite muddy. Those who had not been in here recently were quite taken with the large slip on the true right. Though not new it may have increased in size. There was quite a bit of scouring where the river had been diverted before breaking back through the slip.

Morning tea was taken by some before beginning the uphill stretch. Lunch was taken on the hut verandah partly in sunshine and partly in cloud.

The lure of Herepai high point proved irresistible to some, no surprises there! What did surprise was the time it took when compared to the posted time at the hut. After a series of gradual rises we satisfied ourselves that we had attained the objective. The weather was cooler with some showers. Views east were okay but we were not able to discern East Peak and beyond.



Returning to the hut we found that the less adventurous had wandered off. We arrived back at the road end about 5 o'clock thoroughly satisfied with our day excursion.

Thanks Warren for persevering with this outing when it would have been easy to submit to the predicted bad weather although Sunday was possibly always going to be better than Saturday.



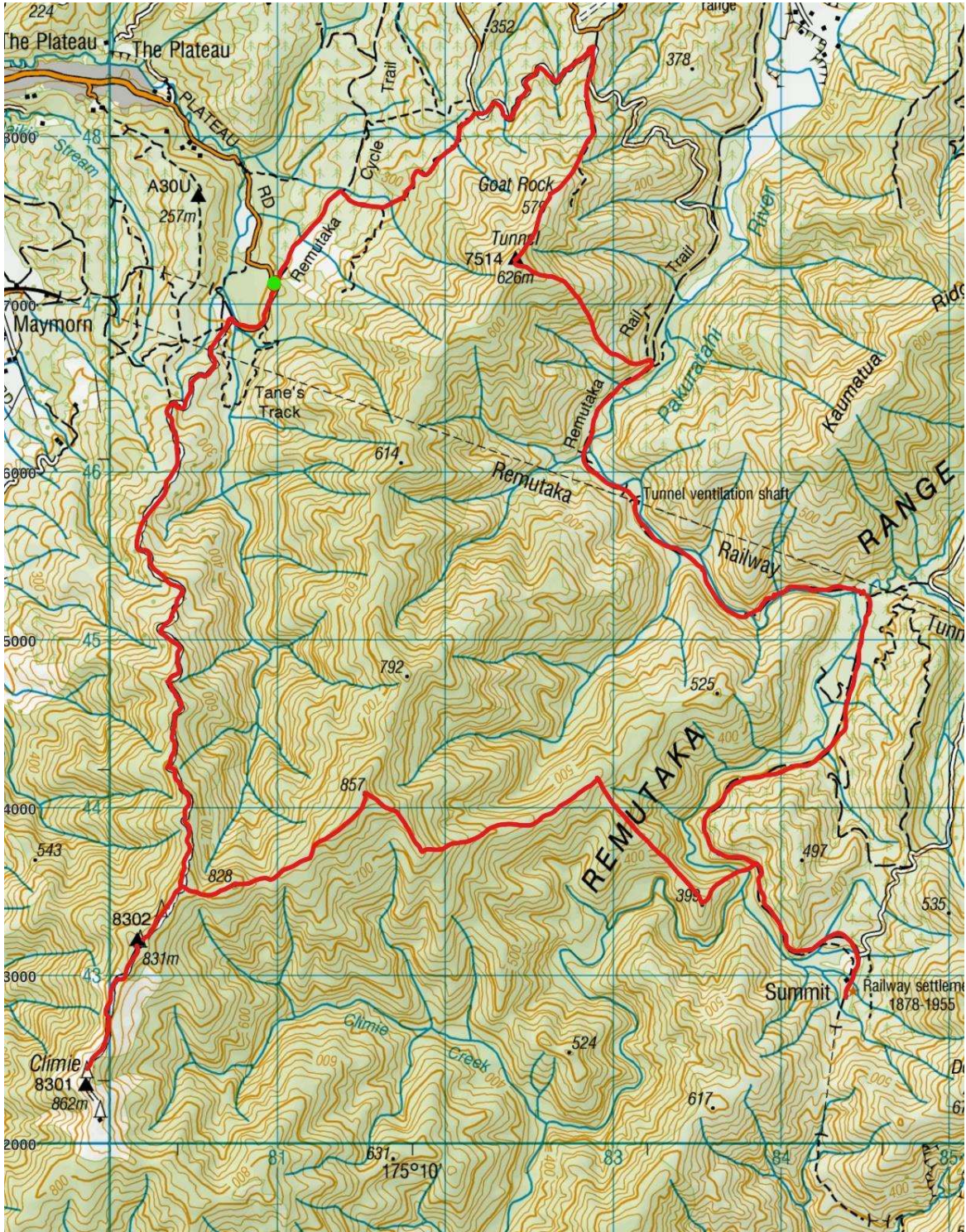
# Upcoming Trip - Route Map

1-2 April 2023

Mt Climie-Remutaka Rail Trail

Medium

Adam Matich





## PNTMC Newsletter March 2023

- Upcoming Trips and Club Nights
- DOC News Cyclone Gabrielle -- Leon Kinvig Hut Lost, Huts and Tracks Closed
- Trip reports: Beginners Tramp #1, Tauherenikau Valley, Iron Gates Gorge, Herapai Hut and high point

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*Get out and about with us!*

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