



Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club

www.pntmc.org.nz

PO Box 1217, Palmerston North

Newsletter December-January 2024



Gable End Ridge track a bit muddy after rain, Tararua Forest Park

Pic by Warren Wheeler

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.

14 December 2023

End of Year BBQs

All

Our annual end of year pre-Christmas BBQ and presentation of Annual Awards at the Ashhurst Domain. BYO food and drink, plus a \$5 gift to get into the festive spirit. A chance to discuss ideas and plans for summer holidays and extended trips over the New Year. 6.00pm to dusk.

25 January 2024

Beginning of Year BBQ

All

We start our year with a BBQ by the paddling pool in the Victoria Esplanade. A chance for a catch-up about your summer tramping and plans for future trips. BYO food and drink. From 6pm.

Upcoming Trips

2-3 December 2023 Atene Skyline M Stephen Legg 027 647 0095

On this overnight tramp we will listen and look for birds along the way and whilst overnight at the half-way campsite. Atene Skyline Track northern entrance is at the Whanganui River Road in Whanganui National Park. It is a 12.7 km round trip. It climbs steeply at the beginning and descends steeply at the end. We will take our time to observe the birds on the way. We will continue round the track to the southern entrance. Depart Saturday 7:30am from Milverton Park.

3 December 2023 TBA

If anyone wants to lead a day trip (perhaps Atene Skyline medium-fit trip) please phone Warren 06 356 1998. Keep an eye out for any trip details on our website.

9-10 December 2023 Kawhatau-McKinnon Hut M/F Roy Rolston 0274 767 188

Rescheduled to 16-17 December. See below.

10 December 2023 TBA

If anyone wants to lead a day trip on Sunday please phone Warren 06 356 1998. Keep an eye out for any trip details on our website.

16-17 December 2023 Kawhatau-MacKinnon Hut M/F Roy Rolston 027 476 7188

A destination that is difficult to get to because of access issues, we will take on the approx 2 hour river route firstly to Kawhatau Base and up a steep ridge to McKinnon Hut to stay Saturday night returning back down same way or via Crow Hut and the river on Sunday. Ideally leave Friday arvo staying Kawhatau the night leaving full day Saturday to get to McKinnon. Some of the track is said to be somewhat overgrown so the tramp will be a bit of a look see and perhaps we could take on some basic track clearing as we go. Contact Roy a week out to work out a plan.

16-17 December 2023 Short Knights E/M Warren Wheeler 06 356 1998

Celebrate the longest day (almost) by camping out on the Toka tops in the western Ruahines. Up Shorts Track and along the ridge to Toka for dinner and sunset. Return via Knights Track after sunrise and breakfast. Depart Milverton Park at 2pm on Saturday.

17 December 2023 Short-Knights Long-Day M/F Warren Wheeler 06 356 1998

For those keen to do a loop day walk instead of camping overnight. Contact Warren to confirm who will lead this trip. Depart Milverton Park at 7.30am.

12-14 January 2024 Tararua Adventure F Roy Rolston 027 476 7188

Fancy a bold adventure? How about a multi-day Tararua Traverse from Putara to Kaitoke or a Tararua Crossing from Levin to Putara or vice versa. Expressions of interest welcome including various route options and preferences depending upon the weather forecast. Contact Roy for more info and to book your place by a week prior if possible.

14 January 2024 Archies Lookout E Nicola Wallace 021 209 0720

Part of the Te Araroa Trail. A nice walk past Makahika Outdoor Centre up the valley behind Levin. Across paddocks then into the bush with several small stream crossings then up to the lookout for views over Horowhenua.

19-22 January 2024 Te Potae Trapline F Janet Wilson 027 341 8945

Wellington Anniversary extended trip to the northern Ruahines for some trap checking.

21 January 2024 Beehive Creek Family Doug Strachan 06 353 6526

Our traditional family day trip for this time of year. Enjoy the Pohangina countryside and splashing down the small cool stream.

27- 28 January 2024 Tenting at Tutuwai E/M Ernie Cook 027 303 1363

Depart Palmerston North at 7:00 a.m. and driving to Waiohine Gorge Road road-end. May return via Reeves and the centre of New Zealand. Possibly arrive at hut early enough to secure bunks for those who prefer. Phone Ernie by the preceding Wednesday please.

28 January 2024 TBA

If anyone wants to lead a day trip please phone Warren 06 356 1998. Keep an eye out for any trip details on our website.

3-6 February 2024 Waitangi Long Weekend TBA

Trip leader wanted. Please phone Warren 06 356 1998. Updated details will be on our website.

4 February 2024 Beginner Tramp #1 E Robyn Wheeler 06 356 1998

This is the first of our Beginner series, in the Tararuas, behind Masterton. From Holdsworth Road-end we follow the track to Atiwhakatu Hut for lunch. The track is fairly straightforward but has plenty of variety with some interesting bridges to cross. Depart from Milverton Park at 7.30am.

10 February 2024 Twilight Walk E Verity Elder 021 260 1885

We so often tramp during the day, but the bush can be just as enjoyable at twilight. The twin version to the moonlight walk last October, this easy trip begins at the Ashurst end of Te Apiti and follows the Gorge Track to Centennial Lookout (option to return via the same track or do a two car key swap with a second group walking from the other end). Bring supper instead of lunch, and a torch just in case. Depart Milverton carpark 4.30pm.

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.

Notices

Warren Wheeler m Robyn Boocock

11 November 2023

Warren and Robyn were married in their old home town of Otorohanga in front of 70 family and friends at St Brides Church. A highlight of the reception lunch was the memorable entertainment provided by 20 members of PNTMC, thanks to modified lyrics and choreography by Jo O'Halloran.



Last Minute Christmas Gift Ideas

“Every Effing Inch” By Tim Pankhurst

Fear and Loathing on Aotearoa New Zealand’s Long Trail - the 3012km Te Araroa



Tim’s account of this epic journey with his wife Sue and former Wellington mayor Dame Kerry Prendergast is required reading for everyone who has walked the Trail, those who are thinking of getting into the back country and those who never will, but can experience it from the couch. Published on Nov 8, rrp \$40. A special pre-publication price of \$30 (plus p&p) is offered to PNTMC members. It is available direct from the Underground Bookstore (theundergroundbookstore.nz) or major bookstores.

HUTS AND HIGH POINTS SCRABBLE CHALLENGE

Club Member	Scrabble	Bonus	TOTAL
Ernie	296	329	625
Blair	238	267	505
Chris T	244	161	405
Janet	168	176	344
Monika	175	165	340
Elly	274	53	327
Heather	157	113	270
Warren	85	117	202
Kirsten	78	63	141
Stephen	78	63	141
Adam	98	29	127
Anne	64	51	115
Martin	60	46	106
Grant	66	38	104
Graham	38	29	67
Neil	46	15	61
Bruce the dog	24	23	47
Michelle	31	2	33

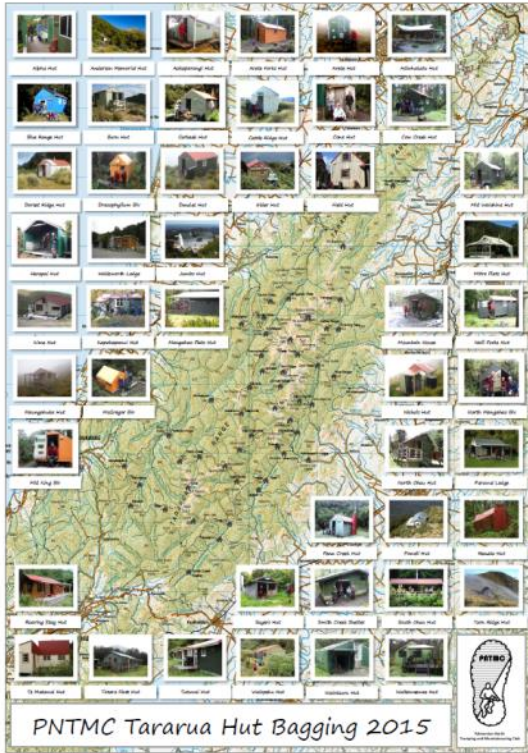
PNTMC Jubilee Book



Old Boots & Packs - The First 50 Years of the Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club (PNTMC) will interest and amuse mountain users, historians, photographers, hut baggers and tree huggers. Read about current and past members’ exploits, which include climbing our highest peaks (sometimes with boots on the wrong feet) and powering a car on white spirits cooking fuel.

Get ready to put your feet up and enjoy. Only \$35 from our editor Doug Strachan 06 353-6526.

PNTMC Hut Bagging Posters



Posters are still available for both the Ruahine Hut Bagging 2012 and Tararua Hut Bagging 2015. See website for an image of each.

Size	Members	Non Members
A1	\$24	\$30
A2	\$12	\$18

Post and tube is about \$15 extra depending on where it is being sent.

Contact Anne Lawrence 06 357 1695.

PNTMC Annual Awards

PNTMC annual awards were announced by Warren Wheeler at the End of Yea BBQ on Thursday 14 December 2023 to give light hearted recognition of some of our most memorable tramping incidents this year.

Back on Track Award – Anne Lawrence - for doing the Gorge walk wearing a knee brace that was not meant for walking, resulting in a swollen shin and floppy foot.

Modelling Good Behaviour Award – Brendon Corner – for crossing the Ruamahanga River 3 times to carry gear over so that the others wouldn’t get wet feet (lots of pics there) and offering to sleep on the floor of Dundas Hut.

On the Rocks Award – Chris Tuffley – for having his camera slip off a rock into the water at Martins Bay

On Top of the World Award – Roy Rolston – for the joy of meeting Kanchha Sherpa, the oldest living sherpa from Hillary’s 1953 Everest Expedition.

Loving It Award- Monika Coles – for enjoying the cold, wet, deep snow to Kime Hut.

Push On Award – Ernie Cook- our epic scrabble points champion for waist deep snow to bag Denna.

Winter Fashion Award – Nicola Wallace – for the lavalava she made by wrapping her groundsheet to keep warm at Kiritaki Hut.

Two Easy Award – Richard Lockett – for leading an “Easy” trip to Burtton’s Whare that took eight hours.

Dropped Into It Award- Nicola Wallace – for slipping from Blairs grasp while crossing the swollen Oruakiritaki Stream.

Baby Knows Best Award – Roy Rolston – for being unduly concerned about a young mother with a baby alone on Powell Track.

Liz Taylor Incognito Award – Jo O’Halloran- on the Samoa trip, for wearing dark sunglasses all the time after losing her specs.

Carry On Award – Graham Peters – on the Samoa trip, for missing the others stopped for a forest walk and cycling on to the fales to wait for the others who thought he had got lost.

Cocktails Anyone Award – Robyn Boocock (now Wheeler) – on the Samoa trip, for veering off for mocktails at a resort with Sally, expecting the others to catch up and do the same...but passed by instead.

Vacation Afterglow Award – Janet Wilson – our leader in Samoa, on behalf of everyone else who went up Mt Silisili on Samoa, for the infected sores that developed on our return to NZ and took weeks to heal.

Concrete Pill Award – Verity Elder – for hardening up despite becoming quite unwell on the “Easy” Gentle Annie Loop.

Quest for Quoin Award – Ernie Cook – who was consumed with the notion of an epic round trip to bag the “Q” for the Scrabble Challenge”.

Living on the Edge Award – Blair Petersen – for balancing on the edge of a wet mossy concrete “chair” as requested for a photo opportunity.

All Fired Up Award – Ernie Cook – for persisting in lighting the fire at a freezing Kiritaki Hut.

ET Award – Woody Lee – for using his phone twice at Kime Hut to talk to Korean friends, also for trying to call Blair when he lost the trail down to Renata Hut.

Blind Luck Award – Ernie Cook – for missing the turnoff to Marchant Ridge, resulting in a cooler trip upriver to Tutuwai Hut.

Better Late than Never Award – Chris Tuffley – for finally sending in a report for a Piripiri Biv trip.

Left Right Out Award – Janet Wilson – for finding she had two left boots when getting ready to leave for Triangle Hut.

Just Gremlin Award – Warren Wheeler – for heading off to pick up the cars after directing the others to just follow the track upstream to Camp Rangī Woods, when actually there was an impassible gorge and the track veered up to the road and along then back into the Totara Reserve. Confusion reigned until he eventually found they had popped out at the agreed bridge pickup point.

Dave Hodges for Excellence in Pursuit of Forgetfulness – Stephen Legg – on the Samoa trip, for losing their bike keys but thanks to impeccable orderliness at their fale they correctly deduced that it must have been left on the counter at the bar next door.

Last but not Least Award – Roy Rolston – for arriving late at Burn Hut with a delicious lemon cake for dessert.

Tararua Trophy Award for Best Newsletter Trip Reports – Monika Coles for Dundas Loop, Scrabble Kime Trip, Quest for Quoin.

Scrabble Challenge Awards

Well done to all those who participated in the Scrabble Challenge this year.

It was a fun way to encourage people to get out to places they wouldn't normally go, thanks to Ernie Cook for the idea.

Janet Wilson presented the following certificates at the BBQ.

- 1st Place – Ernie Cook 625 pts.
- 2nd Place – Blair Petersen 505 pts
- 3rd Place – Chris Tuffley Most winter visits, most hut nights
- Elly Arnst – highest number of visits to huts and high points.
- Warren Wheeler – highest percentage of points gained on club trips – 100%!

Trip Reports

15 October 2023

Field Hut Post Election

Report by Sarah Bramwell

Robyn, Blair, Warren, and Sarah met at the new end of the road - a friend told me drive till you get to the barrier. There is limited parking here and more than a few hundred metres back up the road to Shields Flat Carpark. Windy but no rain as we headed off along the road, then walking over the slip which has steps and a rope handrail in parts. To note, on speaking with an engineer post trip, he advised the slip is still moving and mentioned that there should be signs which say no access, but they continue to be removed. I guess it's cross at your own risk or use the emergency access track which would take longer.

A pleasant walk to the campsite area - less than 4 kilometres and I was given the job of writing the trip report by Warren within the first kilometre.

While walking Robyn mentioned W H Field, the hut's namesake, was her late husband Brian's great grandfather, so it made the walk that much more special – thanks for sharing Robyn and the link to one of New Zealand's great artists - Frances Hodgkins - and the Field collection which will be back on display (after 20 years in storage on and off) in the new Mahara Gallery Waikanae which opened on the 28th October. What a great topic to start the walk!

The campsite area is lovely, but I wonder whether the buildings etc will degrade now with the road closed – possibly a community volunteer effort needed here.



We crossed the swing bridge and after a while because Robyn and I were still talking about Frances Hodgkins we noticed that Blair and Warren were absent! They appeared striding across a grassy area after detouring to Parawai Lodge and found a nice little track which met up with the main track. Still no rain at this stage although we could see the cloudy gloom ahead and knew we weren't in for a day of views.

As we ascended the puawānanga (bush clematis) was seen everywhere and looked spectacular, it really is a stunning flower to see in the wild against a backdrop of green.

The track was extremely well maintained and an easy walk. Stopping for morning tea, light drizzle began to fall and got a little wetter but nothing heavy, with the odd wind gust the trees were creaking and cooler as we climbed.

More good conversations, Blair and I talking about tramping boots in detail, while Warren was giving instructions on foot placement, much to our amusement! The banter continued and before we knew it there was the beautiful old Field Hut surrounded in mist - rather fitting.

Lunch was had inside, and we were joined by Thomas from the Czech Republic – Warren suggested he go up to the end of the bush line to see the leatherwood but there would be no views. Thomas and a family that we passed on our way up were the only people we saw the whole day. Robyn provided more information on Mr Field and there are some great photos in the hut. With lunch over Robyn headed off at pace into the mist perhaps it was to avoid more instruction on foot placement!



Warren kindly took me to see Parawai Lodge on the way back and after a brief stop at the information shelter, we walked back to the cars with only the last hundred metres walking into a gale wind. Stats for the day, 22km and time taken 7 hrs 23 minutes. We were Robyn (Leader) Blair, Warren, Sarah.

1-2 November 2023

Waiopahu Loop

Report by Nicola Wallace

This mid-week trip was in lieu of the TBA overnight trip at the weekend – Ed.

On a very sunny, hot and muggy noon we departed the Poads Road carpark, where only 2 other cars were present. This was to be our anti-Covid trip; we'd done the same tramp a year earlier, and a few of us ended up with Covid-19 a few days later.

We climbed slowly in the heat, dripping sweat, to the 6 Discs track intersection, where we ate lunch before carrying on. The afternoon warmth seemed less humid, and sunlight dappled the track. I was surprised that the track was in very good condition, with no tricky windfalls to get over. It's a long way up this track, rising and dropping, wondering how you'll gain the height to get above the bush. We thought we'd probably have the hut to ourselves, but when we arrived at 5pm we found an Australian lady (doing Te Araroa in sections) and a young English couple in residence.

Our hutmates were very quiet and considerate, making it a very different hut stay from a Saturday night, where the place is crowded and loud conversation and laughter bounce off the walls. We enjoyed the view of Mt Taranaki in the evening, and the last birdsong of the day, from a Blackbird. I stayed up till just after 9pm, watching a helicopter flying around the Te Matawai Hut area, but couldn't work out what it was up to. I was last to bed, had a top bunk deck all to myself, and enjoyed seeing the lights of civilization through the window as I drifted off to sleep. It was a very quiet night.

We rose at 6am and left the hut just after 7.30am. The blackbird was sitting in a leatherwood near the hut as we departed. Some high cloud today, no view of Mt Taranaki, but Mt Ruapehu was a great sight. Ernie and Warren went a little off track and bagged the actual peaks of Waiopahu and Twin Peak, while Robyn and I just enjoyed the view from the track and the Ralph Wood memorial on Twin Peak. Waiopahu and Twin Peak really are twins - there's only 3 metres height difference between them.

After morning tea at Richard's Knob it was off down (and up and down) along Gable End ridge. The dominant theme was mud. It was the drying-out, boot sucking kind, as there hadn't been any rain for a few days, but the mud areas took up the entire width of the track, and were very guggy and at least ankle deep.

I enjoyed the many views of the hut from different angles on the way along. Gable End is the Northernmost peak in this “up and down” sequence of peaks, and it’s in the bush, (beautiful goblin forest), just. As we approached it, a long-tailed cuckoo was screeching from somewhere nearby. We stopped at Gable End, and poking around near the track I found a small black and yellow marker attached to a tree trunk. Was it a peak marker or a geocache marker?



Then it was down, down, down, except for point 670m ASL, and Mayo Knob. Down in the bush the track was a little messy in places, with an area of windfall that I remembered from last year. Robyn rolled on some small fallen tree trunks, and I ripped one of my new gaiters climbing over a large trunk. Welcome to Gable End!

It was a relief to get to the bottom, and we had a wonderful lunch by the Ohau River in the sun. It was a huge recharge before we tackled the slip on the Ohau River track. Actually it wasn’t too bad, as there were 2 very helpful ropes. They were tied at either end of the slip, and were not continuous all the way across. In the middle of the slip, on the narrowest part and sans rope, my forward progress ceased as the carrying loop on top of my pack snagged on a tree. A step or two back and I managed to un snag myself.



It was a hot afternoon walk, and Ernie and Warren pulled ahead while Robyn and I lagged behind, and stopped for a drink. We all met up once out in the open again, and arrived back at the car at 3.30pm. It had been a really enjoyable and interesting trip. If you’re going to stay in a hut, during the week is the best time to go!

Many thanks to Ernie for leading this trip.
We were: Ernie, Robyn, Warren, Nicola

Roy and Chris picked me up at my place and drove towards Masterton. It was such a nice day with blue skies so we could see the Tararua peaks clearly.

We started from Ruamahanga Gorge Rd and walked across farmland. We met a farmer on a farm bike with three sheep dogs at the second gate. He left the gates open for moving sheep, which was good for us. We soon climbed a steep hill and descended down to a flat grassy paddock and then we passed another gate.

Roy carried his hand saw and loppers for track maintenance. He stopped often to cut the hanging branches on the track and Chris and I helped him. There was a narrow and deep creek with waterfalls, so we carefully crossed and climbed up the cliff.



We lunched shortly after midday. We arrived at the junction to Roaring Stag Hut by the Ruamahanga River at about 2pm. After dropping our packs off we continued walking down to the river to check the river route where Roy did a return trip to Roaring Stag Hut in early January this year.

We returned to the main track and continued track maintenance, particularly around creeks or rivers to make the big orange triangles visible from each side. We passed a unique Cow Saddle sign on a metal sheet and arrived at the hut after 5pm.

Seeing smoke coming from the hut chimney buoyed me up. We met Derrick Fields in the hut. Roy knew him well. He had been staying in the hut since Thursday and maintained the hut and track.

It was a long day with seven and a half hour walk. My smart watch showed 15km distance and 27,000 steps for the day.

Roy's Note

Derrick Fields is a well-known mountain man of the Tararua's starting out initially as a government deer culler then working for the Forest Service. He said his first job for the Service was a task working from Cow Creek Hut, so this hut holds historical significance for him.

It was a real surprise to arrive at the hut and to meet him in person for the first time after hearing a lot about him. Derrick organises and carries out lots of track clearing work and some hut upgrades and

maintenance throughout the Tararua Forest Park and recently completed a lot of work on the tracks of the Te Araroa Trail in readiness for the annual influx of trekkers for the 2023/24 year.

He regularly posts his achievements on Facebook and that is where I have a Friend connection and I answered his call for prospecting volunteers to join his list. His latest project was to return with his crew to complete the 32km Matemateonga track in the Whanganui National Park the following week. That work has since been completed and it has opened the way to restore a very family friendly multiday adventure into the wilderness.

A side note here to a very good podcast available at the moment from Radio NZ called ``Deer Wars``. In a 9-part series, it tells the full story of the very first attempt to control deer numbers in NZ starting with government employed deer cullers to use helicopters as shooting platforms to live capture, to meet the demand for the developing deer farming industry.

It's a remarkable account of an era of NZ history that will never be repeated but the legacy of a network of huts throughout the country that was born out of those times is one we can all enjoy today and forms the backbone of our unique mountain hut network that exists only in NZ. You can listen to Deer Wars by downloading the RNZ App to your smartphone or visiting the RNZ website.



The next day was windy. Derrick left the hut first then we left at 8.30am. We crossed the swing bridge and started climbing towards Waingawa peak. We were excited to meet Blair's day tramp team at BRH and it was perfect timing to catch up with Blair and Heather before 12 noon. They arrived at the hut a couple of minutes before us. We had lunch together at the picnic table, but we were not lucky to see Cattle Ridge tops due to clouds.

We all arrived at the Kiriwhakapapa Roadend carpark at 2.30pm. Blair kindly dropped us off to our carpark on Ruamahanga Gorge Rd.

A big thank you to Roy for leading the trip and clearing the track.
We were Roy Rolston (leader), Chris Rayner and Woody Lee

12 November 2023

Blue Range Hut

Report by Blair Petersen

A leisurely 8am start from Milverton Park, just Heather Knox and myself set off for Kiriwhakapapa carpark. A shower of rain on the way, but once past Eketahuna we were into bright sunshine.



It was good to see that someone (maybe the local council) was spending money maintaining Kiriwhakapapa Road - new seal in some places and several sections on the gravel where retaining walls were being built to stop the road falling into the river. If only this sort of work was being done on more access roads (yes, I'm looking at you Otaki Forks).

We left the car at approx 9.20am and were at the turnoff to Blue Range Hut 1hr 20 mins later. From there we went left and up to the summit of Te Mara.



If you haven't been there before, there's a marker peg in the ground, not unlike at the summit of Iron Peg and Mangaweka and other places.

From there it's off to the hut. It was an easy trail to follow going up, but you need to be careful to follow the marking tape coming down.

We arrived at the hut just before midday, expecting to meet up with Roy's group coming out from Cow Creek Hut at 1pm. We'd only been there 5 minutes when they arrived - perfect timing!

After a leisurely lunch in the sun and out of the worst of the wind it was back to Kiriwhakapapa carpark. There's a large rimu tree about 20 minutes before

getting back to the car. This is an amazing tree, with a twist in the trunk of over 180 degrees and hollow inside. If you don't mind cobwebs and creepy-crawlies, you can climb inside the tree and stand up.

Back at the car by 2.30pm and home early. Another fun trip.

26 November 2023

Mania Track

Report by Woody Lee

I was interested in the original plan of the Mania-Rangi Loop walk as I really enjoyed the loop track many years ago. However Anne said going up Mania and back down was decided instead of going to Rangi due to lack of trampers.



Three of us travelled to Rangiwhahia and arrived at Titirangi Road end. At 9am we set off into the foggy forest. The surrounding ridges were under clouds.

We passed a couple of nice campsites on the way and had a break on a flat ground. The break was very short due to the cool temperature. At 1400m we came out of the bush, and we still had no views, but we were pleased when seeing the tussock area above the Rangi hut on the right one time. There was a DOC sign indicating 3 hrs to Mania Road End. We decided to go back due to the poor visibility.



We had lunch in the bush and continued walking down. I had an unusual pain on my left knee whenever I raised my left foot. I took paracetamol and later took Ibuprofen Anne gave to me. However the pain didn't go away.

Thankfully Anne lent me one of her walking poles, which was super lightweight. I found it was very useful when walking down the steep track.

We arrived back at the carpark at 2.25pm. We stopped at Kimbolton café for an ice cream.

Thanks to Anne for leading this trip.

We were Anne (leader), Martin and Woody

2 December 2023

Atene Skyline Walk

Report by Nicola Wallace

Our leader Stephen Legg had originally planned this as an overnighter, but with a wet forecast for Sunday, wisely changed it to a day trip. Five of us left town just after 7am on a fair morning, and we were surprised to see 5 or 6 cars in the Atene carpark when we arrived. Then our club's own Elly arrived, to run the circuit. Stephen was already debating the best direction to walk round the loop, and Ellie told us anticlockwise is definitely the best direction, as the track "flows" better with the uphill less abrupt, and the final descent is much gentler on the knees.

The road walk passed quickly, and while it was very hot climbing the hill, it was a good track, the steps quite high though. Once at the top the birdlife became quieter. The robins and peafowl we'd heard at the very start were replaced by the tomtit, tui, grey warbler, shining cuckoo and others. Birds were hard to spot today, but we identified them by their calls and songs.



Up, down, up, down, passing by Taupiri Trig, and much later, Taumata Trig. No actual trigs, just signs. The track was in very good condition, leaf covered and dry. Only one of us slipped on the leaves, and it wasn't me. We arrived at the sunny clearing (midway) about 3 hours after leaving the car. Just after we arrived, 3 lads came from the opposite direction, packs large and heavy with camping gear. Were they all going to sleep cosily in the same tent I asked one of them. No, individual tents. They weren't concerned at all about the forthcoming rain. As for us, we had a long lunch (hooray), and lay relaxing in the sun afterwards. The entire clearing is on a slope, and the further you go away from the shelter at the top end, the steeper the slope becomes. If we had stayed overnight, there wouldn't have been a lot of room.

The track from here on became more varied after about an hour. Bush track changed to a grass path lined with manuka, which gave way to papa and a rocky surface. At one stage we heard a karearea, but didn't see the bird. At the main lookout there was a yellow "40" road sign dumped. Fancy someone carrying that up there. A 40th birthday celebration maybe? A little further back down the lookout path we had a good view of "Pukatea", the hill in the middle, which stands 276m ASL. We looked through our binoculars at the former riverbed, and saw sheep, magpies, pukekos and beehives.



Further down the hill gorse plants clicked, presumably seed pods bursting open in the hot sun, and cicadas chirped, and I loosened my boots which were becoming tight in the heat. We all stopped and checked out the “space rocket” dunny.

The descent to the road was gentle on the knees, and the bush lush and beautiful near the bottom, with robins present once again. We arrived back at the car at 5pm hot and tired, but having had a very good walk. I’d now walked the track in both directions, and think anticlockwise is the better direction.

We stopped at the Whanganui 4 Square for refreshments. Looking out the window, up the Whanganui River, the clouds were very dark grey, loaded with rain, which did indeed fall the next day. I was home by 7.30pm.

Thanks to Stephen for all the driving, and everyone for their very good company.

We were: Stephen (leader), Kirsten, Rachel, Woody, Nicola.

17 December 2023

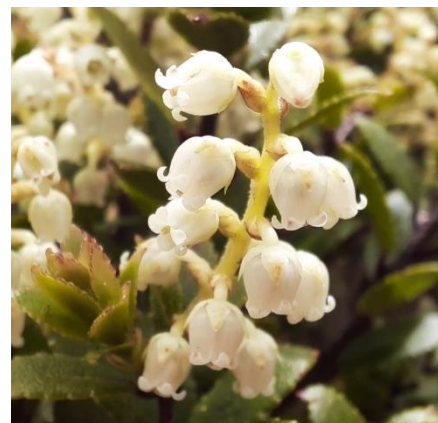
Shorts Knights Long Day

Report by Heather Knox

This is a loop track that I had been keen to do for a while, given that I'd heard from some people that it was their favourite local-ish day walk. I was happy to see that it was on the trip list again after not being able to make it in July. That turned out to be a bit of a blessing as the weather was awful in July and it turned out pretty well this time!

Warren and I left the car park at about 8:50am and headed up the right hand side of the Deerford Loop and on to the Shorts Track. We kept our eyes out for flowers along the way (not as many as expected) and had a look at the slips on the other side. Once out of the leatherwood and on to the tops it alternated between a bit blustery and pretty windy. However, we found a good sheltered spot for lunch and the layer of cloud that had been hovering around sort of started to lift, exposing some stunning views.

After lunch we headed up to Toka, which unfortunately still had white views all around it. We then headed back to the sign post and, not far down the Knights Track, the cloud really started to lift this time and the sun came out.





It was steady going down the track and back into the bush. Stopping to look around every so often. The back side of the biggest slip, which had been a bit of a crack in the track last time that Warren came up, was now a BIG break in the path. It was easy to get across, but gave the impression that things were definitely moving in the area, and that it could all shift again at a moments notice. We carried on down, down, down and it didn't seem to be that long before we heard the rush of running water. Given the option of walking back via the creek or along the Deerford Loop, I opted for the much less adventurous dry feet option and we were back at the car park at 3:50pm, 7 hours after we left.

Thanks to Warren for good company, doing the driving and stopping for an ice-y treat on the way home. A great day out.

MERRY CHRISTMAS and HAPPY NEW YEAR



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