



Palmerston North

Tramping and Mountaineering Club

www.pntmc.org.nz

c/- Society of Friends, 227 College St, PN

Newsletter May 2025

What's in my pack?

PNTMC 2025

Whether it is for comfort, safety or function, we all have it; gear we swear by and can't live without when out in the backcountry. 'What's in my pack' is an opportunity for us to share our stories, tips and advice on the gear we carry in our packs when tramping.

Choose from the 5 categories below and write a short story or explanation about the item or gear. Include a bit of history or an example of it in use, and a photo (in action is best) if available.



Categories:

Two for one - Every milligram on our back counts, which is why some gear earns its place for its dual, or even multipurpose function.

Second-hand - From merino gems, to vintage Swandri and spare tent pegs, you never know what might be found in a second-hand store.

Repair job - in a 'throw away' society, taking a moment to repair your favourite gear can help save the planet and your wallet.

DIY - whether it is hand-made, self-made, custom-made or kit-set, gear that we make ourselves can have added value and satisfaction.

Can't live without - that one item you always pack.

For every entry, go into the draw to win a \$50 voucher from a local outdoor store of your choosing. Enter all 5 categories and go into the draw an extra 5 times. Draw made at the end of the year club BBQ.

email entries to: elderverity@gmail.com

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.

8 May 2025

Taiwan – Stairway to Somewhere

Anja Scholz

Did you know that Jushan, Taiwan's highest mountain, towers more than 200m over Mt Cook? That Taiwan has 268 peaks over 3000m, no ski field, but plenty of tracks for all hiking levels - apart from 24 Mio people living on an island the size of Manawatu/Whanganui/Hawkes Bay? A wild East Coast, food markets, over 60's Hiking Clubs, food stalls, Formosan Bears, food fairs, flying squirrels, food festivals (you get the idea), many natural and political threats plus some bizarre quirks... Two weeks were not enough by half to explore, but come get an introduction to what beckons as your next tramping destination! There will be mud!.

29 May 2025

BYO Pics

Our post-summer Show and Tell of what you have been up to in the last 6 months or so.

Upcoming Trips

3 May 2025

Maharahara

M

Woody Lee

0210 444 552

Saturday trip. From Opawe Road end we start walking through the paddock and climb up the forest park track toward the Maharahara Peak (1095m). We will have lunch somewhere on the way down. Depart Milverton Park 7.30am.

3-4 May 2025

Pohangina Stoat Trappers

M

Janet Wilson

06 329 4722

If interested, please get in touch with Janet early in the week as plans can be very flexible so a weekend trip may become a day trip.

10-11 May 2025

RRWAM - Ruahine Ramble with a Mission (Mission TBA!)

M

Chris Tuffley

06 359 2530

This will be a Ruahine Ramble with a Mission - mission and hence destination TBA! If the weather and stars align it will be a conservation-related mission, either into Mākāretu to do some eDNA sampling for Manaaki Ruahine, or in to Top Gorge to rebait the RWP upper Pohangina trapline. If said stars and weather don't align we'll forge our own mission, and choose a destination to suit.

11 May 2025

Wharite Peak

E/M

Neil Benton

027 243 4664

From Coppermine Creek Roadend up to the southern-most high point in the Ruahine Ranges. Up through regenerating bush to the leatherwood ridge along to the mighty transmission tower visible from PN. Great views to the east and west. Depart 8.00am.

17-18 May 2025

Howlett's Hut

M/F

Anne Lawrence

027 450 4212

This Heretaunga Tramping Club hut is high in the central Ruahines and well worth a visit especially now that it has recently been refurbished.

24-25 May 2025

Poutaki Hut

M

Chris Parker

027 341 0091

Poutaki Hut (old Puketoi Musterers Hut) is a Standard Hut that is located in Gwavas Conservation Area, Hawke's Bay. It has 4 bunks.

30 May-2 June 2025

Kings Birthday Kawhia (aka The Raglan Road Trip)

All

Janet Wilson

06 329 4722

The 2025 "Coastal Classic" trip will be heading to Kawhia. The harbour looks beautiful and there are hot pools to be dug out on the coast, fishing and kayaking. Mount Pirongia is not that far away for tramping and there are bound to be other interesting local walks. Depending on interest, we will stay at one of the camping grounds/cabin or possibly a bach. We will drive up the back roads via Marokopa and return via Raglan. If you think you might be interested in this extended holiday weekend trip then let Janet know asap so a plan can be made and suitable accommodation can be booked nice and early.

7 June 2025 Herepai Hut E/M Woody Lee 021 444 552

Saturday trip. A trip into the eastern Tararuas behind Eketahuna. We will walk up from the Putara Road end and climb steadily up the hill after the second swing bridge then getting to the hut through lovely bush. Depart Milverton Park 7.30am.

15 June 2025 Hemi Matenga Kohekohe Hunt M Nicola Wallace 021 209 0720

Hemi Matenga Reserve rises behind Waikanae with a loop track taking us steeply up through the coastal forest to big rimu on the ridge then along to a lookout over the coast and Kapiti Island. Dropping down we will finish at the bottom with the short Kohekohe Loop track then back through the streets to the start. Ice creams to follow. Depart Milverton Park 7.45am.

Trip Grading

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	Inst (Instruction)

BWD = Best weather day of a weekend

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 027 446 6287 or Bruce van Brunt 06 328 4761.

New Members

Welcome to Sascha Howie. Sascha has already been on two of the trips written about in Trip Reports below.

Trip Reports

30 March 2025

Blue Range Hut Beginners Tramp #4

Report and photos by Verity Elder

PNTMC's final beginner trip for 2025 was to Blue Range hut. 11 of us made our way to Kiriwhakapapa road end. The car park and campground had its usual wind tunnel funnelling

through but the day was mild and the sky mostly clear and our spirits high. We set off just after 9am, making our way through the strange mature conifer trees toward the lush native forest, crossing several minor bridged streams to the start of the ridge climb.

The track begins at around 350 meters and climbs to just over 900 meters over 3.5km. As we began the ascent a quiet focus ensued amongst the group as we set our minds to the task of climbing the ridge, navigating the typically root bound Taranaki track. We took our time, stopping twice for water and snacks.



In 2 and a half hours we made it to the very cute and happily situated Blue range hut looking out over the Waingawa river valley and peaks beyond. Here we had lunch before making the descent back down.



It has been a pleasure to facilitate the beginner trips this year and to meet so many amazing tramping enthusiasts. Thank you to the various PNTMC members who came along to help and share their experience along the way, in particular Richard Lockett for being tail end Charlie on all 4 trips.



We were Sascha, Olyvia, Grant, Kirstie, Richard, Kim, Helen, Bronwyn, Woody, Jo, and Verity.

28-30 March 2025

Social Trappers trip to Iron Gate

Report by Janet Wilson; Photos by Malcolm Thomas

Many hands make light work! A very willing group of 6 trappers headed into Iron Gate Hut on the Friday morning. The plan was to stay 2 nights and to replace some aging DOC 200 mechanisms between Iron Gate and Triangle Huts and to service as many traps as possible. Everyone was carrying extra gear - some replacement trap mechanisms or extra lure plus the usual supply of eggs.

On the way in Malcolm and Ernie checked out the new track DOC have cut to bypass the big slip. They reported it to be steep and quite difficult - not encouraging! The rest of us used the old route which the trap line still follows.

On Saturday morning, Jenny and Adam headed for home, having completed their 'pack-horse' duties. The rest of the group headed towards Triangle Hut, servicing traps as they went. Once on the other side of the steep 'up and over' detour track and back down to the river it was lunch time. The group split up with Malcolm and Janet going all the way up to Triangle and Ernie and Neil returning and finishing off the trap work. We met back at IGH later in the afternoon - a very satisfying day's work. Blair was at the hut having walked in on Saturday morning - he had spent

the afternoon servicing some traps up the track towards the Ngamoko tops and cutting firewood. The 'Hut' who pair turned up late in the afternoon.



Next morning we all decided the weather looked settled enough to allow us to return around the tops. The traps up high don't get looked at very often - usually due to adverse weather conditions. Conditions were lovely until we nearly reached the top - from then on a stiff breeze kept us moving along - too unpleasant for many photos stops. We had a couple of short breaks where we could find some shelter from the wind. Once over Tunupo conditions quickly improved, we shed some layers but it was a long slog home down the hill.

Thanks everyone for helping out on this 'Applied' tramp. It was nice to be back up on those tops and satisfying to get a lot of the trap work up to date.

The team were Ernie, Malcolm, Neil, Jenny, Adam, Blair and Janet (organiser and scribe).

28-30 March 2025

Social Trappers trip to Iron Gate

Report by Blair Petersen

I had to work on the Friday, so missed that part of the trip. That was OK, because as it turned out I also missed all the rain that day.

I left home early on Saturday, with the intention of being at the hut by lunchtime. I must have been in a hurry, as I got to the hut in just 3 hours from the car park. After a quick lunch, it was up the track behind the hut, resetting traps & replacing a few old mechanisms with new ones that I'd carried in with me. It was then that I discovered the folly of rushing earlier in the day – a mixture of that steep track & a hot afternoon meant that I didn't very far.

Back at the hut, I cut some firewood & waited for the others to return from further up the river.

We decided to return to the car park via the tops & Tunupo, resetting the traps on that line as we went. This of course meant climbing that bl__dy hill again. It also meant, for me, a tops trip

that I hadn't done before. As usual, the views were awesome & the wind did its thing. Luckily, the cloud & rain didn't.

On the way back down the spur from Tunupo we stopped at pt 948, apparently called Umutoi on some old maps. It would have been good to know that a few years ago for the Scrabble Challenge – U was a hard letter to bag.

Back at Graeme & Janet's shed, the hospitality (beer & chips) was much appreciated after a long day on the hill.

Stanfield Hut

6th April 2025

Report by Richard Lockett and Photos by Woody Lee

I've always liked the autumn months for tramping, not too hot and not too cold and with settled weather, just all round pleasant. Assisting Verity Elder with the club's beginner tramps early in the new year rekindled my enthusiasm for getting outdoors on club trips more often than has been the case over the last couple of years.

I've been to Stanfield Hut many times over the years via various routes but not for a few years, so I thought it was time to pay another visit on Woody's easy Sunday trip.

As it transpired Woody's Stanfield trip also had the feel of a beginner's trip for the reason that four of us had not been out with the PNTMC before, and three of the four had not been into the NZ outdoors tramping before! For this reason, Woody was grateful that I was with him on this occasion to assist in looking after our new trip participants.



The first obstacle: crossing the Tamaki River at the picnic area before the climb up unto the Homes Ridge track. The three, Claire and Rachael fresh out from the UK and working at the PN hospital along with Martin an older gentleman from Isreal visiting his grandchildren who live in the Manawatu, well they were reluctant to get their feet wet. Now the Tamaki at this point is only 1.5 metres wide and maybe 150mm deep, a good leap and the rest of us were across - no wet feet at all. Lesson number one: wet feet get used to it!

It was noticeable to Woody and me that Martin, although fit, was not comfortable walking along our narrow track with slippery tree roots and loose stones and rock so we keep an extra eye on him to ensure that he enjoyed a challenging but good day out with us. Although he took a

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couple of tumbles managing to break a walking stick that Sascha had kindly offered him the use off for the day. Thanks, Sascha.

On arrival at the hut, Woody quickly had the billy boiled and coffee all round which soon brought on the need to visit the long drop for a pee. I'd been for the visit on arrival at the hut and thought that it was very clean and with no noticeable odours.

The ladies had varying opinions on how bad the odours were with Rachael saying that she had to keep the door open to bear it! Discussion then centred on the worst toilets that we had encountered on our various travels around the world. Claire was a stand-out winner with the description of a toilet atop a mountain in Turkey which I won't repeat here.

Lesson number two: smelly long drops get used to it!



A pleasant two hours after leaving the hut we were back at the cars after an enjoyable day for all except possibly Martin who maybe was just outside of his comfort zone on this occasion.

Trip participants were Rachael, Claire and Martin as the three and Leonie, Sascha, Richard and leader Woody.

Easter Eastbourne Report and photos by Nicola Wallace

20th April 2025

Five of us left PN at 7.30am, meeting up with Lia at Levin, and offloading two of us into her car. There had been hassles in PN for Dev and Wendy, as the buses weren't running, presumably because it was Easter Sunday.

After a long drive we all arrived at the 'roadend' Kowhai St, Eastbourne by 9.30am. This steep little suburban cul-de sac had very little parking room at its end, but we squeezed in.

The track was initially a very wide, flat “townie track” before we headed downhill off track into thick bush, soon crossing the tiny Butterfly Creek – no wet feet. Somewhere near here I stopped for a pee break, and Lia had the misfortune to lose her prescription glasses in the bush. We soon arrived at a hut – locked and abandoned. Adam described it as a Ranger’s Hut. Actually we were on a track, a little pest control track with bait stations and the occasional Timms Trap along the way.



Ascending to high point 130m we headed North along another pest control track marked with small pink squares on trees. Sometimes markers were absent, and we encountered multiple tracks heading in our direction, so there was a bit of discussion and backtracking along the way. There were not many birds, but I saw a Tomtit and heard Tui and Bellbirds. None of the Timms Traps had possums hanging out the bottom, but I did see bait pellets scattered on the ground beneath some of the bait stations. No dead critters though.

It was exciting to arrive at our second hut for the day: Stan’s Hut. Off to the side of the track and a few feet down the hill, it had a man/lady toilet sign on the door, so imagine my surprise when I opened the door to a cosy little hut with a sleeping platform, a picture of Stevie Wonder on the wall (not Bob Marley), a beanbag, shelf and books. When we opened the shutter over the window it was quite bright inside.



Soon after lunch we arrived at the Hawtrey Trig track, at an altitude of over 300m ASL. We didn’t visit the trig but turned left onto this track and headed downhill. This track was marked with orange “tin lid” markers every few feet, but when I touched a marker I found it was made of plastic. Further on a prominent lookout, Kaeaea Lookout, gave us really good views of Makaro Ward Island and Matiu Somes Island. Arriving down at Butterfly Creek, Wendy’s phone fell into the water, but Blair gallantly rescued it immediately, so hopefully no harm done.

Having completed a loop, we had a good look for Lia's glasses in the bush, where we'd been about 5 hours earlier, but we failed to find them. There followed the uphill and downhill that took us back to Kowhai St. It was interesting to go somewhere I'd never been before. The entire walk took us about 5.5 hours on a hot, muggy day with the occasional bit of drizzle.



Thanks to Adam for organising this interesting trip, something different. It was a long drive: 300km from PN and back again.

We stopped at Otaki BP on the way home for eats and drinks, and were back in PN soon after 5pm.

We were: Adam (trip leader and driver), Lia (from Levin, who also drove), Blair, Dev, Wendy and Nicola.



Archeys lookout

27 April 2025

Report and photos by Kirstie Priddle

A group of 3 of us left Milverton park at 8am, picking up Wendy from Massey on the way. The weather was a mix of blue skies with light cloud, cool but with a promise of getting warmer, no wind and we were so lucky it stayed like that the whole day! We set off at 9am from the car

park crossing over farmland, Nicola said the first part was a very old logging road. Then through a campsite. I lost count on how many stream crossings there was and we also encountered a lot of mud sometimes it couldn't be avoided and the only way was through. We had morning tea after 1.5 hours next to a stream before it got steeper.

After a good climb we got to Archeys lookout sign



turning right to go a few more meters to a clearing with awesome views west from the tip of Kapiti Island to Foxton. We all agreed to go a bit further up to Horowhenua lookout. The climb got steeper again,



passing through a dark goblin forest, I stood there and just slowly turned around taking in the whole thing it was amazing, not far from there we got to Horowhenua lookout, a nice sunny spot for lunch and a rest. We could see Shannon, Manawatu river and Foxton beach from here.



After refuelling we headed back down stopping at the campsite picnic table for afternoon tea.

All up it took 7 hours return and an enjoyable day was had by all. We had the whole track to ourselves as we didn't come across any other trampers. Many thanks to Nicola for organising this trip.

We were Nicola, Emma, Wendy, Kirstie.



Thousand Acres Plateau Take 1

Oct 19 – 24, 2000

Report by Terry Crippen

From PNTMC's Bumper Spring Newsletter - November 2000

For those of you who are into rocks and geology, Kahurangi National Park is a great place to tramp.



*Terry admiring the spectacular view of "The Devils Dining Table" from Haystack Peak.
Photo by Tony Gates*

The flat elevated Thousand and Hundred Acre Plateaux ("The Devils Dining Table"), together with the Needle and Haystack, are relatively young, about 30 million years old - (ie, much younger than the 140 to 220 million year old greywacke rocks that make up the Ruahines and the Southern Alps). They are tertiary age mudstones and limestones about the same age as the "papa" mudstones in the Taranaki and Taihape areas. While the limestones have plenty of sink holes in them they probably don't lead into useful caves since the limestone layer is thin and it is a muddy limestone (that's why it gave us slippery, muddy surfaces to walk on).

In contrast, the Mt Owen area nearby is a huge thick body of marble (metamorphosed limestone) and has very deep and long caves. The rocks on which the plateaux sit are very old. They are about 300 million years old; Paleozoic granite-like rocks that erode to give the characteristic coarse-grained pink-white boulders and sand found in the Matiri valley. In other parts of Kahurangi National Park there are even older rocks – some of the oldest rocks in New Zealand - 500 million or more years old, including the Trilobite fossil rocks of the Cobb Valley. By comparison, the glaciations that moulded much of the South Island began about 2 million years ago and finished about 10,000 years ago.

As for recreation in Kahurangi National Park, there are tremendous possibilities. The terrain is vast and beautiful, with some of the best native bird life and flora in NZ. The popular Heaphy, Wangapeka, Cobb, and Mt Arthur/ Karamaea tracks absorb most of Kahurangi's visitors, but there are numerous seldom visited corners like the Thousand Acres Plateau. On day one. we sweated and cruised our way past Lake Matiri and Poor Pete's Hut. Gorgeous country, views, and weather.



Limestone bluffs of “The Devils Dining Table”, Mohikinui Catchment.

Photo by Martin Lawrence

Day two saw us crossing the Thousand Acres Plateau, resting at Larrikins Creek Hut, then camping out on a most delightful tussock ledge beneath “The Needle”. We needed to cringe from the fearsome sunshine for much of the day. An evening climb of “The Needle” gave us all a lasting impression of the vast and rugged National Park named Kahurangi, “The Jewell”.

Day three gave us another dose of “mainland sunshine”. At least we had morning shade as we grunted up “The Haystack”. Awesome, the views of Kahurangi go on forever. A very stylish morning brew was had in the snow as we lazed around the summit. The descent to the north was not easy- steep tussock, bluffs, and Spaniard grasses. There were even some large crevasses in the land, as nature showed us how mountainsides can move to start landslides.

The heat was fair blasting down as we cruised over the easy tussock tops. Several times, I felt my body was going to expire. Fortunately, there were patches of snow to stuff under our sun hats and into our water bottles. At one point, we erected the fly for shade and sat on a patch of snow guzzling cool drinks. While Terry and Stephen continued on to a low col in the cool of the beech forest, Tony and Martin took a fast, sweaty side trip down to Haystack Hut.

Somewhere along the ridge, we dropped down toward Lake Jeanette & the Matiri River, a bush bash that was to prove both exciting and frustrating. After encountering bluffs, we navigated our way with some difficulty to eventually gain the valley floor. Boy, was I knackered! From the bottom, it appeared that a person would have a 50% chance of getting bluffed on the descent, so we didn’t do too badly. We established a very comfy camp on a Matiri tributary river flat and restored our energy with a “Crippen special”- triple portions of pasta and numerous brews.

The map showed us that our retreat down the Matiri Valley was quite a long way. It was! We firstly tramped up valley to visit the very attractive Lake Jeanette, and Hurricane Hut, noting several familiar names in the log book. Back to camp, lunch was a lazy, drawn-out affair. Some stiflingly hot tussock hollows, then lovely Dracophyllum forest, before the rather long, frustrating river sidle track to McConachie Hut. The Matiri River featured some massive earthquake dams and lakes.

On our last day, despite being a little footsore, we tramped rapidly down valley to Lake Matiri, then the car. We paused frequently for even more photography of this lovely place.

We were Terry Crippen, Peter Wiles, Martin Lawrence, Stephen Liddall, and Tony Gates.

Thousand Acres Plateau Take 2 Report and photos by Martin Lawrence

11-14 Feb 2025

In February this year Anne and I had a great tramp to 1000 Acres Plateau in Kahurangi NP. I had great memories of a Terry Crippen led trip there back in October 2000. And Anne, having heard so much about this trip, was keen to see the place for herself.

Our first destination was Poor Pete’s Hut via the lovely Lake Matiri. In contrast to my prior Labour Weekend trip we had a very hot and sweaty climb up to the plateau. Poor Pete’s hut has had quite a makeover since my last visit and is a lovely small hut that sleeps two with nice camp sites nearby.

We enjoyed reading Pete's story that evening – the original hut was built in the fifties by a group of young deer cullers, then poor Pete had to leave his mates to settle down and get married!



After an easy walk to Larrikins Hut we put up tent in a lovely spot nearby under the beech trees. From here we made day trips up The Needle and across The Devils Dining Table to Mt Misery, taking care not to slip down one of the many tomos.





We made an attempt to climb The Haystack but the route we took was a bit too exposed for us, so we backtracked. In Terry's trip we had climbed The Haystack and bush bashed down to the Matiri Valley to make a loop trip. Checking with DOC it appeared that the Matiri Valley track North of the lake is now un-maintained and difficult. We were very happy to exit the same way on this trip.

It was fantastic to revisit this special place that I had visited 25 years ago. If you are looking for somewhere special, a little off the beaten track, then I recommend having a look at the Thousand Acre Plateau.



Final word

The Otaki Gorge track work is still on track for completion May. Thanks to Sarah Bramwell for keeping us updated on this and sent in pic below of Otaki Forks update from council re the removal of the two slips.





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• Trip Reports:

1000 Acres Plateau,
Easter Eastbourne,
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Iron Gate,
Blue Range Hut

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