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## Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club

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

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

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### Newsletter July 2025

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*The PNTMC Ngamoko hut pose is a classic!*

*Photo by Chris Rayner*

### Club Nights

*Club nights are 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.*

**Thu 10th July 2025**

**BYO Pics**

**Martin Lawrence**

POSTPONED from 29 May. Our post-summer Show and Tell of trips done by members over the last six months of so. Bring your pic picks on a memory stick and tell us all about it. Or just come along, enjoy and be inspired.

**Thu 31st July 2025**

**Exploring Southern Fiordland**

**Kerry Griffiths**

This is about Kerry's 2nd trip to the very bottom of Southern Fiordland. We will hear what he saw, and what he heard, in the thick bush – sadly no moose! On his month-long trip, he walked east from the helicopter drop off point at Kiwi Burn to Port Craig.

## Upcoming Trips

### Advance Notice - Expressions of Interest – Aotea – 13<sup>th</sup> October

Following the very successful trip last year Barry Scott is planning a club trip to Aotea/Great Barrier Island. Places are limited so reply ASAP to avoid disappointment. Expressions of interest to Barry by the end of July. Contact Barry at [d.b.scott@massey.ac.nz](mailto:d.b.scott@massey.ac.nz) or telephone: 021 070 4848.

I am offering to host a PNTMC group (7 max) on Aotea/Great Barrier Island for 5-6 days the week of 13<sup>th</sup> of October. Base camp will be our house at Awana Bay 15 min up the coast from Claris airport. There is a mix of walks you can do as well as general exploring of the island. [A walk up and over Hirakimatā, the highest point on the island and breeding ground for the black petrel/tākoketai is a must do.](#) As are visits to Windy Canyon, Kaitoke Hot Pools and Harataonga Beach. But always some new places to explore so plan is very flexible. Part of the arrangement this year would be some volunteer conservation work on Motu Kaikoura at Port Fitzroy removing wilding pines. There is a communal lodge to use and associated cabins where we can stay at overnight to explore the island a bit as well as do some work. For more information on the island click [here](#).

### Sun 6th July Blue Range Hut Easy-Medium

**Doug Strachan: 06 353 6526**

A good trip for the school holidays to a cute hut in the eastern Tararuas. A steady uphill past a hollow rimu and rewarding views to the snowcapped higher ranges to the west. Depart 7.30am.

### Sat 12th July Herepai Hut Medium

**Woody Lee: 0210 444 552**

Saturday trip rescheduled from 7 June. 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.

### Sat 12th July - Sun 13th July Waiopahu Hut Easy

**Ernie Cook: 027 303 1363**

An easy over-night trip to Waiopahu Hut in the Northwest of the Tararuas. Waiopahu Hut is a standard 18 bunk hut accessed from the Poads Road end. Departing Milverton Park at 7:30 a.m. Please contact Ernie no later than the Monday previous.

### Fri 18th July - Sun 20th July - Introduction to Snow Skills **Grant Christian: 021 117 6921**

Want to know how to stay safe on snow and ice? Join this trip to Ruapehu to learn how to keep yourself safe. Learn how to walk on snow, cut steps, use crampons and ice axe and self-arrest. Introduce an understanding of avalanche safety. This trip will only proceed if snow, avalanche and weather conditions are suitable; there is a reasonable chance of postponement to a later weekend. This trip is only open to members of PNTMC, but you can join the club if you wish. Numbers are limited. The only costs are transport, accommodation and gear hire. Contact Grant by 30 June. Ph Grant on 021 117 6921 or email [gpc374@gmail.com](mailto:gpc374@gmail.com) for further information.

**Trips beyond July can be viewed on the club website [‘trip card.’](#)**

**Trip Grading** - Trip grades depend on many factors, including weather and terrain. A reasonably proficient tramper should expect to do the trips in the following times:

Easy (E):	3-4 hrs
Medium (M):	5-6 hrs
Fit (F):	about 8 hrs
Fitness Essential (FE):	over 8 hrs
BWD = Best weather day of a weekend	

Other Grades:

- Family (Fam)
- Technical skills (T)
- Inst (Instruction)

**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, there is probably a good reason for the delay. If you are in any doubt, please phone Bruce van Brunt 06 328 4761 or Verity Elder 0212601885



## Hut Maintenance

### Ngamoko Hut Fly in Work trip – (24<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> April).

Report by Scott Rees; Photos by Chris Rayner.



Four excited fellas rolled into Pohangina Base on a beautiful Thursday afternoon, grinning like kids on Christmas morning. The anticipation of the helicopter ride into the hills had been building for weeks after our false start three weeks prior — and the weather had delivered: blue skies, light winds, and stunning views of the ranges. After a quick gear check and a final round of loading, we lifted off, skimming over the Pohangina River valley and forest, soaking in the beauty of the backcountry. It was the perfect start to the trip.

(Janet and Jo had been dropped into Mid-Po prior with a plan to paint the hut interior and finish off last year's major works).



Touching down at hut early evening, we wasted no time getting stuck into the mission. The first job was scouting a new site for the toilet. Once a suitable spot was chosen, we got straight to work with crowbar, spades and shovels. Soon the worms were biting and after a hearty dinner (and a few beers/gins), enthusiasm remained high enough to carry on digging by torchlight, getting the hole around 80% complete before calling it a night. The following morning, three of us headed upstream for a quick hunt and to check out a few slips, including the ridge behind the hut. After a listen and look, returning after daylight



not having seen anything but footprints and a pair of who in the river, the first of two pairs for the trip.

We finished digging the 900x900 x1500 deep toilet pit and then turned our focus to some much-needed hut maintenance. Three piles under the hut were removed after the corners were jacked up, fixing the dragging door in the process. New piles were installed and concreted into place. Meanwhile, the toilet was carried onto the lawn, where it was repainted, reroofed, and prepped for its new home. New bearers were set in place at the toilet's relocation site, and with a team lift, the toilet was carefully moved and positioned securely.

After a full day's work, we split up and parted ways up and down the river for an early evening hunt, both pairs returning without any luck. A lot of grass on the slips had ended up as a pile at the bottom of faces in the river after the cyclone.

Day three saw an early start with three of us climbing to the tops for a morning look around. After a good 90-minute grind we knew there were a few animals around from the state of the track (including half foot deep mud) and strong smell of deer in the air. We must've been following a stag up the track as he showed himself on the skyline at the top of track as we neared the tops, but without a safe shot, we let him go. We then spotted a spiker grazing in the leatherwood 100 yards away so dropped him and watched as another nearby yearling trotted off up over the range, but without enough time for another shot. We left the spiker and took in the views of the tops, spotting another 10 deer spread over the range without even really looking. We then took the back steaks out of the skinny spiker, rolled him into the leatherwood out of sight, and headed back down the range to finish off the hut mahi.

Back at the hut, we got into the final tasks of Z nailing and strapping the piles, fixing base boards back on hut, wiring down the toilet to waratahs, installing some metal soakers on the rear of the hut to stop moisture seepage through the join in weatherboards and a few other odds and ends.

In the afternoon, a resident stag put in a brief appearance, letting out a lazy, half-hearted roar from the top of the hut slip — the only roar we heard during the whole trip, but a welcome sound, nonetheless.

The final day was spent tidying and finishing off loose ends. We scrubbed down the deck, veranda, clearlite, and hut sign, leaving everything looking crisp and welcoming for future visitors. Firewood was topped up as well, ensuring the next party through would have a good head start.



We capped off the trip with a few beers down at the river lounging in the sun while waiting for the chopper pick up.



Special thanks must go to Monica for organising the heli logistics and other materials which in turn led to a successful and enjoyable trip with all jobs finished. On the drive home we were already planning a trip by foot back into this special little home away home!

We were Chris Rayner, Scott Rees, Callum Taylor and Mathew Tinnelly.

## Mid-Poh Hut Work Party – (24<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> April).

Report by Janet Wilson.



Jo and I really enjoyed our 4 days and 3 nights at Mid Pohangina Hut – working hard scrubbing and painting the inside of the hut. When we stood back on Sunday afternoon and looked at the transformation we had achieved, we had a great sense of satisfaction and pride.

Completing the work planned for both of our ‘club huts’ feels, to me, almost too good to be true – the culmination of a lots of wishful thinking,

planning, cooperation and help from club members and some good staff at our local DOC office. Special thanks to club member Chris Rayner who took the lead as our club builder. Thanks to DOC for supporting our work and sharing the costs – a great outcome.



Top left and centre: digging the new toilet site at Ngamoko hut and the result.

Bottom right: Jo hard at work prepping the interior of Mid Pohangina Hut for painting.

Top right: The newly painted interior of Mid Pohangina Hut.





## Trip Reports

### Kings Birthday to Kawhia (aka The Raglan Road Trip) – (30<sup>th</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> June).

Report by Janet Wilson and Warren Wheeler; Photos by Janet, Yvette and Richard.

The "Coastal Classic" trip at Kings Birthday weekend has become quite a tradition over the years and Kawhia must have seemed an appealing destination, as this time there was a outstanding turnout of 16 people!



Many in the group had left PN a day earlier and had an overnight stay in New Plymouth. The highlight of this road trip for some was the stop at the cheese factory at Eltham; they left well stocked up with bags of cheap cheese off cuts. The weather certainly wasn't a highlight, but those in New Plymouth braved a walk along the breakwater before heading out for takeaways. This team of 3 cars took the coastal route north on the Friday, with a stop at the wild Marokopa coastal settlement and a visit to the Marokopa Falls, which were spectacular after all the rain.



Everyone converged on the S-cape motor camp, on the shores of the Kawhia Harbour on the Friday afternoon. Most had a look around the small settlement and had a quick trip out over the big sand dune to the beach. Some of us took spades but the hot water, for which the beach is well known for, eluded us. It was also blowing a gale! We had a fish and chip dinner, unfortunately not on the beach front. Some took to the spa pool, most had an early night.

Next morning the early birds - Sally, Michelle, Jo, Yvette and Janet were back to beach at dawn to dig for hot water. Armed with more information they were soon successful and enjoyed a lovely early morning soak in the hot water. Unfortunately, the weather and tides weren't suitable for kayaking, but we all found paths to walk and places to explore for the rest of the day. A large communal dinner was consumed in the camp kitchen - cooked up by Team 1 with pot roast beef, sausages, stir fried veges and mashed potato followed by chocolate self-saucing pudding and ice cream.



The weather on Sunday was a bit less windy. A big group went over to Aotea Harbour which is just north of Kawhia - another massive tidal area. They walked down to the coast, and it would have been possible to walk back Sth to Kawhia Hot Water Beach if the tide hadn't been coming in. Some went paddling in the afternoon on the camp kayaks - weather conditions were just ok, and the tide was perfect. Team 2 cooked up an Apricot Chicken feast in the evening.

We dispersed in various directions on Monday. Ernie, Richard and Yvette to go up nearly Mt Pirongia for the night (see their trip report), Graham and I went to Raglan to complete the road trip and returned to Kawhia for another night before picking up the trampers and heading home on Tuesday.

Everyone seemed to enjoy their visit to a new place most had never been there before. There was plenty to see and do on a wintery weekend. Thanks for coming along and supporting the trip. We were Neil, Michelle, Jo, Lawrence, Grant, Vicki, Anna, Warren, Robyn, Yvonne, Sally, Yvette, Richard, Ernie, Graham and Janet (organiser).

Post script: another search for hot water on the beach by Warren Wheeler: "Robyn and I walked out to the heads along the waterfront near low tide, past a small inlet where we watched a couple of spoonbills feeding. Opposite the heads is Te Maika, where there are a few remote baches accessed by sea. There were several people fishing at the heads, including a SUV load of Filipino men from the Taharoa Ironsands. We carried on along the ocean beach, but the tide was in over the hot springs by the time we got there. Despite this we still met several car loads of people walking over the sandhill with shovels in hand. Walking back along the road through the pine forest gave us the opportunity to see big mushrooms along the grass verge and take in the harbour views. Back in town we were impressed with the bunches of bananas growing in some gardens, almost a Samoa feel about the place. We also dropped into the Museum and had a most interesting chat with the woman on duty who made us "invaders" feel right at home (!)."

## **Pahautea Hut and the Mt. Pirongia Summit - Kings Birthday add-on to Kawhia – (2nd – 3<sup>rd</sup> June).**

Report by Ernie Cooke; Photos by Yvette

As soon as I saw the Coastal Classic Trip to Kawhia advertised I immediately thought that this was a great opportunity to visit Pahautea Hut and the summit of Pirongia. Fortunately, Janet, our Kings Birthday trip leader, was agreeable, and the tramp was included as an add-on for the Monday for any-one interested.



The Hihikiwi track begins at Pirongia West Road end and is the only route to the hut from the southern side of mount Pirongia, about a 35-minute drive from Kawhia. Grant Christian and his daughter had completed a day trip to the hut the previous day so we were able to glean some intel from them regarding times and the condition of the track. A visitor to the holiday park in the morning described the track as "the muddiest track in New Zealand." From the road-end we soon began climbing the well-marked track and encountered muddy sections. We met a couple from Auckland coming back down. One had got sick of the mud though they were not wearing gaiters. After about an hour we reached a look-out but due to low cloud there was no view on offer. This was to be the case for the remainder of the trip although every now and then the cloud parted a little to reveal an adjacent ridge. A series of up and downs followed with the mud mostly only ankle deep. We reached a prominent look-out and from there to the hut was all board-walk, perhaps 800 metres in length.

The hut is very spacious with two bunk rooms. One fitted out with bunks and the other platforms. There is no heating, and the hut felt cold. We had a hot drink and a late lunch. By now it was raining off and on and it was hard to be motivated to continue along the ridge for another 30 minutes to the summit with no views in prospect. Fortunately, Richard was willingly to bag the summit whilst Yvette was not bothered with having no views to enjoy. The track to the summit passed the individual camp-sites and the heli-pad. There is a viewing platform at the summit that is reached by climbing a ladder. We quickly returned to the hut. We saw a runner filling his water bottle at the hut and were joined by another weary tramp who arrived in the dark. Early to bed and up once daylight arrived. Reception at the hut enabled us to arrange a pick-up with Janet and Graham for 11:30 am.

We had taken 3 hours 25 minutes to reach the hut so hoped to get back down in about 3 hours. The information about the track had mentioned the presence of blue fungi. *Entoloma hochstetteri*. We had seen no blue on the way up but Yvette was thrilled to spot one in the middle of the track on the way back down. I had hoped to hear North Island Kokako, but they were more likely to be found in the Eastern area. We arrived at the road end 5 minutes late and were very grateful to Janet and Graham for indulging my interest in hiking to Pahautea Hut. We were Richard, Yvette and Ernie.





## Social Trappers, Pohangina River Trap Service May 2025 (aka the Pohangina River "tour de huts) - (22<sup>nd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> June).

Report by Janet Wilson; Photos by Janet Wilson

Postponed from an earlier weekend, this trip took advantage of an exceptional weather window in late May. If you would like to be part of the informal Social Trappers group and can have a flexible approach to timing, you too could take part in these "Applied" tramping trips.

We flew from Pohangina Base with Midwest Helicopters early on a frosty Thursday morning, arriving at the newly renovated Leon Kinvig Hut at 7.30am. Cold fingers and toes! After a quick sort out of gear, we split into 2 teams - Malcolm and Janet heading to the top of the trap line, approx 4km upriver, the others servicing closer river traps and those on the lower part of the Apiti Track. Two pair of whio and a single duck were seen. We were all back at the hut before dark, enjoying the new fire and a few beers to celebrate just being there.



*Leon Kinvig Hut - frost early morning*

Next morning we waited for the sun to rise before heading downstream, servicing the traps to Ngamoko Hut. The river travel was quite easy for the first part but debris from a REALLY big slip from cyclone Gabrielle is moving down the river, leaving obstacles along the way. This makes travel a bit more tedious at times. It was cold and there were no ducks to be seen in this more confined section of the river. Once it opens out again, about 1km above Ngamoko Hut, the travel is easy. We reached Ngamoko Hut in good time and were excited to see the recent improvements completed by our club in April. The hut is sitting firmly on some new piles, the door opens freely, and the newly reroofed and painted toilet sits in a splendid new location. What an improvement.



*Ngamoko Hut*

Next day we moved down river to Mid Pohangina hut. This is an easy section, and it was a nice day. I just had to show off the newly painted interior which looks so nice and clean and bright! We completed all the trap work in the area in plenty of time for our 3pm pickup.

A grant from the Alan Rosoman Trust to the Ruahine Whio Protection Trust made this trip possible.

Enjoying this pre- winter trip down the river were Graham Peters, Ernie Cook, Neil Benton, Malcolm Thomas and Janet Wilson (leader).



*Team at Mid Pohangina Hut*

## Hemi Matenga Reserve - (15<sup>th</sup> June).

Report Neil Benton and Photos by Neil Benton and Warren Wheeler

Every now and then you come across a gem of nature and the Hemi Matenga Reserve is one of those and is only an hour's drive down the road.

We parked up on Huia St, Waikanae and started on the northern entrance to the Te Au track. Once in the bush we started to climb the ridge at 500 m. Going through the bush we were introduced to the Kohekohe tree which is a coastal lowland tree common to this area and the North Island. At this time of year, the



tree is in flower and attracts flocks of Tui along with Bellbird and Wax-eye. Also, at this time, the seed pods from last year's flowering are dropping their seeds.

Up on the ridge the forest changes to include Rimu, Miro and Rewarewa. All along this track we observed extensive trapping. About a further Kilometre along the ridge from the top we came to a lookout which gave us great views of Kapiti Island, and out to the South Island and the snow-covered Southern Alps.

The best part of the day, however, was yet to happen. As we descended the ridge, we began to walk under the canopy of the mature Kohekohe trees, which in addition to flowering in the winter, produce the flower from the trunks of the trees and large branches, right up into the canopy in great profusion. Here we were treated to multiple flocks of Tui in full noise. This, no doubt, would have been a taste of what the forest sounded like in earlier times, when the Kohekohe Forest extended from the Kapiti coast down to the Marlborough Sounds. This was no longer a tramping trip but a wander through a heritage part of New Zealand, and thanks must go to Hemi Matenga and his trustees who had the foresight to put aside this treasure, and to those who maintain the traps to keep the stoats, rats, and possums out.

From here we dropped out of the bush and into the sun for lunch. After wandering back through the streets to the car we then stopped at the Elizabeth St shop for the largest single scoop ice cream I have ever had, and to cap off a great day out.



We were Nicola (lead), Joce, Olyvia, Renee, Warren, Neil (scribe)

## What's in My Pack

**"I love my blue enamel billy!"** – Ernie Cook

**Can't Live Without** - I can't live without my Great Outdoors Timberline 85 Pack. I need it to carry the gear that I require for tramping.

**Two for One** - I use my raincoat for a pillow along with any spare clothes.

**Second Hand** - I love my blue enamel billy that my daughter purchased for me on Trade-me.



**"I can't live without food! Especially dark chocolate, goes without saying, right?" – Verity Elder**

**Two for one** - Garmin InReach/PLB. A Garmin allows me to communicate with home and share my location. It also has an SOS button which acts like a PLB (although thankfully are yet to make use of that feature), provides weather updates and GPS tracking.

**DIY** - As a quick, low-cost solution for keeping my bum dry when sitting on the ground I have a small(ish) square cut from the corner of a tarpaulin. Super lightweight, I pop a spare item of clothing on top for a little insulation and its comfort galore.

**Second-hand** - a pocketknife. Once belonging to my grandfather, this is less second-hand and more of a pass me down. A delightful small pocketknife, I have come to carry it with me on most trips, more as a memento than out of necessity. Usually used for prepping food, I did once use it to make splinters of wood for lighting a fire at Whakapapaiti hut where there was little to no kindling and only a heavy splitting axe. Probably wasn't the best thing for the knife but it got the job done.

**Repair job** - gaiters. At 23 years old my Kathmandu gaiters were failing me. Rather than replace them I opted for some new elastic, and after some careful unpicking and restitching are as good as new (more or less).




**Can't live without** - paper map and topo map app on my phone. I find nothing builds confidence more than studying the map to understand where I am and where I am heading to. **(Bonus: I can't live without: Food! Especially dark chocolate. Goes without saying, right?).**

## 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](mailto:elderverity@gmail.com)





## PNTMC Newsletter

### July 2025

- Upcoming Trips and Club Nights
- Notices: AGM Report, Whats in My Pack, Presidents Report to AGM
- Hut Maintenance: Mid Pohangina Hut, Ngamoko Hut
- Trip Reports: Kings Birthday to Kawhia, Pahautea Hut and the Mt. Pirongia Summit, Social Trappers Pohangina , Hemi Matenga Reserve.

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