



Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club

Newsletter April 2026

www.pntmc.org.nz

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



Photo by Nicola Wallace: Please Stay on the Track – Otangane Loop Track.

Autumn

After a season of highly changeable weather and moments where it was hard to tell if it was summer at all, we finally fall into a spell of good, reliable tramping weather. In our island country, where it is not unusual to expect four seasons in a day, high rainfall, strong winds, and cold temperatures are common, even in summer. Many, especially those who live closer to Fielding, will have seen the unseasonal white blanket on the central and northern Ruahine Ranges (albeit a light dusting) at the beginning of March.

Autumn is often referred to as the best season for tramping, with its cooler, more comfortable temperatures and less tumultuous weather. This month's newsletter is filled with 'good weather' trips, many with rewarding views and seasonally fair temps. If you are anything like me, as a fellow trapper (or mountaineer), you too are likely obsessed with the weather, regularly check multiple reports during the

week, in the hope the weekend is clear, or to determine that well planned trip can finally go ahead. You spend hours scanning obscure sites such as [MetVuw](#) or even spend time checking in with [earth.nullschool](#) – a fascinating graphic showing real time wind across our 3 islands. As I type this now the wind in our area reads 9 km/h and as I look out the window a very gentle breeze moves the tree in the front garden. If I walk out to Featherston street and look out toward the Ruahine Ranges, Wharite is sadly in cloud, but, with some carefully well laid PNTMC plans, anything is possible. Happy tramping everyone this Autumn.
– Verity Elder (editor).

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 9th April **Search for Blown Away Angle Knob Hut** **Monika Coles**
Monika's first trip into the Tararuas was back in 2020 with North Shore Tramping Club. Monika still lived in Auckland back then and had no idea that she would end up living in Palmerston North. Come and hear her talk about the four days, three nights spent in the Tararuas, finding the bunks from the blown away Angle Knob hut and other adventures from the trip. The first night was in Jumbo hut, the second night in Powell hut and the third night in Totara Flats hut.

Thu 30th April **Antarctica Trip in Retrospect** **Harley Betts**
Being a keen photographer, Harley leapt at the opportunity to join an Eco-cruise to the Southern Islands and Antarctica. As this was some 20 years ago Harley will dust off his slide projector for a true retro experience.

Upcoming Trips

Fri 3rd April Easter Explorer 1 - Coppermine Creek Loop *Easy-Medium* **Warren Wheeler**
06 356 1998

Will we see Mt Egg-mont from the ridge line lookout? We start at the Coppermine Creek Roadend, north of Woodville, and follow the old Coppermine track, branching off to climb towards Wharite Peak (the one with the big transmission tower north of the Te Apiti windmills), but turning right at the ridgeline to drop down an overgrown slip into the Coppermine Creek south branch for a "bush-bash" (following hunter/deer trails) back to the track and roadend. Depart Milverton Park 8.00am.

Sat 4th April Easter Explorer 2 - Totara Reserve *Easy-Medium* **Warren Wheeler**
06 3561998

See what the February flood did in the Pohangina River - visit the Pettifar Track, old coach road, the campground areas and new bridge. Those keen for a "Medium" day out can also add the Fern Walk. Depart Milverton Park 8.00am.

Sun 5th April Easter Explorer 3: Paekakariki Escarpment Walkway *Easy* **Nicola Wallace**
021 209 0720

This popular scenic walkway has steep steps in places but offers outstanding coastal views from high on the escarpment above the old main highway. We will start at Paekakariki and return by train from Pukerua Bay. Bring cash for the ticket. Depart Milverton Park at 8.00am.

Mon 6th April Easter Explorer 4 - Sunrise-Waipawa North Bran *Medium* **Doug Strachan**
06 353 6526

Will we see Mt Egg-Mont or just Mt Ruapehu and Ngauruhoe? It is almost a 2 hour drive up past Norsewood and Ongaonga for a 2 hour plus climb through beautiful, varied Ruahine forest to the iconic Sunrise Hut. From there we head to Armstrong Saddle and around the ridgeline above some impressive scree slopes, dropping into a saddle and down a scree slide into the headwaters of the Waipawa North Branch. This is a delightful "sporty" stream to scramble down, with small waterfalls making it a fun trip down to the main river. We pass the Waipawa Forks Hut and down the wide gravelly bed, criss crossing as necessary. Expect wet feet! Deoparfity Milverton Park 7.30am.

Sun 12th April White Cliffs Boulders *Easy* **Kirstie Priddle**
027 779 0738

These are our very own version of the famous Moeraki Boulders, beside the Rangitikei River. There is a signpost on the main road near Ohingaiti that leads us there, via a windy gravel road to the carpark in the farmers terrace paddock. There is a small charge for access. An easy but steep walk down the terrace track takes less than 30 minutes to get to the boulders. Bring swimming togs.

Sun 19th April Anne's Day Trip TBA Medium

**Anne Lawrence
027 450 4212**

Details to come. Watch this space.

Sun 26th April Field Hut Medium

**Richard Lockett
06 323 0948**

This classic Tararua trip from Otaki Forks up to the bushline climbs steadily up the Judd Ridge track to this old Tararua Tramping Club hut, which has been kept in good condition since being built over a 100 years ago. If keen we can carry on up to Tabletop for great views on a fine day. Depart 7.30am Milverton Park.

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

Trip Grading - Trip grades depend on many factors, including 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, 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

Notices

Welcome to new members: Helen Peek (first a PNTMC member in 1971! Welcome back Helen!), Taylor Marston, Emma Hoekstra, Satoru Kuwabara, and Grant Jensen and family.

PNTMC is associated with **Federated Mountain Clubs** <http://fmc.org.nz/>

Trip Reports

Maharahara Lookout – (7th March).

Report by Richard Potts

Photos by Richard Potts and Woodey Lee

Thirty-two years ago in March 1994 I participated in a day tramp with PNTMC, Takapari Rd end to ‘A Frame’ hut. Over the past month I have looked at the club website, mainly looking at upcoming day trips to locations that I have not visited. I saw the Maharahara trip listed so on Friday, the day before the trip I called Woody, and had a chat about the trip initially thinking it was what I had done in 1994. He advised that there was only one other club member to join and that I was welcome. I took up the offer, and the next day met Woody at Milverton Park.



We met Ernie in Ashurst and started the trip from the car park at the end of Opawe Rd just after 9.00 am. The first half hour was following the markers alongside the fenceline of paddocks, with some altitude being gained, before entering the Ruahine State Forest Park

boundary. After a short period, there was a steep section of track that brought us to an opening where we could look out West as well as North alongside the park boundary. Short stops were made to admire the view behind us, to our west mainly, of the Pohangina Valley and the hills beyond.



About 10.30 am we could see the destination from a clearing - after cloud clearing it was the first time to see this as when departing the carpark, the peak was not visible. The weather was not hot and sunny which meant a perfect day for the climb. We arrived at the top just before midday after the 3-hour climb, and ate lunch on a small grassy patch- beside the sign 'Maharahara Viewpoint 1095 m asl.' A two-minute walk to the east meant we could see

Woodville and the surrounding areas of Dannevirke; however, the township was out of sight due to the ranges to our east. The vastness of the ranges was quite clear from here. Kiritaki Hut was clearly visible some two kilometres from us - the way the crow flies - but still required some down and uphill climbing to reach. We departed at 12.50 pm to return to the car, arriving back at the car at 3.15 pm approx.

We were Ernie, Richard and Woodey (leader)

ARUWARU TRIG – (15th March).

Report and Photos by Nicola Wallace

After a very bumpy drive over Kahuterawa Road's notorious potholes, I arrived at the carpark to find Anne and Martin already there. The carpark was a hive of activity, as the MTB Club was setting up for a day of racing. Stephen & Kirsten, then Kirstie arrived in the next few minutes, and we were soon on our way up the Sledge Track. I was feeling excited to be going somewhere new, yet close to home. Half an hour in, Kirstie wasn't feeling well, and very sensibly decided to turn around and head home.

Once across Quartz Creek, the track ascended steeply for a while, but what a great track it was, clear of overgrowth and very well defined and marked. I'd been expecting a rough old 'route'. There was occasional Bush Lawyer, which drew blood, and though the bush looked very healthy, there was no birdsong, and only the occasional rush of Kereru wings. After less than 3.5 hours and after a lot of climbing we came to the leatherwood and, after stopping to enjoy a view, we were soon at Aruwaru Trig, sitting at 767m ASL. There were no views from the trig, the best views being just before and after this high point. It was a perfect weather day: sunny and very warm with a light W wind.



After lunch we descended through gorgeous goblin forest, tree trunks covered with mosses and ferns, further on passing a gap in the bush displaying a close view of Pukenae 'The Nipple'. There were so many good lookouts, we had a few stops. We weren't doing the whole Otangane Loop today; when we got to the loop track we turned left and headed along the Western side. Immediately the track changed abruptly to overgrown, but as it turned out, only in places. I must say, the signposting was really good, with a mix of old-style handmade signs, and modern bright red signs which really stood out. A little way along the Otangane track a gunshot rang out somewhere to the West. There were lots of dug up dirt from pigs rooting, and more bush lawyer.



We returned down 'The Elevation,' and on the return down the Sledge Track, Stephen and Kirsten stopped for a dip in the Kahuterawa Stream, while the rest of us carried on. Martin and Anne having departed, I was sitting at a picnic table in the carpark drinking my tea when Stephen and Kirsten arrived. We sat for a few minutes and mulled over what had been a very enjoyable tramp on a day of perfect weather. It had taken just short of 8 hours total, but I really enjoyed this tramp and look forward to doing it again one day. Thanks, Stephen for leading it.

We were Stephen (leader), Kirsten, Anne, Martin, Nicola, and Kirstie (for some of the way).

Blue Range Hut – Beginner Tramp 3 – (22nd March).

Report by Angela Cameron

Photos by June Soh

A beautiful autumn day for tramping; plenty of sunshine and little wind. The drive down to the Kiriwhakapapa campsite was slightly slower than expected due to dense fog on the eastern side of the ranges.

8 trampers headed off from the campsite at 8:50am. The first kilometre in is a gentle warm up and walking through the grove of redwoods is always an interesting contrast to the bush in the Tararua Forest Park. The track is relatively easy to follow, so great for a beginner's tramp. The 4km tramp with its 650m total climb to the hut adding a suitable degree of challenge. A comfortable pace was set with it taking us 3hrs of ascend and 2 hrs to descend.



Blue Range Hut can only make you smile with its quirky signage. Lovely to be able to have a leisurely lunch outside and drink in the views on this blue-sky day. Not a lot of bird life around but our eyes tuned into spotting some interesting fungi alongside the trail.

With the experience of Marty, Anne and Ernie supporting this beginner's tramp, it made for a safe and interesting experience.

We were Anne (leader) and Fletcher, Angela, Misa, Ernie, Marty, June and Kat.

Turoa New Year 2026 – (Tue 30th December - Fri 2nd January).

Report and photos by Janet Wilson

*The Interclub Quiz - not an event to be missed
With MUAC the hosts, and asking the questions
Our experienced teams were really quite keen to win back the Billy
But who knows, the questions could come from "left field"?
And some did!
On extinct geese and black rabbits we fluked some good answers
And what a surprise, we won first prize!!!*

Thanks, MUAC for the first prize of a night at the MUAC hut at Turoa. We took up the free offer and added on a couple more nights over New Year. The weather was very average and although we did do some nice walking lower down the mountain, it felt a bit more like mid-winter than mid-summer. Lots of time for eating, playing games, and drinking mulled wine. We rescued a couple of wet and cold backpackers who joined us for New Years eve- so a very sociable and enjoyable time was had.

Great turnout from the club - we were Anne, Martin, Warren, Robyn, Kirsten, Steven, Ernie, Richard, Michelle, Neil, Harley, Katherine, Alex, Shaun, Graham and Janet (organiser and scribe).





PNTMC Newsletter April 2026

- Upcoming Trips and Club Nights
- Notices
- Trip Reports: Turoa New Years 2026, Blue Range Hut, Maharahara Lookout, Aruwaru Trig.

Send articles to the newsletter editor at elderverity@gmail.com

Find us on facebook:

<https://tinyurl.com/pntmcfacbook>

Get out and about with us!

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