

Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.

www.pntmc.org.nz

P.O. Box 1217, Palmerston North

Newsletter December 2011- January 2012



PNTMC (with Holly) at Mangahao Dam number three, November. By Saadia Akhtar. See Burn Hut trip report inside.

Club Nights

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| 8 December | End of year BBQ and Awards
6.00 PM, Ashhurst Domain. Bring food and a \$5.00 gift. |
| 27 January 2012 | New Year BBQ
6.00 PM at the Esplanade, Palmerston North. BYO food. |
| 16 February | Committee Meeting |
| 23 February | Club Night |
| 8 March | PNTMC Extraordinary General Meeting
7.45pm at Society of Friends hall, 227 College Street, Palmerston North. |

Upcoming Trips

3- 4 December

Waterfall Hut M/ F
Chris Tuffley 359 2530

Waterfall Hut is smack-dab in the middle of the Ruahines, so there are plenty of options for how to get there, from both the east and west. We'll depart Palmy at 7:30 am; route to be decided closer to the time, depending on interest.

4 Dec

Herepai Hut M
Malcolm Parker 357 5203

This is a really pleasant part of the Tararuas for a wander around. Depart PN at 7.00 am for Putara road end behind Eketahuna. A leisurely wander along the Mangatainoka before the track climbs up to the turnoff to Herepai Hut. If conditions are favourable we'll go for a wander up past the hut to the tussock tops. Return the same way. May stop for a coffee or an ice cream on the way home.

10- 11 Dec

Hinerua Hut and beyond M/ F
Martin Lawrence 357 1695

A great eastern Ruahine area, seldom visited, but with excellent huts and tracks. Plenty to do here. Depart PN 8.00 AM.

11 Dec

Holdsworth Loop M
Richard Lockett 323 0948

A good climb to Powell Hut then the popular Mt Holdsworth. Return down the scenic East Holdsworth Ridge. Depart PN 7.00 AM.

17- 18 Dec

Tongariro NP weekend M
TBA

18 Dec

Mangaturuturu Glacier F
Warren Wheeler 356 1998

Depart 6.30am from PN to Ohakune. We will cut up through Turoa skifield then over to the left and up the glacier to Ruapehu crater lake. Awesome slide back down, then follow a sculpted stream past flowering alpine plants to find the fountain spurting out of the rock. Ice axes and crampons desirable.

14- 15 Jan

Crow Hut, Kawhatau River M
Warren Wheeler 356 1998

This pleasant riverside hut is well worth a visit. Steep forest-clad hillsides of the North West Ruahines blend into vast and easy tussock basins on both sides, and the river presents an excellent fine weather option.

21-23 Wellington Anniversay w/e
Mid Pohangina and Ngamoko Huts M
Janet Wilson 3294722

PNTMC is hoping to become more involved with these two fine huts, located in a favourite area not far from town. Great river tramping, with a bewildering array of route choices available.

22 Jan

Beehive Creek Walkway E/Family
Doug Strachan 353 6526

Lovely Pohangina farmland and river scenes are easily accessible at Beehive Creek. Join Doug and family on a pleasant day's outing. There is always the chance of a good café at the end too.

28-29 Jan

Toka Biv M
Graham Peters 329 4722

High on the Pohangina side of the Ngamoko Range lies Toka Biv - perhaps the least visited hut in the Ruahines. It's a tiny classic ex NZFS "dog kennel" type biv in a lovely tussock basin.

29 Jan

Awatere/ Longview loop M
Dave Grant 357 8269

A good bush and tussock stroll in Southern Hawkes Bay, with great views assured.

4-6 February Waitangi Weekend
Mokai Patea, Waikamaka river, Wakelings, Otokota Huts Circuit M/F
Chris Tuffley 359 2530

Easy dry foot access leads to Colenso trig on the Mokai Patea, then endless flat tussock basins with plentiful tarns. Then there is great summer river travel, with river flats and swimming holes assured, between the excellent DoC huts.

6 Feb

Wharite E
Duncan Hedderley 345 6905

Drive to the leatherwood and TV aerial, then tramp the most southern tracks in the Ruahines. Great views of Ashhurst and Woodville assured.

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
Medium (M):	5-6 hrs
Fit (F):	about 8 hrs
Fitness Essential (FE):	over 8 hrs

Other grades:

Technical skills (T)
Instructional (I)

Trip participants

Contact the leader at least 3 days in advance. Trips 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, overtrousers, 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.

Trip leaders

Complete the trip intentions form and leave with one of Overdue Trip Contacts or drop into 44 Dahlia St. If you are unable to run your trip as scheduled, advise a trip coordinator as soon as possible so that alternatives can be arranged.

Overdue Trips

If a club trip is late returning, please do not worry unduly as there is probably a good reason for the delay. If you are in any doubt, please phone one of the Overdue Trip Contacts:

Mick Leyland	358-3183
Martin and Anne Lawrence	357-1695

Notices

Happy Christmas

PNTMC wishes you best wishes for the coming summer season, with plenty of safe tramping and mountaineering (and of course lots of good tramping style gifts from Father Christmas). We would be pleased to hear of good trips completed, and your editor would be extremely pleased to receive trip reports and photos.

Update from DoC

No 1 Line track, Deerford Loop and Shorts Track have been cut and windfalls have been cleared.

A tender to construct two new bridges near Iron Bark hut, Maropea River, has been accepted. The work is planned to start early 2012.

Other planned work includes; Installing a new cooker at Kelly Knight hut; General hut maintenance at Iron Bark hut, painting Pourangaki hut, Installing a new toilet at Waterfall hut and a new water tank at Top Maropea hut, and track cutting around Iron Bark, Waterfall, Pourangaki and Kelly Knight huts.

Funding for redevelopment of the Rangiwahia Hut track has been approved in principle. The track will be re-routed well away from the slip, and the rest of the track will be upgraded. This work is planned to start mid-2012.

PNTMC Events Card

The PNTMC January- June 2012 Events Card is enclosed with this newsletter. The theme for trips is "Focus on the Ruahines". Refer to hut bagging challenge below.

We hope you enjoy this new events card and the trips and club nights listed, and appreciate the continued excellent work by Janet Wilson, Malcolm Parker, Warren Wheeler and others. A special thanks to trip leaders and club night presenters.

The 2012 PNTMC

Ruahine Hut Bagging Challenge

An exciting club challenge to encourage members to visit Ruahine Huts and bivvis. To bag a hut, you need to enter your name in the hut book and photograph the hut. The plan is to use the photos to produce a poster of all the huts at the end of the year. Wouldn't it be great if all club members could be included in at least one photo- and we collectively bagged all the huts!

RULES

- Open to club members only
- Period is the 12 months starting after this year's end of year BBQ to next years. ie from Friday 16th Dec 2011 to Thursday 13 Dec 2012
- Hut includes any hut (or biv) in the Ruahines that is recognised by DOC (ie "secret huts" are not included)
- All huts are worth 2 points apart from Kawhatau Base which is 1 point.
- Unknown campsite is an exception and worth 2 points!
- A hut can only be claimed once per trip
- You can claim a hut more than once (but only on separate trips): first two visits to a hut earns 2 points per visit, thereafter 1 point for that hut.
- You must enter your name with PNTMC next to it in the hut book and take a photo of the hut (with or without trip members).
- Winner announced at next year's end of year BBQ.

Notice from the President:

Extraordinary General Meeting Thursday 8th March 2012

PNTMC involvement with huts

The Committee has recommendations about the club's involvement with three huts in the Ruahines.

Current funding levels mean that DOC will not be maintaining up to 50% of back country huts in the Ruahines in the near future. Andrew Mercer (Programme Manager Visitor Assets, Manawatu Rangitikei Area Office of DOC) has approached PNTMC committee in the hope that the club would agree to take on management of one or more huts.

Ngamoko and Mid-Pohangina are two huts that DOC will not be maintaining and is seeking community input to manage them. Rangiwahia is a hut that DOC will continue to maintain but would like to have PNTMC as a community partner to work with because of the Club's historical association with this hut.

The committee has written two proposals for club members to consider. Proposal A focuses on PNTMC taking on the management of Ngamoko and Mid-Pohangina huts. Proposal B focuses on PNTMC working in partnership with DOC who will continue to manage Rangiwahia Hut. Copies of the proposals will be available at next club nights including the End of Year BBQ – these will both be good opportunities to chat about the issues and the proposals. We will also post the two proposals on the club website. Once this is done, an email will go out with details.

What is proposed represents a significant commitment from the club, so decisions around these two proposals need to be endorsed by the club. An Extraordinary General Meeting will be held to discuss these two proposals. This will take the place of the usual club night meeting in the first week of March 2012. The **Extraordinary General Meeting will start at 7.45pm on Thursday 8th March** at Society of Friends Hall in College St. Decisions about the proposals could be made either at this Extraordinary General Meeting. Alternatively, decisions could be delayed until the Annual General Meeting.

From the editor's desk

Huts in in the Pohangina Valley

The Pohangina valley is in the southern end of the Ruahine Forest Park, and covers a wild and beautiful area familiar to many. It is a traditional tramping area, with much to offer, particularly those who seek pleasant river flats and lovely swimming holes. The Pohangina river flows from the Ngamoko and Ruahine Ranges, through tussock, a sizeable belt of leatherwood scrub, *Nothofagus* forest, then finally Podocarp-broadleaf forest to the farmland. Extremely pleasant river flats are a feature of the Pohangina river for most of its length.

During the busy N Z Forest Service deer culling, revegetation, and scientific survey years of the 1960's and 1970's, many huts and bivouacs were built throughout the Pohangina and surrounding valleys, all in great locations. From river headwaters at Pohangina Saddle, Longview Hut is close by, then, down valley, Top Gorge, Leon Kinvig, Ngamoko, Mid Pohangina, and Cattle Creek Huts are located. Toka and Piripiri Bivs are located in Pohangina tributaries.

PNTMC committee has submitted to the NZ Geographic Board a selection of place names for tributary creeks of the Pohangina River.

- **Mid Pohangina Hut**

Mid Pohangina Hut is strategically located on a large river flat near the confluence of the Pohangina River and Cattle Creek. It was constructed by the NZ Forest Service during 1960, then upgraded by DoC during 1995 (when the chains in the gorges in Cattle Creek and Piripiri Stream were installed). The access track from the Pohangina farmland, known as "the track you love to hate", was partially benched during the 1960's. The swingbridge near Mid Pohangina Hut was installed in the 1960's.

Many tramping routes in the Pohangina valley rely on being able to follow the river, and this frequently changes. There are many good deer trails in the forest and scrub. The Ruahines can easily be crossed in a weekend, from the Tamaki River at Dannevirke to Cattle Creek, then Mid Pohangina Hut and down valley to the farmland.



The Pohangina River and Mid Pohangina Hut. This is located approximately five hours in from the Pohangina farmland, and a bit longer in from the Dannevirke side and the Tamaki River.

- **Ngamoko Hut**

Like many current Ruahine huts, Ngamoko Hut was initially built as a deer cullers' tent camp. The NZ Army cleared the hut sight near the end of 1975, and the hut was completed by Christmas of that year. During the mid 90's, Ngamoko Hut was upgraded by DoC, with timber lining, a porch, new mattresses, and then a new firebox. Ask any visitor: Ngamoko Hut is a really lovely place to visit and stay.



The Pohangina River and Ngamoko Hut. This is located a couple of hours downriver from Leon Kinvig Hut, and is a similar distance downriver to Mid Pohangina Hut.

- **Rangiwahia Hut**

The original Rangiwahia Hut dates from early last century. It became key to a popular skiing area during the 1930's. Easy foot, horse, and bulldozer access allowed continual hut reconstruction, with the well-known Rangihut of the 1960's being taken over by PNTMC. The NZ Forest Service replaced the then dilapidated hut in 1983, and this has undergone a number of

upgrades by DoC to make it the modern Rangihut of today. It is serviced, with gas (supplied for heating and cooking), and removal of toilet wastes. It is understandably popular because of easy access and lovely tussock basins behind the hut.



The Ruahine Tramping Club skiing at Rangihut, 1939. [photo by Fred Lemberg]

The Tararua Southern Crossing

Bitterly cold weather during early November may have made us forget about Spring and Summer for a little while. Fresh snow on Dundas Ridge during November is hardly rare, but it was surprisingly cold for a few days. One of the ultimate mountain running events in New Zealand, The Southern Crossing Race 2011, went ahead recently despite this cold snap. This event used to be called the Tararua Mountain Race, and some PNTMC members have competed. By the look on the competitors' faces at the finish at Otaki Forks, they all enjoyed the run. Some were crossing the finish line at Otaki Forks mid-afternoon still wearing woolly hats and jackets. It must have been brutally cold for them up on Mt Hector. At least, with clear weather, they all completed the Southern Crossing. The fastest time was a fraction under 5 hours, and an average time would be between 6 and 7 hours. Most trampers would consider this track to take 2- 3 fairly tough days.

William Colenso Birthday

William Colenso is a name that all Ruahine trampers should know - he was the first European explorer there, and is part of Ruahine legend. He botanised and named many native plants, had several Ruahine places named after him, and wrote about the Ruahines of the 1840's. Indeed, some of his writings have been printed here in this Newsletter. William Colenso was a great man in many other ways. And 10 November 2011 marked the two hundredth year since his birthday.

In celebration of this bi-centenary, there was a conference about William Colenso and his life held in Napier during November 2011 (and events in England and also Australia). Being a bit of a Colenso enthusiast myself, I was lucky enough to attend part of the Colenso Conference in Napier, and I even received a slice of his 200th birthday cake. The conference delegates attended lectures and yarned about William Colenso for two days, launched the latest book about him (reviewed below), and went for a memorial tramp in the Ruahines to Colenso Spur, and the Colenso Memorial there.

**The Hungry Heart:
Journeys with William Colenso.**

By Peter Wells (2011). Vintage, Random House. 467 pages, hard cover, \$49.95
Reviewed by Tony Gates

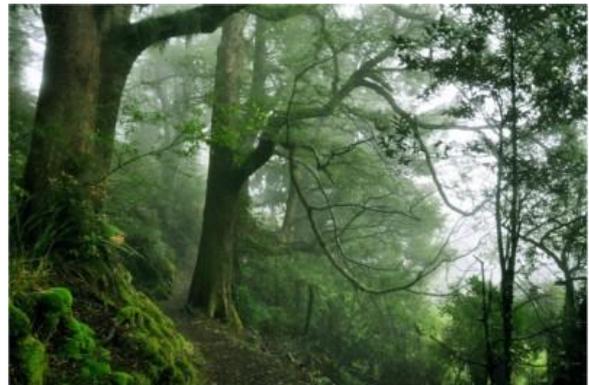
Part of the fascinating story of one of New Zealand's founding fathers, William Colenso, is presented here in 25 chapters of social history. Colenso wrote much himself before his death in 1899, and much of this was preserved. During the late 1940's, Bagnall and Peterson published a fine biography. The author of this latest volume about William Colenso is an award winning writer and film maker filling in some gaps and continuing the legend of the great man. I haven't read it all yet, but plan to soon. It has a lot of reading in it, of family matters, politics, and colonial New Zealand, with most of the book following a chronological path of the subject's life. There is also consideration given to modern day Hawkes Bay locations where William Colenso lived and worked.

"*The Hungry Heart*" is a well written academic book, beautifully presented, with extensive end notes, image credits, and index. Botanical sketches, historic portraits, and newspaper cuttings feature. (Interestingly, William Colenso was a printer himself). Some images are historic, some modern, with several photos of the areas where William Colenso explored in the Ruahines and the plants that he named. Most chapters are writings, with the one entitled "The Wanderer", about his explorations, presented with few words, a poem for William the Explorer by the author, and several evocative photos of Ruahine scenes. The author even suggests that William Colenso could be considered the Patron Saint of trampers due to his enormous contribution to European exploration of the North Island (despite the fact that he crossed the Ruahines eight times with little more than "a strong sense of self belief"). The chapter "*My Darling Pursuit*" is about what I consider to be

William Colenso's most lasting legacy, his botanical explorations, collections, and writings.

"He recognized a magic kingdom when he found it. For him, the bush of this country was where he felt most at peace. You could say finally this extraordinary wanderer had found his home"

**Interclub Photo competition 2011
Overall Winner, judged by Jules Townsend.**



Trees in Fog. Koid Xian Zheng (MUAC)

Hill Folk Tararua

by Paula Hanger (1954)

From "The Mountains of New Zealand" (1954)
by Mavis Davidson.

Beyond that ridge the higher
And farther the great blue line
Of their many mountains riding

Through the cold cloud- shine
They hump their packs to the wind
And turn to the mists their faces
And strength comes into their spirit

Out of the lonely places
The hawks and the high airs know them
And the rock where nothing grows
And they plumb the heart of silence

Under the flaring snows
The one tree left of the forest
Salute those that do not plunder
And they tent down ready for sleep

Though their brief roof throbs with thunder
Though the gale like a dark beast follows
Though the gulfs are wide to the skies
They climb for the love of climbing
And their print on the last top lies.

Trip Reports

24- 25 September 2011 Cone Hut, Tauherinikau, Waiohine Report and photo: Michael Allerby

Craig, Richard and I left Feilding at just after 7.30am picking Woody up in Palmerston North at 8.00am and headed across the Paihiatua track. We were meeting up with Graham and Janet at Eketahuna who were coming across the Saddle road. (Our rendezvous time was pretty spot on as they arrived not long after us). From here it was a good drive down to Carterton turning left on the southern outskirts onto Swamp Road and winding through the Waiohine Gorge Road upon finally reaching the car park.

With boots on and packs ready to go we had a brief discussion on which track to take. This being Graham's first overnight tramp for a while "recovering from a broken ankle" Janet decided the direct route to Cone Hut was their best cautionary option while Richard preferred taking the Lower Waiohine track then Cone Saddle track. We headed off on the Lower Waiohine track looking for Graham and Janet's turnoff, Walls Whare to Cone Saddle and had gone past what looked like a barrier across a disused track. It was after travelling on a little further with no sign of any other tracks that we realised that it was the turnoff. So we bid farewell to Graham and Janet as we headed off in opposite directions.

Richard, Craig, Woody and I continued along the Lower Waiohine track which was easy going with nice river views and travel through a good mix of trees, Kahikatea, Matai, Pukatea, Rimu, Miro, Nikau Palms, it was also pleasing to see plenty of Northern Rata.

Having made it on to the Cone saddle track we started to climb in elevation, clearing the track of fallen branches while travelling along. On climbing higher the amount of winter storm damage increased requiring Richard and Craig to use their fold-up pruning saws to cut a way through. This slowed progress but we were able to clear a lot of track bar a few fallen trees that needed a chainsaw. Once we reached Cone saddle the track gradually descended to the left of a stream.

Further along the track we were greeted by smoke before the hut revealed itself in amongst the forest: a rustic hut built from Totara slab, the second oldest hut in the Tararuas. Inside Janet was stoking the fire while Graham was busy reading and resting. The hut has a section of wooden floor next to the fire but the rest is dirt.

No need to take your boots off which pleased Craig as he had forgotten to grab his hut shoes out of the car. There is a sleeping platform with room for six people and a small one above if you want to risk it.



Cone Hut, Tauherinikau Valley, Tararuas

We got a brew going and started on the food. Darkness had fallen and we were on to the chocolate biscuits and another brew before bedtime when a family of three generations turned up (grandfather, father and daughter). Luckily there was enough room on that section of wooden floor for them to bed down on as moisture had started to drop outside.

Before leaving in the morning we went and checked out the camping ground beside the Tauherinikau River, which has some good tent sites, then headed back out together over the same route Graham and Janet had taken in. There was a climb up to just over 600m and then the track levelled off. The cold wind Graham and Janet struck on Saturday had disappeared making travel pleasant - our route the day before had been sheltered from most of the wind and odd patches of drizzle. With an easy walk back to the car park we left for home with a stop in Carterton for a coffee. Richard and Craig treated themselves to a Gourmet steak, beer and mushroom pie.

We were: Janet Wilson, Graham Peters, Richard Lockett, Woody Lee, Craig Allerby and Michael Allerby.

22- 24 October 2011

Kuripapango, Ngaruroro River, Kiwi Mouth, Back Ridge, Kaweka J, Rogue, Lakes.

Report: Nicola Wallace

Photo: Martin Lawrence

It was cool and drizzly when we arrived at The Lakes carpark after a long drive through Hawkes Bay. We left the car at 10.30 am, and after taking photos at the big coloured DOC information board, we were on our way.

It was a steady climb up to Kuripapango, and as we ascended, the bush became increasingly open, and wilding pine trees were everywhere! We pulled small ones out on the way, Warren doing most of the pulling. Still none of the promised views, as it was still drizzly, and would be all day. At the lunch stop, it took a bit of looking at the map to decide which point we were at, we soon worked out it was 1359. It was deceptively cold – I had trouble opening my pack of ham, and had to stick a knife in it, but the temperature was good for walking.

Soon we headed off again, in a NW direction, and after a fun scree descent, we arrived at Kiwi Saddle Hut, quite a luxury place, with plenty of space and a comfy couch. This is like Howletts Hut, in that you send a donation to the Heretaunga Tramping Club. We were here for about 20 minutes, with Warren taking lots of interest in the hut book.

Then on towards our night's accommodation: Kiwi Mouth Hut. Initially after leaving Kiwi Saddle Hut we descended through bush, then a decision to make as to whether we stick to terra firma, or go via Kiwi Creek. Anne & I decided we wanted to keep our feet dry, but Martin & Warren chose the river route, so off down the side track they went. After a couple of minutes Anne and I heard yelling, they'd changed their minds, so came our way. After a stream crossing there was a big climb that got steeper and steeper. The route became very exposed, and the red clayish soil was very slippery. I slid down the hill for about 15 feet a few times. Finally the top, and a long descent through bush to Kiwi Mouth Hut, a lovely little orange 4 bunker, by the Ngaruroro River. There was also an orange dunny and dog kennel. We were all very damp, myself being very muddy as well, so it was wonderful to get in to dry clothes, and get those freeze dried meals down. Martin capped off a great evening by supplying port for all, so we went to bed early while still feeling rosy.

The only thing I didn't like about Kiwi Mouth Hut – wire wove beds. The person who slept above

me tossed and turned all night, so I didn't sleep well because of the squeaking. But during a midnight dunny trip it was very starry outside - just beautiful.

It was cloudy again the next morning, and we crossed Kiwi Creek, only a couple of minutes from the hut, barefoot, to have dry feet for the rest of the day. The water was numbingly cold. Then a 600m climb to 1258. One time I looked back, and Kiwi Mouth Hut was just a tiny orange dot amongst green hills.

After morning tea, on to Back Ridge. This was up and down, and very rocky. The cloud was higher today, and it wasn't raining, so we started to get some really good views. I wondered how much of the landscape was natural, and how much was altered by man, as the bush was very patchy, and there was lots of bare rock. It felt like there was much more uphill than down today, it was making me work! We had lunch at the turnoff to Back Ridge Biv, but didn't go down the hill to visit it. More uphill after lunch, then a descent through lovely mossy beech forest. There is a huge variety of mosses and lichens in the Kawekas. I had got behind, and caught up to the others at the turnoff to Back Ridge Hut. I felt pretty tired by this stage, and was glad the others didn't want to carry on to Studholme Saddle Hut, as had been talked about.

Off down the side track, over a fallen tree, and the most magnificent view of Back Ridge Hut below, in a hollow surrounded by hills. This hut was built in 1957, and has an aluminium frame, and four nice wooden beds that didn't squeak. It's the only hut I've ever been to where you have to cross a stream to visit the dunny, but Warren improved the rock bridge. It was freeze dried meals again for all, but for Warren & I a special treat: Warren's freeze dried trifle for dessert. It was about 6 years expired, but it tasted really good, so it must have got better with age. Warren was even moved to write about it in the hut book.

Next morning, after a good sleep, I looked out of the windows early, and thought "another cloudy day". But then the grey slowly became blue, to herald an absolutely magnificent day. Martin didn't have such a good start, with a fuel bottle malfunction, and temporarily losing a bit of his headlight, but all was OK. Our tramping day started with the climb up to Kaweka J, with not a cloud in the sky. There were only a few steep bits, and a big knob of rock to get over, and 1.5 hours after leaving Back Ridge Hut, we stood on Kaweka J, 1724 m ASL. The top was a large flat area, not the sharp peak I'd expected. The weather was clear, cold and windy. The first

stop was a large cairn, the Heretaunga Tramping Club WWII memorial. There were a few patches of snow facing the E and remains of a trig. We stayed up here for about half an hour, with lots of photos taken.



PNTMC at the Kaweka Cairn- built in memory of Hawkes Bay trampers who lost their lives during WW 2. The Heretaunga Tramping Club hold a memorial ceremony here every November, leaving flowers and reading poetry.

From here it was mostly downhill, which felt like a big change to my body. As we descended, the temperature rose, and I was soon getting very warm. We went over Mad Dog Hill, and further on couldn't see Studholme Saddle Hut, but saw an orange dunny. Then more wilding pines to pull. We had a late morning tea stop at Kaiarahi, with great views of The Tits, (perky ones they are too). From there it was a more complex route that involved climbing over some rocky bits to get to our lunch stop at the top of The Rogue ridge. There was a good view of The Lakes from up here. It was very hot in the sun now – a real Hawkes Bay summer day. We thought we'd turn on our phones to see if they'd work here, mine didn't but Martin's did, he had a SAR text. We also wondered who'd won the Rugby World Cup the night before, and decided not to ask anyone, and judge by peoples' demeanour instead.

Then down The Rogue; in places this was very steep. Coming down here, a bug flew in to my right eye, and released some very bad smelling poison which made my eye sting like crazy. But I got sung to by a Bellbird in a pine tree, which was nice. Across the Tutaekuri River, then the last bit, a hot climb back to the start point on the forestry road. What a wonderful trip it had been, with the clear weather on Labour Day an added bonus. I thought that Kaweka Country is big! And what good tramping companions I had been with.

We were: Anne & Martin Lawrence, Warren Wheeler, and Nicola Wallace.

Archive photo: PNTMC in the Kawekas 1991



Peter Wiles, Tony Gates, and Derek Sharp at Kiwi Mouth Hut, Ngaruroro River, June 1991.

24 October Field Hut Report: Duncan Hedderley

The Labour weekend weather was drab, but at least it wasn't raining Monday morning. Three of us gathered in the post-World Cup hush and made our way to Otaki Forks. Along the way, we saw several dead possums and also a couple of pukeko which had been hit by cars. Setting off, Richard pointed out that the old track from the bridge was more direct than the new. We made good time, initially up recently gravelled track, and then on more traditional mud-and-tree-roots. Towards the hut (Richard may be able to say exactly where - he had his GPS out by then) we came across a sculpted tree stump which got Richard and Ri reminiscing about the Bogor cartoons in The Listener. We reached Field Hut in 2 hours, had lunch and then went up to Tabletop. Low cloud meant we only got glimpses of the surrounding hills, but things started clearing as we came down, giving a good view of the Forks and where we had come from, out to the coast. A good day out, though I felt stuffed at the end of it.

We were: Richard, Duncan and Ri.



PNTMC on the track to Field Hut.

20 November, 2011

Burn Hut loop

Report and photos – Saadia R. Akhtar

(Refer also to cover photo)

Dave Grant organized and led this tramp; he, Peter van Essen, Tina Bishop, Holly (Tina's dog) and I started out from Palmy at 7am. We headed to Shannon, took a left at Stafford Street, continued onto the ultimately windy metal Mangahoa Road past the Mangahoa Power Station and arrived at our starting point, No 2 dam on the Mangahao River in the Northern Tararuas, by a few minutes after 8am. It was a grey, overcast and somewhat windy morning for the start of this adventure.

We crossed the dam (it took a minute to convince Holly, Tina's dog, that it was safe) and entered the bush to start on the eastward track to Burn Hut. This first part is a narrow but pretty trail that runs just along and above the river, with a nice wooden bridge over a stream and a couple of other straightforward, small, creek crossings. We passed 2 other trampers here and these were the only people we saw the entire day. The track slowly climbs and after about 45 minutes or so, turns to head up the hillside through beech forest. (We missed this turn briefly, in an area where a large tree had fallen across the trail, but were quickly corrected by Peter and Dave; both proved to be master navigators on this day where a variety of conditions made it challenging at times to stay on track.) This portion along the hillside was the steepest climb of our walk but still quite manageable - it was perhaps 30-45 minutes, followed by a more gradual rise to the top of the ridge. There is a lookout near the top; the Tararuas were lovely in the mist and cloud cover. This was the spot we chose for morning tea/snack.

Up to now, the track was in reasonable condition, minimally muddy, and with just a few obstacles (such as the tree across the trail). It became a bit more challenging as we went further and I was grateful for the sustenance from our snack to face what lay ahead. After a little more time in the bush, we came up onto the top of the ridge into subalpine terrain and fairly dense clouds (at about 700-750m). The fields of leatherwood with interspersed tussock blowing in the wind were dramatic and beautiful against the cloudy backdrop. (On a clear day, Burn Hut is apparently visible at this point, as soon as you come up onto the ridge. On this day, we couldn't visualize the hut until we got much closer.) Dave and Peter noted that there was a fair amount of healthy regrowth of leatherwood in the sections that had been attacked by a parasite a few years

ago. Being more exposed on the ridge, we were faced with blustery wind; everyone stopped to put on more layers and windbreakers. From here until the hut, the track was quite overgrown and muddy; we bushwhacked our way through some tough scrub. Often it was difficult to see where you were stepping and I stumbled through a lot of mud holes, roots, flax and other vegetation underfoot. Tina described it well, as a drunken walk!

Despite all of this, the first view of the hut sitting on the ridge was stunning. Burn Hut is a newer hut, having been built about 8 years ago. It is a sturdy little double glazed building with an entry pack/ mud room, water tanks, a sink and room for 6 to sleep; it even comes with an interesting selection of reading (Woman's World and old FMC volumes). It was about 3.5 hours into our tramp that we arrived at Burn Hut and it was a welcome shelter for lunch and a break; Holly even took a brief nap.



Burn Hut, Northern Tararuas.

After about a 30 minute stop, we headed out to the west. The wind had picked up and we had another 1-1.5 kilometers of "drunken walking" through the same sort of challenging track on the ridge before we got back into the bush. (This was my least favourite part of the day!) It was a relief to return to the bush where we were protected from the wind and had a track that was muddy but at least visible and required only minimal bushwhacking! From here, it was a gradual return south, back down the hillside to College Creek. We stopped for afternoon tea/snack just above the creek; Holly quickly curled up for a rest as well.

Then Dave and Peter fashioned a couple of walking sticks (using Peter's handy saw) and led us downstream. College Creek runs in a gorgeous little canyon with green and lush surrounding hills and small waterfalls and tributaries coming into it; it is one of the prettiest portions of this tramp. The walk downstream involved hopping from rock to rock, scrambling over/ around boulders, and sometimes just wading through the water. The water level was

low and the water temperature almost lukewarm (or at least not very cold) so it was easy to walk in the creek; as a bonus, our muddy boots (and Holly's muddy feet) got a good cleaning. We took a couple of detours on the adjacent hillside to bypass the most challenging portions of the creek, including the muddy flats when we approached the reservoir of No 3 dam; again, it was great to have Dave and Peter's experience and sharp eyes to locate those useful detours.

We arrived at No 3 dam at about 4:30pm, approximately 8 hours after starting the tramp. (I estimate that we took an hour's worth of breaks so the walking portion was 7 hours; this could have easily been only 6 hours or less if weather and track conditions were more favourable. My best guess at the distance is about 12km.) A 40 minute walk along the road brought us back to the car, parked at No 2 dam. By this time we were all looking forward to a hot shower and dinner!

Overall, this is an appealing tramp for several reasons: it is not far from Palmy, the length and elevation change place it in the medium level, the terrain has great variety (bush, open ridgeline and river and creekside), and you get to visit a backcountry hut. These factors along with the company made for a pretty good outing for us. But if you choose to walk the Burn Hut loop, I do wish you a day with better weather and a drier and more recently cleared track than we had!

We were: Tina (and Holly) Bishop, Peter van Essen, Saadia Akhtar and Dave Grant.

Articles for the newsletter

Send by the 20th of each month to Tony Gates, the newsletter editor, at kiwi@leatherwood.co.nz, or via <http://www.pntmc.org.nz/mail/>

Terry and Angela in Europe



Young Ibex, Fagaras Mountains, Romania



Cabana Turnuri, Victoria, Fagaras Mountains

A Brief Intro to the Carpathian Mountains

Forming a very long L-shaped chain of mountains and ranges across Romania, (west to east, then curving to the north and heading to the Ukraine), the Carpathians are probably not well known to most New Zealanders. We didn't know what to expect heading towards them, since so far Romania had been very dry rolling hills (now covered in heavy freezing hoar frost). However getting near to Victoria, the town where we based ourselves initially, we could see that there were some extensive and impressive forested slopes and high snow covered peaks above. This part of the Carpathians is called the Fagaras Mountains and extends for 70kms west-east, with 45 of those kms having tops above 2200m, and for the geologically minded, made of schist.

Victoria, being on the northern side of the mountains was a cold place this time of the year (November). It was originally a town set up to support a German petro-chemical industry; its original name was German, this was changed when Romania changed sides during WW2. The name Victoria comes from the early 20th Century Romanian queen consort who was English by birth (not The Queen Victoria). The town also has a distinct communist and co-op feel about it. We stayed in the huge "Central Hotel", on the other side of the square from what looked like it had been the "State Department Store". All the work round town,

such as leaf sweeping and pruning of trees, seemed to be done by cooperative efforts of the citizens! The occasional horse and cart would amble through town while the cars were a mix of very old Dacias (Renaults – like Warren's) and brand new Skodas, BMWs, etc.

After buying up supplies and map, heading into the mountains was initially on an old forestry road then a well-marked track with simple wooden bridges, through deciduous then conifer forest. Hoar frost got thicker and thicker as we approached Cabana Turnuri (1520m) which we used as a base for our excursions over the next few days. This hut, which has a custodian all year, is more like an enlarged Gates' family hut in the Orongorongo rather than a flash huge hut in the European Alps. It was nice and warm and food can be purchased. Outside day and night temperatures were below freezing.

From here the snow covered track heads up into a cirque with a large tarn and another (closed) cabana. Due to the lack of sun, and cold temperatures, the snow stays unconsolidated so it was a bit of a plod and a steep scramble up on to the saddle and the crest of the range. Here we could bask in the sun coming from the south and take in the very extensive panorama. The range looked like a cross between the Nelson Lakes tops and the Tararuas. Plenty of chamois about and the possible sighting of a lynx (you need to keep away from these beasts). Down in the forest bears aren't interested in humans but take a liking for donkeys - two were eaten over the last summer; donkeys are used to supply the huts.

We planned to traverse to Moldoveanu, at 2544m Romania's highest summit, but with the areas of deep unconsolidated snow and short daylight hours we opted for Tarata (2414m), pronounced Taratza. On one of the other days we investigated a side ridge to get further views of cold deep north facing valleys, more snow and hoar frost, and to enjoy a sunny traverse.



Towards the crest of the range and Vf Tarata

The map we used was 1:75,000 scale with only 100m contours, a poor representation of the mountains, tracks, huts and refuges. Better maps at 1: 50,000 scale are available but hard to find. So the Fagaras Mountains are highly recommended. Traversing them would be an excellent summer project, lots of well-marked tracks, huts and refuges. Being Romania; hut fees and food costs, and accommodation in towns and cities, is much more to the liking of the average New Zealand traveller compared to cost in the European Alps. Being big eaters we could now dine relatively extravagantly.

Further east near Brasov the Carpathians split into a number of individual ranges and massifs as they curve north, some made of limestone/ dolomite. Some are not as high or steep; some have rolling grassy tops which are good for skiing. Brasov is an extremely cold, but historically interesting, city with a full-on inversion layer enveloping everything in freezing fog all day at times. But there is easy access onto the Postavarul Massif, with a number of well-developed ski field towns. From one of these a steady two hour uphill grunt gets you onto Postavarul peak, at 1799m the highest point on the massif, for excellent views and to escape the inversion layer. (You can also take a gondola.) Like the Fagarus this part of the Carpathians has an excellent network of tracks and huts; cross country skiing would be good also on the areas of easy tops. Round the bend in the Carpathian chain, the section of the Carpathians running north towards Ukraine hasn't had a visit from us yet. It depends if we can escape the medieval town (Sighisoara) where the real Dracula came from!

Quote of the Month

“The Pohangina River” by the Swazi Man

“Some Blue Ducks became tame, and cleaned my porridge billy out each morning. At least I had someone to talk to. As well as talking to animals, I also talked to the rocks, trees, and rivers. Oh the rivers! Spend time on your own, and a river actually starts talking to you. Sit down for a spell by a river long enough and it will tell you a story. On quiet days, you will hear it playing, making noises like children. Rivers are alive; it's just that we have spent thousands of years not listening. Sometimes, I'd swim out to a rock in the middle of a pool and stand there, naked, in the middle of winter, and pretend I was some bloody symphony orchestra conductor. Thank god no one ever saw me doing it. Thank goodness the river didn't mind”.

By Davey Hughes, 2011 (from his stay at Leon Kinvig Hut, Pohangina Valley, Winter 1985)

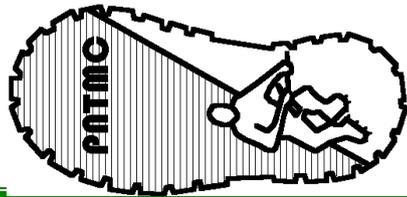
From “Untamed. The extraordinary adventures of the Swazi Man”. By Davey Hughes (2011). The author was the Tararua and Ruahine character who penned “Pohangina Storm” (printed in our October 2001 edition).

Old news

Ruahine hunter kicked by horse, severely hurt

**Evening Post 15 May 1934
(By Telegraph—Press Association)**

HASTINGS, This Day. Severe chest injuries and shock were suffered on Sunday by Lester Masters, a resident of Twyford, as a result of 'his being kicked by a horse upon which he was riding in the Ruahine Hills, behind Kereru, on a deer-stalking expedition. Masters, who was 35 years of age, was accompanied by his nephew, Eric Burge aged 12. Apparently the girth of the saddle slipped and Masters' foot was caught in the stirrup. He was dragged for some distance head down, and evidently was kicked by his alarmed horse. Burge went back and quietened the horse, and extricated his uncle. The two managed to reach a whare [Shutes Hut], where they spent Sunday night. Next morning Burge walked to the Big Hill Station, whence a rescue party set out at noon. After an arduous journey over rough country the rescue party returned to the station at 2.30 this morning. Masters was brought to Hastings, and though his injuries are serious he is making satisfactory progress.



Palmerston North
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Mountaineering Club
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PNTMC Newsletter

Dec 2011- Jan 2012

What's inside this month?

- *Tramping to Cone, Field, Burn Huts*
- *Labour Weekend in the Kawekas*
- *Travels in the Romanian Carpathians*
- *Ruahine hut bagging challenge 2012*
- *PNTMC involvement with Ruahine huts*

Articles for the newsletter

Send by the 20th of each month to Tony Gates,
the newsletter editor, via the club website
<http://www.pntmc.org.nz/mail/>.

Get out and about with us!

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