

Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.

www.pntmc.org.nz

P.O. Box 1217, Palmerston North

Newsletter April 2012



Anne, Peter, Tina, and Nathan (DoC) painting Lake Colenso hut, Mangatera valley, north west Ruahines. Refer to trip report inside for photo of completed job [Janet Wilson]

Club Nights

All are welcome to our club nights. These are held at 7:45pm on the second and last Thursday of each month at the Society of Friends Hall, 227 College Street, Palmerston North.

12 April

Focus on the Ruahines

Peter Van Essen

As we are focussing on the Ruahines in 2012 Peter van Essen will share some observations, vegetation facts, and photos from some of his digital camera era Ruahine trips.

26 April

Mt Blanc

Chris Saunders

Last year Chris completed the FMC Travel Club 11-day walk around the Mt Blanc Massif. He will tell you about the trip, and show a fine selection of images.

Upcoming Trips

1 April (not Saturday)

Coppermine Creek **E**
Janet Maessen **353 0922**

This pleasant streamside stroll near Woodville will show you wild Ruahine country from the comfort of a good track. Some good cafes in the area where to finish the tramp. Depart 9.00 AM

31- 1 April

Arete Biv **M/ F**
Grant Christian **354 5843**

Walk in the South Ohau River, past South Ohau Hut and on to Te Matawai Hut. Climb up to Pukematawai, across to Arete and to Arete Hut. Return via Waiopahu peak.

6- 9 April Easter Weekend

Ruahine Corner **M**
Warren Wheeler **356 1998**

Depart 7.30am. This northern area of the Ruahine Forest Park is a gem and well worth a visit. Plan A is to go in from the west via Mokai Station to Ironbark Hut. Lunch next day at Lake Colenso then up to Potae and the broad tablelands at Ruahine Corner Hut. Day 3 back to Colenso Hut, Day 4 is out the same way.

Easter Day tramp

TBA
Leader required

14- 15 April

Daphne-Howletts **M**
Martin Lawrence **357 1695**

Depart PN 7.00 am for Kashmir Road. From there we head up and over to Daphne Hut which should prove a good place for lunch before we climb up to Howletts. The next day, we may simply retrace our steps to the carpark but we could, depending on weather and fitness, head along to Longview from where there is a fairly good trail to the carpark.

15 April

Waipawa Chalet Loop **E/ M**
Peter Wiles **358 6894**

Depart at a reasonable time from town, enjoy the good forest stroll half way up to Sunrise Hut, then turn off down to the Waipawa River. Spectacular erosion can be seen here.

21- 22 April

Ruahine Colenso Crossing **M/ F**
Peter Van Essen **355 9076**

This trip will partly follow the route of William Colenso's first and unsuccessful attempt to cross the Ruahine range in 1845. We will travel up the Makaroro River, then up Colenso Spur onto Te

Atua Mahuru Peak. We will continue on north along the main range and fly camp at the tree line. In keeping with Colenso's travel exploits we will bush and stream bash down from Upper Makororo Hut to Barlow Hut on the way home.

This trip will not be done in period costume, we will not carry a canvas tent, we will not have baggage bearers, we will drive to Makororo not walk, we will see deer and possums instead of kiwi, we will not run out of food or water, we will not need an axe to cut a way through the spaniards, and we will have map and GPS not a local villagers vague recollection of a possible route. Otherwise it will be just like 1845.

22 April

North Ohau Hut **M**
Richard Lockett **323 0948**

7.30 start. A rare visit south into the Tararua's and a bit of late summer stream travel. In and out via Ohau River from Poas Road end.

25 April (Wed) ANZAC Day

Diggers Hut **M**
Warren Wheeler **356 1998**

Depart 8.00 AM. Join us for a brew after the Dawn Service. It's about 1½ hours up to the bush edge, and along to the hut. Return the same way or down the stream..

28- 29 April

Kelly Knight Hut **E**
Llew Pritchard **358 2217**

Another good river side Ruahine hut, with many desirable attributes, including easy dry foot access. There are is the option of a tramp up to the Whanahuia Range tops, weather and time permitting. Depart PN 8.00 AM.

29 April

Farm Walk **M**
Malcolm Leary **06 327 7825**

A Hunterville hill country stroll on Otairi Station farm, mostly ridges, mostly pasture (with some pines). Great views. Depart PN at 7.30am.

5- 6 May

Maropea Forks Hut **M/ F**
Anne Lawrence **357 1695**

Maropea Forks Hut is sited on flats near the forks of the North and South Maropea River. How we get there, and back is dependent on weather and the party. We will probably leave PN at 7am for Mokai Station but an alternative plan would be for a Friday afternoon departure to get a head start on the weekend.

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

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/>

Editorial

Malcolm Leary, Doug Strachan, and Bruce Van Brunt provide trip reports here as evidence that PNTMC does go to places other than the Ruahines. Trips to the Tararuas, Tongariro, and Southern Alps feature in this edition, as well as our beloved Ruahines. Further evidence of PNTMC's love and appreciation of the Ruahines is offered by the Extraordinary General Meeting results to work with three Ruahine huts. The PNTMC EGM of 8 March 2012 unanimously agreed to adopt both option A, i.e. to manage Ngamoko and Mid Pohangina huts, and option B, i.e. to work in partnership with DoC

maintaining Rangī hut. The next step is for the committee to finalise negotiations with DOC.

This is exciting stuff for PNTMC. Sure, it will require a few trips to those respective huts, and some money and work, but it continues an age old tradition of clubs like Heretaunga and Tararua Tramping Clubs to assist DoC with the provision of public facilities in the hills.

TV comment

The popular Tuesday night TV show "I shouldn't be alive" twice recently featured people tramping through the Southern Alps. Although the programme deliberately avoided naming or filming the actual locations, these would be known to anyone who has a knowledge of recent SAR's in the Southern Alps. Two women became stuck in bluffs for more than a week above the Taipo River, south of Arthurs Pass, only being found alive by chance after the official SAR had ended. Further south, in the Douglas valley (near Mt Sefton), an injured solo trumper sat out a week, after which he knew (thought) his friends would activate a search. His dog, passionately named "L D" (short for Little Dog) stuck with him, even offering sage route guide information when he finally decided to crawl and hobble for three days to a mountain hut. He was sure lucky to find tahr hunters there to rescue him. He remained good friends with LD.

In both cases, there was a lack of communication equipment, and trip intentions and dates left with friends and family were vague. For the purposes of both episodes, they obviously filmed in easier terrain, with digitally added "boulders" rolling past. Many PNTMC people may be familiar with these areas (or similar), so should appreciate the terrain and conditions.

And I finally saw one episode of the TV show that I have been waiting for- Man vs Wild, with Bear Gryllis in New Zealand. For those who missed the show, he was racing around the Southern Alps somewhere near Wanaka, with a few scenes familiar to us. Damp beech forest, dry Central Otago scenes, Haast River gorges and canyons, and tussock mountains all featured. In his search for food, he ate huhu grub, cabbage tree leaves, and the crowning glory, a severely burnt possum carcass roasted over a smokey bush fire.

Mid Pohangina Hut Swing Bridge Removed

PNTMC Committee worked hard to prevent the removal of the Mid Pohangina swingbridge. We argued that it was an important safety asset in

an area of our own back yard in the Ruahines. We met with DoC a number of times to discuss this, and we wrote about the issue to FMC and the Minister of Conservation late last year. However, despite our best efforts we were not successful, and the bridge has now been removed.

The Committee learnt recently that DoC faces even more budget cuts, and their maintenance of assets in the Ruahines will be further compromised. We wrote again to the Minister of Conservation about this (see below for a copy of our latest letter) and we are having ongoing meetings with DoC to reach decisions about how to prioritise huts and tracks in the Ruahine Forest Park.

Notices

Personal Locator Beacons

With the help of ECCT funding, the club has purchased 2 personal locator beacons. Registration with the Rescue Coordination Centre is currently being arranged, and then the beacons will be available for use on club and private trips.

Duplicate FMC Membership

A number of our members belong to more than one outdoor recreation club. Many of these other clubs are affiliated to FMC and currently members pay FMC membership fee of \$10 through any club that is affiliated to FMC. FMC have introduced an option of a reduction in fees for people in this situation. If you do not wish to pay twice for FMC membership because you belong to two clubs you can claim a reduction.

To do this you must produce your new 2012/ 13 FMC membership card issued by the other club, to PNTMC treasurer Martin Lawrence. Martin will then file a return to FMC claiming your reduction, which he will then be able to pass on to you. Claiming this duplicate membership reduction does reduce the PNTMC voting entitlement at FMC AGM's.

Please contact Martin if you wish to proceed.

The Ruahine Hut Bagging Challenge

Please note that the PNTMC Ruahine Hut Bagging Challenge commenced on 9 December 2011 (not 16 December). Some rule checks need to be made here, with "motorized access" allowed to accrue 2 points per hut. If a Ruahine hut can be reached by jetboat, trailbike,

helicopter, mountain bike, horse, etc, then that's OK. There are not too many of them, and we want to keep things simple. The idea is to promote the Ruahines and huts therein, and get people to go out into the forest. Also, we need to clear up the point that photos are desirable but not essential to claim your points. You must however provide the hut name, date of visit, whether it was a private or club trip, and with whom you visited the hut.

An entry in the hut log book (with the PNTMC name) is needed for all except Unknown Campsite.

Please advise Janet Wilson of your successful hut bagging within about 30 days of doing so, so that an accurate record can be kept. We will make a spread sheet, available at club nights, for you to check. Please also provide a photo of the hut, preferably with the hut baggers, to Tony Gates. Enjoy your tramping!

Duke of Ed Shadows

The Committee has adopted the following recommended response when PNTMC is approached to assist in non-Member adventure activities outside the Club.

- 1) Tell the outside party that PNTMC would be glad to help. This is a PR opportunity after all.
- 2) Say to the outside party that the extent of PNTMC involvement will be limited to informing PNTMC members of the request.
- 3) Any responses will then be on a private basis directly between the PNTMC member and the outside party.
- 4) Inform the outside party that PNTMC is open to all, regardless of age, gender or ability and it is the responsibility of the outside party to determine if the PNTMC individual responding is able to fulfill the requested function.
- 5) Advise the PNTMC member to fully assess the request for feasibility and adequacy of planning before any commitment is made.
- 6) Make sure the PNTMC member is aware of the broader considerations relating to leadership and Adventure Activities outside the Club.

Membership

Congratulations to Eric Liu and Sandy Huang on the birth of their new baby Jolene, and a warm welcome to Jolene to the world of tramping.

Correspondence PNTMC- DoC

20 February 2012

Minister of Conservation
Hon. K Wilkinson

Dear Madam

Proposed Removal of Mid Pohangina Swingbridge, Ruahine Forest Park

Thank you for your letter dated 19 December 2011. We are deeply disappointed that you confirm that Mid Pohangina bridge will be removed, working under the guidelines of the Destination Management Framework. Your letter states “the department must prioritise what facilities it maintains” and “low use facilities may not be able to be maintained”.

This is New Zealand’s backcountry heritage being disposed of in the name of economic expediency. These back country assets, huts, tracks and bridges are a legacy that sets New Zealand above most places in the world in terms of wilderness recreation. There has already been considerable “rationalisation” of huts and tracks over the past decade. Comparison of current with older topographic maps reinforces the extent of this loss. Our club views the DMF as a continuing process that will result in the loss of much of this heritage and so we believe we must voice our protest.

The economic model being applied seems bound to exacerbate the process. We are talking about what are basically spartan facilities by any standards, which were built at low cost in the 1960’s and 1970’s. The present economic model demands that DOC pay depreciation and a capital charge on present value, over and above any maintenance costs. So Treasury gets back a large proportion of the funding it supposedly provides DOC for maintenance of these assets. We believe this adds unnecessary constraints to DOC’s budget.

We question how this approach meets the stated focus of DOC of “ increasing participation in outdoor recreation, towards its vision that “ New Zealand is the greatest living space on Earth” when many of the assets that will encourage this are continuing to be done away with under the guise of austerity measures. The policy of justifying the continuing maintenance of assets by the amount of use they currently receive will result in a self-fulfilling prophecy – take away a bridge and as result fewer people may use that track, therefore the track no longer justifies

maintenance, and so maintenance of the hut at the end will be called into question.

We suggest that the decision to remove Mid Pohangina bridge, and DOC’s asset prioritisation process in general, has not received sufficient community scrutiny. The process up to now seems to us to have been mostly internal.

The decision to remove the bridge needs to be made public (perhaps through newspaper advertisement and DOC’s website), and time given for submissions to be received that will be allowed to influence the outcome.

We request that; the removal of the Mid Pohangina bridge is put on hold until public submissions have been heard.

In future any decisions to remove or not maintain backcountry assets are widely publicised and open to public submission.

The basic economic model being applied to backcountry assets, built at minimal cost, is re-examined.

Yours sincerely

David Grant
Secretary
PNTMC

Copy to:
DoC, Private Bag 11010
Palmerston North 4442, Attn J Roxborough

Federated Mountain Clubs
PO Box 1604 Wellington 6149, Attn R Davies

Presidents Report

Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.

President's Annual Report, 29 March 2012

This is the 46th President's Report and covers what has been an interesting year.

The committee sent in submissions about a range of topical issues including mining in schedule 4 areas and a proposal for new place names for 17 watercourses, ridges, and peaks in the Ruahine Forest Park.

Members of the committee have been involved in discussions with Jason Roxborough, Andrew Mercer and Duncan Toogood from the local DOC office about the implications of budget cuts to DOC. These cuts pose real threats to the ongoing maintenance of DOC assets in the Ruahines and as a committee we have worked to raise public awareness of these issues. An issue of particular concern arose from the Mid-Pohangina bridge failing an inspection. This is a bridge which the committee believe to be an important safe link through to mid-Pohangina hut and beyond. Sadly, despite our best efforts, DOC saw bridge removal as unavoidable and the bridge was taken out earlier this month. One positive outcome of our meetings with DOC was the intent to involve PNTMC and MTSC as well as the wider community in DOC's prioritisation decisions for its assets in the Ruahines. This will involve ongoing meetings over the next six months or so.

DOC also approached the Committee for help with managing huts in the Ruahines. In response to this, the Committee developed two proposals which were taken to an extraordinary general meeting on 8th March 2012. 17 club members attended this meeting and those present voted to support both Proposal A (the club taking on the management of Mid-Pohangina and Ngamoko huts) and Proposal B (the club committing to a shared role with DOC regarding Rangiwahia hut). The paperwork to implement this is currently being prepared by DOC.

As usual the club was involved in a range of activities during the year:

- As part of the committee's efforts to raise the club's profile a photo display was held at the city library. This received a very positive response - thanks to Eric Liu and Martin Lawrence for their efforts with preparing the photos.
- Tony Gates represented the club at FMC AGM in Wellington in June
- Janet coordinated the living legends tree planting in the gorge in October
- The committee recently purchased two Personal Locator Beacons. Once the protocol for their use is finalised, details will be published in the newsletter.
- The club participated in the MUAC interclub debate with Tony Gates, Graham Peters and Anne Lawrence coming a close second to the MUAC winners.
- We hosted the Interclub Quiz and were well represented in the winning team. Thanks to Janet Wilson for coming up with such a great set of questions.
- The club photo competition was judged by Udo van Mulert. Eric Liu was a winner in five categories with his Wild horses on the East Coast, Young monks in China and Starry Night camping on the East Coast and two shots of Girdlestone. Dave Grant's photo of Mt Matterhorn won the overseas section.
Udo's Best of the Show were Chris Tuffley's alpine flower and Eric Liu's Starry Night.
- Club members did not feature in placings in the interclub photo competition held by MUAC. However, Martin Lawrence's photo of a group from PNTMC hanging around at Ngamoko hut won the DOC 'Get Snapped Loving NZ' photo competition.
- This year the club snowcraft programme was held over single days rather than weekends. This proved successful with ten people attending Snowcraft I, seven attending Snowcraft II and five going on Snowcraft III. Thanks to Bruce van Brunt for organising and running this programme.
- Warren Wheeler organised an interesting programme for our club nights with speakers covering a diverse range of topics. Areas covered have included the Grand Tetons, Kamchatka, Anapurna, Peru and Antarctica, with closer to home Mt Cook, Dusky Track and the Whanganui River. Topics have ranged from wildlife forensics to issues of public access for outdoor recreation.
- The club continues to publish its monthly newsletter. Thanks to Tony Gates as editor, this continues to keep members well-informed with interesting items and good pictures.

Many people give generously of their time to ensure these activities are successful. A big thanks to all club members involved for their energy and commitment.

The club continues to be well represented by members in the wider community. Working to support DOC has become an increasing focus. Janet Wilson has put huge efforts into the coordination of the Oroua Stoat project, and a number of club members have put time into moving traps and checking stoat lines. The painting of Colenso Hut became a club trip with four club members making Colenso home for 5 days of painting.

Once again Janet Wilson put together two excellent trip cards for the year offering trips from easy through to fit and through from one day to overnight and to trips involving four or more nights. Statistics for club trips are interesting. For the 12 months to the end of February, 102 trips were programmed. Of these 30% did not go, but of those that did go 42% went to the Ruahine Forest Park, 25% to the Tararua Forest Park, 30% to other places in the North Island and only 3% to the South Island. Day trips averaged five people per trip and overnights averaged just over four. The most on a day trip was 12 people, for Terry Crippen's Harding Park Circuit on 3 July (before winter really set in). For overnight trips the maximum was for Janet Wilson's Coastal Classic on Queens Birthday Weekend, which involved 13 people going to the east coast near Tora.

Club members continue to be an active lot outside of organised club activities. This year, forest parks visited include the Kawekas, Ruahines and Tararuas. National parks visited include Kahurangi, Mt Cook, Nelson Lakes, Tongariro and Westland. Members went to a remarkable list of countries including Antarctica, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Chile, England, Germany, France, Italy, Switzerland, Mongolia, Romania, and Slovenia.

This year we welcomed Ray Corner to the club. Overall club membership has remained fairly stable with total numbers at 61. Members includes up 3 life members, 34 individual members and 12 family memberships.

I enjoyed my second year as president. It is a privilege to represent such a wonderful group of people and a pleasure to work with the enthusiastic members of the committee. My role is made much easier by the efficient work of Dave Grant as Secretary, Martin Lawrence as Treasurer and Warren Wheeler as Vice President. My thanks to all committee members: Warren Wheeler, Dave Grant, Martin Lawrence, Bruce van Brunt, Tony Gates, Terry Crippen, Penny Abercrombie, Janet Wilson, Eric Liu and Malcolm Parker. Thanks also to Mick Leyland (gear custodian) and Peter Wiles (club archivist and web master).

Trip Reports

14- 15 January 2012

Crow Hut- McKinnon Hut

Report Nicola Wallace, photo Warren Wheeler

We left Warren's at 7.30am on an overcast Saturday, and drove to Pohangina to pick up Janet. Then followed a lovely scenic drive, via Pohangina Valley West Road, Utuwai, and Apiti to our departure point at Kawhatau Base.

Getting out of Warren's car at the base, it felt surprisingly cold. We walked back down the road for a few minutes, to the track start. The wooden sign to Crow Hut said '5 hours', but the '5' was on a wooden block that had been nailed over the original time. I wonder what it was.

After a muddy little walk downhill, we came to The Cage, first class transport over the Kawhatau River. We had a pleasant and uneventful crossing, with Janet going first. There followed a very steep climb, the track overgrown with flaxes, no doubt left there in the interests of

track stability. I was just the right height for every flax flower stem to get caught between my head and pack, which resulted in some pushing, shoving and swearing until I was clear of the flaxes. After that, travel up to the tops was straightforward, and included negotiating the occasional fallen tree, victims of the recent high winds.

"Warren thought this spot had probably been hollowed out by some enthusiastic track clearers who wanted a choice spot for their lunch too. Then Warren brought out the most fantastic water melon, which made a very enjoyable addition to lunch. Good on him for carrying it up the hill! Lunch over, and off across the tops. Not long after, we reached the Crow Hut turnoff, Crow Hut being 1hr 30 minutes away, according to the sign. Some debate ensued nearby as to whether we should go to McKinnon Hut first, then down the river to Crow, or just go straight down the hill to Crow Hut. Because I'm pretty slow, it was decided the direct route was best. The descent turned out to be surprisingly pleasant, not the muddy, slippery one I'd been

expecting. The track was very good, carpeted with beech leaves. Past the descent's half way point, and the grade steepened, then a side stream crossing, and the joyous arrival at Crow Hut. It had taken only 4 hours to get here.

Crow Hut is a lovely little 6 bunker, very close to our water source, the slightly boisterous Kawhatau River. A swingbridge by the hut crossed the river.

Firewood was collected, and cut, for future hut users, but it was warm, and we didn't use the woodstove. There were so many spots around this hut to sit and just soak up the atmosphere, the best one being down by the river. A group of riflemen and their fledged youngsters provided a pleasantly noisy interlude. The bush looked very healthy here, for Ruahine bush, much better than the bush around Cattle Creek Hut, where I'd been recently.

I enjoyed a freeze dried spaghetti bolognese for tea, while Janet and Warren equally enjoyed a fine couscous concoction they cooked up. With the hut to ourselves, and no snorers among us, a good night's sleep was had by all.

Debate ensued the next morning, as to which way we should go, given that cloud was persistently hanging over the tops. The forecast had been for better weather on Sunday, but it wasn't to be. Instead of going across to the Mokai Patea Range, and heading back via Colenso Trig, we decided to go up river, then up to McKinnon Hut, then back along the tops.

The river was quite boisterous indeed, and Janet and I teamed up to cross safely, multiple times, while Warren provided verbal encouragement. After about 1km we reached the DOC sign directing us up the hill to McKinnon Hut. Janet & Warren stopped here and emptied the water out of their boots, and I carried on up the hill – and what a steep one it was. Bush eventually gave way to grasses, and still it went on, as I came ever closer to the cloud. Then sight of a chimney...aah McKinnon Hut. No one was there, it was lovely and tidy, so I emptied my boots, piled on more clothes, and made myself at home. A short while later, Warren & Janet arrived. It was only about 10.30am, so we had an early lunch and hot brews, as it was quite cold up there.

From here it was up into the cloud and mist proper. We didn't stop at the highest point of the whole trip, 1625m ASL, as we couldn't see anything but the sign to the hut. In spite of the mist, it was beautiful in the tussock, as always. We stopped briefly at the large tarn to the left of

the track, but it was too claggy for good photos of it. And flowers, flowers everywhere - orange ones, and large white daisies.



Janet and Nicola on the Hikurangi Range tops.

As we gradually descended, the mist thinned, but it still took eagle eyes to spot the large orange triangle that marked the track entrance to the bush. Here we stopped, and had lunch in the same place as yesterday. I declined Warren's kind offer of watermelon, as I felt a tad cold after sitting still for a while.

Then it was a straightforward descent through the bush, until the very steep bit towards the end. Today the problem was slippery mud rather than flax entanglement. I arsed over several times, and at one spot not far above The Cage I sat and cleaned out the mud packed treads of my boots with a stick, to try and attain some grip. It worked. The cage was a glorious sight indeed, and I got to go first this time. I got "Ongaonga'd" on the short section of track back up to the road, but it was a small price to pay for such a fun trip. Warren noticed the muddyness of my pack, and said that was the sign of a good time, and so it was. And visiting 2 huts was a bonus.

Many thanks to Warren and Janet for the company, and Warren for the driving, and Janet for the arvo tea back at her place.

We were: Warren Wheeler (leader), Janet Wilson, and Nicola Wallace.

21- 23 January 2012
Mid Pohangina-Ngamoko-Piripiri
Report Anne Lawrence, photo Janet Wilson

This anniversary weekend trip was planned as a good opportunity for club members to have an explore of the two huts that the committee is proposing the club take on responsibility for. We anticipated a reasonable number so were disappointed to just have five of us. However, we were lucky with the weather, which managed to hold off raining until we were safely undercover.

On the Saturday we left our two cars at the road end and followed the rather muddy track across the farmland to the Pohangina River. At the first forks we noticed that the Piripiri was very murky but the Pohangina was nice and clear. As soon as we started following the sidle track we remembered that it was not a particularly easy track to follow, it is well marked but it is not a highway and you do need to watch where you are going. After about 2 ½ hours going, there is a lovely spot to stop and admire the view - this was a good morning tea break before we headed on to hut. As we crossed the mid Pohangina bridge we were all aware that we may be among the last to use it... not a good thought! After crossing the bridge the track climbs quite steeply. A much easier option if you don't mind getting your feet wet is to make your way to the hut via the river – the hut is less than 10 minutes this way.

Mid Pohangina Hut is a tidy 4 bunk hut on a grassy shelf just above the river. Three of us slept out under Janet's fly – unfortunately the wind got up during the night and ripped the fly so that Janet spent some time holding onto it, before deciding we needed to let the whole thing down. We spent the rest of the night with the fly on top of us, but woke only slightly damp from the experience.



Martin, Ri, Warren, and Anne at Cattle Creek hut

On Sunday morning we went for an explore up Cattle Creek. It is a lovely creek to follow, with

only one or two slightly tricky places, including one where a chain provides extra security. After a short break at Cattle Creek Hut we headed back down the creek and back to Mid Poh Hut for lunch. After lunch we headed up river to Ngamoko Hut. Although it is a relatively straightforward walk up the river, there were some deepish pools to wade through and we didn't manage to make it to the hut with everyone dry as a couple of us managed to slip over once or twice. We saw blue duck at Mid Pohangina and en route up river.

Ngamoko Hut is a lovely hut – and in this case it was particularly welcome as we had only just settled ourselves in when it began to pour. Fortunately the rain was over by morning when we headed off up the hill behind the hut to the tops. This is a pretty good track – well marked and providing for an efficient ascent. Once at the top we headed south along the tops – initially in the open but then we hit the leatherwood through which it was hard to find the trail as it was fairly overgrown. Janet located the 'turn off' and we clambered, slid, scrambled down the hill towards Piripiri Stream.

Eventually we found Piripiri Hut after trying a high sidle. We must have been so-o-o-o-o close before backtracking and eventually dropping down to the river for lunch- right at the pink DoC marker! Amazingly our chosen lunch spot proved to mark the start of the trail up to the Biv! The biv is well hidden amongst pepper trees, and the log book suggests it is a favourite haunt of hunters, Tony Gates included. From the Biv it was a long walk down the Piripiri stream. Those of us who were more experienced at river travel found it difficult not to speed ahead while the less practiced members of the party struggled to maintain a reasonable pace. I had forgotten how sporty the Piripiri Stream is, but no injuries, so, all good. Over two thirds of the way down we came across a sizeable slip which explained the murkiness we had seen in the stream when we started out on the first day. I think after the long the walk out we were all pleased to get back to the cars. All in all a great weekend, but nursing a few stinging nettle and cutty grass and leatherwood scratches today. We had checked out the two huts of particular interest to the club and visited another two, so that made four Ruahine huts to add to the hut bagging challenge.

We were: Janet Wilson (trip leader), Warren Wheeler, Ri, Martin and Anne Lawrence

**13- 20 February, then 22 February 2012
Mueller Hut-Annette Plateau-Ball Pass
Report by Malcolm Leary**

Edith and Malcolm had a week recently hut wardening at Mueller Hut, Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park. After the DoC briefing at the village, and a good climb up to the hut, we endured 3 days of mist and zero views. Then we got what we deserved, with great views of Sefton, Aoraki/Mt Cook, and the Southern Alps all around. Each evening, we had between 1 and 23 customers to attend to (some camped outside the hut), and each day, we had 20- 30 day walkers. Bruce, Craig, Malcolm, and Dwight arrived mid week, so they nicked up to the Annette Plateau windscoop with me to camp, and hopefully attempt to climb Sealy. At 4.15 AM the weather looked terrible from our tent. At 8.00 AM there was no change, so at about 9.00 AM we all trooped back to the hut.

We returned to Mt Cook Village for a few days, planning for an overnight crossing of Ball Pass from the Tasman to the Hooker. The weather

intervened, but we did have a half day window of opportunity which we took and succeeded. After an early start, we used Dwight's sturdy four wheel drive to take us to Husky Flat, so by 6.40 AM we were comfortably at Ball Shelter, at the foot of the pass. We reached Ball Pass by 12.30 AM in time to admire the Caroline face of Aoraki/ Mt Cook- then the weather closed in. Bruce decided that it was quicker to return via the Hooker valley, so we got our day trip in the end- all eleven and a half hours of it. We all stuck together well on the descent, and had lunch at "the playing fields" on the descent. Steep guts led to easy terraces, then the delightful, if somewhat damp, Hooker Glacier. There were a couple of wash outs we had to climb over en route to Whitehorse Hill, which we reached at about 6.00 PM. Easy hitch hiking allowed quick vehicle recovery.

Ball Pass day trippers; Craig and Michael Allerby, Edith and Malcolm Leary, Bruce Van Brunt, and Dwight Swainson



**19 February 2012
Heritage Lodge-Oroua-Iron Gate Gorge
Report - David Vydra, photo Doug Strachan**



David eating the water melon

The Iron Gates trip was the second one I did with the PNTMC. We were five people: Warren Wheeler, Adam Matich, Glenn Pendergrast,

Doug Strachan and I. We walked from the car park, past Heritage Lodge, to a place where the track meets the river, and from there we came back along the river to Iron Gates. After this, we took the new Stoa Track back to the main track that guides us to the car park. The first part on the river was an easy one (we didn't have to go up or downhill). Part two on the river was (very) hard because the water was up to your t-shirt and you couldn't see the riverbed through the cloudy water; also, the water flowed very fast. The last part (the new track up to the car park) was an intermediate tramping track but the whole time uphill.

At the beginning of the tramp, on the main track, we crossed a funny bow-shaped bridge. Also, we had to collect firewood for Heritage Lodge because this hut was low on firewood, and had no other heating. We brought a very big tree trunk to the lodge. When we came to the river we had a first lunch, and I realized that I had left my water bottle at home, so I ate first a pear to get some water. Warren carried a whole water

melon for lunch and this water melon was really yummy.

The river wasn't clear because of the showers on Friday, so we couldn't see any rocks while we were crossing. It was refreshing to go through the cold water because it was a hot day, also you couldn't feel that your feet were hurting. But because I didn't close my shoes properly I got stones in my boots four times, but after Warren told me that you tie your boots very tight, I couldn't find any stones in my boots.

While Warren was checking the traps and throwing the dead animals out of the traps, he found Janet's camera, which she lost on the tramp 2 weeks before (I don't know if the camera is still working). We decided when we came to Iron Gates not to swim through it because we hadn't enough time, the water was high, and we wanted to try out the new track. I was really impressed by the gorge and the water which flowed through it. We saw huge tree ferns on the track back to the car park. We came just in time to our car because it started to rain but because of the rain we could see a beautiful rainbow. Before that, we had nice sunny weather. We tramped for six hours and it was a really good tramp.

Feb 20- 24 Painting Lake Colenso Hut Report Tina Bishop, photo Janet Wilson

Four of us arrived at the Doc office on Monday morning with a forecast of heavy rain looming. The decision whether to go or not was left to us so of course we took the risk and were soon off to Mokai in the Doc ute to catch our helicopter. For me this was going to be my first time in a helicopter so I was excited but also a bit nervous. Anne, Peter and I were first up to fly to the hut, I was squashed in the front between Peter and our very young looking (but very skilled) pilot. Wow what an amazing view and not very scary unless you think about crashing! We flew up the valley following the river and were at the hut in what seemed like about five minutes. To think that just over a year ago I huffed and puffed and sweated over two days to get to that hut! The weather was pretty average with drizzle but luckily no wind. The helicopter did four trips which included two large packages of gear and a new meat safe all of which the pilot managed to land right in front of the hut deck.

After unpacking and a very nice lunch our Doc man Nathan got into water blasting the outside of the hut while the rest of us started prepping the inside. Anne and I decided there was too much

dust so we went for a walk to the lake. We spent the rest of the afternoon scrubbing walls and I'm pretty sure Peter ended up outside helping Nathan. Anne cooked dinner which included eye fillet steak – I have to say that Doc really went all out to cater for us – the food was fantastic. That evening the guys spent ages outside trying to get the radio working but had no luck. Lake Colenso Hut is famous for its mosquito population and did not disappoint us!

Tues morning the weather was still a bit doubtful, Anne took on the role of early morning cuppa tea maker for everyone even those still in bed and we discussed our "Snorer". It was decided that Janet would walk up to Potae to ring Doc to let them know we were safe and that Anne should go with her for "safety" – they were off in a flash! By now the sun had come out and the rest of us set to work priming the outside, wire brushing the roof, and scrubbing the bottom bunk. Janet and Anne had obviously motored up to Potae as they were back very quickly from their walk. They had been lucky to see Whio on their way which were sitting tucked under an overhang. Us girls spent the afternoon painting inside the hut while the guys carried on outside. Janet showed us the trick of lining the roller tray with tinfoil and gladwrap – very clever, no mess to clean up – she took on the role of chief roller while Anne and I were cutter inners. We managed to get the first coat on inside except for the bottom bunk which we left so we could sleep on it that night. Janet, Anne, and Peter went for a walk to the lake while Nathan and I went our separate ways to have a swim. We had moved all the cooking gear onto the deck and enjoyed Lamb chops and roast veges in the camp oven alfresco while looking over the river trying to spot Whio. That night Janet slept by the snorer so she was able to politely(?) shove them.

Wednesday dawned a bit damp so the guys put a first coat under the veranda while us girls put another coat on inside. The old meat safe was pulled out and the holes dug for the new one, a team effort lifted the new one into its holes followed by fast setting concrete, water, and last night's greasy cooking fat. We discussed the many uses for recycling the old safe and concluded that it was going to Janet's house if Doc allowed.

After lunch it was still raining so with a fence wire strainer in each hand we all went to find the "Exclosure" that Nathan had been instructed (with sketchy directions) to fix as a log had damaged it. We headed past the turn off to the lake for about fifteen minutes until we came across a small tin sign on a tree directing us to head 200 steps ten degrees to the right. We

followed a few more signs and ended up near the lake and found the enclosure. An enclosure is a twenty by twenty metre deer fenced enclosure that keeps the deer out so Doc can study the plant growth without the presence of deer. Peter used his Kiwi ingenuity to tighten the wire "Guy" to straighten the corner post. We wandered over to look at the lake and counted a few ducks but they were not whio's. We also spotted what looked like the remains of a very old jetty as apparently there was one there years ago. Back at the fence Janet and Peter were enthusiastically helping put the wire strainers on - Anne and I watched and got very bored - time for a walk. We walked further up the track until we got to the Mangatera River then turned back calling in to see that the others had finished so it was back to the hut.



Colenso Hut before and after

We left Nathan at the hut and went for a walk downstream to spot whio and find some house sized boulders. The hut is on the bank looking over a wide river flat but downstream it narrows until you reach a tricky log jam including a waterfall, once through that you either turn right to head up the Mangatera river to Potae or hang a left to find the boulders. We wandered down for a while and eventually came across some very large rocks (not sure if they were the ones we were told about) but unless we wanted a

swim we couldn't go any further - no Whio either. We got back to the hut to delicious spaghetti bolognese, I think Nathan was glad to have been left alone to finally do some cooking.

Today was the day we had a visitor much to my disgust, we named her Wilmer, Mildred and Bruce (whatever), she was a very large spider who took a liking to our white downpipe and spare paint tray in front of the hut. I kept a wary eye on her to make sure she didn't move too far especially not into the gear bag or nearer to the hut. Nathan went off up the river for a quick hunt before bed but didn't see anything. Have I mentioned the Mossies??

Thursday morning the weather looked a bit iffy so we were going to paint the bottom bunk but then the sun came out and it was all go putting the first coat on the exterior walls, I think it only took us just over an hour - good team work. The first coat was put on the roof - we had had many discussions about the colour choice of "Tea" for the outside and chello for the roof which we presumed was a woody brown - wrong it was a very nice blue, trouble is you can only see the roof from the air or a high spot by the long drop. After lunch another team effort put the second coat on the exterior walls. While the other three put a second coat on the roof, Ann and I second coated the bottom bunk - yay inside finished! By then I was totally over painting. Ann went to work cleaning the Dunny while I made myself look busy to avoid that job. Janet painted the door blue and we discussed where else to put that colour. It had been a very long hard day but we had achieved a lot. Dinner was Tuna risotto made by Anne, accompanied by good conversation and unsuccessful Whio spotting, although Janet reckons she could hear them. Our visitor hadn't moved much, and have I mentioned the Mossies?? That night three of us slept on the top bunk hoping the mattresses weren't going to stick to the new paint while Janet and Ann slept on the floor.

Friday we woke to rain but it didn't matter as we were only doing the finishing touches, a blue trim was done under the spouting, everything worth keeping was cleaned and put back in the hut and a note was left to go easy on the paint for a while - we were worried that the walls would scrape easily from packs/brooms etc. Tony Gates donation of a lovely new camp oven had pride of place on top of the fire - thanks Tony. We packed everything into the bags ready for the helicopter which was expected at lunch time. Our final touch was to fill the wood box up, Nathan chain sawed drift logs while we ferried them up to the hut to be cut smaller and split - I love stacking firewood - what a satisfying finish.

Our ride out arrived on time, I took some pics this time and the pilot spotted some deer although I preferred that he kept his eye on where he was flying! We sat in the paddock while the copter returned a few times to get the gear and the old meat safe which trailed behind like a kite.

It was a great sense of achievement to have finished the job especially considering the weather forecast. We all kind of feel a sense of ownership to Lake Colenso Hut which gives us an incentive to return very soon (by foot of course). Although we all worked very hard it was still like a holiday, we did a lot of talking, eating and had a lot of fun – I can't wait for the opportunity to do it again. We think Doc were pretty lucky to get such an experienced team of painters!

We were Peter Darragh, Janet Wilson, Anne Lawrence, and Tina Bishop.

**25-26 February
Raparapawai Stream- Keretaki Hut
Report and photo by Richard Lockett**

I've done a few trips up the No.1 Line Pohangina in my time, mostly up to the marked track end before dropping over the side into the Matanganui Stream and rock hopping down it back to the road end. On the odd time where one gets a look at the top of the range I've thought that it's not that far in height from the top of the marked track end up to the high point 1011 metres on the main Ruahine Range. My last two trips up No 1 Line have been to get to this point picking a route through the scratchy horopito and leatherwood scrub and finding that others had been before us with leatherwood having been cut, Janet Wilson finding a camera hanging in a tree just below the main range and with Tony Gates and myself following a trail to the top of the range and getting a look down into the Raparapawai Stream on the Dannevirke side.

My intention all along, can one get to Keretaki Hut from No. One Line?

The Raparapawai Stream looked to be relatively clean travel from a distance, looking down from the top of the main range and on a previous trip with Dave Grant following trails up from Fairbrother Road and getting a look at the upper Raparapawai, it did look clear of scratchy scrub.

So on February 25th Graham Peters, Janet Wilson, Warren Wheeler and myself headed up No 1 Line , destination Keretaki Hut. The end of the marked track is reached in just over an hour

and then it's into the Horopito scrub picking up a faint trail on up the ridge before following a well defined trail through the leatherwood to reach the top for an early lunch and to discuss options for our onward push into unknown territory. A little red Robbie 22 arrived flying along the main range, we waved, it headed north passed Maharahara and out of sight before returning and setting down over towards Keretaki hut out of sight again. We hoped that it wasn't dropping people off at the hut. From the top we decided to keep heading east along the main range dropping into a saddle and picking up a side creek of the Raparapawai the top of which we could see about 0.5km away marked by a slip face and we thought could offer good travel into the main stream.



Janet, Graham, and Warren in good leatherwood

Now we were in good leatherwood with no previous trail to follow but on the ridge line it's a bit thin, not too bad, but on the east facing downward slopes it was thick. That meant getting down low to the ground (which was slippery and the trunks and branches of the Leatherwood were covered in a wet goeey substance) which meant that we were getting a bit grubby but not grumpy as we pushed on. We looked at the first side stream as an exit of the ridge top but it was choked with Leatherwood well down into it so we pushed on over a rocky outcrop down into the saddle where the leatherwood gave way to Horopito and easier travel. We discovered a large muddy deer wallow amongst it.

This 0.5 km of travel had taken just a mere three hours. One last slimy drop into our chosen creek with ribbons tied onto trees to assist our return journey and no large slip to ease our travel downwards. The slip we could see from the high point was the total slip, not just the top of one. Apart from a bit of Horopito scrub, the creek looked reasonably clear at the top end and a good choice, and the further on down we went the better it got. Upon reaching the junction of

the Raparapawai and the track up to Keretaki Hut we were greeted by a 200 metre climb up onto the ridge top which after a long day was most unwelcome, and with the final 1 km walk along the track we reached an empty hut. A long 9 hour day but in the best of conditions for tramping, calm and not too hot, with clear skies. We could watch the predicted bad weather for the east coast roll up along the coastal hills out east.

I must admit that I wasn't looking forward to the return journey and a brief discussion was held as to alternative routes back to the road end which would involve another vehicle and driver to pick us up from somewhere- but a new day brings renewed enthusiasm. After a good feed and sleep, we set off along the track heading back to the Raparapawai in brilliant weather and back down the steep 200 metre descent to the stream.

Once in the stream we happened upon two hunters who had camped further down stream and who had been upstream for an early morning hunt but unsuccessful. They had found our footprints from the Saturday and couldn't make out where we had come from or where going too. It took a lot of explaining for them to understand our movements and onward route. Ten minutes further up stream Graham spotted that deer they were hoping to shoot high up on an old slip face quietly browsing the scrub. It seemed to me that in no time at all we had reached the top of the creeks and were looking for our pink ribbon on a tree beside a small slip which was found with ease.

Back at the deer wallow I came across a snack bar rapper and accused someone in the team for being an untidy bastard but nobody owned up to it and on further examination the use by date suggested that the rapper had been lying up there for about a year, so others had been before us or more likely had been staking out the deer wallow. Retracing our steps through the Horopito and Leatherwood was quicker in not having to route find and with a good effort we were soon back on top at 1011 metres and time for lunch.

It was very pleasant with views in all directions warm and calm and the inner satisfaction of having done something special and knowing that in was all downhill travel from now on back to the road end- mind you we were looking the worst for wear with muddy clothing and packs, arms and legs covered with scratches. The next mission would be to see if you could continue along the main range and drop down directly to the hut and miss out the Raparapawai and the 200 metre climb, any one up for it?

25 Feb
Atiwhakitu Hut
Leader: Janet Maessen, photo Doug Strachan



Peter Darragh carrying Marty the 3-legged dog



Maho and Doug on the track to Atiwhakitu Hut

Another successful, crowded, and fairly easy PNTMC Tararua day tramp, with eight happy trampers. They wandered in to the New

Atiwhakitu Hut for a picnic, then back, enjoying good weather and Tararua bush. Trampers were were; Andrew Kelly, Doug Strachan, Maho Strachan Janet Maessen, Minami Strachan, Chris Kelly, Conan Strachan, and David Vydra.

17 March
South Ridge of Tongariro
Report by Bruce Van Brunt

The forecast was great for Saturday, and we had an early start from Feilding that put us at the Mangatepopo road end around 8:30am. There was the normal chaos at this road end as what seemed like hundreds of trampers (or are they trekkers?) delivered by lots of coaches converged here to begin the Tongariro Crossing. One must put up with this inconvenience in order to access this part of the park. The new parking lot did not really add any extra parking, but at least it helped the flow of coaches.

We began the tramp around 8:30am and, save for a strategic stop to apply sunblock, went non-stop to the saddle. There were lots and lots of people out on the track on this fine day and this made it difficult to go up to the saddle in any cohesive unit. We regrouped at the base of the South Ridge around 10:00am, and after a short break headed up the ridge. From the saddle the base of the ridge does not look appealing to the casual trumper/ trekker. There is no track, it is a bit steep, and there is obviously loose rock about. This is perhaps why so few people try this approach to the mountain despite the high volume of traffic on the crossing. On the softer soil sections of the ridge, however, there is evidence of light but regular traffic.

Although the base of the ridge looks unappealing at first glance, in fact it is reasonably pleasant and straightforward. Once the steep section is gained, the ridge lays back a lot and it becomes a very scenic route. There are a few spots where one must negotiate some rock (nothing technical). It is not too difficult to get around some of the obvious obstacles, but this detracts from the fun. There are lots of small variations: I have been up there many times and each time I do something a little bit different.

We had a delightful romp up the ridge and arrived at the summit around 11:15am. The party was moving fast with the consequence that we were on the top well before lunch. At any rate, the summit had a lot of visitors and there was a cool wind. We decided to have lunch lower down a bit closer to mid day. We left the summit via a scree slope on the western side and headed for the gentle ridge above the Mangatepopo valley.

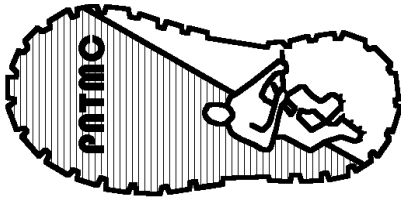


Roy, Richard, and Derek on South Ridge, Mt Tongariro. Mangatepopo valley behind.

At the junction of this ridge and Tongariro, somewhere roughly above the Soda Springs, we had a leisurely lunch followed by a relaxed descent down the ridge. After the scree slope near the top, there is a fairly clear track down to this junction and an equally clear track along the ridge. Just east of the Mangatepopo hut we left the ridge down an old track, crossed the stream, and got onto the Tongariro Crossing motorway, which at this time of day was not in heavy use.

It is possible to stay on the ridge and descend directly down to the carpark. There is an old track all the way down. Near the stream by the carpark, however, the track deteriorates and the stream itself proves a bit of a pain. The last 50m to the carpark is a bit of a scrub bash. I have experimented with this route a few times but never really found it that pleasant or any faster.

We were back at the car at 2:00pm: time enough for ice cream in Waiouru and home for supper. We were Roy Hughes, Richard Lockett, Derek Sharp and Bruce van Brunt.



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PNTMC Newsletter April 2012

What's inside this month?

Bumper edition

- PNTMC adopts Huts
- Mid Pohangina Bridge Removed
- Presidents Annual Report
- Trip Reports to row, Mid Pohangina,
Oroua River, Keritaki Hut
- Painting Lake Colenso Hut
- Atiwhakitu Valley, Tararuas
- Ball Pass, Mt Cook
- South Ridge Mt Tongariro

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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