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# Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.

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

P.O. Box 1217, Palmerston North

## Newsletter April 2013

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*Dawn above the mist, Pembroke Valley (Harrison Valley, Fiordland). [Terry Crippen]*

### 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.

**11 April**

**Annual General Meeting - refer to notice inside**

**25 April**

**Club night cancelled due to Anzac Day**

**9 May**

**Dead Dog or Die**

**Bruce van Brunt/ Chris Tuffley**

Hut bagging last year caused some interesting trips to happen. Here is the story of hut bagging through the northern Ruahines to the fabled Dead Dog Hut.

## Upcoming Trips

**6-7 April**

**Kime Camp** **M**  
**Warren Wheeler** **356 1998**

This is an alpine camping near Kime Hut, in from Otaki Forks and close to Mt Hector. Come and check on the new Kime Hut under construction.

**7 April**

**Beehive Creek** **Family**  
**Doug Strachan** **353 6526**

A lovely easy stroll up the Pohangina Valley. Pleasant autumnal trees, warm, grassy clearings, and warm water.

**13-14 April**

**Carkeek Ridge** **F**  
**Grant Christian** **354 5843**

A beautiful location and hut in the high central Tararuas. Well worth the effort to get there. Leaving early Saturday for Gladstone Road. Expect a long day in via South Ohau Hut, Te Matawai Hut & Arete Peak to Carkeek Hut. Carkeek Hut is the most remote hut in the Tararua Range. Out the same route on Sunday unless I can arrange a pick up at Otaki Forks.

**14 April**

**Ruapae Falls** **M**  
**Warren Wheeler** **356 1998**

An interesting water feature in from Eketahuna. Great forest and river flats.

**19-21 April (Friday till Sunday)**

**Northern Crossing, Tararuas** **F**  
**Mike Allerby** **323 8563**

A Tararua classic, from Levin to Masterton. Big, rugged country with great huts, tussock tops, and rivers. Depart PN Friday 8.30 AM, so we can reach the palatial Te Matawai Hut. Over to Tarn Ridge Hut for the night, then out via Mitre Peak and Flats.

**21 April**

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

An annual stroll through the hills of Rangitikei, with plenty of interest and great Ruahine views. We plan to follow Ridge Road (a paper road behind Mangaweka), so can view the Kawhatau Valley and beyond. Depart Milverton Park 8.30.

**25- 28 April (ANZAC Weekend)**

**Matemateonga** **M**  
**Martin Lawrence** **357 1695**

We are making Anzac Day into a long weekend so we have 4 days to enjoy Matemateonga. On the Thursday we will make our way to the start of the tramp at Kohi Saddle which is inland from Stratford. It is not a long walk to Omaru Hut where we spend our first night. The next day, we

head for Pouri Hut with a side trip to Mt Humphries summit (which gives us points for the PNTMC peak bagging challenge!). Day 3 involves the longest stretch of track at 21km but should be a pleasant walk as it is a well-graded track. Midday on day 4, we are met at Pipiriki by boat and taken upriver to the Bridge to Nowhere before heading down river and back to our vehicles. Transport arrangements need to be made so please contact Martin this month if you are interested in joining him on this trip.

**25 April**

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

Our annual tribute to a place named after the ANZAC's. A lovely hut over the farmland and up in the Makawakawa catchment.

**28 April**

**Fern Walk** **E/ M**  
**Janet Darragh** **353 0922**

A pleasant walk at Pohangina, through lovely native bush. Very easy grade, suitable for families, with a café finish. Depart PN 9.00 AM.

**4-5 May**

**Makaretu-Top Gorge Pohangina** **M**  
**Warren Wheeler** **356 1998**

Depart 7.30 am. A delightful easy river trip from the Kashmir Road end, staying at Makaretu Hut. Top Gorge is visited as a side trip down off the ridge on the way out via Longview Hut.

**5 May**

**Back Track** **E**  
**Woody Lee** **357 2390**

Our walk will start from the Black Bridge at Kahuterawa carpark, a 17 km drive from the city centre and next to the Sledge Track. We will go up into pine forest and descend one of the mountain bike trails. Back Track is suitable for families with small children. This is also known as Kahuterawa Loop track and is used for running and mountain biking. Depart 9.00 am.

### Trip Grading

Trip grades depend on many factors, especially weather and terrain. A reasonably proficient tramp 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.

### Personal Locator Beacons – Free for trips

The club has purchased two PLBs for members' use. If you want to take one of these on a trip, contact Martin or Anne Lawrence. Note that this applies to any trip you are going on - it doesn't need to be a club trip.

### 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:

Tony Gates	357 7439
Janet Wilson	329 4722
Martin and Anne Lawrence	357-1695

### Articles for the newsletter

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

## Notices

### PNTMC AGM 11 April 2013

The AGM for 2013 is to be held on Thursday 11 April. Please note this is changed from 28 March, due to Easter.

We plan to hold a billy boiling competition after the AGM – the Billy TT. Please therefore bring your best tramping cooker, lighter, a billy, and water bottle.

### Ruahine Hut Bagging Challenge 2012 PNTMC Poster For sale

PNTMC has made a poster of their hut bagging efforts in 2012, a stunning array of hut photos surrounding a map of the Ruahines. These have proved extremely popular and we are planning a

second print run for those who missed the February deadline.

Deadline for this order is 31 March.

Price for club members is \$16.00 for A1 size, or \$8.00 for A2. Non members price is \$24.00 and \$12.00 respectively. P&P extra. Order your copy from the Secretary [d.a.grant@xtra.co.nz](mailto:d.a.grant@xtra.co.nz)

### More Ruahine Hutbagging Publicity

The PNTMC Ruahine Hut Bagging poster is now proudly displayed and on sale at the i-site (in the Square). Also, the hut bagging photographs exhibition has been booked for display in the Palmerston North Library from 6th May to 20th May in the area of the non-fiction zone.

### Tribute to Lawson Pither

We are grateful for a donation of \$500 from Sue Pither. This donation is a bequest from Sue as Club Patron. It provides a worthy recognition of Lawson Pither's long-standing contribution to the club, both as club member and his varied roles on the committee and more recently as club patron. We have used Sue's donation to cover the cost of a Personal Locator Beacon. The club now has two PLBs available for club members to take on both club trips and their own trips.

### PNTMC Peak Bagging Challenge 2013-2014

Aim: To encourage participation; to get trampers out into the hills; to follow on from last year's challenge with a bias towards the Ruahines.

### Rules

- To run entirely on an honesty system, although photos on high points are encouraged.
- To run between the 2013 AGM and the 2014 AGM (You must be at the AGM 2014 to claim points bagged on that day).
- All peaks must be marked on NZ Topo 50 maps and be within the Conservation Estate i.e. administered by DOC in New Zealand.
- Peaks must be named - a Trig code or spot height doesn't count.
- A peak located on the DOC boundary will count. If in doubt consult the committee before proceeding.
- Points are awarded for each peak: Ruahine

peaks 2 points (5 points for special Ruahine peaks as below), all others 1 point PLUS all peaks get a bonus point on club trips.

- Special Ruahine peaks 5 points – if it is your first visit or more than 20 years since your last visit to any of these 10 peaks - Maharahara, Toka, Tunupo, Mangahuia, Otumore, Ohuinga, Mangaweka, Tiraha, Te Atua O Parapara and Te Atua Mahuru.
- Bonus point for peaks bagged on club trips - a 5 point peak is worth 6 points, a 1 point peak is worth 2 etc.
- Points can be claimed for each high point a maximum of 3 times. This is to discourage repetitive visits to the same place.
- Your results should be sent as soon as possible after each trip to Malcolm Parker at [mparker@slingshot.co.nz](mailto:mparker@slingshot.co.nz) or phone 357-5203. There will also be a book to record entries at Club Nights.

#### **DoC News – Ruahines Rangi Hut Super Loo**



*DoC Ranger Lyall checking out the new Rangi toilet hole [Andrew Mercer]*

DoC have installed a new 6600 litre toilet tank at Rangi Hut that should require emptying once every four years (the 400 litre tank was emptied four times every year, and 6 times at Sunrise Hut). There are now two toilets, as well as the firewood box, some new drains, and old skis acting as coat hangers.

#### **Rockslide Biv News**

The remote and delightful Rockslide Biv, NE Ruahines, had a good tidy up by Wayne Jacobsen during March 2013. The old bivvy section was repainted, and the lean-to cleaned. A new toilet was put in. The track to Apias “Any point in a storm” stream was cleared, and orange triangles placed at downstream and opposite the hut entry points.

## **Editorial**

One of the difficult jobs of the Editor is to trim back and cut down great photographs submitted for publication. Please keep them coming, and the great trip reports and newsy items, but be aware of space limitations. The PNTMC Newsletter provides a valuable record of our trips and activities, so I try to stick to the Newsletters core function - club trips and interesting places. This edition is printed at 14 pages, and was at one stage a mammoth 18 pages (and growing!). Great poetry and photographs from that draft have been held over for a future edition.

Lacking the ability to do tough trips, I really enjoy watching and hearing of others’ exploits in the hills. Recently, I was a spectator for the finish of the popular annual Tararua Mountain Race, otherwise known as the Southern Crossing. This is a tough but fun event with strong volunteer and SAR assistance. Several PNTMC members have competed in the past, and some have run some pretty good times. Many competitors complete the course looking remarkably fit, considering the conditions and course length.

The 2013 race finished at the lovely picnic site at the Waiotauru Bridge, Otaki Forks. The field of some 100 competitors enjoyed a dry, fast track without any major incident. They sweated the Marchant Ridge, tolerated much of the alpine Tararuas, rushed past the new Kime Hut, then endured the seemingly endless descent past Field Hut. Two competitors completed the race in under five hours - a remarkable time for the nearly 40 kilometre course - and many ran the course in six or seven hours. Other statistics included two competitors who had competed in all of the 22 events, and there were some from around the world. The organisers however noted that a large proportion of competitors competed only once. It’s easy to understand why, but, despite the difficulties, this is an iconic Tararua event. Every second future Tararua Mountain Race is therefore planned to be held in other areas of the Tararuas. The next event, scheduled for the second weekend in March 2014, is planned to follow the Kaitoke-Holdsworth Lodge route, via Cone Saddle and Totara Flats. Easier, you may think, but probably (hopefully) taking a similar time as the Southern Crossing. That will be a great spectator event from Totara Flats.

On a sadder note, George Lowe OBE, one of New Zealand’s great mountaineers, died March 2013. He was the very first person to hear those immortal words “Well George, we knocked the bastard off”, and was instrumental in assisting Edmund Hillary to be in a position to climb Mt Everest in May 1953. George had been an

active Ruahine trampler with the Heretaunga Tramping Club, and knew areas around Howletts Hut, Sawtooth Ridge, Kaweka Range, etcetera. He was obviously a fit and strong mountain man.



George Lowe (kneeling on left) and HTC at Howletts Hut, October 1959 [HTC].

## For Sale

### Bike for Sale

Almost brand new bike. An excellent round town bike (Anja's). GIANT CRX2. Shimano gears (18 gears) and rims; reflectors and mud guards. ALMOST BRAND NEW - only been used about 4 times round town. Original price \$1200, so going for about \$800 ONO.

Contact Terry (it's stored at Terry's place) 027 643 36 37 or 3563 588. Or Anja 027 749 58 11 (residing at St Arnaud and Angelus Hut).

### Books for Sale

"Annapurna" Conquest of the first 8000m peak, by Maurice Herzog, 1954 edition. 288 pages.

"Man of Everest" The autobiography of Tenzing, told to James Ramsey Ullman, 1956 edition. 320 pages.

"Mountains of the South" Paintings by John Rundle, Text by John Gordon. 112 pages.

"Between Heaven and Earth" The life of mountaineer Freda Du Faur, by Sally Irwin. 380 pages.

"Sir Edmond Hillary, An Extraordinary Life" biography by Alexa Johnston. 231 pages.

"In The Ghost Country" A lifetime spent on the Edge, by Peter Hillary and John Elder. 341 pages.

Offers invited. Terry 356-3588 or 027 643 3637

**Book For Sale: "Worn Out Boots"** four decades enjoying the New Zealand mountains

Tramper and Editor of this Newsletter has recently published volume one of his memoirs. As the title suggests, he has spent much time with PNTMC in the Tararuas, Ruahines, and other places.

Worn Out Boots. \$30.00, 160 pages, soft cover, with b/ w and colour photos. Contact Tony Gates (06) 357-7439 for your copy.

## Trip Reports

**24 – 27 February**

**Whio and Takahe - Murchison Mountains  
Terry Crippen**

Mt Irene, on the edge of the Takahe Specially Protected Area in the Murchison Mts (Fiordland National Park) was Ange's and my objective (being on the NZAC's 100 peak list and someone's mum's name). Access to this area requires a permit, with specific conditions, from DoC in Te Anau. This was successfully obtained once the relevant form was filled in and after discussions with staff at the DoC Area Office in Te Anau. We also jacked up a mountain radio and boat access.

The boat trip over to Junction Burn Hut on SW Arm Middle Fiord Lake Te Anau took about 45 minutes from Te Anau Downs, and then we were off into the mossy beech forest. The Murchison Mts are heavily stoat trapped so there was a reasonable trap line track up the Woodrow Burn. Two major storm events in January had caused a huge amount of flood damage; lots of debris avalanches, tree jams and river bank erosion. Clambering over one tree jam had me hitting the ground hard on my wrist – necessitating it being strapped up for the rest of the trip. (Ange's only injuries were a broken tooth - Tararua biscuit eating - and lost filling). The storm also accounted for the lack of whio chicks about, but we saw about 15 adult whio in total along the Woodrow Burn. At Woodrow Biv (not marked on the map) we had a couple of ducks keeping watch on us while we washed in the river. The new biv had had about 30cm of water through it last month and the surrounds were now a silty swamp!

The next day, up valley we continued through more open swampy clearings and past shallow lakes. At lunch time we had six whio nearby while we relaxed on the river edge for lunch. Can't complain about that! The grunt up to Esk

Saddle was a bit of a bush bash, especially having only one hand to hold onto the veg with. Once onto the saddle it was easy tops travel over towards Robin Saddle on tussock and rocky knobs. We set up a fly camp not too far from Robin Saddle, planning to ascend Mt Irene the next day. Unfortunately the MSR cooker pump started to leak so the thought of cold food tomorrow night for tea wasn't the most exciting (fires not allowed except in hut fireplaces; one of the conditions of the permit).

The next morning however the wind had picked up to at least Very Strong and the cloud was billowing across from the west, so we flagged our ascent attempt and decided to drop down into the Esk Burn and down to Te Au Hut. We dropped into the burn via the basin under Robin Saddle and the TL of the stream draining from it.

*We ran into two takahe in the tussock in this basin, quite amazing to see them in the wild!*

This made up for the non-summitting of Mt Irene. Once we had bush bashed down we soon picked up the stoat control track down valley, past Lake Duncan and to Te Au Hut. This is a classic ex NZFS hut, complete with NZFS hut book, open fire and a huge pile of paperbacks! A few well known people had been here a few years before: Janet and Graham on a cave prospecting trip and Don French after climbing Mt Irene.

The next day was up and over Tarn Saddle and into the McKenzie Burn, following a fairly decent stoat trap track, except for all the storm and flood damage. While the Woodrow Burn has plenty of open swampy clearings the McKenzie is almost completely in mossy beech forest. The bridge over the lower McKenzie, not far from the locked hut, was completely demolished in a tangle of wire and bent frame up on the bank, as a result of the recent flooding. We were soon out at the beach on the edge of South Fiord and picked up by Vern in his Western Safaris Fiordland boat and off to Te Anau. DoC was quite interested in our sightings of the two takahe as they were outside the stoat trap area, and also the sighting of numerous whio. Next time a longer trip perhaps; into the Irene Burn and a base camp to climb Coronation Peak as well as Mt Irene.

**16 – 22 February**

**Harrison, Pembroke & Gertrude - Fiordland  
Angela Minto**

One last review of the route guide info for an attempt on Mt Pembroke, and it was decided two

ice tools might be a good idea for the 700m vertical gain Lippe Couloir, which I thought would be the crux of the climb for me.

We had a mid afternoon Rosco's Water Taxi drop off to Harrison Cove across Milford Sound. A busy wee spot, where there is an underwater observatory and sea kayaking trips. It was about a 2km trip to our first night's stop, a very large rock biv on the true right of the Harrison River, that you couldn't miss. Three hours of bush bashing in the thickly mossed flora avoiding the big river boulders and we were there; huge yes couldn't miss it! A cheery fire drying our feet and warding off the sandflies was enjoyed. Even so the glowworms still glowed away happily that night.



*Looking up the Pembroke Valley*

Next morning was only a short distance (bit more in time) to the Pembroke confluence where we headed up to the side-by-side 60m picturesque thundering waterfalls indicating the start of our 160m high, very steep bush-bash, to avoid them. Terry led the way followed by a very keen track cutting Donald, and Ange leisurely enjoying all the hard work of those ahead. Soon T had us popping out at just the right spot. Boulder hopping up the river we soon reached the slabs, passing very inviting warm pools of water. A good flat slab camp site was soon found where we set up the fly to hide from the sun in the afternoon.

Next day a 5am alarm awoke us to thick mist viewed by head lamp. Three hours negotiating up the slabs we ended up on a shoulder 100m higher than necessary to avoid one of two large waterfalls, which were so much bigger and meaner when up close. Looking further ahead to an unavoidable steep snow grass sidle leading to a very exposed dry water course with bluffs just below and then a narrow exposed bench, this was yet another crux! How many more? So we decided to can it for this trip. We sat for a time enjoying the views waiting for the mist to lift, before heading back to camp.

The next day, the walk out was a lot more straight forward, retracing Terry's trunk line and Don's great route slash. Opting for river travel when reaching the Harrison this time proved much easier travel than in the bush despite the boulders. Arriving in plenty of time, we sat counting the many tourist boats and planes while waiting for Rosco who thankfully turned up early as the breeze had dropped and the sandflies were getting forceful!

Arriving back at Homer Hut about 4.30pm, T and I repacked, sorted through our food reserves squeezing another 2 days out of it and headed for Gertrude Saddle at about 6pm. This was a hot tiring slog, since we'd walked out from Pembroke River that morning. The mist gathered as we ascended, but still the views of vertical walls and cascading H2O were very rewarding. The cairns were a big help across the slabs, as visibility was now pretty limited; where's the wire ropes for the steep slabs? They suddenly appeared. Camp sites were looking far and few, but we eventually found a good wee spot not far below the saddle, setting up camp just before dark.

The next morning, a big sleep in while we waited to see what the wx was going to do. After little improvement we thought we'd give Talbot a go anyway, hoping it would improve. Although pretty misty with cloud swooping through Gertrude Saddle we did get good intermittent views. We made good progress over the open easy slabs. We opted to take our own route instead of heading to a distant cairn which looked further and harder to reach in the limited visibility. We pulled out the crampons and weaved around the exposed rock areas. We ended up too far left due to making use of the easy snow travel eventually heading back across to Traverse Saddle and back onto the rocks. As it was about 2pm and still looking like there would be little view from the top due to the mist and cloud we decided that putting crampons on and off a few more times was more trouble than it was worth for the extra 150 odd vertical metres left. On back tracking our snow steps we destroyed our "off route" cairns. It was a relief to still see the top encased in cloud, so we weren't too disappointed in deciding to turn back.

We spotted two human figures below as we stopped for a late lunch, never catching up with them to see where they'd come from, perhaps Talbot Ladder (also on the to do list). Ange's tooth succumbed to a Tararua Biscuit leaving her looking like T had done her a mischief. A pleasant rest stop on the saddle chatting to a young eager Austrian bought back memories of our recent Zillertal Alps travels.



*The slopes below Talbot. Barrier Pk to left, Crosscut to right.*

An afternoon kip and early tea were enjoyed, compared to yesterday's late arrival, then the drizzle started! Contemplating making a rushed pack and quick escape to avoid possible entrapment due to the wet dangerous slab descent was soon dismissed as we took cover. The drizzle continued through the night and at times developed into rain. We both contemplated rationing our one day's remaining food in case things didn't improve, which was looking quite possible. Yesterday's stagnant tarns were now flowing and the holes of our excavated rocks filled with water making a pool at the foot of the tent. By 10:30am, patches of blue sky appeared and things started to dry. Scattering our gear far and wide over the rocks to dry we mucked about for another hour then set off back to Homer Hut. It was nice enjoying the awesome views down valley now clear and seeing the awe in the faces of tourists trudging up, envious in the great wx fc they had for the next few days. We had to hit the road for Te Anau. Never mind we'll be back, to revisit Talbot, Barrier Knob & Peak and Talbot Ladder.

We were Terry Crippen, Donald French, Angela Minto.

### **16 February 2013 Expedition to the Fox Glacier Thomas Robertson**

Grant and I had both done the club snowcraft courses, as well as climbing day trips in the North Island, and were keen to try something a bit more challenging and exciting. We decided to do a trip to the South Island, and on Bruce's advice decided to head to the Fox glacier. The plan was to head down, get a chopper backflight into pioneer hut, and do day trips from there with a possible move to Centennial Hut.

We travelled down on the 16<sup>th</sup> of February, flying from Palmerston North to Hokitika via

Christchurch. From there we bussed down to Fox Glacier township and stayed in the NZAC Porter Lodge. We enquired about helicopter flights, but we couldn't get any backflights in at a convenient time so decided to walk in rather than wait or pay full price. The next morning we went to the mountain guides centre, who very helpfully offered us a free lift on one of their tourist buses. On arriving at the glacier we were able to get on to it easily, as the guides had cut steps into the first section. We were given descriptions on where to get off and on, and so headed off. The idea was to walk along the glacier, then getting off on the true left onto the disturbingly named Suicide Alley, walk beside the glacier until opposite the Victoria Falls, then crossing and climbing up to Chancellor. The first part of the glacier was reasonably easy, but we found it hard to see what the guides had described about where we should get on and off, which meant a bit more mucking around. We eventually got off and walked along Suicide Alley. This is a stretch of rocky ground between the glacier and Passchendale Ridge, which we had been told often threw rocks down. Fortunately for us we didn't see any rocks falling, but we still hurried through that section, despite it being fairly challenging to walk along. We managed to get back on to the glacier and walk across without too many problems, but getting off was tricky, and we had to take out two tools to get down. From there it was a fairly gruelling steep uphill through scrub, and we were both glad to see Chancellor Hut. Chancellor is an old hut, built in 1931. It has a lot of character, and appeared to have its original decorations. After dinner the keas put on a good show for us. We shared the hut that night with a guide and his client.

The next day we got up early and left for Pioneer Hut. We started off in tussock as we sidled around Chancellor Dome, before a tricky climb down onto the glacier. Once down we followed the side of Chancellor Dome before heading straight across the glacier towards Pioneer Hut. The going was fairly good, and because there had been no fresh snow all the crevasses were obvious - we wore glacier coils for this section. Some were fairly large, but we always managed to find a way around, or use a snow bridge. As it got later in the day the snow softened making for harder walking. The last section up was hard for both of us, as we were fairly tired. Pioneer Hut is placed above a 60m cliff, with part of the balcony overhanging the edge, and a rock clamber (assisted by a fixed line) along the cliff to the toilet - also overhanging. We saw a spectacular sunset that night, as we did every night. We had perfect weather the whole trip, with little wind and clear skies.



*The Fox Glacier neve, and Lendenfeld, Haast, and Tasman Peaks from near Pioneer Hut. Marcel Col on left. [Grant Christian]*

For the first morning we set off to climb Grey Peak. We walked out across the glacier towards Governors Col, the pass between Grey and Haast. From there we cut across to directly in front of the summit. We didn't see the route at first as a large part was blocked by a bergschrund, and the routes we could see were rock. We started on these but found the rock too rotten and gave up. We walked to the smaller peak next to grey, and saw a snow route up on the NE side, which worked successfully. We had climbed our first South Island peak successfully!!! The views out to the east and towards Lake Pukaki were spectacular. From there we made our way back with a side trip to the Haast Corner to look at the route to Marcel Col, which we would have to make to climb Lendenfeld. It looked very broken up and challenging.

The next day we went to Von Bulow. Von Bulow is a lower peak on the ridge separating the Fox and the Franz glaciers. To get there we crossed Westhoe Pass, then followed the ridge on to Von Bulow. There were two main crevasses blocking our way, and we decided the best way to climb it was to enter one crevasse then do a single pitch out of it and onto the steeper part of the dome, then walking to the summit. We had great views from Von Bulow towards the sea, Chancellor Dome, and across both the Fox and the Franz glaciers.

*To be continued. . . . .*

**23 February  
Burn Hut  
Nicola Wallace**

Richard & I were eating Woody's dust as we followed his van, out of sight, up the very dry Mangahao Dams road. Soon we arrived at the No.2 dam, and the 8 of us all assembled and set off, destination Burn Hut.

Just past the DOC sign that indicated getting there would take 3-4 hours, a melodious bellbird cheered us on our way over the grass, and in to the bush and the start of the track. The first 40 minutes was a pleasant sidle alongside the Mangahao River, punctuated by one or two tricky bits at the side streams, and at one point, a lovely arched wooden bridge. At the bridge, Woody pointed out the 'grab wires' dangling down the banks, which in former times people used to help haul themselves up the bank.

Coming to sidle's end, we moved away from the river, and started climbing up a long, steady hill, stopping for morning tea in a small clearing with good views of the surrounding hills. Then up, up again until, heading in a SE direction we emerged from the bush, and into the shrubbery. Sunny and calm, it was a perfect day for tramping.

*Soon I got my first ever view of Burn Hut,* looking quite far away, green with red roof. What I thought were two large windows slowly turned into 2 black water tanks as we make quick progress towards the hut. 2hr 40 minutes after leaving our vehicles, we arrived at the hut.

Burn Hut is a 6-bunker of interesting design. Open the door, and you enter a narrow 'ante room', presumably where boots and packs are stored. From there, another door leads into the hut. No one was in residence.

As interesting as the hut was, it was too good a day to spend inside, and we all had a lazy lunch outside, lounging around in the sun. There was a great view of Foxton & Foxton Beach out to the NW.

An hour after our arrival, at 1pm, Woody ordered us into action, and we set off, retracing our morning route at a good pace. It was quite hot now, accentuated by the lack of wind. Soon we were back in the bush, and in no time at all, down to the sidle track again.

The pace slowed again now, and we gradually broke into two groups. At the wooden bridge, Richard went down to the river, intending to take this route back to the end. Soon he was back up with us again though, as there was an unexpected deep bit.

Once back at the dam, everyone agreed they'd had a jolly good day, and this was topped off with a visit to the ice cream shop in Shannon on the way back.

Thanks to everyone for coming along, especially Woody for leading a great trip, and Richard and Woody for driving us on that slightly rugged road.

We were: Woody Lee (leader), Catherine Maidment, Richard Lockett, Kaaren Tutt, Laura de Jong, Sook Oh, Jill Stewart, Nicola Wallace.

## **2 - 3 March 4WD Tramp & Camp – Makaroro/Gold Creek Tony Gates**

The Makaroro is a major eastern Ruahine valley that has characteristically suffered from mega erosion for many years. Millions of tonnes of gravel have been washed off the range, and vast shingle flats have built up. It's often not difficult to drive up the river bed. A sturdy four wheel drive vehicle used to be able to drive up to Colenso Spur and beyond, maybe even to Barlow Hut, but not these days. It is usually okay, river levels permitting, to drive to the Gold Creek confluence. It is proposed that this area will one day be flooded with the Ruataniwha water reservoir dam, and downstream pasture will be well irrigated. If so, then access tracks will need to be altered.

For us, the access was okay up to Gold Creek and camp. One vehicle got stuck in the gravel, and needed a gentle tow out. There are easy little tramps to do around the camp, nice swimming holes, and it's a great spot to picnic. The day warmed up somewhat, and a few of us went for the easy tramp to the William Colenso memorial cairn, and some a bit further up to Gold Creek Hut. Swimming holes were explored, and we spoke with a few other four wheel drivers up for fishing and hunting. The Makaroro is understandably a popular spot. The summer drought continued while we were there. Farmers must have been hoping that the dark Ruahine clouds would produce rain, but they came to nought. We appreciated the continuing sunshine.

Various BB'Q's, chairs, and other luxuries were produced from the vehicles, and our tents were erected right next to our wagons. The Colenso Spur trampers saw numerous tadpoles in a river side pool, then on dark, we watched a few trout next to camp. There was also an extremely friendly eel and plenty of sandflies. The Gold Creek trampers had chased four "tame" deer along the creek. Sadly, native birds didn't really feature on our wildlife spotting, and the surrounding forest was largely devoid of bird song in the morning.



*Four wheel drivers; Yvonne, Sally, Graham, Alistair, Emily, Tony, Julian, Woody.*

Most of us relaxed at camp the next morning, but there was still some exploring to do up Gold Creek, and cooling off in the river, for those who wanted to. Then the incident packed drive down valley soon had us working. The Subaru got stuck (again!), and was rescued with a few people pushing. Then the same thing happened to the Suzuki. It was as if one front wheel found a patch of fresh air in a hollow, so lost traction. It was once again a simple matter of pushing the wagon a bit. There were a few foot ball sized rocks in some sections, and we managed to dodge most of them with careful driving. Some innocent looking river crossings were deeper than expected, maybe knee deep, but a four wheel drive wagon should be able to cross waist deep water with good gravel underneath. The drivers were no doubt planning further four wheel drive expeditions to the Ruahines, up the Mangapuaka Stream, Tamaki River, No Mans Road, and Takapari Road.

## **2 - 3 March** **Sparrowhawk Biv Top Maropea Hut** **Nicola Wallace**

This was originally going to be a tramping trip that worked in with Tony's camping trip. Only Warren & I were goers, and what with one thing and another, we decided on a change of plan. I wanted to go to Top Maropea Hut, as I'd never been there before, and I was very glad that Warren was agreeable to going there.

We left Warren's at 8am in the trusty Renault, speeding through a sunny Manawatu day. Once we got through the Gorge however, cloud was the order of the day. Fast forward to the tramp, and it was very hot & muggy, with a fine drizzle falling, on the benched zig-zag up to Sunrise Hut. I found myself sweating buckets, and because of the humidity, the sweat couldn't evaporate, and I couldn't cool down. So the only way of dealing with it was to not go too fast up

the hill. Thankfully, Warren was happy to potter along behind me.

Upon arrival at the Shuteye Shack site, we got adventurous and took the old Sunrise Staircase track up to the hut. It was still well defined, but steep, with an awkward bit when we came out on a slip. We came out on top of rocks just above Sunrise Hut, at about noon. Gosh, it was still very hot!

Looking around, I was glad we weren't staying the night there, too many people already! Warren & I ate our lunch, and made a move.

It was misty along to Armstrong Saddle. My legs were hurting a bit along here, and I blamed it on the heat, humidity, and that Staircase bit. Up past Armstrong Saddle, the clouds parted and we were rewarded with the most wonderful views, and cloud sculptures, great for atmospheric photos.

From here it wasn't far to Top Maropea Hut, passing some cool rock pillars before descending into the bush. The hut came sooner than expected, a lovely little orange 4-bunker in a clearing, basking in the hot sun. A look inside at all the gear confirmed others were in residence, but not to be seen.

Warren headed off downhill to the river, and I chilled out in the area around the hut, staying mostly in the shade. After a few hours our friendly residents turned up, 3 hunters (father, son, and son's friend).

Come night time, Warren slept under his fly among the leatherwood, and I slept in a choice little spot under the trees. I've slept outside lots, but this was the first time ever that I didn't get any dew. It was remarkable to not cover your bag, and have it perfectly dry in the morning. It was a hot night, and several times a little breeze got up, then died down again.

The next day was cooler, thank goodness, and Warren was keen on a river trip back. We returned up the hill, and took the track towards Te Atuaoparapara. There was shouting behind us, "Warren". It was Doug and Sara. They caught up, and now came the "fun" part, leaving the track at the lowest point, and heading down a scree slope into the North branch of the Waipawa River. I wasn't at all keen on the scree at first, and headed down through the tussock, before giving it a go near the bottom. My technique was all wrong, but I got there.

The four of us headed downriver, which was quite gnarly at first, steep sided and narrow, with slippery rocks. It was enjoyable to measure our

progress down the river by noting how it gradually became less steep, and the river channel widened. So it got easier and easier.

By lunchtime, we got to the Waipawa Forks Hut turnoff, and the rest of Doug's crew were waiting there for us. I headed up the hill and bagged the hut, no one else up there. We had lunch on the riverbed, and headed out as a group. With the kids there, the pace was leisurely now, and enjoyable in a different way. Little concentration was needed, and there was time to look at everything in detail. We examined fossils embedded in rocks, and two swallow nests, still lined with feathers, but the babies had left.

A short wander up the road, and we were back at the vehicles. It was a great trip, a trip with everything. Thanks to Warren for all the driving, and for spicing up the adventure.

We were Warren Wheeler and Nicola Wallace.

## **2 - 3 March Sunrise Hut Doug Strachan**

What seemed like a normal family tramp to Sunrise Hut actually encompassed a covert mission to track down Warren's missing Buzz Lightyear torch. Warren had sidled up to me at Dave's Everest Base Camp club night presentation and sketched the layout of Sunrise Lodge on the back of an envelope, with an X-mark next to a middle bunk - the suspected location of his Buzz Lightyear torch. I memorised the map, then destroyed it, lest it should fall into the wrong hands.

It was a bit of a slog up to Sunrise with heavy weekend packs. Chris zipped his backpack onto his Dad's pack then ran off up the track unencumbered. Andrew must have secretly wanted to carry 2 packs, otherwise why buy a pack with a detachable smaller pack instead of 2 separate packs? He wasn't impressed with this interpretation.

We all made it to the hut with no injuries except for busted guts. The next party to arrive found all the mattresses occupied and complained because they had bought hut tickets. So had everyone else (!). The aggrieved party opted to go to Waipawa Forks Hut to spend the night. Maho and I had to double-bunk with our kids, but we had planned to do that anyway, and didn't bother bringing their sleeping bags. I had an old Reader's Digest with me, so Minami's bedtime story was "I am Joe's brain tumour."

There was a party of St Peter's College students at the hut, meeting their Duke of Edinburgh requirements. The younger kids enjoyed watching these big kids play hacky sack on the helicopter pad.

At one point, I quietly mentioned to one of the adults at the hut that I was looking for a Buzz Lightyear torch. He seemed surprised and said that another guy had been by earlier, looking for the same thing. A tall guy. Were the Russians trying to steal the technology?



*Sara, Minami, Chris, Conan with scree behind*

The next day, Sara was keen to run down the scree, so it was decided I would take her that way, while the others would take the track down to Waipawa Forks. Just before we reached the scree, we saw Warren and Nicola ahead of us. They were on a different trip and had spent the night at Top Maropea Hut. The four of us ended up tackling the scree together, meeting the rest of the Sunrise party at Waipawa Forks, 3 hrs after Sara and I had left Sunrise Hut.

On the walk out down the river, Minami was taken by a rock filled with fossils and it was taken by her. Next, crossing the farm, Nicola found some bird feathers for her collection. Hawk? Turkey?

Maho also deserves a feather in her cap and an end-of-year award. The day before the tramp she was stung by a bee, so she did the whole trip with a swollen, painful and itchy foot. The trip was a bit of a buzz for everyone on it, even if we didn't find Mr Lightyear.

Sara Kuppe (14) from Germany; Andrew and Chris (8) Kelly; Maho, Doug, Minami (7) and Conan (5) Strachan. On the Sunday, we merged parties with Warren Wheeler and Nicola Wallace.

**2 - 3 March  
Sunrise Hut  
Sara Kuppe**

We arrived at the carpark at about 11 o'clock, and walked up to the hut. It took us about 3 hours to get up, including breaks. We had a fantastic view from the hut, and when we climbed up a little hill, we could see in every direction.

The hut was very simple: mattresses, tables, chairs and gas to cook, but there was water (from the roof) which was very clean and nice & cold. The next day our group of 7 people split in two: me and my host father went another way, the rest walked the easier way downhill to the river, where we would meet them. First me and my host father walked to the place where a plane of a man called Armstrong crashed down, a long

time ago. From there *we walked to a stone scree, and ran down, which was very fun.*

We have met two other people at the top, so we four walked and climbed the more difficult part of the river down, and met the others after about 3 hours. Then we all walked back to the car, sometimes in the river, it took us about another 2 1/2 hours. Tired but happy we arrived at the carpark and drove back. It was a really nice trip, staying in a hut above the clouds with a fantastic view and an exciting walk back

**10 March  
Titahi Bay Rock Climbing  
Terry Crippen**

Four of us headed off at the leisurely hour of 9am to brave the heat of the Indian summer for a spot of rock climbing at Titahi Bay. We had to stop at the Titahi Bakery for pie, sammies, donuts, etc. High tide was at 9:30 hence the leisurely start as it's easier to get round the rock with the tide lower. The tide was still in a bit to get round to the "Nose" area so we had a bit of a look at "Baby's Bottom", then gave up, by which stage we could proceed further without getting wet.

Setting top ropes up on the right side of the "Nose" we managed in various combinations to get up the Ramp, Limpet Groove, and some Plimsoll-Rebuke variations. I won't mention how high the grades of these are! We had an interesting range of footwear to attack the climbs; climbing shoes new and old, and one pair too too small, running shoes and rubber gumboots. Meanwhile lots of other gun climbers

had arrived and were working away in the "Slab" area. After lunch and after the guns had lead all the easy ones, we moved round and set up the top rope for "The Slab" and "Slab Variant".



*Titahi Bay 2013*

All in all, a good intro and work out for one pair of newly purchased climbing shoes, to a bit of greywacke rock climbing. The too too small pair will be taken back to the shop - the shoes should be tight fitting not excruciatingly painfully fitting!

By the way there are some bolted routes by Ballance Bridge (limestone) and on the TL of the Manawatu Gorge below the road (greywacke) set up by Matt Natti a while ago – he gave a talk at Club night one time. I've got the topos of these areas if anyone is interested.

We were Grant Christian, Thomas Robertson, Warren Wheeler, Terry Crippen.

**11 - 15 March  
Painting Ngamko Hut  
Janet Wilson, Craig and Michael Allerby, Tina Bishop (with assistance from DoC)**

You may have seen the glossy TV advert by Dulux paint about their partnership with DoC. They donate paint, and receive publicity. The TV advert features Tarn Ridge Hut, located in the high central Tararuas. Here is another hut now painted with donated paint.



*Ngamoko Hut during the painting work. Note attractive surroundings [Janet Wilson].*

For this beautiful week of March 2013, Ngamoko Hut exterior was painted, tidied up in preparation for its take over by PNTMC. It's a job that PNTMC can be proud of. After a thrilling helicopter ride, Janet and Craig to Leon Kinvig Hut, Tina and Michael to Ngamoko Hut, the predator control traps were checked down the river. The roof was painted in Dulux Gimblett Road, and the walls in Dulux Sandfly Point. A new water tank tap, plastic (non slip) netting on the exterior steps, guttering was prepared, and firewood chopped and stacked. ***A stylish gravel track to the toilet was completed*** (the toilet had already been shifted by DoC onto a new and sizeable hole).



*Job completed [Janet Wilson]*

**16 - 17 March  
Castlepoint  
Tony Gates**

The great New Zealand drought of 2013 gave brutally hot and dry conditions to the Wairarapa. We endured the stifling conditions with frequent stops for cool drinks, water melon, and the like,

then relaxed in the shade at the lovely Castlepoint house for the weekend.

Despite the heat, the lagoon water was pretty brisk for our obligatory swimming. Some dried off by walking some of the numerous tracks about the rocks, and along the beach, and others went fishing for dinner.

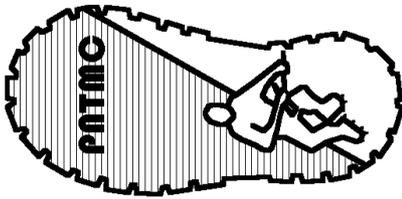
There were, as expected, crowds along the reef, and not many appeared to be catching fish. Geoff and Rochelle did however know where the fish were, and how to hook them. Some of us just hooked seaweed and rocks. Back at the house, we enjoyed a BBQ dinner with plenty of fresh fish and other stuff.



*Geoff with his impressive Castlepoint barracuda [Jennifer Wilson].*

During breakfast and lunch on Sunday, we experienced a little drought breaking rain. It hardly worried the tough fisher people who braved the reef to catch a couple more good fish, and it was impressive to see the dark clouds and feel the rain drops. Everyone was very pleased. On the way home, the Ruahines and Tararuas were covered with rain clouds.

We were Kaye, Jennifer, Tony, Yvonne, Sally, Geoff, Rochelle, and Warren.



Palmerston North  
Tramping and  
Mountaineering Club  
Inc.

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## PNTMC Newsletter April 2013

### *What's inside this month?*

#### **AGM 2013 details**

- Whio & Takahē in Murchison Mountains
- Fiordland Climbing
- Fox Glacier Expedition
- 4WD Camp Makaroro/Gold Creek
- Burn Hut - Mangahao
- Top Maropea, Sunrise-Waipawa
- Titahi Bay Rock Climbing
- Ngamoko Hut Painting Expedition
- Castlepoint Getaway

#### **Articles for the newsletter**

Send by the 20<sup>th</sup> 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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