

Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.

www.pntmc.org.nz

P.O. Box 1217, Palmerston North

Newsletter August 2013



Enjoying the view west from the Mokai Patea Range – Otukota Trip - 24 March 2013 [Woody Lee]

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.

8 August

PNTMC Auction

Warren Wheeler

Purchase a bargain, sell a treasure for profit - this is your chance to offer pre loved stuff up for auction, and to buy someone else's. Refer to Notices.

29 August

What's Up, DOC?

Andrew Mercer

Apart from the recent major restructuring, work continues as usual at the coal face of conservation, looking after our tracks and huts and other facilities. Andrew Mercer, our local Visitor Assets Manager from the Department of Conservation, will give us an update on these and other issues.

Upcoming Trips

3 August (Sat)

Branch Rd Walkway E
Janet Wilson 329-4722

Join Janet on a stroll up and back down the old benched track just north of Pohangina township. Great views across to the snow capped Ruahine Ranges.

3 or 4 August

Snowcraft 3 I, M
Terry Crippen, 356- 3588 or
Bruce van Brunt 328- 4761

For participants who have booked already.

4 August

Mangaweka Trig F,T
Grant Christian 354-5843

Expect an early start for this walk up to the highest point in the Ruahines. We go via Purity Hut, and Wooden Peg & Iron Peg peaks. Crampons & ice axe are *de rigueur*.

10 August (Sat)

Blue Range Hut E/M
Woody Lee 357-2390

A delightful easy/medium trip to the Eastern Tararuas, with a nice canopy track. Having lunch at the hut and then return the same way. We could have a relaxing afternoon tea at the Mt Bruce cafe.

10-11 August

Girdlestone T
Grant Christian 354-5843

A grade 1 climb on Mt Ruapehu. If you're not confident you may want to belay. If there is time & energy we may get another peak or two. If the forecast is favourable we will climb on Saturday & Sunday.

11 August

Beach Walk E
Tina Bishop 06 363-5660

Come and explore the forest, dunes and beach - rain or shine! Tramping boots not required, all welcome including your dog. Afternoon tea supplied at "The Bishops" new hut. Meet at Foxton Beach 10am. Phone Tina for details.

17-18 August

Iron Gate Hut M
Janet Wilson 329- 4722

Enjoy a trip up the Oroua River sidle track and check out some stoat traps along the way. You might even see blue duck near the hut.

18 August

Coppermine Creek E
Janet Darragh 353 -0922

A pleasant easy walk close to home in the southern Ruahine Range behind Woodville. Bring your torch to spot cave weta in the old Magazine.

24-25 August

Rangi Hut E
Tina Bishop 06 363-5660

This is a combined trip with Heretaunga Tramping Club. A nice easy overnighter and if we are lucky lots of snow to play in? Come and see what Doc has been doing up at Rangi and enjoy socialising with friends from Hawkes Bay.

25 August

Mangahuia Loop M/F
Peter Darragh 353-0922

A good chance to enjoy being up on the snow covered tops of the western Ruahine. Great views. Normally more "medium" than "fit" but will depend on snow conditions. Meet up with the Rangi overnighters on the way back.

30/31 July -1 August

Howletts – Waterfall Hut F
Derek Sharp 323-7913

A classic winter trip over the snowy tops and into the middle of the Ruahine Ranges. Hard to beat.

1 September

Herepai Hut M
Duncan Hedderly 354- 6905

8a.m. start for a trip into the hills behind Eketahuna. Pretty gentle apart from one steep bit. We'll either go as far as the hut, or if someone wants to bag a peak we can push on (and up) a bit.

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.

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

Notices

PNTMC Auction 8 August 2013

Purchase a bargain, sell a treasure for profit, or just enjoy studying what old (?) equipment is up for sale. The biennial PNTMC auction is your chance to offer pre loved stuff up for sale, and to buy someone else's. PNTMC takes

- sale price if item sells for under \$5.00
- \$2.00 if price between \$5.00 and \$10.00
- 15 % commission for items sold for more than \$10.00.

Interclub Quiz 9 September 2013

Will PNTMC be able to hold off MUAC and MTSC from the Trevor Bissell Memorial Billy Trophy this year? Or will we just get the chocolate and other prizes?

Come along and join one of our teams for a fun night out, starting at 7 pm in the ICLT lecture theatre, ground floor of the Vet Tower at Massey University.

PNTMC Photo Competition 12 September 2013

Rules

- Only digital entries accepted
- No previous entries
- Images must be related to tramping, climbing, trekking
- Limit 3 images per category (per person)
- Images must be clearly labelled

There is a slight change in the categories this year to better align with the Interclub and FMC categories.

Categories

NZ Landscapes – scenery, no people
Above the Bushline – includes people
Below the Bushline – includes people
Natural History – NZ flora, fauna, geology, etc
Topical NZ – people or detail
Overseas - people and/or places

Deadline 6 September

Entries due ASAP, so that they can be given to our judge. These can be provided either by pen drive, CD, or email. Contact Martin Lawrence on 357-1695 or martin.lawrence.nz@gmail.com

Notes

There is a prize for the overall winning image. It is anticipated that the winning images will be entered in the Interclub Photo Competition (Thursday 1 October 2013) and the FMC Photo Competition 2013. In addition, some of these images may be used to promote PNTMC. Please indicate if you do not want your images used in these activities. Images remain the property of the photographers.

New Overdue Trip Contact System

Reminder of a new way for trip leaders to share their trip intentions (details were in the last newsletter).

Simply email pntmctrips@gmail.com with the date and trip name in the subject line.

Trip leaders can put the details of the trip and participants into the body of the email or they

could fill out their intentions form, scan it and attach to their email.

This email can then be read by any one of the club overdue trip contact people if they are alerted that a trip is overdue.

Currently club overdue trip contacts are: Martin and Anne Lawrence, Janet Wilson, and Tony Gates.

Contact Anne if you have any queries about this new email system.

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 another print run.

Deadline for this order is 31 August.

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 dgrant@inspire.net.nz

PNTMC Peak Bagging Challenge 2013-2014

The aim here is to encourage participation, to get trampers out and on to the hills! To follow on from last years hut bagging 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 clubs 2013 AGM and the 2014 AGM. (You must be at the AGM 2014 to claim points bagged that day).
- All peaks to be within the Conservation Estate ie administered by DOC in New Zealand. They must be marked on NZ Topo 50 maps. Those on boundaries will count. If in doubt, look at the Walking Access NZ website.

- Peaks must be named - a Trig code or spot height doesn't count.
- A peak located on the DoC boundary will count.
- Points - Ruahine peaks 2 points, all others, 1 point.
- Special Ruahine peaks 5 points - for first visits (or if its more than 20 years since you last visited). There are 10 - Maharahara, Toka, Tunupo, Mangahuia, Otumore, Ohuinga, Mangaweka, Tiraha, Te Atua O Parapara and Te Atua Mahuru.
- A bonus point for each peak bagged on a PNTMC club trip.
- Points can be claimed for each high point a maximum of 3 times.
- Your results should be sent as soon as possible after each trip to Malcolm Parker at mparker@slingshot.co.nz or phone 357-5203.
- Any dispute to be settled by the committee.

Search and Rescue Training

Our local Police organise monthly training for volunteers who wish to be involved in SAR.

The latest email from Andy Brook sets out the training in the next month or so.

If you have any queries about being a volunteer you could contact one of our more active SAR volunteers – Anne or Martin Lawrence, Janet Wilson or Graham Peters, Terry Crippen, Richard Lockett, Peter van Essen, Craig Allerby, Peter Darragh. Otherwise give Warren a call on 356-1998 or email Andy directly:
Andy Brooke <mlc@inspire.net.nz>

Saturday 27th July, 1000 – 1500 (10am-3pm)

Comms Training Day

Where: Paneiri Park car park, end of Maxwells Line, Palmerston North.

What to bring: Daypack, wet weather gear
The training day will give everyone the opportunity to setup and use the HF Polsar radios as well the VHF handhelds in SAREX-type scenarios. New and experienced people are welcome.

For further training in the art of communications there are also radio classes being run by the Manawatu Amateur Radio Club alongside AREC. If you are interested please come along and see if it's for you. For more info contact Stuart Anderson (stuart.anderson@clear.net.nz) or Len Inkpen (ljenjanet@inspire.net.nz) of AREC or online at <http://www.zl2ko.org.nz/>

Weekend 3-4 August

Annual SAREX

Overnight field exercise to upskill teams and Incident Management personnel.

Weekend 17-18 August

Tracking in the Wilderness Environment (hosted by Palmerston North LandSAR)

Saturday 7 September

LandSAR First Aid (hosted by Palmerston North LandSAR)

To assist with planning please advise me or our Training Coordinator, Gordon Groube (groubefamily@gmail.com), ASAP if you would like to attend any of these events.

Cheers
Andy

Uncle Jacko comes to Palmie

By Anne Lawrence, President PNTMC

The committee was not sure whether we would be able to get someone from FMC to come and talk at one of our club nights. Much to our astonishment, when we contacted Robin McNeill he responded enthusiastically. Yes, he would be happy to come and talk. And if we suggested a date, he would see if he could work things to fit... and he did!

Robin is perhaps better known to some of us as Uncle Jacko with his regular column in the FMC bulletin. However, I did a little research and found there is more to Robin than this. His working background is as remote and rural telecommunications and space ground segment engineering. He has designed and built telecommunications networks not only in New Zealand, but also at Scott Base and Tokelau. He designed and built European Space Agency rocket tracking facility at Awarua and quite a lot of telecommunications infrastructure in Southland. He is also the editor of a number of tramping books including

Fiordland tramping guidebook, Moir's Guide South (6th and 7th editions) and the recent edition of Safety in the Mountains. He has been a keen trumper, and occasional hunter and mountaineer for over 35 years, and is a long-time member of the New Zealand Alpine Club and the Southland Tramping Club. Robin has served on the Southland Conservation Board since 2003, where he has taken a special interest in developing the Fiordland and Rakiura National Park Plans.

Apart from all the above, Robin's arguably more important role is as president of FMC. Following his appointment to this position in September last year, it immediately became clear that Robin is willing to speak out on backcountry issues. He has been reported in the media speaking on a range of issues including Te Urewera settlement, the Denniston plateau, the proposed Monorail and the Milford tunnel and calling on Key to give money to DOC not tourism, all of which he touched on in his talk to the club.

It was a misty moisty evening ... but despite the wintery temperature, we had a reasonable turnout of club members and visitors. The range of topics Robin covered make his talk difficult to summarise. He spoke of the importance of developing relationships with conservation folk in the political arena and with DOC. He said he feels optimistic about changes in DOC. However, he was less optimistic about our diminishing birdlife and spoke of the urgent need to do more to protect them and the use of 1080 as a valuable tool. Robin said that much of what he had to say was a bit of a litmus test – based on our club's generally positive response, he will be putting these ideas into his president's column in the next FMC Bulletin.

The committee presented Robin with one of the club's Ruahine Hut posters. This was something Robin had not seen before - he was clearly impressed and suggested we write an article about it for the FMC Bulletin.

Clearly upcoming Bulletins will have much of interest to read!

Trip Reports

23-24 March
Otukota Loop
Woody Lee

After an hour and forty minute drive, we arrived at the Mokai Patea Station car park. Once we headed off, towards the signpost, we were welcomed by a mob of sheep, and they were around for a while. We walked up onto the high farmland, following the white poles along the fence. Before tackling the steep hill (1202m), we sat in the shade looking at the beautiful landscape, although it was sad to see the whole area brown due to the long summer drought. On my last visit to this Range in 2011, it was a beautiful green paddock. Warren told us this area had had no recent rains.

Scrambling up the hill was a bit of challenge, and the three of us behind Warren needed a few stops to catch a breath, but Warren showed no signs of slow down. Once we reached the top of the hill it was easy going, then time for lunch and an opportunity to enjoy the stunning views.



Carefully crossing the Otukota slip.

Walking down in the forest track was pleasant. Geoff spotted the red roof of the hut through the branches. Although we soon faced another challenge before getting down to the stream, the last bit of the track was covered

with slippery gravels, and nothing to hold on to. Everyone, very carefully placed their feet, and left a huge space between each other for safety. We arrived at the hut in the mid afternoon for a well-deserved break. Afterwards it was time to move on to the Iron Bark Hut which was our destination for the night. We soon descended down to the Whakaurekou River, at which time Warren suggested Plan B, which was to return to the Otukota Hut and leave from there tomorrow. We all welcomed his Plan B.

We dropped our packs once again in the hut and started enjoying the rest of sunny afternoon in many ways; hot drinks, nibbles, noodles, reading in the sun and mouse hunting (There was a tiny mouse crawling inside and Kathy asked us to catch it. Geoff quickly grabbed a cardboard box and banged against the wall a few times. The mouse knocked down and did not move. I went outside to find wooden sticks and picked the dead mouse [a cute one] up from the floor and threw away into the bush). I noticed an upgrade had been made to the bunks, as all six had new wooden slabs instead of wire springs.

Next morning, an early start, saw us walking through a forest on the other side of the river. We looked back down the Otukota Hut across the river, and the big slips we had come down on Saturday, as we climbed higher. It took about an hour to the junction of Iron Bark Hut and another hour to get to the swing bridge. Warren crossed the bridge first and Geoff followed. When Kathy began crossing the bridge, I took out my digital camera from its case attached to a shoulder strap, but the camera slid from my hand and fell down the cliff. OMG!

I carefully stepped forward to check the edge of the cliff while grabbing small vegetation. But no luck in locating the camera and heard Warren's yelling, "What are you doing?" After crossing the bridge, I immediately dropped my pack, and tried to find a way down to the river. Soon I found myself wading in the river and desperately looking for a blue object. In no time I located my blue camera in the riverbed about 3 metres down from where I had dropped it, the only damage being a scratch on its side. Fortunately the camera still works fine as it is shock and waterproof. I discovered a trail to the bridge on the way back up to the track.

We continued to tramp towards the hilltops and had a relaxing lunch on the eastern side of

the Range. I really enjoyed this tramp with a new companion (Geoff) and club members.

We were Geoff Phillips, Kathy Corner, Warren Wheeler (trip leader) and Woody Lee.

6 July 2013
Waiopahu Circuit
Grant Christian

Despite a forecast of strong gale force winds and rain the three of us turned up to brave the elements. This loop track behind Levin makes a good day walk for fit trampers. It also incorporates five named peaks which was a good tally for the peak bagging competition.

We started off across the farmland for about 15 minutes before reaching the forest. Shortly after reaching the forest you can head to the right up the Waiopahu Track that takes you to Waiopahu Hut or head along the easy flat track beside the Ohau River. We chose the latter.

After an easy walk along this track we reached the site where the Ohau shelter used to be. From here our route headed up along the Gable End Ridge. Starting at a height of 190m it gently climbs for 6 or 7 km to the high point of Twin Peak at 1097m.

Before long we had reached Mayo Knob, an easily attained peak for trampers of all fitness levels at only 665m. The track drops down from Mayo Knob before climbing again.

The next peak was Gable End (903m). Around this point it started to rain but there was no sign of the high winds that were forecast. By the time we reached Richards Knob (985m) it was getting colder. The sign said three hours to Waiopahu Hut which seemed somewhat pessimistic.

We carried on upwards until we reached Twin Peak. The high point was off the track a little so we scrambled up through the wet scrub. There were no views to be enjoyed at the high point today and the conditions here were unpleasant. We quickly moved through the saddle to Waiopahu Peak (1094m).

After getting to the high point here we wasted no time in descending to Waiopahu Hut for a quick lunch. We were too wet and cold to stop for long. It had taken only about an hour from Richards Knob - so much for the sign saying three hours.

From the hut we soon reached the shelter of the bush again. With the dark skies and bigger trees it became quite dark although it was only mid afternoon. The track down the ridge descends slowly and seemed to go on for a long time. After completing about three quarters of the track it finally starts to drop quickly and we were thankful to soon be back at the farmland. An easy stroll back across the farmland found us back at the car and into dry warm clothes.

Not the most pleasant tramp but still a good day's exercise and successful in terms of peak bagging.

Trip Participants: Grant Christian, Janet Wilson, Warren Wheeler.

3 July and 7 July
Snowcraft 1
Anne Lawrence

Wednesday evening was an interesting evening at Terry's place. Lynette, Russell, Gary, Dale and I tried on crampons and helmets and hefted ice axes before we moved on to learn about avalanches. It was good to hear from Terry and Bruce as well as have this learning backed up by a video. All very informative and I was looking forward to putting things into action on the Sunday.

I have to say that at 4.30am on Sunday morning with a rather miserable forecast I was feeling a little less enthusiastic. My expectations were not improved by having breakfast at Waiouru petrol station (Angkor Wat being inconsiderately closed).

However, the day proved to be enjoyable as well as worthwhile. There was not a lot of snow so we were able to park right up at the top of the Bruce. From here Thomas headed off to do his own thing while the rest of us made our way to the slopes just above the MTSC hut where we spent the rest of the day.

With two instructors to four students (Russell not being able to come on the day) we got plenty of individual instruction. In the morning the focus was on cramponing techniques, as well as cutting steps and hand holds. In the afternoon we moved on to self-arresting - I think everyone tried every possible starting position before the sleet set in enough to convince us enough was enough.



Cutting steps and hand holds on Snowcraft 1.

Timing worked well with Thomas getting back to the Bruce not long before us. A brief stop at MacDonalds in Taihape meant we got home not too long after dark.

Thanks to Bruce and Terry for their patient guidance.



Practicing self arrest with ice axe.

**21 July 2013
Snowcraft 2
Terry Crippen**

Five students, two instructors and one extra were up on the Turoa side of Mt Ruapehu for the Snowcraft 2 session. For those who were not lucky enough to be up the mountain for Saturday (a perfect weather day) it was the usual 4.30am departure from Palmerston North, all jammed into Anne's car. As for Snowcraft 1 unfortunately Angkor Wat wasn't open at Waiouru. All the ropes, hammers, snowstakes, snowpickets etc were ready and waiting up at Ohakune. Gary was up there with his family, who are not familiar with snow coming from South Africa; Terry and Ange were up there trying to ski.

What a perfect day it was weather wise. Too many people on the ski field though. We headed into a basin not too far from the road end facilities where we found a hard crust on unconsolidated snow on south facing slopes. So students soon decided that *upright top clip* anchors were no use, and since the snow wasn't compressible *upright mid clip* no good either. So it was the *t-slot anchor* that was demonstrated and practiced repeatedly using snow stakes and snow pickets. Then we did a series of very short pitches to get into the swing of belaying. Miss Minto cruised along on her skis to check to see if we were doing things correctly.



Anne belaying Dale with a Stomper Belay.

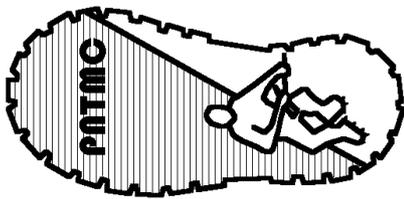
Heading up the firm slope into the sun it was about time for lunch. The day continued to be A1++. By this stage north facing slopes had begun to soften so students were then shown and then practiced more belays; *body* belay, *snow pig* belay, *Austrian Ice Axe* or *Stomper* belay. Then it was time to practice some self arresting on the icy crust south facing slopes. All the students enjoyed throwing themselves down the slope (after a little bit of encouragement). All good amusement to the various skiers and snowboarders who passed by. One person who will remain nameless even tried it with crampons on!!

All in all a good day on the slopes. What's needed now is lots of practice at identifying snow conditions, choosing the correct anchor, and plenty of pitching getting faster and faster .

Those of us were: Students; Garry Sparrow, Anne Lawrence, Dale Hokin, Lynnette and Dennis Price; Instructors Bruce van Brunt and Terry Crippen; extra Ange Minto.



Anne and Gary setting up a Stomper Belay. Bruce, Lynnette and Gary behind. [Terry Crippen]



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- Tararua winter loop to Waiopahu
- Snowcraft Reports

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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