

Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc.

www.pntmc.org.nz

P.O. Box 1217, Palmerston North

Newsletter December 2013



Cycling the big suspension bridge across the Maramataha Stream, Timber Trail, Pureora Forest Park. It is 141m long, and a spectacular 53m above the stream. [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.

12 December

End of Year BBQ

Warren Wheeler

Join us at Ashhurst Domain for our end of year get together and Annual Awards. Bring your own food and drinks and a \$5 gift for under the tree. From 6.00 pm until dusk. Contact Warren 356-1998 to car pool or need a lift.

30 January

Esplanade BBQ

Warren Wheeler

Come along for another BYO social BBQ beside the paddling pool in the Esplanade. From 6.00pm.

Upcoming Trips

7- 8 December

Waitewaewae Hut E/ M
Kathy Corner 356 8186

A classic Tararua forest stroll to a lovely riverside hut. Plenty of interesting scenery.

8 December

Otaki Forks BBQ All
Warren Wheeler 356 1998

This is a picnic BBQ planned to meet with the above group. Spacious grassy riverside camping areas here allow for lazing about swimming, and eating.

15 December

Ross Peak Scrub Bash M/ F
Peter van Essen 355 9076

Ross Peak is a seldom visited Ruahine peak half way between Wharite and Maharahara. There is no track and it is surrounded by a fortress of leatherwood! So if you can tolerate hours of mindless leatherwood scrub bashing then this is your chance to join an attempt at reaching the top. The attempt will be made from the eastern side starting at Coppermine Road then via Mangaatua Stream. Unless we pick up some hunter or animal trails, to help us on our way, we may not make it all the way to the top. We will need all the daylight available so departure will be 5.30am.

21- 22 December

Short-Knights E/ M
Warren Wheeler 356 1998

Celebrate the shortest night and escape the Xmas rush with this camping trip up to Toka in the western Ruahines. Depart 4.00pm from PN, returning by noon on Sunday.

11-12 January

PNTMC 2014 Tongariro NP M
Warren Wheeler 356 1998

Depart Friday night 6.00pm. Climb 2014m on your first trip in 2014 with a visit to Tongariro National Park. Enjoy the alpine flowers as we first climb Ngauruhoe via Pukekaikiore, then Tongariro, 'Merald Lakes and Central Crater (P-N-T-M-C) with a side trip to overlook the steaming Te Mari craters. We will stay in cabins or camp at the Tongariro Holiday Park.

11 January (Sat)

Sparrowhawk-Colenso Spur F
Bruce van Brunt 328 4761

Easy access onto great tussock tops make this a wonderful day tramp. Great swimming holes in the Makaroro River.

18-20 January Wellington Anniversary

Oroua Circuit
Warren Wheeler

M/F
356 1998

Depart 7.30am. A classic Ruahine loop with lots of variety and great scenery; up the Oroua River to Triangle Hut, a climb up to Te Hekenga and Tiraha to Howletts Hut and back along the tussock tops to Tunupo and out.

20 January

Stanfield Hut E
Duncan Hedderly 354 6905

A pleasant and well maintained stream side Southern Ruahine hut with a variety of routes to and from it.

25-26 January

Top Gorge Hut M
Graham Peters 329 4722

Another cosy ex NZFS hut beside the Pohangina River in the southern Ruahines, with great camping nearby if you wish to.

26 January

Maharahara/Matanginui E/M
Grant Christian 354 5843

These two Ruahine peaks are close to Palmerston North. From the east side, start with a short walk up a river bed then a steep climb for a 100 metres on to a ridge which gently ascends to Matanginui and then a little further on to Maharahara.

1-2 February

Gold Creek All
Warren Wheeler 356 1998

Note change from the previously advertised 4WD trip with Tony. Anyone with a 4WD is welcome but it is only about an hour walk up the wide Makaroro to Gold Creek and our camp site. Options include easy day trips up to Gold Hut and Barlow Hut or peak bagging up Colenso Spur or Sparrowhawk ridge. Preferably depart PN on Friday night.

1-2 February

12 Peaks Ruapehu F/FE
Grant Christian 354 5843

These twelve peaks are on top of Ruapehu or near by. Some people do them all in one day but I thought I would make it a little easier. Still need to be fit though because that means climbing up the mountain twice.

2 February

Tama M
Peter Wiles 358 6894

An easy walk in from the Desert Road to Waihohonu Hut and up the ridge to Tama peak. Great views of Tama Lakes, Ngauruhoe and Ruapehu.

Xmas - New Year Trips

Various club members are planning local trips over the holiday period. Hopefully the weather will be kind, especially for extended trips.

If you are interested in any trips in the Tararua or Ruahine ranges between 27 December and 10 January then contact either Warren Wheeler 356-1998 or Janet Wilson 329-4722 or Craig Allerby 323-7913 to see what they are up to.

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 on 357-1695. 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 or email to pntmctrips@gmail.com with the date and trip name in the subject line. 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 Warren Wheeler, the acting newsletter editor, via our web site <http://www.pntmc.org.nz/mail/>

Editorial by Tony Gates

This is my last PNTMC Newsletter for a while. Health considerations send me to Auckland, hopefully only for a few months, after when I hope to continue as Editor (or assistant editor). It is an enjoyable job to compile trip reports, news, etcetera, and good to assist PNTMC. Please continue to offer contributions to the new Editor and Committee, and continue to enjoy this Newsletter.

An old family friend, Michael Brown, recently showed me his Doctorate of Philosophy of music about tramping club songs. It is an academic and fascinating social history. They may not be popular these days, but there was a time when sing songs and self made music were an integral part of the Tramping Club scene, particularly in flourishing post war Wellington Tramping Clubs. Michael's thesis focuses on camaraderie and self entertainment of what he calls a significant musical phenomena made by VUWTC and TTC. Many of the sing alongs began in 1946 as part of post World War 11 "welcome home" celebrations to servicemen of Tramping Clubs. Tramping Club singalongs went from great popularity around the camp fire to a forgotten art by the 1970's.

As a young lad, I recall my father and friends singing on club trips, and in communal club transport trucks and at club huts. During the early 1950's, the Auckland Tramping Club even carried a piano up to one of their favourite Waitakere huts, Nga ra kotere!. An LP recording "Bush singalong" was produced in 1962, and some song books. Tararua tramping Club stalwart Tony Nolan was one song writer who penned and sang the immortal words:

***"Away away with billy and pack
A rollicking down the mountain track
We'll all get lost and never come back
In the Tararua ranges"***

***If you stand on Lambton Quay
On Friday night then you will see
In rain and snow the trampers go
To the Tararua Ranges***

This, and others, were frequently sung with energy and enthusiasm, if not musical style. Michael even considers some tramping club sing-alongs allowing people to "roar, gurgle, and squeak in rough synchrony" In addition, the banjo- ukulele, bagpipes, a wind up gramophone and even banging billies and billy lids were sometime used on occasions such as the Tauherinakau Hut barn dance. Lyrics were sometimes bawdy, maybe political, and always humorous. There was some comparison with other similar genres like 'rugby songs' or "army songs". Spontaneity often led to the creation of material of lasting significance in Tramping Club circles.

On a different note, at the movies currently is the latest big screen feature about Sir Ed, Tensing, and Mt Everest. It is a wonderful re creation of the historic climb, with original footage and recordings added to by several modern day scenes by Sir Ed and Tensing look alikes. Sure, they did not film those sections on the slopes of Everest, but they add lots of close ups of boots stomping in snow, grimacing faces of exhaustion, falling into crevasses, etc to the original movies. Some kiwi mountaineers may even recognise where those scenes were filmed. Original period costumes were worn in the same manner as those on "First Crossings" - an excellent movie.

Thinking of the popular TV series and book "First Crossings", I understand that the second series is currently underway. I imagine that the North Island could feature, with characters such as Dieffenbach on Mt Egmont and William Colenso in the Ruahines. We may even see exploration of some of our beloved Tararuas. The peaks of Tunui and Tuiti (the Tararua peaks), and many of the Tararua gorges, were not traversed until the 1920's and 1930's. An event like the Sutch search, from 1933, followed a tramping group traversing the Waiohine Gorge in a week, from near Girdlestone, right down to the farmland.

[Tony has since had a heart transplant operation at Greenlane. Our thoughts are with Yvonne and Tony for a speedy recovery - Ed.]

Notices

Manawatu Walking Festival 2014

Following on the idea of some walking highly successful walking festivals around Auckland, there is to be a Walking Festival here on the weekend of Friday 28 February- 1/ 2 March

2014. There is a selection of guided walks, ranging from evening city walks to a variety of popular forest and beach areas. The Manawatu Gorge naturally features. Walks take between 2 and 8 hours.

Volunteer guides are needed. If you are interested, and have a knowledge of; botany, local history, birds, tracks, or even interesting stories of the area, then please contact the web site below. There is a fee for each walk, and bus transport is provided. Sponsors of this event include DOC, Manawatu Forest and Bird, Sport Manawatu, Walking New Zealand, and Te Manawa. Refer www.mwf.org.nz.

Ruahine Hut Bagging Poster Xmas Order

We are planning another print run of our poster for those who missed previously.

Deadline is 9 December for distribution at the Club night BBQ on 12 December. Late orders also taken for next print run to suit demand.

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 or ph 328-7788.

January – June 2014 Trip Card

The January-June 2014 PNTMC Events Card is enclosed with this Newsletter. Thanks to all those who offered to lead trips – happy tramping.

Peak Bagging Update

We are over half way through the PNTMC peak bagging challenge, which ends at the AGM in March 2014.

As detailed in previous newsletters the aim is to get trampers out into the hills, with a bias towards the Ruahines.

Your results should be sent as soon as possible after each trip to Malcolm Parker at mparker@slingshot.co.nz or phone 357-5203. There will also be a book to record entries at Club Nights.

Some members are yet to send in their results but the points table below does include corrections to errors in last month's list. While every effort is made to ensure the results are

accurate please let Malcolm know if you believe your points need to be amended.

Peak Bagging - November Update

Member	Points
Warren Wheeler	74
Grant Christian	50
Janet Wilson	50
Terry Crippen	47
Angela Minto	42
Geoff Phillips	40
Craig Allerby	35
Tina Bishop	32
Mike Allerby	28
Martin Lawrence	24
Woody Lee	24
Anne Lawrence	20
Richard Lockett	16
Hannah Lund	14
Annett Patzold	12
Graham Peters	12
Karen Tutt	10
Mary Lund	8
Dave Grant	4
Jo O'Halloran	2
Kathy Corner	2
Lawrence O'Halloran	2



Leaving Waiaua Gorge Hut [Warren Wheeler]

After a pretty stormy night with rain being hurled at the hut, we headed back down the track to the car. Parked up at Dawson Falls visitor centre and after a look at the falls, set off along the Lower Lake Dive Track.

Took a slight detour up to the summit of Hasties Hill, which turned out to be more eventful than expected. Found a lovely grassy clearing at the top and were all lying down to have our photo taken when my hand started to feel quite prickly. Looking down my whole arm was covered in ants. Ouch! We all took a hasty (get it?) retreat back down the hill after that and decided not to be so lazy and sit down again in a hurry.

Trip Reports

26-28th October (Labour Day Weekend) Mount Taranaki Trip (not Tongariro Circuit) Kathryn Palmer

My first overnight tramp in New Zealand.

After a change of plan due to the poor forecast, I was relieved to hear we were not actually fly camping and excited to get up close to Mount Taranaki. First view was from the Water Tower in Hawera where we stopped for some supplies (Apple pie and Afghans!). On the first day we headed up Ihaia Track (an old bush tramway) to Waiaua Gorge Hut. After a fairly easy river crossing we arrived, then carried on without our packs, up to the Brames Falls Lookout. On the way back the weather decided to turn and we were glad someone had already got the fire going.



Ant attack on Hasties Hill [Warren Wheeler]

Seemed like quite a long day's walking that day so we were all relieved when we got to Lake Dive Hut (close to the Beehives).

On the final day, we decided to take the Upper Lake Dive Track back and surprisingly got above the bush line fairly quickly. After a long gradual climb in the sleet, we met the Fanthams Peak Track and knew it was all downhill from there back to the visitor centre.

Sadly, heard news of two fatalities on the summit on our return to the visitor centre. Had lunch in the slightly weird surroundings of the 'Swiss-style' cafe before setting off home. Even snuck in a quick paddle in the sea at Ohawe Beach.

All in all, I really enjoyed my first overnight trip. Thank you fellow trampers. I loved the varied landscape and terrain, including goblin forest, ancient lava flows and the flora (wild clematis and fuchsia). The long ladders were a bit scary though. Think we experienced most weather conditions over the weekend so glad we had a roof over our heads. Highlight for me was obviously the Kinder eggs on the last night (thanks Warren). But Dawsons Falls and Wilkies Pools were also very impressive. With Warren's new all-singing-all-dancing camera I'm sure we have some excellent photographs too.

Walkers – Warren Wheeler (Leader), Tina Bishop, Kathryn Palmer, Lawrence and Jo O'Halloran.

2- 3 November 2013 Pureora Timber Trail by Mountain Bike Richard Lockett



Pureora Timber Trail riders ready to roll.

A late afternoon departure from Palmy with a dinner stop in Taihape saw us arrive at

Piropiro Flats camp just on darkness and the first challenge for the weekend, putting up your tent in the dark. Who would need artificial light? Who had flat batteries in their headlamp? I was surprised that we were able to score a shelter with barbecue table and wood burner stove so the weekend was off to a good start. The Billie was boiled and after a tea with biscuits it was off to bed.

The dawn chorus ensured an early alarm call so up and out of tent at 6.15 am to find Tina up and with the Billie boiling so quickly into breakfast, our usual tramping kai and were on our second cup of coffee when Geoff turned up with a large frying pan. Sausages, egg's and bake beans were produced and cooked up and it smelt great with Geoff looking very content as he tucked into a raver expansive meal compared with what the rest of us had eaten.

With the greasy frying pan washed and stowed away it was onto our bikes to head south - Piropiro flats being in the middle of the trail - with our intention to go along the track, turn around and return to camp each day with Saturday to go south to cover as much of the old Ellis and Bernand logging tramway as possible. From the camp it's along a gravel road for 1.5 kms and onto purpose built cycle track to find the massive bridge over the Maramataha River - 140 metres long and 55 metres above the river, an impressive piece of construction.

A long climb on new benched track up from the bridge had us all sweating then a short flat section before picking up the railhead of the old tramway. From my previous visits to this area I knew we had a few kilometres of descending track through old tramway cuttings and across embankments and the little detour to an old Punga hut, easy travel till our morning tea stop 20kms down the line from camp. At this point there is a hunter's camp set up with water tanks with taps so a good spot to refill the water bottle.

Onward travel would be all new territory for me with the next stop to be at the old No 10 camp site 5kms down the line and lunch. It seemed to me to be a very hard 5 km for some reason, slightly hill, a bit of mud and porridge all burnt up. The PNTMC bikers turned up one by one all having found the last few kms hard work and so were keen for lunch and to make this the turnaround point.

I was keen to push on for another five kms to the Mangatukutuku Bridge, and so was Geoff, leaving Terry, Kathy and Tina to head back to camp at a sustainable pace. With food in our bellies the 5 kms seemed to take no time at all before we arrived at another neat bridge and our turnaround point.

After a 1.5 kms of uphill riding we found ourselves flying along, tail wind, descending track, fuelled up and pushing a high gear, sweet as and it seemed to run for about 10kms before having to lower the ratio and climb back up to the railhead. Reunited with Terry and Kathy and a long descent to the big bridge, you can get up a fair bit of speed along here, one had to be a tad careful!

Tina was waiting on the far side of the bridge taking photos so just a short ride back to camp to start the long process of eating and drinking which started with a late afternoon tea and finished with coffee and biscuits as darkness fell. The MTSC's also doing the Timber Trail same weekend were camped alongside so it made for a noisy evening but once in the sack I slept like a baby.

Another early start, aromatic smells from Geoff's frying pan and discussion on the day's programme with Terry keen to bag a peak Ketemaringi 839 metres and an hours walk from the road end 4kms from camp. Excellent idea was the consensus so as the MTSC's were breaking down their camp we left them to it and tramped for an hour up to and found the iron pipe marking Ketemaringi before returning to camp for a mid morning coffee and the packing up of our gear.

So now back onto the bikes for a short run north for 13kms mostly uphill with Terry stopping for a bathe and sun soak in a stream while we pushed on north to lunch at another stream before a rapid return downhill blast back to camp.

We were Terry Crippen, Kathy Corner, Tina Bishop, Geoff Phillips and Richard Lockett.

3 November Puketurua Martin Lawrence

With Dave's promise of a possibly long day, we set off from Milverton Park at 7am. The road to the third dam behind Shannon always seems to take a little longer than you would expect, so it was good to get out of the vehicle

and start walking in a light drizzle. We noticed that the dam was much higher than normal, and the lake looked excellent in the morning mist.

The first section of our walk, to Baber Forks, followed a route that I had previously done as a return from Burn Hut. We weren't sure what to expect on the climb up the spur from Baber Forks, as the track was unmaintained, but it turned out that the route right up to the ridge top had had some work done on it and was easy to follow, apart from the extra huff required to get up the steep slope.

After a wee rest on the ridge our route was to follow the ridge south to Ngapuketurua. First, Dave wanted to have a squiz to the North to how accessible Burn Hut was from here. This route did look reasonably clear. The route to Ngapuketurua was a little scratchy, but not too bad, so we decided to knock another peak off and head to Massey Knob. The light rain had long since cleared and we found that we were looking straight down onto Putara Road, with Herepai and East Peak to the South.

The day had moved on so we retraced our route from here. I was pleased to rest at Baber Forks again before the last sidle back to the dam. Thanks to Dave for organising this interesting day out and also thanks for the good company of Grant, Warren and Woody.



*Ngapuketurua (1094m) on a fine Tararua tops day.
[Woody Lee]*

5-10 November 2013 A Ruahine Odyssey: Connecting the Dots Bruce van Brunt

The Ruahine hut bagging contest last year doubtless sparked interest in many of us to visit (and in many cases revisit) places in our local northern hills that normally might be politely eshewed for more fashionable venues

that sport either the lustre of high alpine walkways or the “party line” that invariably includes in no modest proportion the Tararuas. I leave it to some of my comrades in Palmerston North and its southern suburbs (e.g. Wellington) to explore these southern foothills. Here, I wish to focus on the Ruahines and relate briefly a short, recent, odyssey.

A month or so ago, I hatched a plan (not original) that involved a trek from the northern most outpost of the Ruahines to some southern target in the Southern Ruahines. It was serendipity that at this juncture a friend, Paul Ackland, whom I shared a few ascents in the southern alps at Mt Cook and Mt Aspiring announced that he would be returning to NZ. We quickly linked up and formed a plan. Derek Sharp, who shared many of our earlier ascents, quickly subscribed to the plan, and I found that I had a strong party of three for a six day venture into the Ruahines.

5 November

We left Pohangina early with the plan of getting to the Comet hut road end at 9am. In fact, we did not get started until after 10am. There is always some risk leaving from Comet road end because the largest river in the Ruahines, the Taruarau, can prove a formidable barrier to cross. Once you cut your ties/transport from Comet, you descend some 700m to the river. If you cannot cross it, then there is nowhere to go but back to Comet hut and somehow find a way to “somewhere else”. The river flow data from nearby eastern rivers, however, suggested that this crossing should not be a problem. We left the road end with the confidence that we should at least make it to the northern boundary of the Ruahines. Paul, Derek and I set out over Comet hut with the objective of making Diane’s hut by evening. Penny Abercrombie had very generously given her time to driving us to Comet and accompanying us to the summit. We parted just before the steep descent to the river. Penny tramped back to the car and went on to Palmerston North via Hawkes Bay, and with heavy packs we descended to the river.

As predicted, the river was in good shape for crossing. The weather was nice and we took time for a swim. Paul fed the sandflies whilst Derek and I enjoyed the river. Just up from the river on the Ruahine side, is a nice campsite/lunchsite. Paul fed more sandflies and learned the joys of NZ plants such as Onga Onga in this magical valley. We went on to visit the historical Shute’s hut and braced



Penny at overgrown Comet trig

ourselves for the slog up the hill towards Taruarau biv/Diane’s hut junction.

The trip to Diane’s hut from this direction is a down 700m, up 700m, down 500m affair. It is energetic, but the tracks are mostly good under foot. Nonetheless, we did not get to the hut until after 7pm, though we did have a relaxing trip up Comet, a swim in the river, a long respectful break at Shute’s hut, and a steady but not frantic climb up to the junction. The weather was good, visibility good, and we simply savoured the day knowing that we could easily make Diane’s hut well before dark.

6 November

The original plan was to stay at Taruarau biv and descend via Ikawatea peak to the Ikawatea forks hut and climb up to Ruahine Corner hut for the night. This plan depended crucially on getting permission from the landowners for the section between the biv and Ikawatea peak. In the end, we were unable to secure this permission owing to various factors (outside our and the land owners’ control). The upshot of this was that our only way south was to go to Diane’s hut (a great place) and climb up to No Man’s Road. In any event, the weather forecast was not kind for this day so that perhaps it all worked for the best. After an annoying wet feet start from Diane’s hut down the stream, we began the steady ascent to No Man’s Road. The

forecast was for deteriorating weather through the day, so we started at 6:30am with the hope that we would beat the worst of the weather. It turned out that this was a good move because the forecast was amazingly accurate. We plodded up the road and onto the tops, putting on overtrousers just before leaving the road. We were lucky here as it was just light rain and wind. The track from the road over the tops towards the junction with the Master's Shelter track is amazingly good and clear. Even in poor weather, it was not hard to follow this well marked route. We had lunch just as we entered the bushline on the southern side. It was here that we noticed the intensity of the rain was increasing.

The track down to the Master's shelter junction is exceedingly good, as is all the track on this ridge down to Parks Peak hut. When wet, it is often spongy, but one cannot complain that the track is ill defined or that one must fight the bush. The original plan was to tramp down to the Aranga hut junction and then (if the weather was suitable) to go west towards Kylie biv. In fact, by the time we got to this junction the weather was appalling and showed all promise of being even worse later. The rain intensified and the winds came up ...nobody wanted to go over the tops to Kylie biv, particularly because we were three in number, most of the travel would be exposed, and in the best case we still faced a predominantly eastern flow of wind. It was an easy choice to go to Parks Peak hut.

This day we covered some 22-23 km of tracks and found ourselves slogging it down to Parks Peak hut in a driving rain. We took time between the Aranga hut junction and the Sentry Box junction to climb up to the trig, but *the last hour to the hut seemed a death march*. At least it was a new hut with a nice fire. We had an enjoyable and comfortable evening at this hut. Some of our stuff got dried out and I suppose there is some pleasure in listening to rain/wind in the comfort of a hut. It was a long day, and we felt that we earned the rest.

7 November

The Met weather forecast that I studied on 4 November was amazingly accurate on this trip. We knew at Parks Peak hut that the weather would not improve this day and indeed could get worse. At Diane's hut we sculpted the plan, should the weather dictate, of continuing south via the long but sheltered Parks Peak ridge to

the confluence of the Makaroro river and the Gold Creek stream.

It is hard to leave a hut in dry clothes state and venture in to a certain deluge of rain. Somehow it is much easier to leave a hut in a slight drizzle and then be overtaken by heavy rain. Heavy showers came and passed in the early morning as we steadied ourselves in the hut for the descent to the Makaroro river. We did manage to leave when conditions were pleasant, and true to form the rain came. Still, it was not as bad as we had envisaged and by the time we got near the base of the ridge it was pleasant. The logging road from the base of the track to the river was open to the elements, but nature restrained herself and gave us a pleasant passage with some views of the valley.

The biggest worry of the morning was the condition of the Makaroro river after the rains of the last few days. The "bottleneck" of the plan for this day was the crossing of the river. If we could not cross the river, then our prospects were relatively bleak: a. return up some 800m to Parks Peak hut; b. camp near the river; and c. go for a scenic walk and stay at Murderer's hut. Coming down to the river, I saw that it was brown and discoloured...it was running high. There are times when one must be grateful for earlier endeavours and here I must say that despite the threatening look of the river I knew what the maximum depth would be. Just two weeks prior to this date, Penny and I went up the Sparrowhawk ridge having crossed the Glenny Rd Farm to arrive with dry feet at this very confluence. I knew where the main channel was and from the banks of the river I knew what the maximum depth would be in the present flooded state. I told Derek and Paul that the river would be swift, but that its depth could not be more than mid thigh deep. This proved the case, and we crossed the dirty river (linked arm in pack) with more ease than one might expect. I would never have attempted this by myself, and for that matter, I would have been reluctant with three linked had I not known the river at this point. In any event, we crossed and moved on towards Sparrowhawk ridge.

The weather was kind to us up the ridge to Sparrowhawk biv. I love this ridge and, though it was my fourth ascent up it this year, I never tire of the scenery. Just two weeks before Penny and I climbed up this ridge to leave a food parcel for this trip. At the time, I did not think that I would be up this ridge again so soon.

Still, *it has one of the most magnificent beech forests to be found on the eastern side of the ranges.*

Derek and Paul were soon bounding up the ridge leaving me to wheeze my slow way up enjoying the delicious beech forest. Again, we were favoured by luck with the weather: we all arrived at the biv in pleasant weather, but soon things turned nasty again. I recovered my food parcel and we settled down to a comfortable night in the biv. An old newspaper provided a marginal diversion with a crossword puzzle that seemed to entertain Derek and Paul. The rain continued and there was lightning.

8 November

Most of this journey so far has been over tracks that I tramped at least once if not several times. This day spelled the first real "connect the dots" part of the journey. We left Sparrowhawk biv for Armstrong Saddle. Penny and I recently went to Maropea Peak just above the biv, but I had never explored the ridge from this high point to that above Armstrong Saddle. I knew from enquires that there was a less than pleasant scub/ bush section somewhere in between the high points but that aside travel was good. We left the biv in marginal weather. The wind was modest, but the rain was persistent. Once again we donned overtrousers and prepared to battle the elements. There were no vistas or limited views to be gleaned in this weather. We moved towards Armstrong Saddle, compass in hand with map, trusting to Derek's reliable navigation.

The morning really did break bleak. The last two days were not that pleasant, and it looked like this day would be the same, punctuated perhaps by short spells of tolerable weather and longer spells of miserable weather. I was starting to grumble about going down to Sunrise hut if this rubbish weather got worse. At this nadir, the weather cleared and became pleasant. By the time we got to the saddle, the weather was definitely looking good and we proceeded with confidence over Te Atuaoparapara. We finally got our well earned views from the tops. Crossing over Te Atuaoparapara we descended to Waipawa Saddle. Climbing up towards the Three Johns (I count only two) we moved on towards Rangiateatua. We made the decision at the saddle to have a high camp at 1600m just below the summit of Rangiateatua. Derek

knew a good camp site where there was water and shelter from a westerly wind.

The original plan made provisions for camping on the tops, particularly in the north, as time and weather dictates. We had all the gear for a good bivvy at 1600m and with the promise of tolerable weather we were quick to agree to camp just below Rangiateatua. I think we were all tired of losing elevation: nobody wanted to go down to Waterfall hut or Waikamaka hut and regain all the elevation yet again.

The bivvy was mostly good, but the rain came again and wetted all our gear. The rain, however, was short lived and we nonetheless had plenty of pleasant weather to enjoy the views. Sometime during the day, Paul lost the poles to his tent (probably that wretched bush section out of Sparrowhawk). The tent was used as a two person bivvy bag for Derek and Paul. I had my own bivvy bag.



Bivvy at 1600m

9 November

The morning dawned clear but was spiced with a modest wind. We made the short trip up to the summit of Rangiateatua and then I moved, for me, into *terra nova*: another connect the dots section. The wind was getting more pleasant and there were views to be had as we ascended the high peak 1715. Why this peak (the second highest in the Ruahines) has no name on the map defeats me when lesser slagheaps get glorious recognition.

We descended 1715 to a saddle connecting the peak with the Broken Ridge. It was annoying to lose more elevation, but the saddle proved interesting and the circuit around the prominent gendarme was mildly stimulating. Derek led us to an elegant route up to Paemutu avoiding the painful scrub

section. The route so far proved interesting and the weather was getting better. At the top of Paemutu, I had an unexplored and interesting walk along the Broken Ridge to look forward to, and a proven (and fun) tramp along the Sawtooth ridge. I love this part of the Ruahines.

“And then there came both mist and snow, and it grew wondrous cold, and ice mast high came floating by as green as emerald”.



*En route across the Ruahine tops
[Bruce van Brunt]*

Ok, it was not that epic, but I felt mildly robbed by the encroaching mist that obfuscated the local and global terrain. It seemed the Ruahines would close in again, though the weather was, aside from visibility, pleasant. We had a nice crossing of Sawtooth ridge without seeing much beyond the immediate route. Given the number of epics on this ridge, I guess we caught it in a good mood...yet I would have loved to see more of the vistas. I have been here in good and bad conditions, but I had really hoped for better. If one could see little, at least the wind was down and there was no hint of rain.

We climbed up to Tiraha and made our first contact with the outside world. We were due out the next day, and the weather really dictated whether we exit via Longview hut, or pressed our suit south towards Tunipo. Using Paul's phone I got the latest forecast from

Penny's husband George. The weather tomorrow was meant to be brilliant with light winds. We burned our bridges here and declared that we would go on over Tunipo the next day and be picked up and the Peterson road end near Heritage Lodge. The weather improved as we descended down to Howletts hut.

10 November

This was our last day on the journey south. We spent previous evening at Howletts hut using up our food rations and generally having a pleasant warm evening. True to the forecast, the weather dawned fine and we were soon (i.e. 6-6:30am) moving south at a leisurely pace. After some scrub and the annoying descent down the saddle at the top of the Tuki Tuki river, we ascended Otumore above the Pohangina Saddle. Here, we confirmed our exit plans by phone with Penny and began the pleasant and undemanding walk to Tunipo Peak. No one could fault the weather: a light breeze, plenty of visibility and rain but a distant prospect. We made the final slog up Tunipo and had lunch. I believe this was the only time I had ever had lunch on this summit, though I have been here many times. Tunipo and Toka seem to be magnets for horrid winds, so this was indeed a special event. I did, however warn my "Comrades" that the ridge down from Tunipo was a bit long if gentle.

The ridge down from Tunipo to Heritage Lodge seemed to go on forever. I noted that there was much damage to the forest over the winter and that, surprisingly, the track had been cleared with a celerity unexpected in the Ruahines. We had a nice descent down to the junction of Heritage Lodge with the Tunipo Trig track. Up to this point, we had not met any other people since we left Penny near the summit of Comet some six days ago. Now, Michael Allerby appears and we begin to learn the story of the Tunipo track. It seems that Michael, Craig, and others from PNTMC have kept the track down from Tunipo clear...no easy task given that there was a lot of snow related damage to the upper beech forest trees and they were armed only with hand tools. We exited the park from the Heritage Lodge track and met up again with Penny, who drove us home.

Some Very Rough Stats:

1. The average day was about 9.5-10.5 hrs;
2. We climbed roughly 900m+ each day;

3. The longest distance covered in a day was about 22-23km;
4. The highest elevation achieved was at 1715m (unnamed high point); the lowest elevation was at the Taruarau river (380m).
5. The highest camp was at 1600m (bivvy below Rangioteatua); the lowest night was spent at 700m (Diane's hut).
6. The named high points that we crossed (North to South) are:
 - 1) Comet (Kawekas);
 - 2) Ohawai;
 - 3) Pohatohaha;
 - 4) Maropea;
 - 5) Te Atuaoparapara;
 - 6) Rangioteatua;
 - 7) Paemutu;
 - 8) Ohuinga;
 - 9) Tiraha;
 - 10) Taumataua;
 - 11) Otumore;
 - 12) Tunipo.

The party was: Paul Ackland, Derek Sharp, and Bruce van Brunt. We all acknowledge the generous help of Penny Abercrombie (and George Ionas) for support in this adventure and for transport.

**9-10 November
Hauhangatahi & Other Peaks
Grant Christian**

I have often looked at Hauhangatahi when driving or tramping in the area and thought I must go up there one day. The peak bagging competition gave me a great reason.

We arrived at Erua and walked south alongside the railway line. Look for the pole with the stay on it, the directions had specified. Somehow we walked straight past the first pole with a stay. Upon reaching the second stay we could see no obvious track and Warren recalled the track being further south. We walked on further but saw no sign of the track so returned to the pole with the stay. A close inspection found no sign of the track so we decided to push our way through the thick flax and scrub that lead to the ridge and mature bush.

After struggling through the dense scrub we reached the ridge and headed along the top of the ridge. Generally it was easy going but after about 10 minutes we came across the track and had a good walk up to the bush line and then across the open and gentle rise to the peak. After the obligatory photos we headed back down. The track down lead us back to the first stay we had passed.



Hauhangatahi peak baggers [Warren Wheeler]

We had got there and back in reasonable time so I thought we had time to climb another peak. We headed around to the beginning of the Tongariro crossing track and from here we headed around the outside of Pukekaikiore, steadily gaining height until we reached the saddle between Pukekaikiore and Ngauruhoe.



Pukekaikiore summit rocks [Warren Wheeler]

From here we climbed along the ridge to the highest point. There were three groups of rocks spread across a flat top so we climbed each one and checked which was the highest with the altimeter. We descended down a steep and difficult route, opposite to the direction we had come up. Eventually we arrived back at the car at 7 p.m. We camped at the Mangahuia camp site for the night. It was very busy with many tourists staying.

Next morning we went back to the Tongariro crossing track. Soon after passing the Mangatepopo hut we headed up on to the ridge adjacent to the track that leads to Tongariro. This was a very good direct route to the peak. The sky was clear most of the way but some cloud rolled in as we reached the rim of the crater. From here we had a short walk to Tongariro peak. The sky cleared again and conditions were perfect. After enjoying the views and taking more photos we moved along the crater rim and dropped down the north side and headed directly across to North Crater. The landscape here reminds me so much of how I imagine the moon to be. We crossed North Crater and headed towards Rotopaunga.



South rim of North Crater [Warren Wheeler]

At this stage Warren had thought Rotopaunga was Te Mari so taking his word for it I thought that one of the smaller peaks to the south west was Rotopaunga. David decided to head back to the car due to blisters and joined the hordes doing the Tongariro crossing. Warren & I headed up what we thought was Te Mari and then came back via what we thought was Rotopaunga. After that we followed the Tongariro track back to the car.



Rotopaunga (not Te Mari) [Warren Wheeler]

We were getting weary by the time we reached the car but there was still one peak to climb. Pukeonake is about 150 metres high and sits alongside the Mangatepopo road. We weren't sure of how to get up it and the scrub cover looked quite thick. We decided to approach via an old vehicle track that we thought would lead to the quarry on the far side. We hoped there would be a track to the peak from here. It was not too difficult and there were tracks visible. We were soon on top of our sixth named peak and felt satisfied with our achievements.



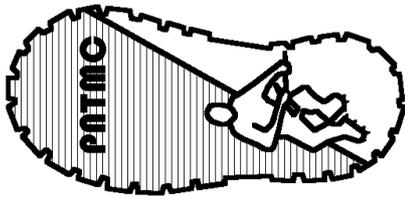
Pukeonake – not peak six, sorry Grant [Warren Wheeler]

It was not until a day or two later that Warren phoned me to point out the mistake with Te Mari. We had needed to walk a few hundred metres further along the ridge to climb Te Mari so we were disappointed at the mistake. Our six peaks were only five. C'est la vie.

Trip Participants: Grant Christian, David de Raitz, Warren Wheeler



One of many alpine buttercups in North Crater [Warren Wheeler]



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PNTMC Newsletter December 2013

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- Order your Ruahine Hut Poster Now
- Ruahine Peak Bagging Odyssey
- Puketuru in the Tataruas
- Tongariro peak bagging
- MTB Pureora Timber Trail
- Easy Egmont tramping
- Coming trips through to February

Articles for the newsletter

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

Get out and about with us!

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