



Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club

www.pntmc.org.nz

PO Box 1217, Palmerston North

Newsletter March 2025



Enjoying the Beginners Tramp #1, Fern Walk in Totara Reserve, Pohangina Valley. Pic by Verity Elder

Club Nights

Club nights are generally held on the second and last Thursday of each month at the Quakers Hall, 227 College Street, Palmerston North. Doors open 7.15pm for meeting start at 7.30pm. All welcome.

13 March 2025

What's in my Pack

Verity Elder

For Beginners and more experienced trampers. PNTMC members share and talk about gear they have in their pack. Focus on Emergency gear, Prepare for all weather, Hydration, Energy food.

27 March 2025

AGM

At this year's AGM we will not only have the usual Presidents Report, Financial Report and Election of Officers but General Business will include ratification of a proposed new Constitution. A delicious supper to follow.

Upcoming Trips

1 March 2025 Sunrise Hut E/M Jo O'Halloran 0274 171 140

Postponed from 2 February this Saturday trip is to a popular track that is the "jewel in the crown" for the Hawkes Bay region. A well graded track climbs up through mixed beech forest to the hut on the bushline. A further 15 minutes takes us to Armstrong Saddle for views west to Ruapehu. Depart Milverton Park at 7.30am.

2 March 2025 Ohau Gorge E/M Warren Wheeler 06 356 1998

This delightful section of the Ohau Gorge in the western Tararuas behind Levin offers those feeling a little adventurous an opportunity for a couple of hours of nice rock-hopping, wading and even some pool swimming. We start with an easy hour walk along the track from Poads Roadend carpark above the Ohau River, with views down into the gorge as we go, then down the river itself to exit just past the old town water intake. We then rejoin the track back to the roadend. Yes, you will get wet feet! Depart Milverton Park at 7.30am.

7-9 March 2025 Waikuku Lodge Aorangi E/M Janet Wilson 027 341 8945

Has PNTMC ever visited this hut? A chance to visit one of our lesser-known huts in the Aorangi Range – east of Martinborough and around on the northern side of the more frequently visited Haurangi Range. The lodge sleeps 30, comes at a very reasonable cost (depending on numbers) and you can drive to it! From there you can do a day trip to Sutherland Hut – now who has been there? Sounds like there are great views and plenty to do/explore from the lodge. I have booked the sole occupancy lodge for 2 nights but happy if there is a group who just want to come for the Saturday/Sunday. Non-tramping partners welcome too as there will be plenty of room.

9 March 2025 Beginner Tramp #3 Rangi Hut E/M Verity Elder 021 260 1885

The Rangiwahia Hut Track begins at 800m in the carpark and climbs to 1300m above sea level for, on a clear day, fantastic views of the wider Rangitikei area and Mount Ruapehu. We will aim for early lunch at Rangiwahia Hut with the option, for those keen, to continue onto the tops and the Whanahuia Range. Return via the same track. Depart Milverton Park 7.30am.

XX March 2025 Our Huts Maintenance M Janet Wilson 06 329 4722

Work on Ngamoko Hut will be around the weekend of 15-16 March with a 2nd choice of the following weekend 22-23 March with days possible either side of those weekends. I would like to see the interior of Mid Poh painted at the same time so that may well be on week days.

15-16 March 2025 Ohakune Overlander MTB Richard Lockett 06 323 0948

Explore the new Te Ara Mangawhero trail by MTB or walking. Plan A is to camp at Mangawhero Campground. Leaving Friday night or Saturday morning to suit participants.

BWD 15 or 16 March 2025 Archeys Lookout E Nicola Wallace 021 209 0720

Postponed from 26 January, this will be a Best Weather Day trip. Part of the Te Araroa Trail. A nice walk past Makahika Outdoor Centre up the valley behind Levin. Across paddocks then into the bush with several small stream crossings then up to the lookout for views over Horowhenua. Depart Milverton Park at 8.00am.

22 March 2025 North Mangahao Biv E/M Graeme Curwen 027 391 2759

Saturday trip from Scotts Road to the hidden hunters Ponga Hut and following a trail of pink tapes to the biv for a bit more Love to tidy it up.

23 March 2025 Beginner Tramp #4 Blue Range E/M Verity Elder 021 260 1885

This is a typical backcountry tramping track in the Tararuas. Expect a rough and unformed track surface and an uphill climb with a fantastic reward. The very cute and happily situated Blue Range Hut looks out over the Waingawa River valley and peaks beyond. Depart Milverton Park 7.30am.

28-30 March 2025 Social Trappers All Janet Wilson 06 329 4722

Extended 3-day Oroua Valley trip to check traps and install some replacement mechanisms beyond Iron Gate Hut. All welcome.

30 March 2025 Wharite Peak M Leader wanted See website for updates

6 April 2025 Stanfield Hut E Woody Lee 021 0444 552

An easy walk to the eastern side of the Ruahines. We will start from Tamaki West Rd and follow the Holmes Ridge track and an unmarked riverbed route to the hut. After lunch we return the same way. Depart Milverton Park 7.30am.

13 April 2025 Branch Road Walkway E Sally Hewson 06 357 0990

A nicely graded easy walk up an abandoned road from Pohangina Village up to Ridge Road. From pine trees to bush-clad gullies and views across farmland to the Ruahines, this is a pleasant walk up and back. A visit to Country Fayre for Devonshire tea, artwork and museum pics is an option to follow. Depart Milverton Park at 8.30am.

Advance Notice -Expressions of interest Wanted

Kings Birthday Kawhia (aka The Raglan Road Trip) 30 May to 2nd or 3rd June.

The 2025 "Coastal Classic" trip will be heading to Kawhia. The harbour looks beautiful and there are hot pools to be dug out on the coast, fishing and kayaking. Mount Pirongia is not that far away for tramping and there are bound to be other interesting local walks.

Depending on interest, we will stay at one of the camping grounds/cabin or possibly a bach. We will drive up the back roads via Marokopa and return via Raglan. If you think you might be interested in this extended holiday weekend trip then let Janet know asap so a plan can be made and suitable accommodation can be booked nice and early.

Trip Grading

Trip grades depend on many factors, especially weather and terrain. A reasonably proficient trampler should expect to do the trips in the following times:

Easy (E):	3-4 hrs	Other Grades:
Medium (M):	5-6 hrs	Family (Fam)
Fit (F):	about 8 hrs	Technical skills (T)
Fitness Essential (FE):	over 8 hrs	Inst (Instruction)

BWD = Best weather day of a weekend

Gear for trips

Minimum gear for day trips is appropriate footwear, pack, lunch and snacks, waterproof jacket, over-trousers, 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.

Overdue Trips

If a club trip is late returning, please do not worry as there is probably a good reason for the delay.

If you are in any doubt, please phone Martin Lawrence 027 446 6287 or Bruce van Brunt 06 328 4761.

Beginner Tramps 2025

Our programme involves a graduated series of tramps and workshops. Suitable for youth and above, those who've never tramped through to those who want to get back into tramping, our aim is to introduce you to tramping gradually.

The trip series begins with an easy low-land bush walk and progresses to exploring the tops of the Ruahine and Tararua Ranges. We walk as a group and at a pace to suit everyone on the day. Along the way you can participate in workshops and learn from our more experienced club members.

The current series of Beginner Tramps finishes in March with lots of Easy trips in coming months.

All Beginner trips depart from Milverton Park at 7:30am. We carpool to reduce carbon footprint, petrol share will be included in trip information (cash on the day to the driver). For more information see [PNTMC trip planning](#).

For further information, phone Verity 021 260 188 or email pntmci@gmail.com or check out our trip programme for dates.

What's in my Pack?

WIMP from Bruce van Brunt

Two for One:

I always pack iodine. Iodine is useful, of course, for treating and disinfecting wounds, burst blisters etc., but it is also exceedingly useful to "purify" water. A few drops will disinfect 1.5 liters of water. This has saved a few trips where we descended into places where the water is less than pure.

Secondhand:

I have a lot of secondhand stuff much of which has been around the hills with me and visited several 3000m peaks in NZ. Here, however, I focus on what piece of secondhand gear I have used for many years on trips of all descriptions. The winner is a modest canvass Swiss army medical bag from the 1940s. This bag has been on almost all my trips for some 30yrs. I bought it in a surplus store in the US back in the mid 80s and it is still going strong. I still have not figured out why I like it so much. I never used it

as a first aid bag, but more of a small bag for other stuff.

Repair Job:

I have a lot of repaired gear. A patch here, a new strap there...But there is one clear winner here, though it finally died a natural death. I had a pair of OR Crocodile gaiters. These are Gore-Tex gaiters that my father bought me some 25+yrs ago. They were lightweight, breathable and pretty much perfect for alpine work. I used them a lot. The insole strap finally wore out and I put a new one on (though not so adjustable) made of crampon strap. This was replaced a few times as the nylon straps wore and became a bit too furry. In the meantime, the upper part of the gaiters saw some pretty hard wear. There seemed to be lots of holes and rips in the Gore-tex from abrasions and crampon tears from walking in tight snow trenches on the Grand Plateau. Each hole and tear were patiently patched including a massive one: here, I recruited my climbing partner (a surgeon and GP) to stitch up the gaiter (this rip never needed to be revisited). By this time, there were patches on the patches, and I was looking at buying some fabric to make sure the gaiters would last longer. My sister had a lot more sense: she went out and bought a new pair of the same gaiters for me as a Christmas gift. There comes a time to let it go, though I admit I still have the old gaiters hidden away in a drawer.

DIY

There are several bits and pieces that I have modified to make what I think is a much better piece of equipment. One very simple example is to go to the local store, buy a bit of elastic band used in sewing and tie these onto gloves to keep from losing them when you take them off. In climbing we often have cause to remove gloves, and this simple and cheap solution can save a lot of money and cold hands.

Can't Live Without

There are lots of items that can be put in this category. Few in NZ would argue with things like raincoat, fleece, sunblock, map and GPS/compass, water.... I do not argue any of these. Here, however, is an item that perhaps you would greatly appreciate and sorely miss: Toilet paper! Forget it once when needed and you will never forget it again.

Trip Reports

9 February 2025

Fern Walk Beginner Tramp 1

Report by Verity Elder
Pics Esther Rogers

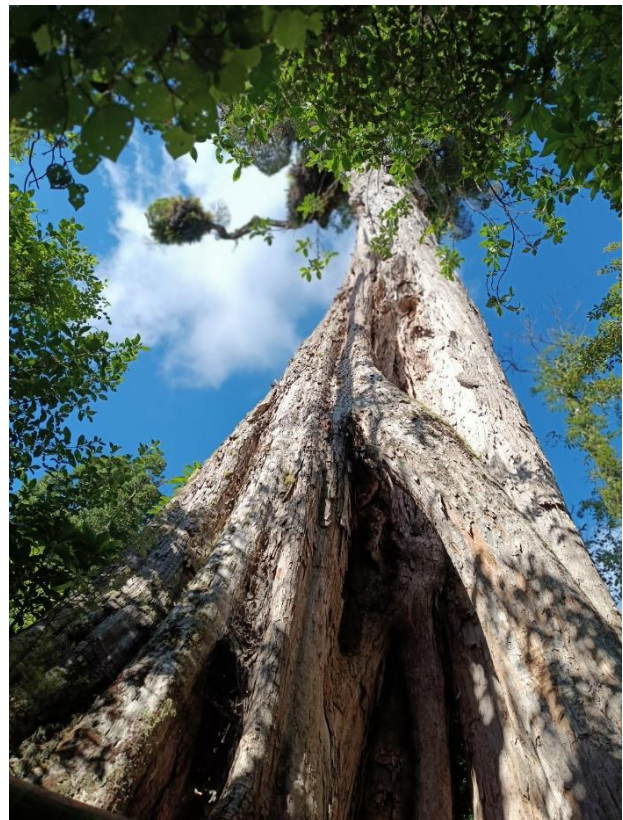
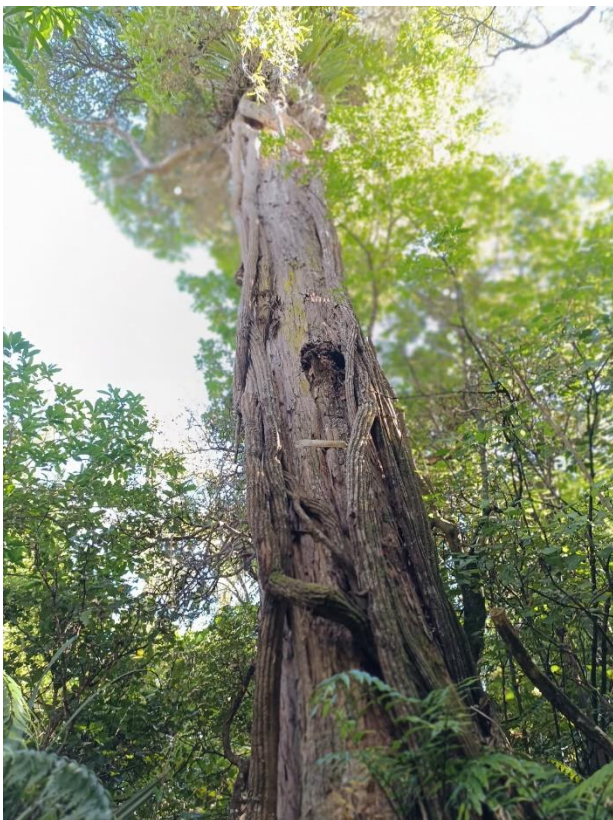
This year's beginner trip series began with the Fern Walk in Pohangina Valley. 5 PNTMC members and 10 new enthusiasts made our way to the start of the track to enjoy the beautiful diverse section of forest connected to Totara Reserve.

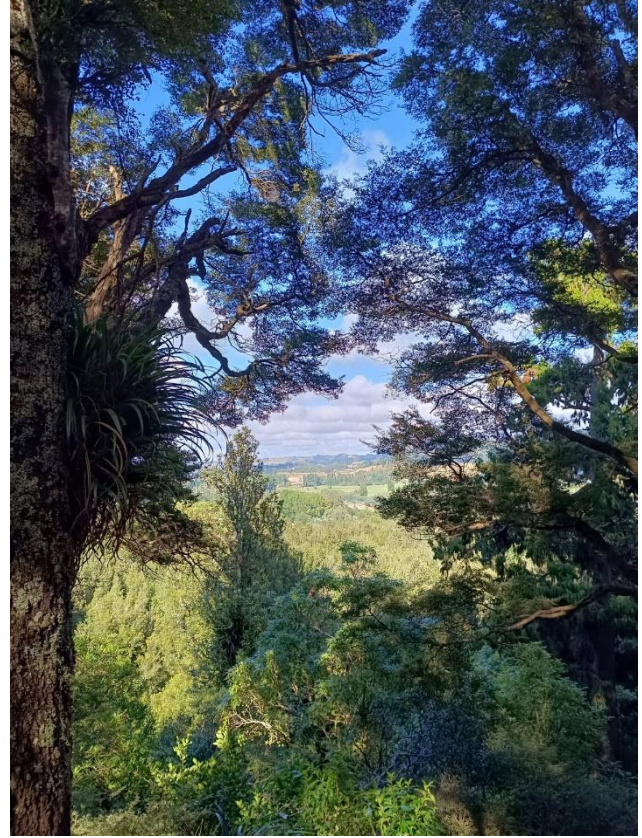
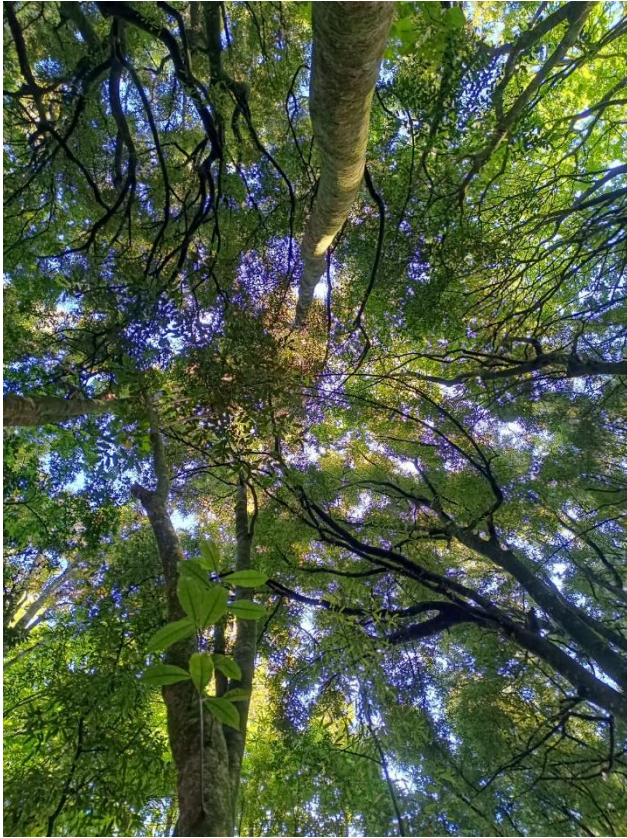
Coupled with this trip was a short in-situ workshop on map reading. Horizon's council provides an aerial map of the walk with a line indicating the track. However this image is low resolution and gives minimal information beyond showing the track moves through lowland podocarp forest. While in the car park we checked out the Kimbolton Topo-50 map, firstly identifying where on the map the Fern Walk is situated and second, the topo features we would come across on the walk. Because the Fern Walk track is not marked on the topo map we needed to use our surroundings to decipher where it is situated, recognising the river was below us and across the road, the bridge we had just crossed before entering the car park, and the curve in the road. We identified a number of features, in particular a terrace, streams, bridge, and elevation.

We took just under 3 hours to complete the loop track, moving at a leisurely pace, stopping to enjoy the understory of fern life and magnificent examples of tōtara, matai, rimu and kahikatea.

Along the way we noted the bridge and farm road, the short rise in elevation, the terraces of farmland we could see at the top through the bush, and our return to the farm road appearing through the edge of the bush as we completed the loop.

The photos are courtesy of Esther Rogers, who took the time to get down low to capture the scenic tree canopy of rata.





Peek view from the Fern Walk

15 February 2025

Beehive Creek

Report by Doug Strachan

Carlos and I picked up Warren from Awahou South Rd for the annual pilgrimage along Beehive Creek. This waterway is a tributary of the Pohangina River, located a little NE of Pohangina township. Most years we walk along the road to the other end of the track, climb the farm hill for a view, and come out down the creek. A nice round trip. More recently, signs make it clearer that the farm section of the track really is closed while farm improvements are being made. However, it has been closed for years, and one wonders just when access will be reinstated.

It took about 1.5hr to dawdle our way up the creek because there were many stops to discuss botany, hydrology and geology. There's evidence of tectonic activity in the form of sedimentary layers tilted at an angle of about 45 degrees. A lot of the material is unconsolidated and easily eroded. We spotted some lignite, shell fragments, and plenty of greywacke. Around 3 million years ago this area, like the nearby Manawatū Gorge, was a coastal environment as the land was separated by the Manawatū Strait well before God realised he'd stuffed up and closed that strait, replacing it with the younger Cook Strait further south.

Geology aside, we were delighted to find a few samples of ongaonga tree nettle and we got as close to it as we dared. Some of the leaves showed signs of having been chewed by the larvae of the red admiral butterfly, an invertebrate even more daring than us.

Ongaonga wasn't the only prickly plant present. Blackberry plants abound. Although I had come prepared with long-sleeved gloves and secateurs, there were no fruit to harvest, so I contented myself with cutting back some blackberry shoots that encroached over our path.

At one point I saw a flash of movement and the rear end of a black animal with a white rump. Our best guess is a goat. I hope it eats the young sycamore seedlings that are popping up everywhere. I predict that this tree is going to become a major weed in NZ. Its samara helicopter seeds travel far and wide.

We had lunch at the sign telling us to proceed no further. Warren produced and shared his signature watermelon, Carlos some healthful blueberries and I, well, chocolate naturally. Did I say "naturally"? Hmm.



The walk back out only took an hour. We decided to lunch at Warren and Robyn's place, which Carlos and I hadn't been to before. Over coffee, a wide-ranging discussion ensued, topics including what brought Carlos to NZ, Cyclone Gabrielle, and the chaos surrounding Donald Chump.



Blast from the Past

PAST EVENTS February 1975 Newsletter (see Newsletters on our website)

25th-26th JANUARY. BUSHCRAFT COURSE – RANGIWAHIA.

The three stooges set off on a compass bearing for Feilding to pick up the Terrible Trio. Once all were settled in their ecologically catastrophic mode of conveyance we proceeded, post haste, to Rangiwahia.

After leaving appropriate signs for any following (knowing they wouldn't see them anyway) we headed off up the river by the Bulldozed Track. Next on the agenda was an attempt to fix our position. After coming to an amicable agreement we started searching for a camp site. We eventually found a suitable area (which turned out to be one of the last flat, dry areas probably to Mangahuia) and set up both the tent and fly for experience.

Once lunch was very efficiently dispensed with, one of our members promptly fell asleep while the rest did some map and compass exercises. We lit a small fire, prepared tea and then retired to our sleeping bags.

Sunday saw us following the river up to the Impassable Waterfall. To bypass we took to the bush which seemed to be concentrated bush lawyer diluted with hookgrass, cutty grass and other types of offensive vegetation. We eventually got onto the track but dropped back down to the river just above the bridge. We followed the river down to our waterfall where we attempted to reroute the waterfall. We found a much easier and less masochistic route around the waterfall. We continue down the river to our camp where we cleaned up and headed back home.

Trip members: Trevor Bissell, Peter Croad, Kent Horsfield, Ross Meder, Kevin Pearce, Michael Triplow.



PNTMC Newsletter

March 2025

- Upcoming Trips and Club Nights
- Notices: Beginners Tramps, Whats in My Pack
- Trip Reports: Beginners Fern Walk, Beehive Creek, Blast from the Past

Send articles to

the newsletter editor at pntmci@gmail.com



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Get out and about with us!

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