



Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club

www.pntmc.org.nz

c/- Society of Friends, 227 College St, PN

Newsletter November 2025



Photo by Graeme Curwen: Mikimiki Stream

Club Nights

Club nights are 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.

Thu 13th November

Niue Conservation

Barry Scott

Niue is a small Pacific Island which has a potentially big problem with invasive weeds, in particular African Tulip Trees. Barry recently went with Friends of Niue, a keen group of conservationists, and over four days cleared the three known sites of infestation before enjoying a holiday of snorkeling and walking.

Thu 27th November

BYO Pics

Warren Wheeler

Show and tell of highlights from trips done over the last six months or so.

Thu 11th December

End of Year BBQ

Warren Wheeler

Upcoming Trips

Sat 1st November Moonlight Gorge Walk *Easy*

Verity Elder
021 260 1885

Saturday trip - rescheduled from 4 October. Following the Gorge Walk track from the Woodville end we make our way to Centennial Lookout in the last hour(s) of daylight. We return via Balance Bridge Road (a short section of the old gorge road). Bring supper instead of lunch and don't forget your headlamp. Depart from Milverton Park at 5.30pm. Contact Verity no later than Friday 5pm.

Sat 8th - 9th November Colenso Spur-Barlow Hut *Medium*

Blair Petersen
027 600 4263

My mission for this year is to go to all 6 places in the Ruahines that are named after William Colenso. 3 down so far, 3 to go! This is a cruisy overnight trip, starting from the end of Wakarara Rd, following the Makaroro River up to the Colenso Memorial at the bottom of the Colenso Spur. From there it's up the Colenso Spur to approx. the 900m mark, then down the Barlow Track to Barlow Hut. At this stage, the plan is to stay the night at Barlow Hut, before returning to the carpark via the Makaroro River. Please contact me by the Wednesday before.

Sun 9th November Aokautere Loop *Easy*

Robyn Wheeler
06 356 1998

Explore the city trails linking the reserves in the Massey University- Summerhill Drive/Aokautere area. Depart Milverton Park 8.00am.

Sat 15th - Sun 16th November Iron Gates Hut/Oroua River *Medium-Fit*

Janet Wilson
027 341 8945

A social trapping trip with a chance to see the latest spring batch of whio chicks.

Sun 24th - Mon 25th November North Ohau Hut *Easy-Medium*

Warren Wheeler
06 356 1998

Option as a day trip (Medium-Fit) depending on interest. Get ready for summer! From Poads Road behind Levin we head up the Ohau River, first along the sidle track then up the river itself to the north branch. Expect wet feet and the odd deep wade. Depart Milverton Park 8.00am.

Sat 29th - Sun 30th November North Mangahao Biv *Easy-Medium*

Chris Parker
027 341 0091

This replaces the trip to Poutaki Hut, which is currently affected by logging. It will be a relaxed trip from Gordon Keer forest through some scrubby sections to the biv, which is the southern-most hut in the Tararuas. Well worth a visit but only has room for two so we will be tenting nearby.

Sun 30th November Supper at Rangi *Easy*

Verity Elder
021 260 1885

If Sunrise Hut is a Ruahine must-visit of the east, Rangi is the same for the west. Situated perfectly for a sunset view and a delicious supper/dinner, we will aim to walk the easy benched track in mid to late afternoon, arriving for an early supper and the option of exploring the tops above the hut, before making our way back down during the early twilight hours (sunset is predicted to be 8:30pm). Bring warm clothes for cooler evening temperatures. Depart from Milverton Park at 2pm. Contact Verity no later than Friday 5pm.

Trips beyond November can be viewed on the club website [‘trip card.’](#)

Trip Grading - Trip grades depend on many factors, including weather and terrain. A reasonably proficient tramper 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

BWD = Best weather day of a weekend

Other Grades:
- Family (Fam)
- Technical skills (T)
- Inst (Instruction)

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, there is probably a good reason for the delay. If you are in any doubt, please phone Bruce van Brunt 06 328 4761 or Verity Elder 0212601885

Notices

Ruahine Whio Protection Trust Annual Fundraiser

The Ruahine Whio Protection Trust's annual fundraiser "Wild Ruahine" 2026 calendar is once again available - get in early as they may sell out before xmas. Calendars are still \$20.00 +p&p, they make a great locally produced xmas present and the funds raised support the local hard working volunteer effort in the Ruahine Ranges to protect the Whio or Whistling Blue Duck. Many of the volunteers are PNTMC members, photos are all donated, and the production is by club member Anthony Behrens. Calendars are printed in Masterton. Available at club nights from Janet Wilson. They can be mailed out at \$5.50 for up to 3 calendars.



Love our Huts Trip – Dates TBC (current option: 6-8 December) – Mid Pohangina hut / Leon Kinvig hut

This trip is a joint project between PNTMC and RWP (Ruahine Whio Protection Trust) and part of FMC's 'Love our Huts' campaign. The aim is to give some love to Mid-Poh hut and Leon Kinvig hut. The group will also be servicing the Pohangina river trap lines, and the timing of this trip is not fixed - it will fit around weather, river levels and people. There is also a possibility of flying in, if so, there are limited places for trappers and those wanting to just go to the hut will need to contribute to the cost.

Expressions of interest by 30 November - contact Janet Wilson (027 341 8945).

PNTMC is associated with **Federated Mountain Clubs** <http://fmx.org.nz/>

Trip Reports

Waitewaewae Hut (YTTY) – (18th – 19th October).

Report and Photos by Nicola Wallace

I'd been looking forward to visiting this hut, which I'd never been to before, and now that the Otaki Gorge Road is open this is feasible, and finding that a club trip was going, even better. A few days before the trip an underslip (slip under the road) had occurred, about 100m from the old, fixed up slip, but no worries because the DOC website said the road was open over the weekend, closing on Monday morning.

As soon as I saw the cars parked by the roadside, I thought “Oh no!”. Sure enough, the gate was locked, so we walked the extra 3km of road with our destination still YTTY Hut. Before we set off Graeme gave each of us a printed copy of the Topo map route. This was very good, because unbeknown to me my 2013 map was out of date. After the bridged crossings of the Waioatauru and Otaki rivers, walking along the old tram track was easy, except for a very steep climb over a slip. Back on the tram track we came across old sleepers and sections of rail. About 2km along this track, we came to a major junction: the tram track carrying on straight ahead, and a very well-marked track (lots of orange triangles) heading uphill to our right. This was clearly the proper way to go, the tram track presumably blocked by slips.



This new track was probably cut about 2016 I'm guessing, and it was quite a rugged, technical track. Lots of tree roots, big steps, rocks, sidling, but mostly clear of tree fall, it felt a long way. After several stream crossings and lots of climbing, we descended and crossed Plateau Stream. Someone had camped in here; there were campfire remains. The Plateau was a flat, boggy with beautiful bush and bits of boardwalk here and there. After another descent, and at the Arapito Creek junction we crossed the creek and hobbled the loop around and above the Otaki River's hairpin bend, rather than cross the Otaki. Yes, I was

starting to hobble a bit by now, and the eventual sight of the hut through the trees gave me the most wonderful feeling. The “walk” had taken us 6.5 hours from the big Waioatauru bridge at Otaki Forks, over 7 hours from the car. The whole day had been cloudy, but with no rain.

This is one beautiful hut. Upon walking inside the air felt warm and dry. It was very spacious, this feeling accentuated by the white painted walls, big windows and skylights letting in lots of light, and its high ceiling. I fell in love with YTTY hut immediately. Outside the hut I heard Grey Warblers and Tomtits, a Blackbird and a Thrush. A Swallow flew round above the hut. We had the hut to ourselves, so settled into a cuppa and snacks, too warm to light a fire. As it turned out, no one else arrived and we all hit the hay (sleeping bags) by 8pm. It was a very, very quiet night.



The next morning dawned a heavy grey. We all knew the forecast rain was coming. We left the hut at about 07:45am, and the rain started in earnest about 45 minutes later. The Plateau was very sodden and boggy by the time we got there, some of the puddles coming up almost to my knees. Aside from a couple of stops we just kept walking. The rain was pouring, and I was soon wet under my coat, but the weather was very warm. This tramp is a “put one foot in front of the other until you get where you're going” kind of tramp.

After the long journey over the “new” track, we descended back onto the tram track, and stopped at the junction for lunch, the temperature now cooler. The rain had stopped, and the sun was emerging, though

we were still in the bush and couldn't feel its warmth. That came soon after, emerging into the open as we negotiated that steep slip track, my boots losing their grip on the smooth surface of the very steep descent. The Waioata and Otaki rivers were a different sight today, grey and full.

Back up the road in the sun, and my legs were feeling it now as its mostly uphill. I walked on the roadside in the leaves and dirt to ease my sore feet. It had been a good trip, and I'm so glad I went. Thanks to Richard for leading this trip, Ernie for the driving, Graeme for the maps and for being the "tail end Charlie" and last of all everyone for their good company.

We were Richard Lockett (trip leader), Ernie (driver), Graeme (maps), Nicola.

Mikimiki Tramline Track — Green Therapy – (28th September).

Report by Kim Vardon

Photo by Kim Vardon and Graeme Curwen

I was grateful for the 8 a.m. meet-and-greet at Milverton Park, especially on this overcast spring morning when the clocks had just sprung forward. (Amusingly, a few in our group were blissfully unaware of the daylight-saving change—but thanks to automatic updates, everyone arrived on time). Our mission for the day was to scout the Mikimiki Track and assess its suitability for the beginner's schedule in 2026.



We were a group of six, setting off in two cars with a quick stop in Pahiatua to pick up Ernie. Just over an hour later, we reached the quiet Kiriwhakapapa Campsite, where only a single tent was pitched. Some sleuthing the week before had warned me of the track's muddy reputation and a stream crossing without a bridge. Armed with gaiters and a sense of adventure, I was keen to put them to use. The forecast was unpredictable—showers and a roaring northwesterly were expected—but we felt confident the bush would offer us shelter.

After a quick kōrero and a photo at the DOC sign, we set off in good spirits. The track followed the stream before climbing gently over a small saddle. It was stunningly beautiful and tranquil—every shade of green bursting fresh and bright. The sound of rushing water drowned out my busy thoughts, which is always a welcome reprieve. And yes, there was mud! Plenty of classic Tararua mud. Kat quickly learned that sneakers aren't ideal for this track—or any in the Tararuas, really!

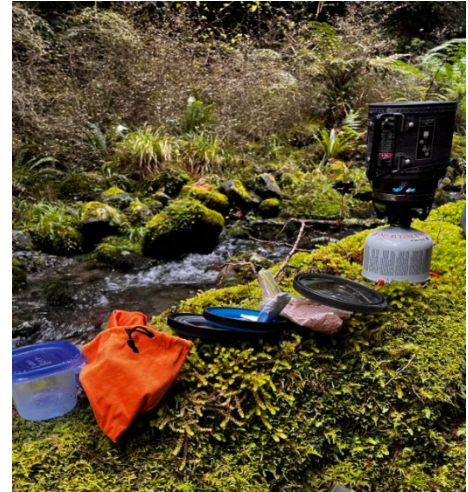
Some remnants of the old tramline appeared along the way, though it's far from a rail trail. As we tramped, Richard, Ernie, and Graeme did a stellar job clearing fallen debris from the path. The saddle was a gentle 240 m climb. At the top, we paused for morning *smoko*, where Graeme generously shared his homemade muesli slice. Soon after, we encountered the unbridged stream crossing—ankle-deep and reasonably wide, but easy to navigate. It was Kat's first stream crossing, and she handled it like a pro.



We continued toward Mikimiki Road, where the northwesterly made itself known, honking through the treetops. Upon reaching the large bridge near the road end, we chose to retrace our steps, stopping for lunch at the stream crossing. Graeme brewed a quick cuppa for two, which buoyed him and Richard nicely for the return leg. Five hours and 12 kilometres later, we arrived back at the campsite, now busier with others enjoying the shorter redwood tracks.

On the way home, we stopped at the Pūkaha Café for a well-earned hot drink and treat. Over steaming mugs, I asked the group whether they thought the track was a good fit for the beginner's schedule—the response was a unanimous yes. I'm already looking forward to the return of summer, with any luck, the mud will be less enthusiastic next time!

We were Verity (trip leader), Ernie, Graeme, Kat, Kim and Richard.



Hemi Matenga Reserve – (12th October).

Report by Anne Lawrence

Nicola had planned to do the Coppermine Magazine Loop but there had been rain off and on for days and rivers everywhere seemed pretty high. Coppermine Creek was unlikely to be doable. So she changed to the dry-foot option of the Hemi Matenga Reserve. Originally four were going but by Sunday morning, it was down to just Nicola and me. The two of us left Palmy around 8am. Rain and wind were forecast so we were pleased to have it dry all the way to Waikanae. This is one of Nicola's favourite tracks. She had last done it in June, leading a trip on a beautiful day when the Kohekohe were flowering, attracting flocks of tui and there were fantastic views to be had. Today's trip was a bit of a contrast, but enjoyable none the less.

We left the car on Huia St, Waikanae and headed up the road to the northern entrance to Te Au track. There was a light drizzle as we set off, but not enough to don coats and that was pretty much how the weather stayed for our whole walk. We didn't need our raincoats at all – as we got higher, there was quite a bit of mist/cloud/drizzle being blown about but we were fairly sheltered by the bush.

The bush is lovely. As well as the Kohekohe, which are impressive even when not in flower, there are Nikau, Rimu, Miro, Rewarewa, and many others. We also spotted some clematis flowering. The area is well trapped so we were surprised to see or hear only a few grey warblers. The wind was strong so maybe most birds were seeking shelter elsewhere.

It's a bit of a grunt up till the track flattens out around 500m after which it's easy going. We stopped at the first lookout for morning tea. We were able to find some shelter under the trees but no hope of a view with mist coming in thick. After that we seemed to get to the next lookout quite quickly. After this the track broadens and we started to meet a few others who had braved the weather. Before you get out of the bush, the track branches with options of the Parata track or the longer Kohekohe track back into Waikanae. Nicola recommended the Kohekohe track, and I can see why – it leads through a beautifully lush section on the flat nestled in behind Waikanae. This really added to the day.

Following along the streets back to the car we saw lots of tui and kereru feasting on the abundant kowhai. Back at the car, Nicola shared her flask so we both had a cuppa as we watched birds flying overhead, and cavorting in the trees. Then time to head home. It is always a little pleasing to have the rain set in once you are back in the car. We got back to Palmy mid-afternoon after a very pleasant day.

We were Anne and Nicola (trip leader).

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What's in My Pack

'What's in my pack' 2025 continues throughout the Spring season. Entries are accepted right up until the day before the end of year club BBQ in early December. What fun story, or top tip do have to share? No word limit, write a short punchy list or a lengthy story... completely up to you..... email entries to elderverity@gmail.com

What's in my pack?

PNTMC 2025

Whether it is for comfort, safety or function, we all have it; gear we swear by and can't live without when out in the backcountry. 'What's in my pack' is an opportunity for us to share our stories, tips and advice on the gear we carry in our packs when tramping

Choose from the 5 categories below and write a short story or explanation about the item or gear. Include a bit of history or an example of it in use, and a photo (in action is best) if available.



Categories:

Two for one - Every milligram on our back counts, which is why some gear earns its place for its dual, or even multipurpose function.

Second-hand - From merino gems, to vintage Swannndri and spare tent pegs, you never know what might be found in a second-hand store.

Repair job - in a 'throw away' society, taking a moment to repair your favourite gear can help save the planet and your wallet.

DIY - whether it is hand-made, self-made, custom-made or kit-set, gear that we make ourselves can have added value and satisfaction.

Can't live without - that one item you always pack.

For every entry, go into the draw to win a \$50 voucher from a local outdoor store of your choosing. Enter all 5 categories and go into the draw an extra 5 times. Draw made at the end of the year club BBQ.

email entries to: elderverity@gmail.com



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Send articles to

the newsletter editor at elderverity@gmail.com



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