



The Mouth 'n' Ear

Wellington Tramping & Mountaineering Club Newsletter

Email: newsletter@wtmc.org.nz

April 2012



WTMC Photo competition winners 2012. All winning and runner-up photos can be found on our club website at: <http://www.wtmc.org.nz/photo-competition-winners>

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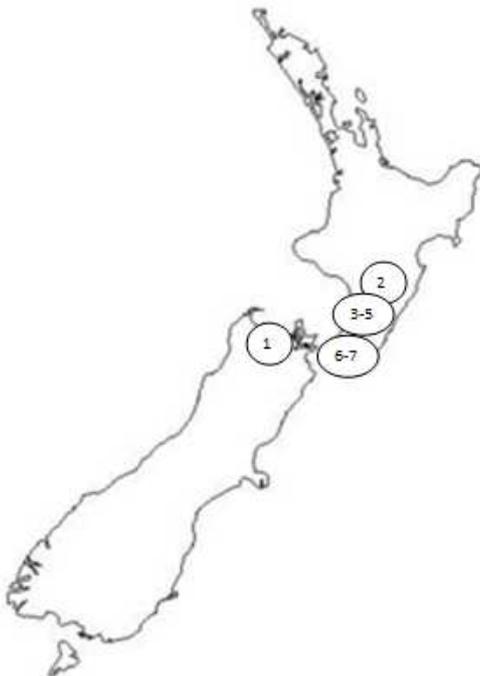
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Notice of AGM



Notice is hereby given that the sixty fifth annual general meeting of the Wellington Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc. will be held in the Tararua Tramping Club Hall, 4 Moncrieff Street, Wellington on Wednesday 18 April 2012 at 8.00pm.

Agenda:

1. Attendance and Apologies
2. Approval of Minutes of the 64th AGM
3. Matters arising from the Minutes of the 64th AGM
4. Consideration and adoption of the Annual Report and Annual
5. Accounts (discussion of issues arising welcome)
6. Election of Officers to the General committee for the 2012/2013 term
7. General Business

Note:

(a) Associate, Junior, Family Members and Friends of the Club do not have voting privileges.

(b) Please bring a copy of the Annual Report (which includes the Financial Report) to the meeting.

The Nature of Things

Sharron Came, President



In a few weeks we will hold our AGM. With this issue of the newsletter is a copy of the Annual Report and the Club Accounts. There are five topics we would like to get your feedback on at the AGM. I have highlighted them here for convenience and to get you thinking. Of course we would welcome debate/feedback on anything to do with running the club.

- **Club nights** – are you prepared to help run these? How can we make club nights more popular? Could the club survive without them? We all lead busy lives so it is hard to get 1 or 2 people to commit to turning up every Wednesday and staying all evening as well as coming to monthly committee meetings. One option is to set up a roster and have rotating club night organisers.
- **Lodge utilisation** – we have a fantastic facility in a brilliant location sitting empty or partly empty lots of the time. How can we get people to use it?

- **Van usage** – we have two great vans for transporting people to road ends yet often we only have sufficient trips/punters heading out to fill one van. Can we increase trip numbers or do we need to look at selling a van? Can you think of any ways to generate more income from the vans, either during the week when not in use, or during weekend trips? Does anyone know a way to minimise our maintenance and repair costs?
- **Leading trips** – it is always difficult to get sufficient trip leaders, particularly for day trips where punter demand outstrips leader supply. Any ideas? What stops you leading a trip? Should we send day walkers off to other clubs?
- **Training courses** – do you like what we run? Should we run other courses, if yes what and who can we get to help with these?

I say it in the Annual Report and I'll say it again here. Every single person on the 2011/12 Committee has worked extremely hard to keep the club running smoothly. It would be nice if you could come along on the 18th of April and show your appreciation and support.

Nominations for the 2012 Committee:

President	Sharron Came
Vice President	Kate Cushing
Secretary	
Treasurer	Steve Austin
Chief Guide	Amanda Wells
Assistant Chief Guide	Richard Lardner
Social Convenor	Jenny Beaumont
Newsletter Editor	Sarah Young
Membership Officer	Helen Law
Promotions Officer	
Transport Officer	Gareth Morton
Ruapehu Lodge Convenor	Brian Goodwin
General	Donna Maher

As you can see we still have a few vacancies in crucial roles and a couple of the people who have agreed to stay on would be really happy to stand aside for new people, most notably Jenny and Gareth. It is not too late to get yourself nominated. There is a form attached to this newsletter or email someone on the committee.

Hopefully you have noticed that we have a new look website up and running. If you have not taken a look I suggest you do so and spread the word. Big thanks goes to Mike Gilbert, Sarah Young and Steve Kohler who despite being very busy with loads of other stuff still managed to put in the hard yards to see this important project through. Of course we still have more stuff to do, most notably getting the membership data base back up and running. That will happen once those of you who like to leave things to the last minute get around to renewing your membership. We would love to hear what you think of the

website, particularly any constructive suggestions for making it even better or any suggested amendments to content. Contact Mike at webmaster@wtmc.org.nz. Next up will be the electronic booking system for the Lodge. This is due to be up and running by 1 May 2012, - something to look forward to as you plan your winter adventures.

Finally, I would like to thank Mika, Hans, Marie and Tony for running our Bushcraft course in March. Due to its popularity there will be another course run in April. I'm stoked that people are making the most of this opportunity to meet other outdoor loving people and learn a bit more about tramping.

See you on the 18th.

Sharron

Track Talk

Amanda Wells, Chief Guide



It's nearly a new (tramping club) year, so time for some resolutions. Remember leaders' forums? They are back, as of Wednesday 2 May. Meet at 6.45pm in the cafe above the Embassy to talk routes, meals and other trip leading intricacies. Feel free to come along to just chat about trip leading if you're vaguely inclining in that direction. Or just to fill in some time pre club!

If you are feeling leader-like, now is the ideal time to take action. We are currently working on the Winter schedule, which has a deadline of Friday 20 April. To sign up to lead, just edit the Google document. If you don't have the link, drop me an email at chiefguide@wtmc.org.nz and I'll send it to you. We particularly need people to sign up NOW to lead the first two weeks of the schedule – otherwise we get to the end of April and the board is bare...

There are a lot of new people trying us out at the moment. Remember that they might need a bit more info about a trip so that they can make a good decision about whether it's right for them. As a leader, don't be afraid to ask about potential punters' experience. It's much better for people to do something too easy but still have a great time than to do something far enough out of their comfort zone that they never come back.

New people also need educating about our emergency contacts system. The bottom line is that if you aren't back by Sunday night, the club emergency contact will ensure the Police are alerted. He or she needs to know your intentions, including back up plans, any relevant medical conditions, and your punters' emergency contacts. This process is not optional; it stands for some of our core values as a club. Please make our rostered club emergency contacts' lives easier and get this info to them in a timely way.

We are looking at organising an outdoor first aid course in conjunction with the Alpine Club. If you are interested, please drop an email to Richard (lardner.richard@gmail.com). We've had a great response to the recent Bushcraft course. Huge thanks to Mika and Hans for their hard work and leadership.

Membership

Helen Law, Membership officer

The following new members were approved at the last committee meeting. Welcome and congratulations!

Couple members: Rex & Charmaine Wessels
Junior members: Timothy & Matthew Wessels

Margaret Craigie was upgrade from Friend of Club to Senior member.



Social corner

Donna Maher and Jenny Beaumont, Social convenors



WTMC 2012 photo competition results

The annual WTMC photo competition was a great success. Thanks very much to Grant Newton for his encouraging feedback on our photos and for selecting deserving winners!

Congratulations to these winners and runners up of the 5 categories:

Above bushline:	Tony Gazley and Spencer Clubb
Below bushline:	Spencer Clubb and Hans Wiskerke
Hut and camp life:	Tony Gazley and Mika Verheul
Native flora and fauna:	Ian Harrison and Spencer Clubb
Outdoor landscape:	Ian Harrison and Amelia White

The overall winners:



People's Choice winner: Spencer Clubb



Judge's choice winner: Ian Harrison

All winning and runner-up photos can be found on our club website at:
<http://www.wtmc.org.nz/photo-competition-winners>.

We will be holding another photo competition next year so don't forget to take your camera out and about with you!

Coming up at club nights in April

4th April - Harry Smith goes cycling around Samoa

11th April - Oxfam Trailwaker - a celebration! Four club members undertook the 100km Oxfam Trailwalk, with the support crew of four other club members. Come along to hear about the good, the bad and the ugly. And thanks to all the lovely club members who donated to the Café Cruisers!

18th April - WTMC AGM. We hope to see you all there!

25th April - Alan Knowles straps Nordic tour skates to his tramping boots and heads out onto our lakes, swamps and creeks in July. He says it's easier than tramping, more exhilarating than skiing and you see lots a new country!

Got an idea for a Wednesday night slideshow? Talk to us on a club night or email the social convenors at social@wtmc.org.nz

Lodge update

Sue Walsh



You will have received the Ruapehu Lodge Guide for 2012/2013 with this newsletter. If you plan to use the lodge this season it is important that you familiarise yourself with the sheet as a number of major changes are taking place:

1. **New online booking system.**

We are pleased to let everyone know that club has implemented a new booking system which can be accessed online from 1 May. This will enable everyone to do their own bookings with a credit card and, subject to availability, obtain immediate confirmation of the booking.

2. **Dates bookings open for the season.**

Booking dates for the season open 1 May for members. Coincident with the booking system up and running, bookings for members open 1 May for the whole season. This allows everyone to plan ahead. Non-member booking dates open have changed.

Non-member weekend bookings now open 1 month before each trip runs (with the exception of open weekends). Week bookings for non-members open 1 June. This is to allow non-members more time to plan and organise trips.

3. **Rates.**

The previous High School, Intermediate and Primary rates have been collapsed and consolidated into one youth rate of 4-17 years old. This makes booking easier and aligns well with what everyone else is doing.

There has also been a slight overall increase in rates this year to cover the hike in our insurance premium and the significant increase in our electricity prices. The food component cost remains the same as last year.

If you have any questions regarding the booking system or anything else to do with the lodge this season, please contact the Ruapehu booking officer by phone: 04 479 6799 or email: lodgebookings@wtmc.org.nz.

Minivan famil session

Gareth Morton, Transport Officer



To ensure the club always has enough volunteers to drive the club Ford Transit 12-seater minivans when heading away each weekend we are going to hold a Minivan Famil session on the morning of either Saturday 21st or Sunday 22nd April, depending on peoples preference.

The famil, open to members and non-members who are looking to join the club, is ideal for those who wish to help out in some way but may lack the experience or confidence to drive a larger, manual transmission vehicle.

It is an opportunity for people to practise driving the vans in a quieter, slower and more comfortable environment than that of a Friday night departure with a noisy van full of trampers and packs.

The session will depart from the train station and last about 3 hours depending on numbers.

The session will be led by Steve Austin who will run through:

- the features of the van
- what to do in case of a flat tyre or other mechanical problem
- where the vans are stored and
- how to pay for diesel

and everyone attending the session will be given the opportunity to drive the van.

If you are keen to come along, or have any further questions, please email me on transport@wtmc.org.nz with your preference for either Saturday or Sunday morning.

Trip reports

To Peel or not to Peel

20-23 January 2012, Medium tramp, Kahurangi NP (map #1)

Katy Glenie

Punters: Spencer Clubb, Kate Cushing, Kevin Cole, Katy Glenie, Illona Keenan (leader)

After many years of vigorously peeling any carrot that came within a co-eee of my cooking pot, I have recently found there is a strong movement of people who believe in a skin-on approach to culinary carrots.

I therefore now feel more confident in writing this newsletter article about the lack of peel in our Peel Range trip.

After spending Friday night cramped together in a small shelter above Cobb Reservoir, our group of intrepid explorers set off down the road to the start of the Cobb River Track. We were looking forward to some sweaty bush-bashing and ridge climbing along the Peel Range.

However it seemed that one of the party (known to some as Sonny Bill) had done a bit of prior research, and the ridge we were planning on navigating could only be described as “a little bit gnarly”. When seasoned WTMC folk describe something as “a little bit gnarly” I start to think that it’s time for a change of plan.

Illona was keen to actually attempt to meet the trip grading of Medium, so we agreed on a new route. We hot-tailed it along the valley floor, heading up the ridge just after the ramshackle but beautiful Chaffey’s Hut. The team hopefully followed a trappers line for some time, until realising it was leading us astray.

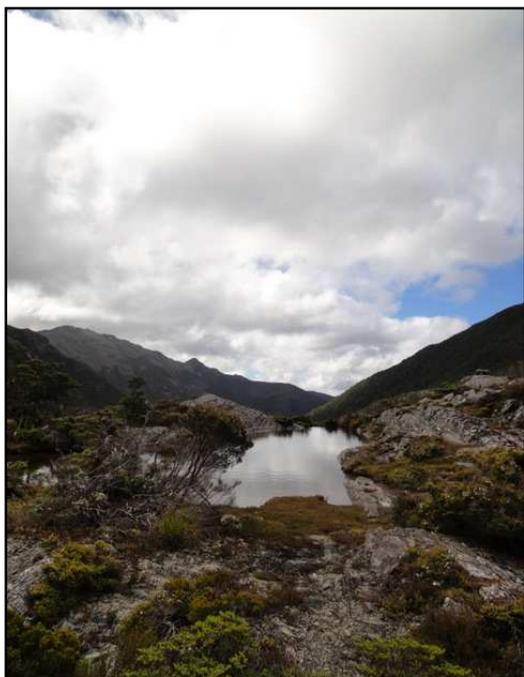
We retraced our steps a bit, then headed straight up a likely looking ridge towards Mt Prospect. We were pretty happy trampers when we finally made it down to Camp Lake – a gorgeous spot nestled beneath a circle of mountains along the Peel Range.

Next day saw us heading back down to Cobb River and along the valley floor to Fenella Hut. Here we met up with our other van companions, who had chosen to head up Peel Range despite Sonny Bill’s “gnarly” descriptions. They reported back that hours spent on the ridges had still resulted in gnarliness, and they too had headed back down into the valley. We felt just a little smug.

We had a glorious afternoon exploring the tarns below Mt Xenicus, and repaired for a lovely dinner prepared by the best-tramping-chef-in-the-West: Illona.

Monday was spent walking back along the valley floor, soaking up some well-deserved sun and views.

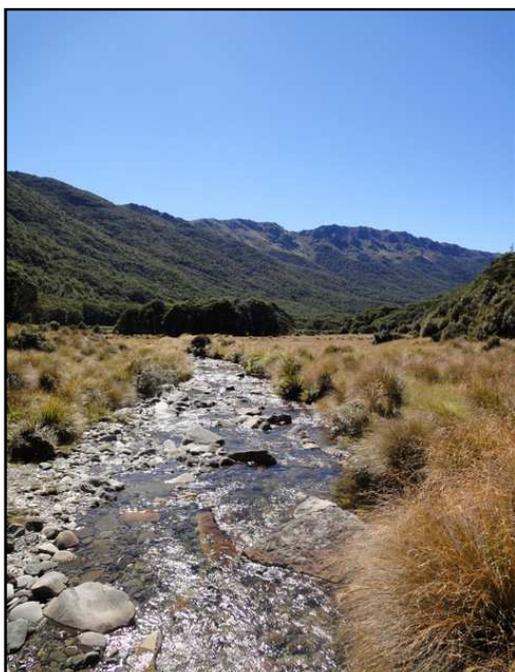
So maybe those carrot non-peelers were right after all – there is no need for Peel to have a great trip in the Kahurangi.



Tarns near Mt Gibb and Mt Xenicus



Tent Camp – Cobb River Valley



The beautiful Cobb River



Looking out over Cobb River Valley

A Sawtooth Sunday

24-26 February 2012, Fit tramp, Ruahines (map #2)

Stephen Healey

Punters: Mike Phethean (leader), Sharron Came and Stephen Healey

- We just can't pass up the chance to walk Sawtooth Ridge on such a fine day
- Awfully long way back to the car at Rangiwahia but!
- It will be ok says Mike

So decision made, we turned and headed North along Sawtooth Ridge on Sunday morning.

It wasn't supposed to work out this way, but as usual Huey had a hand in the way things turned out.

A late flurry of emails saw us heading for the Western side of the range, instead of the original Eastern side, destination: Rangiwahia Hut.

Leaving home around lunchtime, I arrived 1st, but Sharron and Mike left work early as well so were only about an hour behind me.

Excellent we can all get an early night to prepare for the long day ahead.

Our plan was to head for Pourangaki Hut via Te Hekenga, Sawtooth and the ridgeline towards Iron Peg, dropping down the track off Pt 1632 and back up to the hut. That left a very manageable 5-6 hours on the Sunday, to get back out to the car.

We awoke though on Saturday morning surrounded by mist and clag. The outlook for today was unfortunately somewhat gloomy, with occasional showers and a brief southerly change forecast.

We got away at 7am anyway and by the time we started to drop into the Te Hekenga saddle, the weather lifted somewhat allowing spirits to rise and teasing us into thinking we would be ok.

We arrived at Te Hekenga around 11am and with reasonable visibility, we had the advantage of choosing a route around the gnarly bit here. Last time I was here we had driving snow, no visibility and a few inches of snow on the ground; then we had headed down the spur to the south until we could drop down a scree and sidle under the rocky ribs to eventually regain the ridge to Taumataomekura.



Sharron & Mike climbing back up to rejoin the ridgeline heading to Taumataomekura from Te Hekenga

This worked well but was a longer option. With good weather this weekend we picked a much quicker route: If you head East on the South side of the pinnacle ahead, about the same height as you reach the top of the ridge, there is a trail that follows around a short distance until you come to a rock climb, directly below you there is a gully that drops you down to where you can sidle under this part and back up onto the ridge again. We couldn't access this gully directly at the top, but a short backtrack to the previous gully allowed us to drop down a short distance and then cut over into the original choice without any difficulty.

As we reached Taumataomekura we dropped to the Leeward side of the ridge for a snack and to consider our options. The cloud was starting to roll in again and after much deliberation we decided nothing except that most of us would rather not walk Sawtooth Ridge in the rain.

Continuing on to Tiraha, the weather suddenly closed in completely and the rain started to bounce when it hit the ground, it had turned to sleet or hail. Either way after some debate we decided to drop to Howletts, thinking we would probably be returning the same way the following day to get back to the car.

Descending the spur, the rain settled in again, reaffirming our decision to bail, it was cold wet and unpleasant up here today.

Arriving at Howletts Hut around 1:30pm, we read, dozed and filled in the day until it was time for dinner, then Mike got the coal fire going and we finally managed to dry out our remaining wet gear.

Sometime during the afternoon / evening we started muttering about still having a crack at Sawtooth Ridge if the weather was fine tomorrow. Either along it and back, or even to complete the trip as planned. We calculated this would be about a 12 hour day, so would need to be off early again the next morning if we were to have any chance of completing this; funnily enough sitting at home looking over the maps, this wasn't an option I had considered.



Sunset from Howletts

We set the alarm for 6am and on arising discovered a brilliantly clear morning and suddenly Sawtooth Ridge was firmly back on our radar again.

Arriving at the top of Tiraha around 8am it was decided. We couldn't pass up the chance to wander along Sawtooth Ridge in the sunshine and if we were going to Ohuinga, we might as well continue on all the way and finish off the trip.

There was a cool breeze on the tops so it was on with the jackets and gloves, but the

sun was shining and the views were fantastic.

Sawtooth Ridge is exposed and shouldn't be taken lightly in bad weather, but travel is actually pretty good with many sidles under or around the various gnarly bits, it definitely looks worse than it is.



Sawtooth Ridge



Sidling around a 'bump' on Sawtooth

It was fantastic to finally get along here in good weather, my few previous attempts had always been dogged by bad weather, but today was just brilliant.

By the time we had reached Ohuinga, cloud was starting to build up to the South and North of us but we remained in the sunshine, with a window of fine weather that was to remain with us for most of the day.

The travel north of here to the Pourangaki Hut turnoff is, at times, more challenging territory than the ridgeline we had just traversed, easy enough in good weather, but the pinnacles just south of the turnoff to the hut are slightly more difficult than anything on Sawtooth Ridge.

Next it was down to the river and up to the hut for a late lunch, or actually we ate on the ridgeline above the hut rather than dropping down to it, energy conservation seemed more important than seeing the inside of the hut. Mike went down and filled in the log book and topped up our water bladders, but we were happy just resting.

Funnily enough my photo's seemed to dry up over this period as well.

The climb up to the top still passed quickly enough and once there, Sharron sent off a few texts to explain we would be a little late out of the hills, it was now around 3:30pm and we still had a bit of ground to cover yet.

Back along to Maungamahue again, where the weather began to get overcast and the temperature started dropping. Soon enough though we were standing by the sign pointing to Rangi Hut, a couple of photos here, (we got none on the Saturday morning as it was too misty), then off down to the hut.

A quick re-hydrate there and then we were off again, finally reaching the cars just after 7pm, exactly as predicted 12 hours ago.

No rest here though, after a quick change of clothes, we hit the road, Mike and Sharron off to Wellington, while I had to head back to Tauranga.

All in all this was a very memorable weekend in the hills.

Many thanks to; Mike for making it happen, Sharron for the Jellybeans and Huey for the fine Sunday.

Amelia's first tramp

10-11 March 2012, Family, Atiwhakatu Hut, Tararua NP (map #3) Amelia Lyth (age 4)

Punters: Richard Lyth, Hamish Lyth (7), Amelia Lyth (4), Beth Piggott, Taylor Bowman (5)
Sarah Young, Alistair Young, Arabella Young (2), Harriett Young (6 mths)
Clare Green, Auriel Lewis (8), Seren Lewis (6), Susan Sturman, Katelyn Sturman (7)

On the weekend of March 10/11th, I went for my first overnight tramp with Dad. We were in a large party of 5 families. The youngest was only 6 months old!

We set off on Saturday from Holdsworth carpark for Atiwhakatu hut – a distance of 5 kilometres. It was a beautiful sunny day, but the trees were good to keep us cool. Most of the time we could hear the Atiwhakatu Stream running near the track. Dad had all the

heavy things in his pack, and my brother Hamish had a pack with two sleeping bags, lunch and a big billy for cooking inside it. I didn't have a bag, because it was my first big tramp. We stopped a lot to eat; I often shared lollies, snakes and chocolate with the other kids on the tramp. After lunch we came to a river where the swing bridge had been washed away by a lot of rocks. I thought it would be good to take my boots off to wash my feet in the river.



It took about 5 hours to get to the hut; DOC reckons it should only take 3! Atiwhakatu is a modern hut. You need to bring your own candles, food, and cooking equipment. There were lots of other people there – Dad thinks about 50 in total. We had a shared dinner with the people in our group; most people had second helpings!

I slept really well, Dad helped me get to sleep by giving a cuddle in the bunk. He even carried me barefoot to the toilet in the middle of the night (because he couldn't find his sandals in the dark). The toilet is really, really,

smelly – but we won't tell Mum that!

The morning was busy, getting ready for the return. Dad was a little slow getting packed, so Hamish and I started walking with Beth and Clare, two other Mums in the group. Dad soon caught us up though. We stopped for lunch on the river, and had great fun throwing rocks, eating and generally relaxing.

Back on the track I soon started to tell Dad I was tired. When he finally listened to me, he picked me up in his arms to carry me. We both got a big fright soon after, when Dad tripped and hurt himself. Some other trampers carried his pack, and Dad walked out very slowly to the car park. We learned later that he had broken two bones in his foot.

I was pretty tired, but had really impressed Dad with the great walking that I did. Now we are busy planning our next tramp.

Waiopehu Hut via Waiopehu track and Gable End Ridge

9-11 March 2012, EM, Tararua NP (map #4)

Sarah Fisher

Punters: Steve Austin (leader), Chris Sellwood, Sarah Fisher, Matt Barclay, Geoffrey Cornelis, Shane Gallagher, Adam Clarke, Juliet Armstrong

The tramp started really well for me: I hadn't been tramping in a number of years but thought I had all my gear together in one place since I had recently done a trip to cycle and camp the Otago Rail trail. So, I decided that I could leave packing my bag until 11pm on Friday evening only to realise I couldn't locate my waterproof jacket!! After this horrified realisation, I remembered I had left it at work. I managed to arrive early at the station but completely out of breath telling Steve I had nearly forgotten the most important item. The gear list on the club website is great for doing a last-minute check to see that you have everything. It's very easy to overlook the most obvious items even if you have been tramping a lot.

There were 8 of us in total, including our trip leader Steve, who met at the station at 8am on a sunny Saturday morning. We had all done some tramping before but were newbies to WTMC. The trip to the road end went pretty quickly, with Steve expertly negotiating the WTMC van across the narrow bridge to Poads Road end. The tramp was originally planned for North Ohau Biv but due to numbers Steve thought South Ohau Hut would be a better idea; a fairly new hut that didn't even exist on my 2006 map of the Tararuas. However, when we checked the log book at the road end, there were a group of VUWTC members, who had stated that their intention was to tramp to South Ohau Hut so Steve suggested heading to Waiopehu Hut, an idea that was greeted with much enthusiasm, (despite been a bit longer and steeper), as it would mean we could do a loop rather than returning on the same track. Juliet and Adam had both done the tramp to the hut before so unfortunately they couldn't bag a new hut.



The punters at Waiopehu Hut - except Shane (who was asleep) and Matt (who is taking the photo)

Not long after Bush Corner, Steve announced he could see the hut on the hill side. "He's not having us on, is he?" Matt said to me. Apparently not, because we came across the hut about 30 minutes later.

We got to the hut about 3pm where some of the group decided to have a nap or relax in the sun. Geoffrey and I were still feeling really energetic so we walked up to Waiopehu Peak and Twin Memorial Crosses to take advantage of the unusually good weather. I knew that getting perfect visibility above bush line in the Tararuas is a bit of a gamble so decided to make the most of it. While walking up to the peak, I met

another WTMC member, who was doing a day walk. We got talking and I mentioned I was doing a tramp with the WTMC. "The Tongue and Meats Club," he said. To which I

responded with confusion that it was the WTMC, not the “Tongue and Meats” Club - by this stage I was wondering with increasing bewilderment what such a club was!!! He then explained me to me that this was what the club was known as amongst club members since the club once shared the same acronym as a Wellington meats company.

The view from Waiopehu peak was amazing with some picturesque cloud formation. I did find it strange though that when I sat on the peak next to the trig I could still hear the distant sound of cars. We all found it a bit unusual that you could hear the sounds of civilisation from the hut – it’s probably the only hut in the Tararuas to do so. In the evening



we were treated to a beautiful sunset and could see the lights of Levin and Palmerston North. The hut log book was pretty entertaining with people recording main activities on their trip to the hut as ranging from eating right through to scuba diving and sprinting away from giant bears.

Dinner was a delicious: Thai Green Curry cooked by Steve, Shane, Adam and Juliet.

Sunday dawned with light drizzle and mist; a typical Tararua day, especially when above bush-line. We left the hut at about

8:30am and went up to Waiopehu peak and then continued the descent along muddy Gable End Ridge. The mist did clear a bit allowing a little bit of a view but not as good as the day before.

One of the topics of conversation along the way was of tramping gear and the merits of various packs: NZ made packs (MacPac) vs Off-shore manufactured packs. Somehow Matt brought up that he had some tramping socks since 1985. “I hadn’t even been born then!” I piped up. Those socks will be famous one day, surely.....

After we had descended the ridge, the track was fairly flat and we all zoomed along back to the van.

Everyone had a great time. Thanks to Steve for driving and organising the trip.

Mangahao Flats Hut

16-18 March 2012, EM tramp, Tararua FP (map #5)

Sarah Fisher

Punters: Jo Fink, Karl Stapleton, Penny Coombes, Ian Harrison, Sarah Fisher, Margaret Craigie, Megan Banks (leader)

Out tramping again with WTMC for my second weekend in a row, we met at the station on a sunny Saturday morning for the 2.5 hour drive up to Mangahao Dam road end. The trip along the gravel road to the Upper Mangahao Dam is a long, bumpy ride in, taking about 50 minutes.

We left the van just after 10am. Penny and I were the newbies with Jo having done a number of tramps with the club on and off over a couple years. I was the only person who had done the tramp to the hut before so it gave everyone else the opportunity to bag another hut. I was a little nervous about the track because I remembered steep river terraces from my last trip there, when I had tramped to the hut at night. Luckily the track was better than I remembered and obviously tramping in daylight made a big difference!

We stopped for lunch just after the second bridge where there were some DOC contractors working on putting in the foundations for a new bridge that is to replace the existing one. Ian's GPS came in pretty handy along the way as it gave us pretty accurate readings of where we were. At Harris Creek Bridge we stopped for another break where Margaret entertained us with her adventures above bush line in the Tararuas: bagging Maungahuka hut (not to mention the 15 metre steel ladder!) and being stuck there for a day due to bad weather and her continued battle with the weather across Bridge Peaks to Field Hut.



Mangahao Flats Hut: group photo

We got to the hut at 4:15pm, easily within Ian's estimated arrival time of 5pm, and found we had it all to ourselves. Unfortunately they had replaced the hut log book earlier this year so I couldn't go back and read my entry from when I had done the tramp in December 2008.

Megan was keen for a swim at the hut which I considered brave – I thought the river would be freezing since it was about 5pm and it was the Tararuas. But a few of us ended up going for a swim and found it really refreshing.

The communal meal of Asian Noodle stir fry was delicious – thanks to Jo, Karl and Ian for cooking. The meals I've had on the two tramps I've done so far have been really impressive; I've now got the recipe book downloaded for meals ideas while I'm at home!

Margaret had us all laughing over how she had picked the chicken up from New World in that morning and had just got her knife out to chop it up into pieces on a table outside the supermarket. Consumers who were braving early morning shopping probably thought it was a new street stall starting up!

After dinner, the cards came out and we played Presidents and Loser;— Jo's reign as President went pretty much undefeated and we eventually surrendered to turn in for the night.

On a sunny Sunday morning we left the hut at about 9am. We decided to follow the river until the junction where the inland route joined back up with the track. The river was no deeper than shorts height so it was a fun way of avoiding walking the same track twice. We stopped for an early lunch not long after Harris Creek where there was picnic table (accompanied by a pair of slippers!?) in a little clearing just off the track.

Once we got to the bridge where the DOC contractors were working, we decided to follow the river out to the road-end instead of the track. Getting down from the track onto the river bed was a bit of clamber. Unfortunately, Jo was halfway down when she heard me putting my foot in my mouth and jokingly muttering "this is a bit of steep drop." This resulted in us both in fits of laughter at the perfect timing of the comment and everyone else regarding us with confusion over what the joke was.

Just as we got down onto the riverbed, a helicopter circled overhead and then landed on the riverbed in front of us to pick up some of the DOC contractors' gear. It was nice to see a helicopter in the Tararuas for a reason other than SAR.

From there, it was an easy hour walk down the river to the road-end, which was about half the time it would have taken by the track.

Thanks to Megan for organising the trip and driving. It was a really fun weekend.

Bushcraft training weekend

24-25 March 2012, training, Paua Hut, Orongorongo Valley (map #6) Multiple authors
Punters: Geoffrey, Penny, John, Joanna, Marnie,
Steve, Robyn, Graeme, Rebecca
Leaders: Mika, Hans, Tony and Marie

With nine punters signing up rather early we were confident it would turn out to be a good weekend. And indeed, it was a weekend with a good atmosphere, made more so by the Paua Hut rat having been caught earlier this year. The rain during the days prior to the weekend meant that the Orongorongo river was a bit up, which added to the fun of trying different techniques of river crossing.

We set out from Catchpool at 10 am after we had weighed everyone's pack. The average pack weighed about 13-14 kg; well done! Mika's pack was good for an embarrassing (or impressive?) 20.8 kg, but that might have had to do with the fact that Hans' pack only appeared to be 8 kg.

Since I won the "lightest backpack" contest, my reward was the honour of having to unpack it all in front of the whole group, probably to prove that I hadn't left half of my gear at home (fortunately, I hadn't). To the apparent disappointment of some, there wasn't any magic trick to it either. The main trick really is to just think hard about what you will really need for the trip; as Tony said "a heavy backpack is full of light things".

You can certainly save a lot of weight on the heavier items, such as backpack, sleeping bag, mat and tent. Lightweight gear is usually a bit pricier but not by much, as long as you avoid the supposedly lightweight stuff from the main manufacturers. It's usually better to try more specialised brand which trade online. For the rest, I just try to take only what I am sure I will need, plus whatever might be necessary for safety (dry clothes, first aid kit). There is a whole lot of information and tips on the internet about going lightweight, including some which give advice relevant to New Zealand conditions. Some of these guys manage to go on overnight trips with about 4kg, including food! That is clearly an extreme case but still, they have good advice which helped me to shave off a few kg from my backpack.

Later during the weekend we found a moment to discuss the contents of several packs and it was good to realise that we all were well prepared. If, however, we had discovered that someone had forgotten an essential item such as a water-bottle, we learned that a watertight bag would suffice in its place. The spectre of learning to cross rivers had been



hanging over us since we all signed onto the course, and for many of us it was probably one of the main reasons we were there, but then, after lunch, we were suddenly presented with the prospect of actually launching ourselves into a cold, brown and not un-fast flowing river, and we all got a bit more of an idea of the need to have these sorts of skills when tramping in the NZ wilderness. Coming from Europe I'd always had the mantra drilled into me that you avoided getting your boots wet at all costs (even taking them off when crossing rivers and going bare-foot if needed) and so it was both weird and liberating at the same time to feel the water seeping in over the tops of my boots.

It was great to get the advice and experience of our group leaders Mika, Hans, Tony and Marie and so we spent a good little while trying out different river crossing points: trying by ourselves, with sticks, in groups of two, three, four, until we all felt confident, and that little bit more knowledgeable (and damp). The groups of children merrily hurling themselves across the river probably helped our bravado a bit mind you...!

I think we also all realised though (and again, this applies for the whole weekend) that you can't beat experience and practice, and that although we all felt a bit more aware of the considerations you had to make before embarking (or not embarking as the case may be) on a river crossing, we'd just have to get on out there and get stuck in.

With a bit of hesitation as where it came to find our way and where to cross the river again we arrived at Paua Hut on the true left of the Orongorongo river around 2.30 pm. Marie and Tony pitched in their tents, we had a go at putting up the large and small fly, and Marie showed us how a mountain radio worked.



T'was a dark and stormy night..... Pitch black in fact and gale force northerlies were blowing. This did not matter, however, as by this time we were all warm and well fed in Paua Hut. We had learned a lot that day from our leaders. Their attitude and enthusiasm for sharing their knowledge and experience was fantastic and really made the weekend for me. I particularly enjoyed practising the river crossings with Tony and Penny. It was appropriate that one of our final lessons of the day was a fire lighting lesson with Tony as this resulted in the hut being warm through the night. So much so in fact that I was warned it would be pretty warm up on the top bunks. Due to this sage advice and the fact I knew I would have to venture out in the night (slight bout of paranoia on this foray) I opted for a mattress on the floor. I had a very comfortable night probably partly due to the fact that rats were not mentioned until the next morning and I did not see the sign on the wall about them until then! Ah, all these things

to learn and consider, but that was why I was there. The next day would enlighten me more when the mysteries of that quintessential 'boys own' device, the compass, were revealed to me. Along with new skills that we learned, the big take home message for me was around being more aware of the situation and surroundings.

Tony predicted more rain to come on Sunday so we headed off in a timely fashion. We chose to go up Brown's track to experience the different terrain and conditions. It was muddy, steep and slippery, garnished with a gusty wind coming up the hill from the river. How easy did we find the main track afterwards, and the rain? We missed it.

Family tramp to Paua Hut

25-26 February 2012, Family, Orongorongo Valley (map #7)

Vivienne Lewis



Intrepid trampers (from left to right):
Tom, Matt, Toby and Tim

Wow, what a glorious weekend! The weather gods were extra kind to the young trampers.

This was the writer's first tramp in ... let's say her son is nearly 17 and leave it at that. Her external frame pack was the focus much discussion but hey: isn't retro in? I'm sure mustard coloured, swing jackets with scoop necklines are fashionable again?

The designated rendezvous was on Saturday, 10:00 in the Catchpool Valley car park, one of the many entry points to the Rimutaka Forest Park, and we were promptly

on our way. Almost immediately civilisation was a vague memory... Our intrepid young trampers, Tom, Matt, Tim and Toby, in consecutive years 6 through 9, were very enthusiastic and ranged happily from front to back.

Morning tea was taken at the aptly named "Midway Bridge" where the boys practised their climbing skills. There is a well travelled path down to the stream way, way below, however the opposite bank of scree was a different proposition. But never despair: Matt and Tim's dad was prepared with a climbing rope, and without further ado, it was unfurled and up the boys reverse-abseiled.

Toby's dad decided to investigate the rumour of a short cut to the Orongorongo Valley so leaving the rest of the party to continue on the main path, he, the writer and Tim set off exploring past one of the many private huts in the park (anonymous after some plonker removed the identifying plaque; why?) and along a rough, steepish track winding and scrambling down the ridge. Tim was very accomplished at sorting out the way to go, and we soon stumbled out onto the river valley. Unlike most "short" cuts, this one really did cut a good loop off the main route, though was it shorter in time? Debatable:



Matt showing how it's done

the main group was very quickly upon us.

Regrouped, it was a very pleasant stroll to Paua hut and didn't we make great progress. Cuppa tea anyone?

Exhausted by our strenuous morning, the afternoon was free for unstructured activities: some of us slept, others read, dam construction was attempted, and explorations undertaken.

A day's tramping will pique the most fussy appetite: the writer has memories of delicious, one-billy "stews" of T.V.P. – is this backpackers' staple still available? "bacon" was especially flavoursome, and Surprise mixed veges, thickened with potato flakes, the latter ground to powder after a couple of days at the bottom of a pack. Cabin bread and honey was a gourmet dessert, not to be confused with the honey, cheese and cabin bread had for lunch.

The modern trumper is accustomed to far better fare: our meal would have graced any dinner table. Dips with capsicum strips and carrot sticks to start was followed by a delicious main of pasta shapes, salami, broccoli and pesto (the lack of cheese was not noticed), then there was shortbread for afters. Yum!



Obligatory marshmallow toasting

A marshmallow roast is mandatory on a family tramp, and this weekend was no exception. Tim and Matt's dad did a great job of getting the fire going and in no time nuggets of goey, sugary deliciousness were being scooped; Toby won the "who can thread the most sweeties on one stick", and the consensus was that the white marshmallows are best.

If you go to bed with the birds, it is axiomatic that you are also up with them. Left overs make a great breakfast and after chores were completed, it was back on the trail.

Those who went the long way were keen to explore the Alternative Route,

and having made note of landmarks (truly, we didn't use the GPS reading) we easily located the start of the track, and once again, Tim led from the front.

We had the obligatory break at Midway Bridge to encourage the boys' climbing skills and this time little Tom conquered his fears and bravely completed the reverse-abseil. Well done Tom.

And so we arrived back at the car park, earlier than expected. Big commendations to all the boys: route finder Tim, entertainer Toby, intrepid Matt and brave Tom. You are all awesome.

Thanks to Angela for a well organised, thoroughly enjoyable tramp. We especially appreciated the word you had with Tawhiri (god of wind and storms): I don't know what you did to convince him to stay away but it worked!

Apologies for inaccuracies that may have slipped in and any unintentional omissions: call it literary licence.

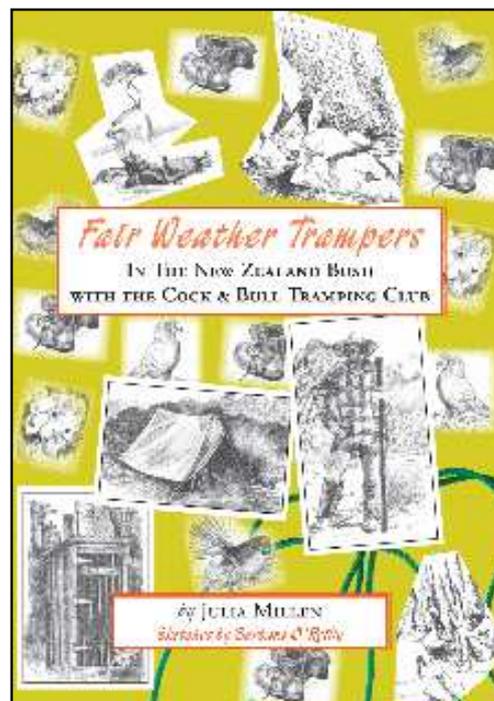
Other bits and bobs

Fair Weather Trampers: in the NZ bush with the Cock & Bull Tramping Club
A book by Julia Millen with sketches by Barbara O'Reilly

Writes Hill Press
156pages; original sketches & maps
ISBN: 978-0-473-20009-1; \$30

One summer morning a group of drinking mates set out from Owhiro Bay for a short walk. Twelve hours later, exhausted, hungry and footsore, they straggled on to Makara Beach. Undaunted, the self-styled Cock & Bull trampers embark on a series of light-hearted adventures – and disasters.

Inspiration comes from their guiding spirit *The Compleat Trumper* – indigenous species guru and trumper of the old school. He regards primuses as an invention of the devil and is disgusted by new-fangled tramping gear - especially synthetic fabrics. His battered billy has a handle of no. 8 wire and when bush camping, *The Compleat Trumper* spreads out his mildewed sleeping bag on top of some wet bracken and his hob-nailed boots.



Fair Weather Trampers relates the highs and lows of the Cock & Bull trips: jokes and laughter while struggling through supplejack and leatherwood in the Tararuas: a night out clinging to tree roots above the Waihone Gorge; battling a blizzard on Tongariro; being attacked by wasps and native falcons in the Nelson Lakes; slogging through the swamps of Stewart Island: skinny dipping in the Abel Tasman: sleeping under the stars in the Ruahines.

Writer JULIA MILLEN's numerous works include the biography of NZ novelist Ronald Hugh Morrieson and the history of Kirkcaldie & Stains. Throughout her long writing career she

has also tramped in the New Zealand hills, skied the Tasman Glacier, hiked in The Grand Canyon and in Patagonia (Chile). In Antarctica, one of the first women 'on the ice', she took part in the historic Longwire-Byrd traverse, 19km with the temperature 23° C below.

Book Orders: Lynn Peck, Writes Hill Press

P.O. Box 23032, Wellington 6140 lynn@writeshillpress.co.nz; www.writeshillpress.co.nz

Deadline for submissions to the May 2012 WTMC newsletter: Friday 27 April 2012

The views expressed in the articles in this newsletter are not necessarily the views of the Wellington Tramping and Mountaineering Club. Any queries or comments should be directed to the writer of the article. The editor of the newsletter reserves the right to edit and publish articles.



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**Wellington Tramping and Mountaineering Club
Nomination Form**

I, _____ hereby nominate
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_____ for the role of
(name of nominee)

_____for the 2012/2013 committee.

I, _____ accept the nomination for the
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role of _____ for the 2012/2013 committee.