



# The Mouth 'n' Ear

Wellington Tramping & Mountaineering Club Newsletter

Email: [newsletter@wtmc.org.nz](mailto:newsletter@wtmc.org.nz)

August 2012

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Waiopahu Hut, July 2012  
Richard Lyth

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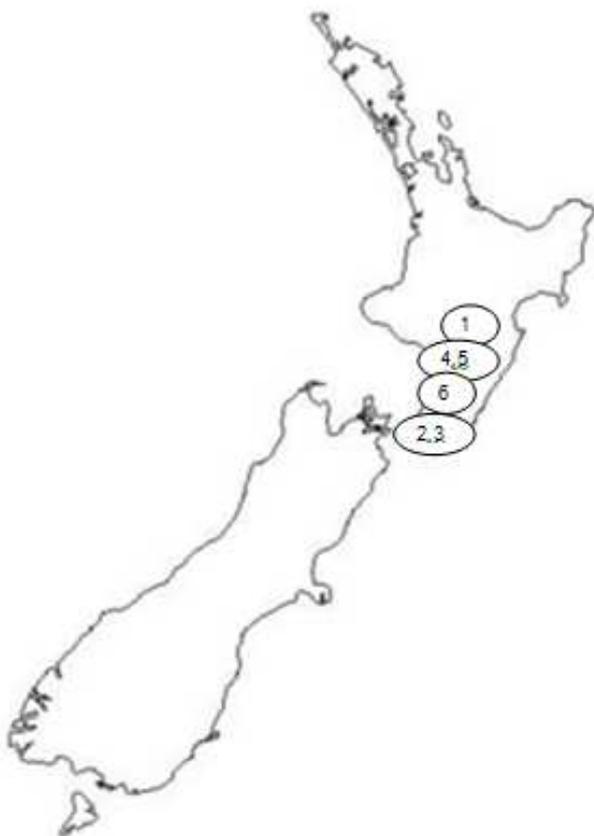
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# The Nature of Things

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Sharron Came, President



Tena koutou fellow trampers.

Big thanks to the Committee and the rest of the WTMC team for ensuring the Club ran smoothly while I was overseas. Actually it sounds like it may have run even better without me around. Perhaps I should go away more often. Special thanks also to Katy Glenie who has taken over responsibility for organising Club weekend contacts for trips. Now we just need a Promotions Officer, a Vice President and a Secretary and 16 Olympic medals.

I hope you are making the most of the Wellington Winter. There are lots of great trips coming up for those of you who have been spending more time than you would like at work or on the couch. If you want a preview of the forthcoming Spring Trip Schedule get in touch with [Amanda chiefguide@wtmc.org.nz](mailto:Amanda.chiefguide@wtmc.org.nz). There are plenty of trip leading opportunities available plus you can get out your diary and mark in a few weekend excursions to remind you to get along to Club and sign up before the trips fill up.

The Committee is in the process of reviewing the Club Constitution to see if any provisions need updating. For example, the notice provisions could do with an update to reflect the fact that most of our business is done electronically rather than through the post. The Constitution is available on the website. If you have any interest in this project please have a read of the Constitution and get in touch with me [president@wtmc.org.nz](mailto:president@wtmc.org.nz). I hope to report back in the next newsletter (or the October one) on any proposed changes. If we do decide changes are necessary we will call an SGM.

You will be aware that the Department of Conservation (DoC) like the rest of Government is under pressure to make savings. We have been informed that three tracks in our backyard are to be closed:

- Block 16 between the Marchant Ridge and the Tauherenikau River (true right)
- Ruamahanga to Cow Creek track
- Kaiparoro Track from the Kaiparoro Road near Mt Bruce to Kaiparoro Hill

DoC's Wairarapa Field Centre is open to expressions of interest from volunteers who wish to help maintain these tracks. This could be an opportunity for the Club to help keep some tracks open in our own backyard in places we often visit. If anyone is interested in putting together a proposal or team of volunteers to undertake some track maintenance please get in touch: [president@wtmc.org.nz](mailto:president@wtmc.org.nz).

If you have been on a trip lately and took some pictures and have some stories to tell please grab Jenny and book in to share your experiences with the rest of us. It's tough trying to source slideshows on a weekly basis. We can all make Jenny's job easier by volunteering or, failing that, giving her a few ideas or helping out with the tea making. Not too sure how to make tea? We can provide you with an opportunity to acquire that skill any

Wednesday night you like. By the way, our tea cups are the old fashioned variety that don't wash and dry themselves.

Finally, remember to keep those Journal articles coming in. The Journal Editor is off on an adventure of his own at the moment but he will need something fun to do when he gets back. Would be great to surprise him by having lots of articles written up and ready to go. Send your contributions, including photos to [newsletter@wtmc.org.nz](mailto:newsletter@wtmc.org.nz) and mark them "for the 2012 Journal".

## Track Talk

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Amanda Wells, Chief Guide



It's been a beautiful weekend in Wellington. And judging by the view out the bedroom window, a beautiful weekend in the Tararuas as well. While appreciating the view, I feel that rueful opportunity cost of being at home rather than in the mountains; being sick and being on call notwithstanding. The last few times I've been in that view, the weather was more on the typical winter side.

That really rainy weekend in July, Richard and I had gone through plans A and B, with plan C seeing us driving to Otaki Forks early on a misty Saturday morning. We were intending to go to Elder hut via an unmarked ridge in the Waiotauru. It's hard to get excited about plan C. I was quite into plan A, which involved the Southern Crossing and Snowy river, and plan B, which involved the Waiotauru and Snowy rivers. But plan C was going to be characterised by wet bush bashing and a night in a hut at 1000m without heating. I hadn't been along the Waiotauru track before, and was struck by the freshness of the slip action and the number of side streams along what was supposedly our wet-weather-friendly exit.

We got to Waiotauru forks and had a rest. "Are you having second thoughts?" I asked Richard in a relatively neutral tone of voice. "No, not really," he said. But after I expounded on the reservations flowing through my head, his resolution quickly faltered.

By the time we got to Waiotauru Hut, which had become the destination of our newly emerged plan D for daywalk, it was getting torrential. We were surprised to find people in the hut, and surprised to find it wasn't a hovel. No one has a kind word to say about Waiotauru, yet it appeared to be weather tight, was a lot bigger than I expected and was relatively clean. It also had a pot belly stove roaring away. The 4WDers in residence clearly took pride in the hut, talking about their regular trips and maintenance. While I had initially evaluated them as a somewhat intimidating group, I ate my mental words as they made us a cup of tea.

It's great to see other people feeling a sense of ownership and pride in our outdoors. And to have your preconceptions of strangers overturned. Part of the intangible benefit of tramping is belonging to this community in the hills and stepping outside your usual insular circle.

And part of that challenge is stepping up to lead! It's time to sign up for trips in our Spring Schedule. If you're an existing leader, you will have received several emails already, and may well receive several more before our deadline of Wednesday 15 August. If you're not a leader but would like to be, drop me an email at [chiefguide@wtmc.org.nz](mailto:chiefguide@wtmc.org.nz). I've just looked at the Google Doc and it's a bit bare: I hope this weekend's weather has inspired you!

## Upcoming trips

### 17-19 August Tararuas – Holdsworth

Tramp	EM	Tutuwai via Reeves	Craig McGregor
Family	All	Turere Lodge	Richard Lyth
Day	EM	Butterfly Creek	Cecelia De Souza
Run	F	Jumbo Holdsworth	Gareth Morton

### 24-26 August Wellington day walks

Day	E	Somes/Matiu	Amelia White
Family	All	Kaitoke Loth Lorien	Daniel Moore
Instruc	M	Snowcraft II	Sharron Came

### 31 August-2 September Nelson Lakes and Tararuas

Alp1	M	Mt Angelus (3 day)	Sharron Came
Tramp	F	Moonlight Southern	Illona Keenan

## Membership

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Helen Law, Membership officer



All senior, veteran, couple, veteran couple and life members should have received their FMC card with the bulletin in the post last month.

This month we welcome 5 new members.

- Philip Dunlop, Kareen Schnabel and Oleg Vlasov as senior members.
- Kaleb Smith and Alayne Wright as couple members.

Please send any membership queries to me on [membership@wtmc.org.nz](mailto:membership@wtmc.org.nz), or find me at the club on Wednesday nights.

## Social corner

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Jenny Beaumont, Social convenor



More interesting talks to come this month:

- a variety of club trips as well as
- a talk by Geoff Key on his campaign for a marine reserve in the Ross Sea.

Please keep an eye on the website ([www.wtmc.org.nz](http://www.wtmc.org.nz)) for details and dates of talks.

Please also think about coming to talk to us about your own adventures. Contact me on [social@wtmc.org.nz](mailto:social@wtmc.org.nz) or see me on a club night if you're keen!

Happy tramping

## Lodge update

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Brian Goodwin, Ruapehu Lodge convenor



A few years ago the Lyall Bay surf club building was burnt down because surf boards were cutting through wiring over a period of time.

In the club lodge, all the wiring to the ski room and alarm wiring goes through the loft. Skis were often stored in the loft. With the wiring exposed in the loft, the risk of fire due to skis with sharp edges cutting through the wiring was too high. Therefore, the ski racks in the loft have been removed and most of the wiring is now boxed in plastic trunking.

This summer we will build a lockable rack on the wall, where the never-used dart board is, so lodge users will be able to store and lock up their skis using a bike lock cable, instead of storing them in the loft.

Please do not use the loft to store skis. The loft should stay locked. Ski boots should be taken home, pulled apart and dried.

## Free set of van keys available!

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Gareth Morton, Transport Officer



Would you like your very own set of keys for both the club vans, allowing you 24/7 access to the clubs sexiest assets?

If you can help the Transport Officer just once a month with cleaning the vans then you will be given your own set of van keys. The job entails driving the vans from their storage location at the Interislander ferry terminal to the car wash in Johnsonville, driving it through the car wash machine and then vacuuming the inside of the van with the vacuum machine they have there. No need to get your hands particularly dirty with this job and you can charge the cost of the Wash n Vac to the club's Fleetcard. I would like someone who can volunteer to do this job just once a month per van and you can do it anytime you are free and the vans are at the ferry terminal.

This role would suit someone who can drive the club vans and wishes to help out with the running of the club without committing large amounts of their time. I would very much appreciate a willing and able volunteer for this role to keep our vans looking in great condition both inside and outside. Please speak to me at club when you see me or email me on [transport@wtmc.org.nz](mailto:transport@wtmc.org.nz) if you are interested or have any further questions. Thanks.

## Trip reports

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### Teaching girl guides snowcraft

6-8 July, Snowcraft teaching, Ruapehu (map #1)

Jenny Beaumont

Punters: Jenny Beaumont, Steve Austin,  
10 girl guides / rangers, 3 guide leaders

On the 6-8th July, Jenny Beaumont and Steve Austin took a club van up to Ruapehu - along with 10 girl guides/rangers from the Wellington region and 3 guide leaders. We stayed at the Scout lodge (just along the track from the WTMC lodge) and taught the girls basic snowcraft skills - walking in snow, crampon use, self-arresting, avalanche transceivers etc. We had the most amazing weather (blue skies and not a breath of wind) and had a great weekend. Let's hope we get the same conditions for the WTMC snowcraft course!



### Butterfly Creek walk

21 July, Family day tramp, Eastbourne (map #2)

Daniel Moore

Punters: 28 trampers, kids and adults

How about that? It was the middle of winter and I was debating coating the children in sunscreen. You've got to make the most of cloudless, windless days in Wellington and we were looking forward to spending this one on the Butterfly Creek walk in the East Harbour Regional Park. The meeting spot on Kowhai Street, Eastbourne had a large grass lawn on the roadside complete with tree for the kids to play on while they waited for all the hikers to arrive. Once everyone was there we started up the hill on the well-formed track to the ridgeline.

Our party contained children with ages ranging from under one to early teens and as result of this and the steepness of the track the group soon started to spread out. Some of the parents with younger children laboured onwards and upwards despite protests and the



weight of infant carriers on their backs. The effort was well worth it though. At several spots the track opened up and there were panoramic views across a pond-like Wellington harbour to the West, framed by native bush.

After the ridgeline, the bush was different and the temperature changed from pleasantly warm to refreshingly cool. As we descended to the picnic area the sounds of some of the older, faster children drifted up the valley from below. The picnic area itself was forested with beech trees and came complete with picnic tables plus a bridge and stream for the kids to play in. Unfortunately, there were no butterflies to be seen. This spot would also make a good campsite and as we talked and played another group set up ready for spending the night there.

Once the children had enjoyed playing and the snacks had all been shared, we started back towards the original road end. Some had headed off early hoping to get back in time for movies etc.

Travelling uphill back towards Eastbourne slowed us down a little and I was able to appreciate the bush better. It was great to see the many different species of trees in that part of the forest including some very young nikau palms. The views of the harbour coming down seemed even better than the ones going up.

While we waited for the last families to return to the road end and before the obligatory ice cream, some children enjoyed rolling down the grass incline on a side street covering their clothes in grass clippings as souvenirs of their big day out in Butterfly Creek.



## Orongorongas (North saddle traverse)

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29 June – 1 July, Medium tramp, Orongorongos (map #3)

Alistair Young

Punters: Allen Higgins (L), Sue Higgins,  
Rowena, Debbie Buck, Marie Henderson, Alistair Young,  
Harry Smith, Gary De Rose, Weimen, Chris, Kevin Cole

We left platform 9 on a cold Friday night with the promise of clearing skies and a warmer end to what had been an extremely cold month. The 40 odd minute drive through Wainuiomata, down coast road to the Orongorongos, sped by. We had boots on the ground before 6:30pm. Night tramping over the five mile track and up the big bend track was as pleasant as Friday night tramping can be. We made camp under flies in a lovely little spot by the main river.

Next morning was cold and drizzly. We donned warms and coats, cussing the weather gods and weathermen equally as we headed up river before turning up Matthews stream. Travel in this proved easy and, apart from the drizzle and cold southerly, it was a pleasure to walk up.

Although advertised as a trip involving navigation, we found the turn off to the north saddle to be well marked and maintained, we summited and descended down it into the Wharekauhau stream with no major fusses. Travel down this side was even easier, with the exception of one mildly challenging waterfall and the unintentional face-plant on rather sharp river rocks by yours truly, we made the coast by early afternoon camping at corner creek on the coast. In addition to a bevy of excellent fly spots the camping spot also has a decent shelter sporting a huge table and seats and running water: heaven.

The Orongorongos is one of the few places you can tramp where it's possible to bivvy by the sea. This novelty, in addition to its pleasant sounds also furnished us with fuel for a large bonfire which we crowded round while we ate, drank, chatted and dozed late into the evening.

The next day we headed around the coast and up the Muka Muka stream under clear windless skies, bumping into the odd mountain runner. We made our way up to a lunch spot in the sun on the south saddle. From here it was little more than a few hours, down into the Orongorongo River and out back to the car park.

It had been a fabulous weekend where we covered the Rimutakas twice: from west to east, and then back again. We had walked up and down rivers, around the southern coast and at times had walked in the sea more than you could expect to do in a weekend only 30 km from the capital city.

# Rangiwahia Hut

13- 15 July, Easy tramp, Ruahines (map #4)

Bibi van Heerden

Punters: Megan Banks, Ian Harrison, Nicky Shields, Yao Liu, Linda Cobiac and Bibi and Lean van Heerden

A few months ago my husband – Lean – mentioned experimental research which proved that spending time 1,000m or more above sea-level resets the hypothalamus (metabolism function), and supports the thyroid gland. My thyroid is hypo-active, so naturally I was totally keen. We signed up for Rangiwahia Hut with Megan and Ian, Yao, Nicky, and Linda.



We met, and left Wellington station; dark coastal drive then onto the highway to the Mangaweka campground. Stopped at Bulls – we all had Mediterranean food – lovely. Mangaweka campground was pretty, but cold and windy. Heard some slips during the night. Everyone was up from about 7; hot coffee and breakfast all round. We tried out a sweet couscous nut & fruit with cardamom dish – nice hot start to the day. Quick decamp, off again at about 9. Drove through pretty countryside,

mostly livestock farming, a bit of crop agriculture.

After a detour to collect the 2<sup>nd</sup> team van, we arrived at the starting point – packs on, and up the hill. As this was my first tramp to the tops, and I am the least fit in the group, it was a little graunching.



The others went ahead, to meet us at the bridge. Arrived at the slip detour – challenging for me, as progress is made by grasping trees, rocks, and roots. Over the slip, down the other side – slightly hair-raising. Met Megan and Ian; the wooden bridge is beautifully constructed in an arc – more weight on it gives more stability; clever design. We had a lunch of pressed Turkish pide stuffed with pastrami, cheese, tomato, and pesto – delish. Beautiful view of the waterfall and river.

Onward and upward – started seeing evidence of recent snowfalls; Ruapehu was completely covered in snow, as well as the surrounding mountains. We finally reached the Hut – icy cold winds, and incredible views of the snowcapped mountains. So worth the climb.



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Yao, Nicky, and Linda had continued exploring beyond the hut. Lovely hut, well-kept and spacious – we were the only group there. We settled-in; hot drinks, then dinner preparations. The Chorizo couscous was lovely, but Megan’s dessert of ginger bread, peaches and cream was delicious.

The gas heater was a little tricky to get going, and has a 30-minute burn time cycle. It needs to cool before it can be lit again. When we had it going, the hut was lovely and cosy.

Bedtime, great snooze all-round, up and coffee. I tested my omelette-in-a-bag unsuccessfully; it turned into a poached omelette; delicious with pita bread. Quick pack and we left with a 30-minute head-start. Going back is always easier; primarily downhill, we reached the bridge quickly. Had a snack and a little waltz to celebrate, and then off again. Soft rain and cool wind throughout.

We saw a new type of mushroom, not covered in our NZ wild food book. Also encountered a new lichen, very large and looks like kelp leaves/fronds. Crested the detour, down the other side, quick-march to the car park. We made it with 30 minutes to spare, thanks to my home-made jet-fuel energy bars.



Scenic drive, stopped at Fielding for lunch; brilliant coffee. Back to Wellington station through light drizzle. Disembarked, cheery chat, everyone set off home. Lovely tramping experience with Megan and Ian, great group. Keen to find out if my hypothalamus has been reset! It felt like a 2-week soul-cleansing holiday...

# Iron Gate Hut

13- 15 July, Medium tramp, Ruahines (map #5)

Debbie Buck

Punters: Paul Christoffel (leader), Craig McGregor, Sarah Fischer, Bernie Smithyman, Brendan Eckart, Jamie Foster, Debbie Buck

Friday night departure went smoothly. But things slowed to a halt when two of us ordered dinner at the Thai slow-food takeaway in Levin. Eventually our dinner arrived and we set off again. Our driver safely manoeuvred around the many roundabouts in Fielding, and after a bit of exploratory detouring we arrived at the busy Rangiwahia road end. Mmm – hope of beds in Rangiwahia Hut were looking dashed.

The night was calm and not too cool as we sauntered up the track. Sarah and I passed one low-hanging possum, unperturbed by our presence. We climbed the grunty slip detour to the stars. Then descended to the bridge way above the river – well it sounded as though there was a river down there but it was too dark and too far below to see it. Onwards and upwards we arrived at the full Rangiwahia Hut at 11pm for a cosy night on the floor. Craig, equipped with an 850 loft sleeping bag and not one to be discouraged by a small patch of snow, went for alfresco slumber on the east deck. Sarah, Jamie and I stoically shivered inside most of the night. It meant we had an early rise – hot water and gas heater warmed us up and got us on the trail to Triangle Hut at 8am.



The theme for Saturday morning was ‘snow’, glorious snow. In snow we sauntered (briefly), trudged and bounced over snow-coated tussock. Paul, Jamie and Brendan scratched their bare legs in the snow and bled liberally all over it. Craig sank up to his butt in snow and briefly lost a boot in it. Sarah slid down an icy funnel and let out a not-quite blood curdling scream. Bernie side kicked its iciness and tiptoed across the snow pretending to be weightless only to discover he wasn’t. I squinted at snow and sitting glissaded down it.

And whilst we were doing all that, there was the seductive white vista stretched before us with brushstrokes of tussock, a brooding layer of steel-toned cloud hovering above the horizon, the knock-you over wind. It was a stunning, elemental and tiring morning. Thanks to Jamie, Brendan and Bernie for being at the front to carve out a path through the white

stuff. I haven't read about it in 'Alpine tramping for dummies' but I'm sure the 5 litres of water Brendan was carrying gave him the ideal centre of buoyancy for this task.

The spur down to Triangle Hut became snowless and our feet adapted into steep, stony and rooty mode. We had our first river crossing in front of Triangle Hut, our stop for a relaxing lunch with a hot cuppa on the veranda. Before we became too cosy we set off down the river, immersing ourselves deeper and deeper in the reasonably swiftly flowing water. The water was cold, but bearable up to my thighs – thankfully it didn't get deeper. A tranquil and sheltered 1.5 hours travelling through lush vegetation, gorge-like bends and around calm clear aqua pools (very swimmable in summer!).

We left the river at the exit point and ascended abruptly on a route made by mountain goats for turbo-charged mountain goats. At a saddle, we paused on the few flat meters and then descended back to the river, along another mountain goat route. Mmm- Craig's exploratory summer trip on the remaining part of the river would avoid the mountain goat detour.

Back down at a deeper and faster part of the river, Sarah, Craig and I linked up for the river crossing. By the time we arrived at Iron Gate Hut, the rest of our group had the fire going and the billy on. We all settled in for the night in the cosy wee hut, chatting and helping Paul, our leader and head chef, make a humungous delicious meal of pasta Bolognese. Most of us rose to the challenge and finished it all. But wait, there was an oversupply of biscuits. Again we rose to the challenge and made a valiant effort of devouring them, including the mega-Afghans. Weary, full and feeling exhilarated by the perfect tramping day, we went to bed early.

It rained quite heavily during some of the morning whilst we slept in. After a relaxed breakfast with some leftover biscuits, we set off at 8:30 towards Heritage Lodge. The track followed the river, going up and down and occasionally next to the river. We were fortunate to see a couple of the native blue ducks that were hanging out in a quiet pool near the bank of the river, hopefully enjoying the light rain. We were on a well-worn track that didn't offer the same tramping excitement as the previous day, but gave us the opportunity to focus on the verdant bush.

After 3 hours or so, we arrived at Heritage Lodge as it started to rain heavily. So we relaxed (again!) in the hut over a lengthy lunch with a cuppa and the remaining biscuits, discussed the relative roominess of the hut and browsed fishing magazines. After a while, a few of us put on over-pants. Of course that made the rain stop and we headed off for the last half hour to the road end. Thankfully, the Easy group had dropped our van off for us.

We celebrated an exciting, exhilarating and elemental tramp with refreshments at the Kimbolton café, and caught up on news of the weather bomb we had missed!

# Waiopehu Hut

7 - 8 July, Easy Medium tramp, Tararuas (map #6)

Richard Lyth

Punters: Jenna, Jo, Ashley, Richard and Katie (who stayed at home, but her dessert made it all ok)



Our weekend starts with Katie pulling out at 5.30pm on Friday due to a pulled muscle. We hear there was a good party on Saturday night too.... Katie was a good sort, acting as a shuttle driver to and from the club van, and passing over her group rations; including a wonderful dessert that even stretched through to morning tea on Sunday.

We had been built up to expect Antarctic type weather and muddy conditions. The sun shone down on us as we set out at 10.00 on Saturday from Poads Road heading up to Waiopehu. Four of us climbed steadily together to the ridge. Lunch was devoured, and tales shared about Grizzly bear attacks (and how to avoid them) in Canada.

After lunch the cloud cover came in, the light faded a bit, and the chill was certainly setting in. The afternoon seemed to drag a bit, as we never quite decided on the correct location of 'bush corner' When we arrived at the alpine scrub, it was thought by some that we had over an hour of climbing ahead of us. What a relief from the tail to hear the whoops when the head found the hut after only 15 minutes.

Waiopehu Hut has fantastic views of the Horowhenua. What it doesn't have is any heating.



Dinner was had by 6.00. Big ups to Katie for a well planned, tasty meal. After dinner we sat around the table in sleeping bags.

Entertainment was thanks to the crossword and horoscopes in the Upper Hutt Leader, which would have been fire lighting material had there been a fireplace. The 'leader' was regarded as the highlight of our trip.

Jo is our favourite tramper on Sunday morning when she brews up for everyone else while we are still in our sleeping bags. One of the four

missed out due to still being asleep when the call for a brew went out – oh well....

We set out for the well named Richard's Knob and Gable End in clear weather, with only the gentlest of southerlies to cool the air. There was a satisfying crunch from the ice

underfoot. Soon we had the two climbs of the morning behind us, and had reached the turn for Gable End in good time. The lunch stop was taken up here, in the cloud. Soon we got into the big descent down to the Ohau River. Halfway down I take a slip. For the second time in two trips, I manage to fracture a bone, this time in the wrist. Everyone seems a bit quiet after this; we push on steadily line astern with the river on our right. We must of been thinking about the fudge brownie waiting in the van, as the next couple of hours pass fairly rapidly.

We are out as the sun dips behind the hills. All in all a great weekend – a beautiful area, and a beautiful weather break for us. We didn't break any speed records, but we saw lots, and took plenty of photos. Thanks to Jo, Ashley and Jenna for great company.



## Other bits and bobs

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To get updates on DoC related activities, gain information on some current conservation management issue, read newsletters from DoC offices around the country, and much more information besides, go to the news section on their site: <http://www.doc.govt.nz/about-doc/news/>

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**Deadline for submissions to the September 2012 WTMC newsletter: Friday 31 August 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.