



# The Mouth 'n' Ear

## Wellington Tramping & Mountaineering Club Newsletter

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

June 2013

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Leanne Jenkins visiting NZ from the UK views the southern hemisphere from the summit of Mt Impey on the Easter E/M trip to the Raglan Range

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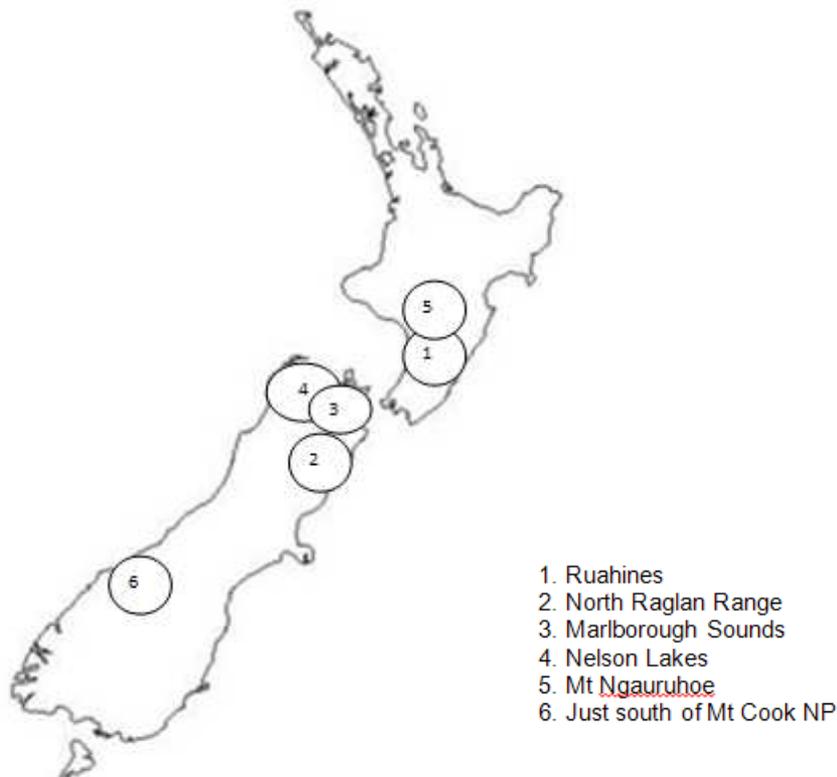
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# The Nature of Things

Sharron Came, President



We are a very lucky Club. Last weekend four of our life members braved a freezing southerly to patch the roof of the Club Lodge thereby fixing the lounge leak. Life members are worth their weight in gold particularly when it comes to looking after our Lodge. They are also an inspiration in terms of modelling how members can make a practical, positive contribution to WTMC. Next time you see one at the Clubrooms, or up at the Lodge remember to show your appreciation.



The winter trip schedule is up and running. If you've already looked at it you will have noticed that we are featuring lots of navigation trips. This is so everyone can practice their locational awareness, an essential tramping skill. It is not just trip leaders that need to know where you are going and how to get there, we all do. Like all skills navigation improves with practice and if you don't use what you learn it fades away. Another great way to pick up navigation skills while getting fitter and having fun in a social setting is to participate in the local after work rogaines. Check out this site <http://www.mapsport.co.nz/rog/rogaine.htm> Yes it can be a bit cold and you definitely need a good head torch but it is great fun.

In July we hope to run both a Snowcraft and a leadership course. These represent great opportunities to up skill while having fun in a friendly, small group environment. Check out the club website and the trip sheets at the Clubrooms to find out more or for Snowcraft email DJ on [alpine@wtmc.org.nz](mailto:alpine@wtmc.org.nz). For the leadership course talk to Amanda or Richard or email [vicepresident@wtmc.org.nz](mailto:vicepresident@wtmc.org.nz)

Sue, our Social Convenor, has some great slideshows and other entertainment lined up for the winter months. We hope to see some of you at the Quiz Night. We have not run one of these for a few years as they take a bit of organisation, if this one is a success we may be inspired to run some more. If you have ideas for Wednesday night entertainment talk to Sue or email her at [social.wtmc.org.nz](mailto:social.wtmc.org.nz). Oh and please remember to take your tea cups back to the kitchen after you have drunk your tea and wash them. Sue is not your mother!

Another fun event to mark in your calendar for June is the annual showing of a selection of films from the Banff Mountain Film Festival. Check out this site for details of the films on show at the Paramount in Wellington on the evenings of June 11 and 18 – these are Tuesday nights so no need to skip our club night! Films on show typically vary in length with one longer film each evening and a bunch of short films. As well as rock climbing and mountaineering there are usually films featuring mountain biking, kayaking, skiing and a

range of other extreme sports in exotic locations. <http://alpineclub.org.nz/banff-mountain-film-festival-tour-of-new-zealand-2013>

Finally, something I neglected to mention in an earlier newsletter. Back in February Yibai He and Mike Phethean completed the legendary S-K . S-K stands for Schormann-Kaitoke which is code for the challenge of traversing the Tararuas from north to south or in reverse. Punters used to start from the Schormann track but now the southern road end is Putara via Herepai hut so it is really a P-K. The S-K challenge was dreamed up by a few WTMCers in 1961. It doesn't take a particularly in-depth knowledge of the Tararuas or the associated weather to figure out that traversing the entire range is hard work.



Traversing the range in under 48 hours is strictly for the crazy. Traditionally WTMC has sheltered a healthy population of crazy people so it is good to see Yibai and Mike carrying on the tradition (see picture below). Harry Smith also completed the S-K. Some of you may not have realised that Harry is sane and therefore he did it over 3 days. There are many variations on the S-K, the S-K valleys for example. The stories of the various attempts, successful or otherwise make interesting reading and I hope to organise a reprint of the S-K book at some stage and to add to it the stories of those who have made the journey since 1995. Meantime belated congratulations to Yibai, Mike P and Harry.

Have a fun filled June!

# Track Talk

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Debbie Buck, Assistant Chief Guide



The Chief Guide, Mike, is off mountaineering in Alaska. This makes me think of two short and sweet topics to write about whilst I fill in for him this month: navigation and enjoying the cold outdoors.

## 1) Navigation

There are a few day and weekend navigation trips on the Winter schedule and so far they have been popular. I encourage you to make the most of these.

At this time of year, a drizzly misty day or two (or even a calm and fine day) in the Tararuas with a compass and map and a few friendly trampers is perfect for improving your locational awareness and your general comfort with tramping over rough terrain. Concentrating on where you are and where you are going, you become oblivious to the inclement weather.

Navigation trips tend to be fairly collaborative so everyone gets a chance to contribute to getting somewhere. On a recent day navigation trip near Reeves, we took turns to lead and advise the leader and were all responsible for scenic detours and estimating where we were.

By the time Spring comes along, you'll have better navigation skills, be more confident at tramping over untracked terrain, and know a few locationally-aware trampers. You'll be well equipped to make the most of the longer days and better weather for tramping.

## 2) Enjoying the cold outdoors

In addition to tramping, the Winter programme offers other opportunities to enjoy the cold outdoors and develop some new skills.

The Snowcraft course in August will give you the skills to participate in ALP1 alpine tramping trips: using ice axes, walking in crampons, self-arresting, avalanche awareness.

The WTMC lodge at Mt Ruapehu is the perfect base from which to do some alpine tramping and practice snow sports such as skiing and snowboarding.

The club is running a Leader's skills day on the weekend of 3-4 August. If you've been on a few tramps and would like to lead tramps yourself, then this day will give you useful tips and inspiration for leading tramps.

Finally, the WTMC website provides a useful gear list for winter adventures.

<http://www.wtmc.org.nz/sites/default/files/checklist-what-to-take-on-a-trip.pdf>

And if in doubt, your trip leader will be able to advise you about suitable gear.

## Membership update

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Helen Law, Membership officer



This month we welcome the following new members:

Child members:	Thomas Ralls, Charlie and Iona Wood, Matthew, Henry and Angus Cox
Associate member:	Jane Cox
Senior members:	Mike Moore and Rob Edward

The club has ordered the 2013-2014 Federated Mountain Clubs (FMC) membership cards. If you are a full club member, you will receive a card with the next FMC bulletin, so look out for them arriving in your mail box next month.

The FMC card offers a wide range of discounts including DOC's Backcountry Hut Pass, Great Walk tickets, transportation, accommodation, magazine subscriptions, purchases at outdoor shops etc. More detail here: <http://www.fmc.org.nz/discount-card/>

So please let me know if your postal address needs updating by contacting me - [membership@wtmc.org.nz](mailto:membership@wtmc.org.nz) or PO Box 5068, Lambton Quay, Wellington 6145.

## Be entertained, wowed and stunned

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Sue Walsh, Social convenor



With the winter nights starting to creep in, rather than hibernating at home, come on down to the club rooms and be entertained, wowed and stunned by our amazing speakers. Coming up, we have Harry Smith taking us over Ball Pass; Katja will stun us with her photos from Svalbard; and DJ and Sharron will coax us over Mt Sefton and up Mt Brewster. And then, we have.....

The WTMC Quiz Night!!!

Mark June 19th in your diaries and come and join other Tongue and Meats while they battle for the honour of top group for 2013 quiz. Your knowledge of the club, of the NZ outdoors, and maybe even the odd place from overseas could see you in the winning team.

The InterIslander are supporting the quiz night by very kindly donating a \$250 online travel voucher - how fantastic is that!



As well as a team prize or two, the InterIslander donation will be an individual prize. Look out for more information on this. I look forward to seeing you in the club rooms!

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## Ruapehu Lodge update

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Brian Goodwin, Lodge convenor



Jan and I have spent a week early May looking after a school group and then helping a very hard working team to bring in winter food supplies for the lodge and making it clean and ready for the winter ski season.

The Sunday prior to this, four of us spent the day doing remedial work to the roof ridge area above the lounge dining rooms mainly replacing the seals which were aging and letting in snow spin drift and then causing small leaks during the thawing process. We have on the agenda seal replacement for the rest of the ridges. Interestingly enough the metal under the ridges is in very good condition so we expect the roof to last a good number of years to come.



View from Ngauruhoe to Red crater, Blue Lake, Smoke from Te Mari craters and Lake Taupo

Thanks to Kevin, Pete, Dennis and also Jan for keeping us fed and watered.

The week proved to be one of perfect weather for the third year in a row and enabled the school group and Jan and I to enjoy the park without the masses of tourists found during the summer months.

As well as some minor improvements done to the lodge, Kevin has designed and installed some rails in the ski room which will enable frequent users to lock up their skis and snowboards in between their stays at the lodge. Anyone wishing to leave their skis and snowboards at the lodge will need to bring their own locks and chain or bike locks.

We expect all your gear to be removed at the end of the season. If for some unexpected reason you may fail to remove your gear, it will pay to label it with your name.

On the same subject, there was some gear left in the lodge loft (an area of the lodge which is no longer available for private storage). I have transported this gear back to Wellington but am not prepared to keep this gear for long; it will soon be available for purchase at the recycling station Spicer landfill, Porirua.

The gear is as follows:

- Skis: blue, Elan with Look bindings, 157cm long, one damaged tip
- Skis: grey, Atomic, Solomon bindings 180cm long, wrapped in calico cloth
- Skis: black, Tyrolia, Tyrolia bindings, 185cm long, yellow green red decals
- Skis: red, Atomic, Atomic bindings, 160cm long, seem to be in good condition
- Skis: Yellow/black Rossignol, Rossignol bindings, 183cm long. Name Bolam written on face
- Ski boots: Grey Solomon, Womans, size U.S.8, in yellow bag
- Crampons: old stile steel with leather straps
- Helmet: blue, make Jofa
- Skis big foot, black, in blue bag with name Simon Lillico
- Monopoly Game
- Pirateology Game.

The games, if not claimed, will be returned to the lodge for everyone to use.

If this is your gear or you know who owns it then arrange with me to pick it up.

[lodgeconvenor@wtmc.org.nz](mailto:lodgeconvenor@wtmc.org.nz) or phone 04 479 3810.

## Trip reports

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### Sunrise Hut

12-14 April, Easy tramp, Ruahines (map #1)      Authors: Simone Musin and Tracey Black  
Punters taking a punt: Tracey Black, Barry Cuthbert, John Hickey (trip leader),  
Helen Law, Simone Musin, Ilske Verburg

First decision to be made was should we go SH1 or SH2?? Which will have less traffic and be the quickest? Majority said go SH2 so we did, although our first driver was a bit unsure as we got to some heavy traffic with a “Delay accident ahead” sign. But it all cleared very fast! Then the fun started with this driver somehow turning on the back windscreen wipers over the Rimutakas. It was a quite sudden “eh, eh, eeh, eeh,…” sound as there wasn’t much rain. The driver asked “what’s that noise?” We all said, “It’s the back windscreen wipers”. Driver: “How did I turn that on? I’ll try this button and if we don’t hear it, then it means just don’t press the button” Us: ha, ha, ha. Wipers: “eeh, eeh, eeh..” Us: “Back windscreen wipers still going, must be another button!!” Next thing you know I was saying this trip is hilarious and we haven’t even started tramping!!



Everyone out-voted the trip leader’s suggestion to have dinner at a Chinese takeaway and we stopped at the kebab place in Carterton. When we finally got to the road end and drove through the farmland to the next gate, we had a decision to make: “do we go through this one or turn right along the road?” Going through the gate was the right choice.

The walk in to Triple X hut was only 5 minutes (that should be prerequisite for easy trips!). Luckily we found the hut empty, and as it has 2 separate bunk rooms we decided snorers would go in one bunk room and everyone else in the other; otherwise known as boys in one and girls in the other. As we were starting to go to sleep we could hear voices from the other bunk room and said, “Is that John and Barry talking?” Listening from our room we worked out that, no, it was just John talking! “Oh well, when he stops we know that he is asleep”, we said. And I thought I talked a lot. I soon learned on this trip that John can talk more than me especially when he meets other engineers!

The next day we had a leisurely start and got tramping by 9am. The track can be like a wide road at times and we could see that they have put in a few more zig zags so although it is a constant uphill, it’s not steep. The bush is wonderful, with so much rimu and ferns and beech and more. I couldn’t believe how much young rimu there was in this area – I have never seen this much rimu in the Tararuas!! Even though it is only two-and-a-half

hours to Sunrise we did stop for breaks (this being an easy trip after all) and admired a rainbow at one stage! There was hardly any rain...well no rain, just a few drops. Popping out onto the top the hut is suddenly right there and we thought yep, it's lunch time. The EM group, which was going on to Top Maropea Hut, joined us there shortly after we stopped, and we sat in the lovely sun enjoying the view.

After lunch we all took a walk up to Armstrong Saddle and Tracey and Helen went right to Top Maropea Hut and back to check out where the EM group was staying. Then the hut started to fill up but everyone was nice and it wasn't noisy really except for the wind whistle in the night.

But of course we have to mention the games of 500. After a bit of coaching, both Tracey and Ilske were trained up John Hickey-style. So Barry teamed up with Ilske and Simone who was helping her. Then John teamed up with Tracey. While Ilske got a bit tired so Simone took her place and she and Barry had a complete losing streak, despite some "adventurous" calls from newbie Tracey. So that was a game to John and he was quite pleased with himself despite Simone teasing him about taking ages to make decisions to play something. So we thought we better have another game as Simone didn't want to go to bed on a losing streak. John and Barry got fierce in their bidding with John going for diamonds and Barry for spades. Simone passed and Tracey bet diamonds. Simone tried to give Barry a clue to let John go with diamonds as she had surprises for him with 6 diamonds in her hand. He certainly was surprised as she waited for the top 4 cards to be played before coming out with the next two highest. In the end he found out Tracey only had 2 diamonds! But at least everyone went to sleep after a lot of laughter and no one felt that they were the loser at all.



The next day we had stunning weather as we came down from Sunrise Hut after a beautiful sunrise. We decided to take the track down to the Waipawa River to Waipawa Forks Hut for lunch. It looked like a replica of Triple X hut in fact, same design and all. Given the sunny day, it was lovely to come back along the river which was so low none of us minded getting our boots wet, it was more a case of don't step on the brown slippery rocks (a bit of wisdom which a couple of us forgot!). John even managed to break a pole he

had borrowed from one of the others while he was experiencing the cool river! But he didn't break himself, so it was all good. Some of us who had completed the bushcraft course got a great opportunity to practice linking up to do river crossings.

At the track end we met up with the EM group, and headed off for coffee and cake at Yummy Mummy's Cheesecakes in Woodville. It was an uneventful drive home, except for one driver deciding to try out the suggestion of the person riding shotgun to start in second gear...at the lights on the Hutt Road. Was all fine, after stalling and the light turning orange while getting going again!

We got back to Wellington early Sunday evening agreeing it was a great trip, with heaps of laughter and sunshine.

## **Letham conservation area - North Raglan Range**

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Easter 2013, Easy medium tramp, Raglan Range (map #2) Author: Murray Sutherland

Trampers: Tony Gazley (Trip Leader), Leanne Jenkins, Anita Su'a, Meena Kadri, Nicky Shields, Rory MacLellan, Paula, Murray Sutherland, Cathy Screech

We piled into the Van for the 6.15pm sailing on the Thursday night, settling quickly and introducing ourselves to those we had not met before (amongst the 9 trampers, that meant for me, every one). The original plan for the trip was to have a look around the Mt Owen area (and summit), but the weather forecast caused our plan B to be enacted, which was to stay further east and allow the high plateaus of Kahurangi NP to soak up some rain that was expected from the west before it got to us.

The Letham conservation area is a place seldom visited by trampers some 90 km out of Picton, not far from the Wairau River valley. There was a newly marked "Wye" track that we would explore, with the possibility of a diversion over Mt Impey, if possible. The Hidden Hut would be our turn around stop, before we would head back out to the Van via Boulder Stream. The area is initially farmland, with beech forest further in.

Spending a moonlit night at a convenient DOC campsite, we upped sticks and got ourselves to the end of the Letham Road and tramping by 10am. After a short tramp along the 4WD track following the very pretty Letham River valley, we followed the Wye track up to and along the ridge that would take us to our campsite for the first (and third) night of the trip. This entailed a long steady climb from under 500 meters to a peak of 1149, and with some 'powerful undulations' it had our party puffing in no time.

At lunch we maintained the EM tradition and took great advantage of the warm sun, and basked, before we picked up again and moved to our campsite for the night, beneath the saddle between Mt Impey and Mt Bounds. At this point I should comment that the club recipe book is a winner, all of the meals we had on this trip were top notch, a great idea whoever that was!



Day 2 and we were packed and away by 9.30am. We headed for the saddle where we would stand, stare and make up our minds about how we would attack the rest of the day. Once we got there some of the options apparent to us on the map were denied, the route from the bottom of the saddle to 1430 and beyond to 1451, while not necessarily impassable, was given a miss in favour of taking the track to the Hidden Hut. Once there we could make an ascent of Mt Impey from the hut via Parkers Spur.



The trip down from the saddle was enjoyable and allowed a good stretch of the legs and solid pace, though it also introduced some members of the party to Spaniard grass for the first time! Once we had reached the hut, we (who were still tenting) set ourselves up and basked in yet another extended lunch, until 3pm when the party of Mt Impey ascenders set off on their journey. The 850m climb up and return took it out of the team and all welcomed the warmth of a riverside fire, another well cooked dinner and 'smores' (2 chocolate biscuits sandwiching a toasted marshmallow).

Day 3 had us return to the campsite of day 1 via the same saddle, after a late start of 11am waiting for the worst of the rain to burn off, also allowing us to enjoy the morning chorus that is

so impressive in these parts **and** for people to comment on my having potato flakes for breakfast. Once started we made quick pace and arrived at the site after about 4 hours of solid walking. Unpacked and readied for the evening Tony soon had us hunting through the trees for standing dry beech so we could set up another fire and enjoy some more toasted marshmallows after dinner.



Day 4 had us packed and away by ¼ to 9, early so we could make the ferry with time to spare. The trip out was initially along the same ridge we came in on, but we then took a turn and headed down one of the spurs into boulder stream, where there was a 4WD track that we could follow out (2 of us eschewed this and stuck to the stream). Presently we had all collected ourselves at the van and were ready to return to civilisation!

## White cap warriors

24-28 April, Sea kayak, Marlborough Sounds (map #3)

Author: Brendan Eckert

Trampers: Debbie Buck, Lyndsay Fletcher, Emilie Fetscher, Michele Coghlan, Caroline Dugoni, Katy Glennie, Michael Blindheim, Hans Wisekerke, Brendan Eckert & Elizabeth Claridge..

Day one we all gathered at the shed, five of the team had spent the night on the shed floor, and five more made their way from Nelson early on the Thursday morning. The teams for the trip:

Debbie & Elizabeth (Bob) - known as Anzac II

Brendan & Katy - known as Anzac I (one being superior to two in this case)

Michele & Hans - team greatest height difference and

Michael & Caroline - team U S A.

All lead by our on water co-leaders Emily and Lyndsay flying solo.

Before the trip we had a mixed weather forecast and our initial plans were to be changed as conditions predicted on the water, sometimes rather quickly. In all the weather held and for the most part the water was calm and the sun was out.

Our friendly crew set us up and drove us out to Tennyson Inlet where we launched the boats at around 13:00 at Duncan's Bay. The first day was pretty short and uneventful, but we were introduced to our first CROSSING. This crossing in front of Maud Island (MI) was tame compared to some of our other more *advanced* crossings later on in the trip

We stayed at a nice little campsite in Waiona Bay, the Weka capital of the Marlborough Sounds. As would become the campsite ritual, the tarp was set up and the fire was started. We got a great sunset followed by an impressive moon rise (one day before the full moon), the Weka's did their best to disrupt the peace and managed to get away with some of Lyndsay's bread and also nearly managed to provide us with dinner after one ran through the fire trying to escape its pursuer (another Weka).

The next morning the winds from the north were up a bit, but as we could not see the white caps from our tents we set off at nine. We were going to make our way across to MI and then move clock wise around towards Pelorus Sounds. Here came our first crossing of any note, with the tide running out and the winds whipping in from the North we were confronted with a monster swell (1/2 a foot), turning our noses into the waves we made our way across to MI battling the seas for 30 minutes or so. Once we had closed in on the shore we spun 180 and tried to ride the waves into the island. Some of the crews were really good at riding waves and some really struggled.

Everyone had their eyes peeled for the giant Tuatara and the uncoordinated Maud Island frog; unfortunately there were none to be seen. However we did see a delightful seal pup in the water at the point of the island. A search along some uninspiring farm land did not yield any spots for lunch so we made our way into the Pelorus Sounds and into Wilson's Bay for lunch.

After lunch we cruised over to Jacobs Bay where a fair bit of confusion set in with half the group thinking we were camping in Nydia Bay and the other half wanting to stay in Jacobs Bay, eventually it was decided by vote that we were going to stay at Jacobs Bay and the people who wanted a longer paddle could make their way around the next few bays while the light was good. This was the first opportunity for the group to drop a line: heaps of bites and lots of lost bait with the only fish caught being an unidentified small thing (official term for it). Extra bonus at the Jacobs Bay campsite was the jetty's thriving oyster population; downside was the available campsites meaning Debbie plonked her tent on top of the trail, tisk tisk Debbie, oh and the water was a little dirty.

The next day we started on the water again at nine after a noisy night near the nesting shags, we checked out Fairy Bay, Penguin Bay, Chance Bay and finally into Nydia Bay, very nice bush right down to the water line was present in these bays and made for a nice start to the day. We ventured further into Pelorus Sound and stopped for lunch at Pipi beach campsite, perfect spot to stop as it allowed us to get out of the current when it was strongest. After lunch and dodging a few shadflies we made our way down the bank towards the opening of the Kenepuru Sound, for this crossing we needed to remain tight as a unit as there were plenty of boats using this area to get out to the outer sounds, after the crossing we made our way into Kenepuru Sound until we reached Ferndale campsite. When we turned up there was a family in the large camping area; after a short discussion

they decided to move to the other end of the beach, obviously they had heard of the WTMC mafia.

On the Saturday night we ate fresh mussels and oysters and Hans somehow lost the chocolate pudding when he tried to set it in the cold water of the rising tide, we suspect he ate it under a tree.

Sunday morning we were blessed with the best conditions of all four days: The water was glassy, the sun was shiny and the wind was nowhere to be seen. We cruised around into bays of the scenic reserve and into Mills Bay, before it was time to turn for home. We stopped briefly in Broughton Bay for lunch and then back into Pelorus Sound past two fairy penguins and all the way back to Double Bay.

Anzac I was found to be superior to Anzac II, in straight-line speed situations, but was found to be less reliable when there were obstacles, namely mussel farms buoys.

## Travers-Sabine circuit

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24-28 April, Easy medium tramp, Nelson Lakes (map #4) Author: Tracey Black  
Trampers: Dmitry Alkhimov (trip leader), Emily Shrosbree, Fiona McWhirter,  
Mike Moore, Mike Travers, Murray Sutherland, Tatiana Krayushkina, Tracey Black

Just in case I have written a boring trip report and you don't get to the end, let me put one of the concluding points at the beginning: this was Dmitry's first time to lead a trip - and he's a great trip leader! I admit that my opinion may have been influenced by the fact that the sun shone three out of four days, Blue Lake was blue, and Dmitry seemed to be carrying most of the club gear himself. But as far as I can tell, he seems to have only one weak point, in relation to capsicums, so go on Dmitry's trips (but count your capsicums first!).

Our route was typically easy-medium, i.e. we elected to take water taxis where we could and skipped boring, long trudges from St Arnaud to the track and return. So our trip was:

Day 0 – 6 pm ferry to Picton and drive to St Arnaud, arriving 11 pm and stay at backpackers

Day 1 – water taxi from St Arnaud to Lakehead Hut; up Travers Valley to Upper Travers Hut ( $\pm 7.5$  hours)

Day 2 – over the Travers saddle to West Sabine Hut ( $\pm 7$  hours)

Day 3 – sleep in, day trip from West Sabine Hut to Blue Lake return ( $\pm 6$  hours)

Day 4 – down to Sabine Hut at the edge of Lake Rotoroa ( $\pm 5$  hours), water taxi to top of lake and shuttle back to club van, arriving approx. 2pm, then on to Picton for 6:30 pm ferry.

On day 1 we decided to check out three different bays where a water taxi could possibly pick us up...eventually finding the boat in a bay about 100 m from where we started. We had to split the group at that point as we couldn't all fit in the water taxi, so Dmitry and Mike M waited for the boat to return half an hour later. But on the gentle terrain they easily

caught the rest of us up at the first swing bridge. We got to John Tait Hut at a good time for a lunch stop.



Interesting to note that in the Nelson Lakes area the hill and track names are pretty daunting: Mt Hopeless, Mt. Misery, Hopeless Track. However, our track heading up the valley alongside the Travers River had a gentle uphill gradient, and we had superb weather. It's stunning tramping: waterfalls, peaks encrusted with snow, and gorgeous bush. On the downside, there are a few wasps to contend with, as both Fiona and Tatiana discovered.



The last hour or so was not quite so easy-going...so much so that two of us actually hallucinated that we'd seen the hut (actually a giant rock). There were concerns about our cognitive function...had we in fact developed hypothermia? No – just wishful thinking that we weren't far from the hut! However, we eventually arrived and at the optimal time; just before it really filled up.

Dinner time neared. Thankfully Mike T was happy to wrangle the MSR stove for the whole trip. As we started preparing the veges, the three-day game of capsicum-musical-chairs got underway. To explain: there were capsicums listed in

Dmitry's instructions for what we had to bring for all the dinners; three of us were keen to offload – Murray in particular as he had been asked to bring no less than 6 capsicums (the others 3 each). In case you are wondering none of the recipes required 6 capsicums. Dinner 1 result – Tatiana and Murray still had capsicums to carry.

Day 2 was also lovely for going over Travers saddle. As we got to the top, we started to layer up, having just been in shorts and t-shirts pretty much for the sweaty climb. But I preferred that to the other side; it seemed pretty steep for a good part of the 1100 m descent! Some of us discovered our downhill legs could use some training. I put holes in my posterior landing on some spear grass and also executed a (not-so-teenage) mutant ninja turtle impression slipping down instead of stepping down something, ending up on my pack but with my upper body continuing to head downhill.

I was very glad to see West Sabine Hut. It also got quite full, but is larger than Upper Travers. It was nice to know that we'd be staying here the next night too. That night, Tatiana got her capsicums in the billy. The one left standing, Murray, wasn't too worried, knowing he wasn't carrying his the next day, and that they'd be eaten the next night – so he thought. New players were inducted into 500...I think I would want to be playing with Emily rather than against her if there was a choice! I swear I quite enjoy it, despite trying to wreck Dmitry's cards by tipping water all over them!

On day 3 some of us enjoyed a sleep in, and we had a cruisy start to our day trip up to Blue Lake and back. This day we had our worst weather of the trip, and even then it was only a bit of drizzly rain. It's a great day trip, and the lake is worth the effort: even on an overcast day it was beautiful. Mike M modelled a bit of a different daypack for the trip – part of his pack unzipped into a bum bag. He said it was very comfortable...the jury's out on the style factor though.

So we got back, and it wasn't long before we needed to get dinner underway. It was at this point we discovered that that night's recipe had no capsicums listed. Of course we didn't let that stop us, and we used a couple, but then the billy reached capacity, and we still had 4 to get rid of! You'd think that giving fresh food to other trampers would not be too hard, but most of them had brought their own capsicums! So out they came with us. Fresh food taken tramping and not eaten; that surely is the definition of a luxury trip!

On day 4 we needed to head off around 7 am so we were in time for our 12:30 pm water taxi pick-up. After breakfast we were gathering up our gear, and I found a pair of black merino knickers on the floor by Murray's pack. I didn't want these to be left behind – they're very comfortable items, and generally speaking not cheap. So I thought I'd better ask Murray if he'd dropped them. The answer was so much more interesting that I thought it might be...In fact they weren't Murray's, but he had found them in his pack where Fiona had "mistakenly" put them, she told us. Interesting tactics I thought!

Day 4 was another gorgeous day, and the terrain very easy heading down beside the Sabine River to Sabine Hut at the southern tip of Lake Rotoroa. All went to plan: water taxi pick-up, then shuttle back to St Arnaud to the van. Dmitry suggested a yoga competition, but no-one was keen when we saw him stretching (he would have won I think!). We

enjoyed coffee/cake at St Arnaud before heading to Picton and an early dinner at the Toot N Whistle Inn (best fish and chips ever!).

The ferry was a bit delayed unfortunately, but no-one really noticed. I think we all slept on the way back. We arrived at the railway station about 10:15 pm. Thanks everyone for a great trip!

## A possible new route ...

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... to the summit of Mt Ngauruhoe, discovered recently (map #5) Author: Journal editor

John C Bidwell, an arrogant British trader, made the first ascent of Ngauruhoe in March 1839 against the express wishes of Te Huehue the Tuwharetoa chief. Then after his climb Bidwell proclaimed to an angry Te Huehue that he was greater than the mountain god because he alone had stood on the top.

Bidwell used a route up the north-west slopes which is now regarded as the standard ascent and which has been followed by thousands of other climbers. This route in summer is a straightforward, if frustrating, scramble up the loose scoria slopes but with the inherent dangers of falling rocks especially those dislodged by any others above.

I recently spent several lovely days wandering through some of the less-trodden places in the Tongariro National Park and in one of the more remote areas I unexpectedly came across a route up Ngauruhoe that has never been reported but which appeared to be the simplest and easiest imaginable way to the summit (refer to the picture). All that is involved is a short sandy slope and then a final step right on to the top.



I passed by the opportunity to try the route as I had other places to go but if you like the look of it and would be interested in a probable first ascent then, to get more information, send a self-addressed return envelope to the journal editor, not forgetting to include your bank account number and password.

But now that I have your attention perhaps you also have made a recent discovery in the hills somewhere like the one above that you could let others know about it. Or maybe you have made a trip that was a bit special, or was just a nice outing and you could write a story that could be included in this year's club journal. Because at the moment the journal consists of the title and contents pages and one story about someone called Arthur Range whoever he was and that's it.

You don't have to be a gifted writer because the editor's job is to help you get rid of those pesky spelling mistakes and grammatical error's.

So how about getting to and writing between 1,000 and 2,500 words. Add a few nice photos and send the lot to [journal@wtmc.org.nz](mailto:journal@wtmc.org.nz). Become famous in the WTMC – you will be popular and people will like you and want to go tramping with you. And the journal editor won't be so bored.

## Ruataniwha reconnaissance

Anzac weekend, ALP2F, south of Mt Cook NP (map #6)

Author: Sharron Came

Trampers: David Jewell (trip leader), Mike Schier, Mike Phethean and Sharron Came



Plan A: lug rock climbing kit up the Hopkins to Dasler Biv enjoying spectacular views of Mt Ward along the way. Camp in an alpine basin above the biv and climb the Dasler Pinnacles: a spectacular set of grey pointy things at 2315m. Plan abandoned due to a lack of interest in the frostbite thought to be an inevitable consequence of attempting the climb given the weather forecast and the coating of snow the pinnacles received a few days prior to our arrival.

Plan B: head up the Huxley and base ourselves at Brodrick hut. This hut is just below Brodrick Pass which links the Hopkins and Huxley valleys to the Landsborough Wilderness Area. A Landsborough Adventure being on our "to do" list a recce seemed like a good idea plus from the pass you can climb Mt McKenzie (2156m) or the more intimidating Mt Strauchon (2391m), both snow climbs.

We switched our rock kit for alpine kit and made the trudge up 9 kilometres of four wheel drive track across river flats past rose briars festooned with bright red rose hips and the healthiest matagouri I've ever seen. From Monument hut it is another 9km to Huxley Forks Hut. Travel is ridiculously easy - open river flats interspersed with beech forest, a little bit like the Matakita Valley in Nelson Lakes NP complete with livestock. The surrounding mountains are a tiny bit taller though.

We stopped at Huxley Forks hut for a late lunch just as it started to rain. By now we knew a family of 5 were ahead of us on the trail to Brodrick Hut. We decided to stay put, deduced by the lure of remaining warm and dry at Huxley Forks versus camping in the rain and gambling on the weather clearing tomorrow up at Brodrick.

Plan C: base ourselves at Huxley Forks hut and either get up really early and go climb Mt McKenzie or climb the peak directly beside our hut, weather permitting. We spent the afternoon stocking up on firewood. The rain appeared determined to stick around. By evening we'd been joined by 7 other trampers so our hut and the tiny 3 bunk Officers Hut next door were full to overflowing.

Friday morning and Plan C is abandoned. Plan relied on an alpine start which did not quite come off partly due to Michael having set his alarm that only goes off Mon- Thurs and partly due to the trip leader having a good instinct for when to remain horizontal. The dark clouds promised more rain and the stiff nor-wester was clear evidence any climb to the tops would be punishment rather than reward.

Plan D: day walks from Huxley Forks. We headed up the north branch of the Huxley to Brodrick hut. Not long into our walk the clouds delivered their promised rain and the nor-wester picked up, for a brief time it even hailed. After a quick chat with the family at Broderick we retreated back to base spending the afternoon listening to the wind and rain while sleeping, reading, playing cards and watching the Huxley flood. The other parties walked out.

On Saturday we awoke to more rain and wind and Plan D was abandoned. No point waiting to try going to South Huxley Biv as the side streams would be uncrossable. Another day watching the river lacked appeal.

Plan E: walk out and head round to Unwin Hut at Mt Cook Village and do rock climbing there or in Christchurch. After an early lunch and just as the weather started to clear we wandered back down the Huxley. A pleasant evening was spent in the Old Mountaineers Café at Mt Cook.

Sunday was fine and mild. Should we climb at the Sebastapol Bluffs next door or the crags in Christchurch? We decided to get the drive back to Christchurch over with. In our second biggest city the sun was shining and it was 23 degrees celcius. Friend of the Club, Ant Mulick, kindly acted as tour guide taking the boys crag climbing in the while I went for a run around the hills behind the Halswell Quarry Park.

The Ruataniwha Conservation Park encompasses the Dobson, Hopkins, Huxley, Temple and Maitland Valleys. It's located just south or behind Mt Cook in the Mackenzie Basin near Lake Ohau. The open river flats, hearty beech forest and rugged snow capped tops mean this area is a bit of a scenic wonderland well stocked with huts and bivs and perfect for tramping, climbing, mountain biking and chilling out. I'm already plotting my return which will be accompanied by a good weather forecast and a jumbo sized assortment of plans.

# The Wellington Banff film festival

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Go and watch some of the world's best mountain films from New Zealand, France, Canada, the US, and Australia... just to name a few.

Paramount Theatre, 25 Courtenay Place  
6:30pm  
Tuesday June 11 and Tuesday June 18

Tickets:

- \$19 for members of the New Zealand Alpine Club and students and
- \$21 for non-members.

Bookings can be made online or in person through the Paramount Cinema.

Tickets are going fast, so encourage interested parties to book now to ensure their spot!

## And a little bit of history

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We read about the recent tramping trip to Travers Valley earlier in this newsletter ... now you can read about the trip in 1955.

### TRAVERS VALLEY .. EASTER TRIP 1955

We (22 of us I believe) assembled at Queen's Wharf Gate at 10.30 p.m. on 7th April. The usual scrum was had to get aboard and we hit our berths about midnight, unfortunately not to sleep (I could write six pages here on why not but will spare the tender feelings of our male members). At 3 a.m. we had to hit the decks once more as the steward was screaming in our ears "a cuppa tea now being served in the saloon," we could have given many suggestions what to do with his tea.

At Picton we rolled off the boat at 4 a.m. plus six C.T.C. who were sharing our transport, and fought for places in the truck. We breakfasted at Blenheim, then picked up another three bodies who were to travel in our transport. Blenheim was left behind about 5.30 a.m. with all of us determined to catch up on a little sleep. The positions the 31 people draped themselves into rather resembled statue groupings of wrestlers, except statue like silence was not the order of the day as limbs began to drop off (at least that is what it felt like.)

Lake Rotoiti was finally reached about 8 a.m. Having an hour to spare before the launch left some of the boys went fishing and Johnny (Yorkshire) caught a fish . cue for many photographs. The lake had to be crossed in two parties, the four girls, the C.T.C. the shooters and Bill, who was to have the doubtful pleasure of shepherding four females up the Travers, comprised party number one. It was a beautiful trip across the lake, which though deep has crystal clear water with hills sweeping right to the edges. (It also harbours a treble the normanl size sandfly!)

On reaching the other side, the shooters, Peter, Johnny and "Spud" pushed off at full speed with Mary, "Slats", Hamah, Bill and self following more slowly. The valley is very lovely, wide, with flats making easy walking. Unfortunately the view was marred by a drizzling rain. On reaching the forks, where we had been told the hut was near, we spent three quarters of an hour tearing up and down every track trying to locate it, cursing with every breath clubs who do not indicate clearly where huts are situated. Finally we decided to wait for the second party to see if they had any ideas.

When the advance party of Trev, Dudley and Ted arrived they informed us that the hut was another three quarters of an hour farther along the track. We pushed on, "Slats" and I both eager to reach the hut having fallen foul of the river which resulted in wet shorts. An hour and a half later we were still pounding along the track, even having had a couple of mirages, seeing huts that were not there. At last, just as I was having visions of us walking for four days looking for an elusive hut, it came in sight. Trevor, "Slats" and I arrived just as a brew was being made, Peter, "Spud", Johnny and Ted having reached the hut ahead of us; sometimes it pays to be just a little late. The hut has six double bunks, so it was first there, first served, the rest sleeping in tents.

Whilst the stew was cooking, the girls sat more or less in comas, but among the boys maps were passed, peaks were climbed, times for rising were flashed around and I believe 4 a.m. was set as zero hour for Saturday. Tea was eaten, but most of us felt very weary, Joe being discovered on a top bunk fast asleep, with his fork halfway to his mouth.

We all hit the sack early, not a sound was heard until 7 a.m. (shades of night before resolutions) and then only a sound, not a movement was forthcoming until Johnny and Peter started to rush around getting breakfast, then all the energetic people came to life and began to mill around. Out of the confusion and chaos some order resolved, parties were organised and away. Peter, Johnny and "Spud", shooting, Dave, Tom, Hori and Dudley to climb Cupola, and Dan, Trevor, Phil John, Ted, Mary, "Slats" to try and reach Travers, while the rest of us stayed behind to sunbathe and laze. It was a beautiful day, I think the remnants enjoyed lazing.

Later the parties came in after each other, Cupola had been climbed (so popular they had someone directing traffic I believe), the Travers party had navigated the way back in the dark, without torches.

After tea (the dehydrated stew looks rather like a dogs dinner but tastes very good) the usual games of 500 shot into being, I Don't know whether it was the presence of females or what, but they didn't seem to have the verve of the games Dave witnessed on the Xmas Trip, no idiots waiting to receive the cap and gown of lunacy, Dudley must have had a winning partner.

Sunday was another lovely day so we decided to make a leisurely trip down to the lake, spend the day there and be on the spot for catching the launch on the Monday morning. We strolled down the river, had a chance to really look at the valley which was very pretty in the sunshine, the photographers of the party were able to have a field day.

We reached the lake about 4 p.m. some of the boys leapt in for a swim, leaping out even more quickly wearing a delicate all over blue shade. The

weather was fine so most bods slept out, not bothering to put the tents up.

On Monday, the first launch load across the lake were able to lounge on the beach and watch the speedboats while waiting for the others to arrive. The return trip was a very dusty one as the truck canopy was turned back, so Picton saw us arriving very much the worse for travel. This didn't stop us shooting into the nearest fish shop while the males rushed off to test that "Civilisation" hadn't changed during the three days absence.

All of us caught the boat on time, I was told that trampers have a reputation to keep of having an "extra curly time" on the boat trip from the South to North Island. It perhaps goes without saying that the W.T.M.C. males upheld traditions very well.

So ended a pleasant long week end.

... Johnny J.

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**Deadline for submissions to the next WTMC newsletter: Friday 28 June 2013**

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.