



the Mouth'n'Ear



Newsletter of the Wellington Tramping and Mountaineering Club



Snowcrafters at Dome Shelter (Photo: Steve Austin)

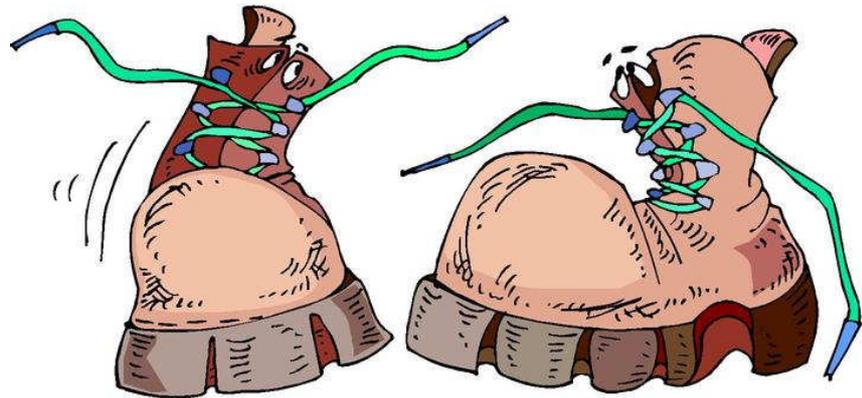
In this August issue: Alpine Instruction Reports; Trip Statistics; Waitewaewae Hut (Tararua FP); Kaweka Hot Pools; Dreaming about Daphne; FMC News.

Deadline September Newsletter: 18 September

Send contributions to newsletter@wtmc.org.nz, or PO Box 5068 Wellington.

Topographical Turpitude

with the Chief Guide



Greetings All

Tips for Leaders can be found on www.wtmc.org.nz

Go to [Home](#) , [Trip Information](#) , Trip Leaders Info

Trip Leaders Info

Trip Planning for Leaders

Promoting

- Make sure the trip sheet is on the trip noticeboard – check with the Chief Guide or Assistant Chief Guide if it is not.
- Make an announcement about your trip to get others to sign up at Wednesday night Club meetings.
- Restrict your trip to a manageable number of people. If there are many others wanting to do the trip, another person could lead a second trip. Consider forming another party if there's lots of interest.

Planning

- Write up and distribute a plan to your party
- Provide them with a gear list
- Let them know the departure and expected return details.
- Make sure they know what is expected of them, eg. bringing communal food for dinner and BYO food for other meals.
- Make individual lists for group gear and communal food.

Collecting money and confirming numbers

- South Island trips – payment is required 2 Wednesday's before departure. If trampers do not pay, their places cannot be confirmed for ferries.
- North Island trips – payment should be received on the Wednesday before the trip leaves.
- The trip money form should be filled out and passed to the Transport Money Officer.

- Ensure the Chief Guide knows your trip numbers approximately 1 week before the trip and contact them if your trip numbers change. This is required to ensure transport requirements can be met.
- If someone has not paid by the due date, it is the leaders decision whether or not they allow them on the trip. If you do accept them, it will be your responsibility to follow up and collect the fare.

Search and rescue and overdue trips

- Complete an Intentions Sheet and forward it to the overdue/emergency contact person for the weekend. If you do not know who this is please contact the Emergency Contact Co-ordinator.
- Forward the overdue trip contact details to your party (name and phone number will be assigned before departure). They can leave these with their families, flatmates or friends.
- Ensure the gear requirements sheet is filled out and handed to the Gear Custodian. The contact phone numbers will be used in the event of a trip returning late.

Alcohol

The Club has a policy of no alcohol on trips without the prior approval from the Chief Guide. Some exceptions may apply for social or gourmet trips – check first.

Food

- Check if any of your party are vegetarian
- Rules of thumb
Rice/pasta/couscous – 100-125g per person
Fresh meat/vegetables etc. – 300g per person
- A packet of biscuits will suffice for a dessert.

Group gear

- Tents and flies – The Club has tents for alpine trips only, otherwise flies can be used. Please remind trampers to return them clean and dry. Although pegs are available, you may choose to use rocks, logs etc instead rather than carry this extra weight.
- Emergency Kit – all trampers are expected to bring a personal first aid kit. These should compliment the Club emergency kit, which does not include items such as basic sticking plasters. If the emergency kit is used, please ensure the Gear Custodian is made aware of this.
- Cooker/Fuel – although this is shared group gear, the Club does not provide these for use. You will need to find trampers who have them. Let those who are bringing cookers know how many will be used as this will determine the amount of fuel brought. Weight the purchase of fuel against others who buy food.

Route planning and navigation

- Check the route before the trip so you are familiar with huts, tracks, river crossings. There are several guidebooks on tramping that may provide information, but feel free to contact the Chief Guide, Assistant Chief Guide or others who've been to the area before.
- Maps – generally the 1:50,000 topographic series are used for trips. For cycling and kayaking trips a park map or 1:250,000 will often suffice. Maps are available at discounted rates to all FMC members. An order form is in the back of each FMC journal.
- Make sure you have all the appropriate maps and a compass. Photocopy notes from a guidebook (they're lighter and avoid damaging your guide book).

Don't forget about Paua Hut free for members and \$6 per person per night if non-member. Paua Hut for Bookings Phil Kendon ph 475 7625 pauabooking@wtmc.org.nz.

For Ruapehu Lodge Bookings contact Brian Goodwin lodgebooking@wtmc.org.nz or leave a message on the answer phone ph 479 6799.

Alpine Courses Update



This year the Club again ran both an Alpine Instruction Course and a Snowcraft course.

We had 6 people on the AIC and 14 doing Snowcraft so a total of 20 students.

At the time of writing we had just completed the Snowcraft course while the AIC still had its final weekend to go.

We enjoyed two brilliant weekends based at the newly renovated Club

Lodge. We were very lucky to get great weather conditions for 3 out of 4 days and a good variety in snow conditions, (from really soft through to the nice crisp stuff). There were many highlights from Snowcraft, but probably the most memorable climbing bits were everyone getting to Dome Shelter (2672) on Snow II and about a third of us going on to summit TeHeuheu (2732) and Tukino (2721) peaks. Maybe, by the time you read this the AICers will have added Mt Taranaki to the list of peaks bagged! Of the many other great experiences there were a couple of culinary endeavours that really stood out - the cheese

scones and the death by chocolate self saucing chocolate pudding just to name two. There are some very talented bakers in the club! If you want to know more about what the courses were like you will have to wait for your copy of the 2009 Journal.

As usual the running of the courses was a team effort and lots of people were extremely generous with their time and energy. I would like to thank all the people who helped out with the courses this year, in particular Andrew McLellan, John Thompson, Yibai He and John Duggan who assisted with AIC instruction. Without the endeavours of these guys, most of whom have significant other commitments such as young families, we would not be able to offer an AIC. Thanks also to Allen Higgins, David Jewell, Marie Henderson and Steve Austin who again helped out with the low profile but absolutely vital administrative and practical tasks associated with making sure the courses run smoothly. These guys also did a fab job of instructing on the courses. Special thanks to Marie Smith and Donna Maher for assisting with gear allocation. Finally lots of cheers for Steve, Kev, Ant and Jenny for doing a superb job of driving us up and back from the mountains. The Club needs more people to become certified van drivers. If you like driving and go on club trips this could be a way for you to contribute to the smooth running of the club. All you need to do is have a chat to Gareth our Transport Officer. transport@wtmc.org.nz

Doing an alpine course is a great way to start winter but don't forget to get out there and do some alpine trips! This applies not just to graduates of the 2009 courses. I'm sure there are Club Members who have done the courses in the past who are keen to test themselves on a few expeditions this year. By now the Spring trip schedule is probably out, Spring time = prime climbing time, so I hope you have taken a look and found some trips to do.



If you want to lead an alpine trip or help out with alpine instruction get in touch at alpinecourses@wtmc.org.nz it is not necessary to be a seasoned mountaineer, in many cases the Club can provide practical backup, mentoring and support.

Hope to see you getting high on hills.

Report by **Sharron Came**

Photos by **Katharina Monien**

Alpine Instruction with the WTMC

For the past couple of months we (the 6 AIC students) have been heading off into the mountains with a team of dedicated (and highly skilled!) instructors to learn how to safely climb challenging snowy peaks. The Alpine Instruction Course, run by Sharron Came together with this years instructors (Allen Higgins, David Jewell, John Duggan



and Yibai He) consisted of a day of indoor climbing, a day of rock climbing out at Titahi Bay followed by 3 weekends in the snow - 2 weekends based at our club lodge on Mt Ruapehu and one weekend based at the Kapuni lodge on Mt Egmont. Weekends were spent walking and climbing up and down snowy peaks, getting our heads around various knots, rope work, snow anchors and crevasse extraction techniques!

I highly recommend this course to those of you who have an interest in taking your snowcraft training further – to gain more confidence out in the snow and to learn how to safely tackle steep, icy slopes! Bring with you enthusiasm, some fitness and a willingness to challenge yourself and you will both learn a huge amount and have a lot of fun! We certainly did..

A huge thanks to all the 2009 AIC instructors!

Jenny Beaumont



The Mouth`n`Ear



Murmurings from the Kitchen



Kia Ora all

Well it's hard to believe we are putting the spring schedule together. I'm not sure where the year has gone. We have had some great presentations on club nights that have been informative and entertaining. Thank you to those willing to give up their time and brave enough to stand up and talk. We are always looking for more people so if you have been on a fantastic trip lately, whether you actually made the destination

or not, come and let us know.

We have more great presentation coming up. Here are a few

26th August: WTMC Quiz Night. We have put together some questions for you to test your knowledge of WTMC and tramping so skill yourself up, organize yourself into teams of 6-8 people and come join the fun.

2nd September: Craig Bellhouse: Taking us for a tour around Stewart Island, the presentation we missed in July.

9th September: Darren Hammond: The club president is telling us about his trip to Morocco

With more to follow.

As you all may be aware we have an annual photo competition. This year is no different except we have new judge. We will tell you more about him later in the year but for now get your camera out and get snapping. Try to take the picture using a high resolution setting (ie 5+ Mega Pixels).

The categories are as follows

- Flora and Fauna
- Landscape
- Dramatic
- Water
- Tramping with WTMC

There will be a maximum of 2 photos per category per person. The photos must be in to either Donna or Sally by Wednesday November 4th 2009 and the winners will be announced on Wednesday November 25th. Late entries will not be accepted so get on to it early.

We have some exciting and fun things planned for the future so keep your eyes, ears and minds open for more details.

Thanks and see you all at club if not out in the hills

Donna and Sally.



Stats Junkies Corner

If you're one of the wonderful people who's organised a club trip over the last few years, you may have noticed that someone often nags you afterwards to find out how it went. This is all part of the statistics process, and it's one of the ways our club's valiant leaders keep an eye on how well everything's ticking over. Showing off the trip stats is usually left for the annual report, but we thought we might experiment with including a few in the newsletter every so often to see how it goes.

Below is a comparison of the three month period from May to July for the last 3 years. (May seemed a good place to start, because January to April were never collected for the first two of those years.) Stats have been compiled by Gail Shuttleworth (between May and December 2007), and Mike McGavin (since May 2008), so keep in mind there are possibly small differences in data collection and recording techniques.

Although an effort is made to track down trip leaders after the date, sometimes it's just too difficult to get hold of people, especially if the email system doesn't work, although most of the time it's not a problem. The stats below do not show trips that were cancelled, trips that were merged with others, or trips for which no response was available. The full statistics record all of this to some extent.

Between 1st May and 31st July

Grade	Ran 2007	Ran 2008	Ran 2009
All	6	1	2
Easy	7	7	10
Easy-Medium	4	8	10
Medium	7	12	8
Medium-Fit	2	3	3
Fit	1	4	5
Total	27	35	38
Type	Ran 2007	Ran 2008	Ran 2009
Alpine 1	3	2	3
Cycle	0	0	2
Daywalk	5	7	8
Instruction	4	3	6
Kayak 1	0	1	0
Kayak 2	1	0	0
Mountain-Bike	0	1	0
Navigation	0	1	0
Sea Kayak	0	0	1
Social	1	0	0
Tramp	12	20	17
Work	1	0	1
Total	27	35	38

Waitewaewae Hut – from Otaki Forks Easy/Medium Tramp – June 12 to 14

by Angela Gilbert

Leader: Steve. Team: Robert, Tricia, Kate, Richard, Dmitry, Tatiana, Angela, Gareth, Daniel and Duncan



After a wet week in Wellington I imagine everyone in our group was looking forward to getting away from the town and out into the Tararuas. For some reason I have never tramped in the Tararuas before and I was keen to have a look for myself after seeing many club night photos of popular Tararua tramps. I have to say I was not disappointed - I saw the Tararuas in glorious sunshine and heavy rain that left a mist hanging through the trees.

We left from the train station at 8am on Saturday and picked up our last person at Porirua on the way to Otaki Forks. The weather was pretty good and after a few quick stretches at Otaki Forks we started our walk in brilliant sunshine. This was to be the only time I wished I had packed my sunglasses though. We walked over the lovely bridges and into the bush. We were the first group through for the morning - I know because I was first over the swing bridge and collected many spider webs on the way over.

The track was lovely – a gorgeous mix of pungas and regrowth bush with a lot of variable terrain. We followed a stream up the hill and we were in and out of it many times. The river rocks were smooth and sometimes slippery but I think we only had two people take an unexpected deeper dip than usual. The track itself was full of tree roots and I did encounter some of the famous Tararua mud. I ran out of energy not too long after negotiating the active slip area. This was very exciting as we had to clamber up a slippery bank around a huge slip using a few tree branches and roots. My new Macpac pack sat snugly on my back as I gave it a good workout in stability - leaping through the undergrowth like I was born in the jungle. Well, in my mind. In reality I was covered in mud once I got to the top of the slip and my arms felt like they had stretched a few centimetres. It really was good fun but sapping - I should have snacked more regularly on my chocolate and nuts after that episode.

Past here we followed an old log hauling trail where there were often remnants of rail tracks we were walking between. Fascinating to think about them building all that infrastructure in

the middle of nowhere to haul out the magnificent huge trees. This insight into historic logging culminated in seeing a huge, iron monster of an engine on the side of the track. We spent a lot of time speculating on this contraption. Did they bring it in on those tracks they had to lay? Did they bring it in piece by piece and assemble it onsite? We discounted helicoptering it in for obvious reasons but that would have been the preferred modern option. Every other option seemed like too much hard work. We left with lots of photos.

When we popped out of the stream bed up onto a plateau, we spent a wee while walking on track that was pretty flat before heading off down another stream on the other side of the hill. About this time we were passed by a university tramping group and the heavy rain started. This section of track went down to the Otaki River where you could take a dry weather option up the river itself, or climb up to a ridge and around to the hut on a track. Taking the wet weather version we were surprised by a new slip exposing lots of nice, grey, very sticky, clay around the root ball of a massive tree. We used stringy but strong tree roots to sidle around it and managed to get away without getting covered in clay.

The Waitewaewae hut was a welcome sight and it was light, airy and warm. There seemed to be loads of space and our team members had a brew on already and I found a good sleeping space on the roomy top sleeping platform. We chatted as night set in around the fire and then around dinner. Steve organised a lovely Thai tuna green curry and that was followed by chocolate biscuits. The pita bread with garlic roasted over the pot belly stove top was a huge hit. Steve chose the dinner table benches as the best sleeping location - he pushed two benches together and slept there.

We all slept very well that night - there wasn't a lot of snoring or anything. Breakfast might need some minor adjustments on my part. I was not overjoyed with 4 Weetbix with my milk powder made up to resemble milk - mostly. I surreptitiously checked out my fellow trampers breakfast options. Someone had toast, someone had One Square Meal bars, some had porridge and some, rather sensibly I thought, had kept leftover tuna green curry with loads of rice. I think I might check out the leftover option on future tramps. Very tasty and it limits the amount of leftovers you have to pack back out after over-estimating the amount of rice 10 people can eat. I heard mention of previous trips people were on where they had to carry full billies of cooked rice back out.

My pack did get a bit lighter on the way out after the veges and tuna had been eaten and we all left excited by the river option back. About 50 m back down the track from the hut, we diverted into the river itself. After a few steps in the Otaki river, the numbness stopped the bone-chilling cold from hurting. Oh - I needed my polarised sunglasses here once more so I could see the river bottom and avoid those big, mossy, round stones. No one fell in however so it must have been a good option and we continued to wander down the river for about 800m or so before cutting back onto the track and following our route from yesterday back to Otaki Forks. You had to make sure you kept an eye out for the orange tag showing the track back into the bush on the true right bank as it would be easy to miss. Although as Steve pointed out, the river does flow past the carpark eventually. Perhaps inner tubes rather than packs for that idea. And not in winter. Brrrr.

I really should have stretched a bit more upon our arrival back to the van. By the time we got out at the Red Cafe to have some tea my muscles were getting stiff. The cafe had some nice food to satisfy our appetite and we got back in the van for the trip into Wellington. I did spend the next few days cringing when I climbed some steps and my legs remembered the weekend's activities. But as they say, that kind of a feeling is a great reminder of weekend fun!

Kaweka Hot Pools Easy Tramp – July 24 to 26

by Michael Lightbourne
photos by Lucy Soar

This was the third time I've gone to the Kaweka Hot Pools, or the Mangatainoka Hot Springs as they are more properly known. My introduction to the Hot Pools was back in 2005, doing an Easy tramp with Helen McDermott. Then two years ago I led a Medium tramp to Ballard Hut and the Hot Pools. This was one of the best tramps I have ever done – the small Ballard Hut is set in a beautiful location at the bushline of the Kaweka tops.

Normally these tramps are run over 3 days, but this year for some reason they were squashed into a weekend. This was no problem for the Easy tramp, but there was no way the Medium group could do Ballard Hut and the Hot Pools – that would be a Fit trip.

We left town a little after 5pm and stopped for dinner in Levin. I prefer to avoid the Rimutaka Hill Road at this time of year if possible. So it was through the Manawatu Gorge, then a change of drivers in Dannevirke, and we were driving the last road (Makahu) shortly before midnight. A long drive, yes, but I was okay with it - not having tramped for 3 months and being very keen to head far out of town and into the hills!

About half way along Makahu Road there is a ford with a big warning sign before it. There was heavy rain before the weekend, and the river was flowing swiftly over it. Both Easy and Medium groups decided to wait until morning, and flies were set up on grassy areas before the ford. It was a very cold night, and there was frost on the fly in the morning, and all over a pack that had been left out! Unfortunately, the river had not dropped during the night, and was splashing on the marker pole slightly above where it turns from white to red (meaning don't cross). There was much analysis and discussion at breakfast time. John Hoffeins and his Medium group showed up, had a look at the ford, and more analysis and discussion followed. In the end we decided the consequences of a van ending up sideways in the river were too severe to take the risk. We parked the vans where our fly was and the river was forded on foot.

Ahead of us was a 2 hour road walk through farmland, before we even got on the track, and it was looking like a big day for an Easy group to get to the Hut and hot pools. Shortly after

the road walk began, the shape of our weekend was about to change dramatically when a van, very similar to ours, came driving up the road. The driver said he had no problems crossing the ford, so two of us returned to the van and forded the river no problems. We passed the Medium group who were at the end of their road walk, they could only take comfort in the fact that they would have an easy way out.



So the tramp finally began from the road end car park later in the morning. The flattish track to Te Puia Hut is a nice stroll next to the Mohaka River with some dramatic rock faces to admire on the way. When those of us at the back arrived at the Hut we found the advance party had left their packs in the Hut with sleeping bags spread out over the mattress. They had gone to the Hot Pools, a further 45 minutes away. I had said in the trip plan that if the weather was good we would fly camp next to the hot pools, and the weather was actually okay, but I felt there could have been a mutiny if I had insisted that an Easy group spend a second night under a fly in the middle of winter, so the hut it was. I have to admit it was good to have a soft mattress in a warm hut and even the Medium group shared the hut with us.

We all enjoyed a late afternoon soak in the hot pools and returned to the Hut to make dinner. Dinner was Beef Stroganoff, which was made using a blend of Maggi's instructions and the recipe in the club recipe book. The resulting stroganoff was very tasty, if I might say so myself.

The next morning we returned to the car park on the same track, and again the group became very spread out. At the car park there is another hot spring, which is inferior because you cannot adjust the temperature. Some of us had a second dip here, it was a very warm pool, and when I got out my muscles told me they did not like the sudden change in temperature. A couple of the Medium group took my van back over the ford to collect their van, and then drove both vans to the road end. I discovered after getting out of the hot pool that a few of my group had gone home in John Hoffeins' van – personally I couldn't understand the hurry to get back to town. Lunch was had at the road end, which is a very nice picnic area to bring your family for the day (if you live in Napier). I could have stayed

longer, but the others were ready to go, so a bit reluctantly I got behind the wheel, and we left at about 1pm.

I look forward to seeing this tramp on future Winter Schedules – it certainly is a classic Kaweka tramp.

The trampers were: Michael Lightbourne, Patricia Hassett, Lucy Soar, Aimee Richie, Andy Hay, Rita Quill, Bruce Dudley, Jo Pekelharing, Nicole Hoy, Chris Montgomery and Duncan Garmonsway.

Kaweka Hot Pools - June 2008

by Justin Parker

“Hey Justin, doesn’t the fuel gauge say we’re on empty?”

“No, the fuel indicator needle is just having a little rest below the ‘E’. We’ll be fine”.

“Are you sure about that?”

“Um, not really, but you weren’t supposed to ask that question. I’m sure we’ll be, um, fine. <Quiet mumble now> Maybe we’ll make it back. <even quieter mumble>. You guys might have to push for a bit.... <louder now> Um, anyone got any chocolate??”

And so began our trip back into civilisation after three hard days tramping, at the beginning of a very long gravelly access road (60km long) with no service stations, no working cell phones or cell phone network, in heavy rain with very tired punters and no chocolate - not a good sign!

A small group of us had signed up for what was to be a nice medium / easy trip out to the Mangatainoka hot springs. The springs are in Kaweka Forest park, located out at the end of a very long gravel drive from Taradale, and we were looking forward to a quiet trip in the bush over Queen’s birthday weekend, in winter.

I ended up being (voted? Forced? Coerced?) volunteered for the job of trip leader after the two trips heading out that way (an Easy and a Medium) were cancelled at the last minute. We’d all done an Easy trip before and we were ready for our next challenge, an Easy-Medium, so we now had the chance to make it our own trip. After much poring over the maps, we asked the (former) Medium trip leader what she thought of her planned Medium trip up to Ballard Hut: “it’s really not that hard, it’s more of an easy walk up a hill, then a bit of a slog across the tops, and then you’re there. No problem at all. You’ll be fine”, and pretty much made our first mistake.

What I’ve come to learn is, that when a Medium fitness trumper says ‘it’s really not that hard’, what that really means to an Easy trumper is “it is mind blowingly knackered and you have to be insane to do it”. Luckily having experienced this problem in translation before we had an escape route up our sleeves just in case we couldn’t make it to Ballard Hut, which

would be to stop half-way at Middle Hill on the first night and then cut straight through to Te Puia Lodge and the hot Springs from there the next day. We'd be carrying big packs, including four season winter tents just in case, plus gourmet food (although I found out about that bit later), but hey, we had our escape route, so we'd be fine.

Friday night we spoiled ourselves with a station wagon being provided for transport courtesy of WTMC (since there was only four of us), and accommodation at the Hastings Top 10 holiday-park for the night. (Um, yes, we were supposed to be camping at the road end, but some concerns had been expressed about the dangers of driving at night along gravel roads.... and besides which, a nice comfy warm bed sounded much more appealing).

The drive-in to Kaweka Forest Park is awesome in Autumn. Long rolling hills, with a light coating of frost and the autumn leaves amongst the trees made everything look very picturesque. Saturday morning was bright and sunny, and we travelled for what seemed like hours along a very windy 60km gravel access road through rolling countryside out of Taradale to the tramp / road-end.

Did we check the fuel gauge? No. But we'd only driven up from Wellington and it was with a full tank, and besides which my car is able to make it to Taradale and almost back again on one tank, so surely all other cars are roughly the same??

One of our punters had volunteered to sort dinners for us, and it was with some surprise that heavy, raw chicken and vegetables, along with garnishes and everything you'd expect for a full course meal at home, was handed out among the group. (What's wrong with instant noodles and vegemite!!!). I looked at my pack, already bursting at the seams and up at the steep hill in front of us, wondering how the raw chicken might hold up, and my legs and the rest of the group as well...

Our destination was Ballard Hut which is a four-bunk hut that sits just down from an exposed gravel ridge. A Google search told us winds can be in excess of 100km up there, so we'd all packed monster packs with heavy winter tents and the warmest gear we could find. All this extra gear seemed a little silly, when we were standing there in the baking autumn sun, already sweating and looking up the never-ending steep slope that would take us towards Ballard hut. But we thought about the google warning of possible 100km/h winds, shouldered our packs and headed out.

From the road-end to Middle Hill hut it is only 2-3 hours, but it is a steep climb amongst scrub and farm-land, and then an even steeper climb amongst beech forest for a further 2-3 hours to Ballard Hut. When you are carrying heavy packs, it seems more like 2-3 days. It wasn't long before the full ferocity of the mid-winter sun was bearing down upon us, and after many unscheduled 'photo' stops, Plan B (to over night at Middle Hill hut) started looking pretty good.

We emerged through low lying scrub onto a small table-land with Middle Hill hut, a small squat little 8-bunk hut sided with orange corrugated iron, set out before us amongst a

clearing of tussock grass on the edge of some very pretty beech forest. Lazy smoke coiled in the sky from the hut's fireplace and a father and son were busy chopping wood, and were the only other occupants. With guaranteed bunks and no more hill-climbing for the day, we couldn't possibly turn it down and decided Plan B was the best option.

The gourmet chicken dinner drew envious stares from the father and son, and more than made up for the effort of carrying it earlier that day. Later after dinner we were just settling down for the night when suddenly, sometime after darkness, the door flew open and we were surprised to be joined by a large group from another tramping club. They were just as surprised to see us, and had just made it in from tramping along our 'Plan B' and looked absolutely exhausted. They told us that while the track looked good on the map (and there was no info otherwise), the track was massively over-grown in places, not well maintained and very up-and-down. They heavily advised against doing it. (Not only that, but they weren't tramping with four season tents and gourmet food, and looked like pretty fit trampers).

Our group had a think and decided we would back-track to the carpark the next day, drive the short distance (5km) across to the other road-end (the blue gum car-park) and then tramp along the river to Te Puia lodge and the hot springs via that way.

It meant a bigger day than Plan B, but it would be 2-3 hours downhill and we could also lighten our packs by dumping all surplus winter clothing and the four season tents before starting the 3-hour "easy" walk along the river to Te Puia lodge.

That night we ended up all squashing into the hut with every available inch of floor space taken up, with the late-arrivals crammed in front of the fire-place and enjoying the heat, and the rest of us squeezed into the bunks. Before long, gentle snoring filled the hut and about 1am, after tossing and turning for a few hours and trying to ignore the sounds of rustling sleeping bags, I ended up grabbing my pack and pitching my tent outside on the cold, hard frost covered ground for a bit of solitude. I was asleep in seconds - and also happy to have used the tent after lugging it up a very steep hill!

The next morning I got woken by a gentle tapping on the tent frame and to a cup of tea from one of my punters. Nice. Frost had caked into ice in some places on my tent, but otherwise it had been a very good sleep. Before long we were skipping back down the hill we'd climbed so arduously just the day before.

Jumping into the car we had travelled only 100metres when one of the punters noted the fuel gauge. "Did you know we're about to run out of petrol?"

"No", I said, "we're not going to run out, and everything's fine".

"But the fuel gauge is on empty".

"Nah, that's because we're on a hill".

"Yes, but we're sloping downwards, so that should mean the tank should be reading that we have even more petrol".

"Oh right", I said, "I guess we might have a small problem then".

With the car parked in the middle of the track, we debated for over half an hour as to what to do. The choices were to push on with the planned trip and hope for the best, or turn the car around and see how far we could get back in day light to Taradale, so that we would have all day to be 'rescued' if need be by passers by on this remote track.

Eventually, we decided we'd give it a go. We'd park the car pretty much back at the closest road-end, and walk the 5km to Blue Gum car-park and then tramp into Te Puia lodge from there. Luckily one of the punters from my group had run into a friend the previous night from the other tramping group (who lived in the Taradale region), who had agreed she would come find us with extra petrol if needs be. The major concern was the intermittent cellphone coverage.

All of this had added another hour delay to our day and I was beginning to wonder that after already having done 3 hours down from Middle Hill, with an hour to walk between car-parks and then a further 3-4 hours to get to the lodge, as to what time we'd finally get to Te Puia Lodge, whether we'd be tramping in the dark, and whether it was such a sensible idea after all. By that stage we'd all ditched what extra gear we could, as the lodge took 24 bunks and was not exposed like Ballard hut. Very quickly a small pile of gear was sprawled across the back seats of the hire car. We'd also had the chicken last night and so with our packs somewhat lighter, we headed off for the next part of our trip.

We passed blue gums car park and started along a wide gravel path that meandered along the river. The bush was exceptionally scenic and travelling with lite packs along the mostly flat path was idyllic compared to the hard slog of the day before. As the day wore on and the light was beginning to fade, tired muscles, aches and pains began to emerge and just as we were all wondering whether our torches would provide enough light to get to the hut, we rounded a corner and there it was! Te Puia Lodge.

There were only four others in the hut, including a small dog, so we claimed some mattresses as fast as possible and then grabbed our gear for the hot pools, urging tired and aching muscles to take us the remaining 45 mins to get to there. The hot pools are well worth the effort. A large fibre-glass tub (from a fishing boat) has been placed where the hot springs emerge, with a pipe that carries the hot water into the tub and which can be removed in- and out- of the tub so you can control the temperature. It's all surrounded by wooden decking and set in a nice beech forest clearing. Since we'd arrived so late, we pretty much had the place to ourselves. It was absolute magic, especially for weary bones and tired muscles.

The trip back to the lodge was uneventful, although one of our punters had a shock awakening when the other party's dog made a bee-line for her upon being allowed back into hut early in the morning. Although it was only to be covered by slobbering dog kisses, when you're fast asleep it comes as a surprise!

The Sunday morning tramp back along the river was also good, and we all turned to thinking about whether the petrol would last for the trip back out again. The skies had begun to

amass thick, dark grey clouds and were threatening rain all day – not a great prospect for a car with no petrol. We finished at the blue gum carpark and were half-way to the car at the next car park when suddenly the heavens opened up. Luckily we were only in it for a few minutes before a passer-by in a large 4WD took pity on us and gave us a lift to our hire car.

The next couple of hours back in the car along the road-end consisted of long periods of coasting, very slow driving in some places and a very light touch on the accelerator, lots of anxiety, along with furiously scanning the cellphones as to when we would next be in coverage (which seemed very intermittent), and watching the fuel indicator dip firmly below Empty. To add to the excitement we only had two cellphones between all of us and the batteries were very low on each one. Thankfully the trip back to Taradale was mostly downhill, and after what seemed like a life-time we managed to limp into a service station with the engine still running, despite having travelled well over 60km on a less than empty tank.

The lynching party for the trip leader was cancelled and instead we had a small celebration feast at McDonalds - after we'd refuelled the car.

So these days, I always check the fuel gauge whenever I pass the last petrol station on a trip, and assign a second person in my group the responsibility to check, too.

Dreaming of Daphne Medium Tramp – July 3 to 5

by Mika Verheul

I dreamed about Daphne, her spur, her ridge and her hut. After a couple of months filled with studies and deskwork it was time to get out and meet Daphne in the Ruahine's. I choose to be a novice leader on this trip, the 3rd-5th of July. It would be great! There were 16, then there were 8, then there were 11, and finally there were 7 punters keen to join me. Unfortunately the weather didn't allow for our meeting with Daphne and only last minute we changed plans and decided to visit Cone instead: his saddle, his peak and his hut.

We met Cone in the Tararua's on a cloudy but beautiful day without any wind. After Adrian finally finished his milo we were all ready to go and walked up to the saddle.

We left our packs at the bottom and climbed up Cone's peak to have a lunch with a view. As expected on the tops there was a nice layer of snow and Phil decided that a snow man should be made as evidence that we had been there. When the clouds ran in and the views disappeared we decided it was time to head down again. Reinforced by the weight of our full packs we continued our trip.

After a short inspection of Cone's hut (yes, it's still there) we moved on along the river towards Tutuwai Hut. Referring to Adrian's late milo we walked the last half hour in the dark. Phil, Sandra, Adrian, Christian, Robert, Gunes and I felt a bit like the seven dwarfs,

marching lined up with our little shiny lights to find the hut where there might be somebody already sleeping on our mattresses. However, it turned out that there was no Snowy White in the hut. In fact there was nobody except us.

To avoid paying too much attention to Cone only we decided to catch up with Reeves on our way out the next day. Reeves' track over Mt. Reeves seemed very promising with nice views in clearing areas if only it hadn't been cloudy. It was a good 3.5 hour walk including a short but unpleasant mud fight & slide battle through a pine plant at the far end. Being a bit wet and muddy we were pleased to find Hans at the road end with the van ready to drive us back to Wellington. Thanks to the punters for enabling the trip. It was great to meet Cone!

However ... I am still dreaming about Daphne, her spur, her ridge and her hut, and look forward to catch up with her some day. Maybe another opportunity in September?

FMC News

FMC Bulletin Survey

The Federation is planning to contact all clubs and individual members to seek suggestions on how our flagship publication, under the expert editorship of Shaun Barnett, could be further improved. For example: What additional features would you like to see? Have you any ideas about improved format, or even a name change? Expect to receive a survey form shortly.

Topo50 Maps

LINZ has announced that the release date for the new Topo50 Map series is 23 September 2009. All clubs have been sent information directly from LINZ outlining the reasons for the new release and why they should be used from 23 September. If your club has not seen this information then you can download it from our website, www.fmc.org.nz/services/maps. In early September, we will be sending to all clubs an order form so that clubs can order supplies of the new maps through Federated Mountain Clubs at a considerably reduced price. In order to achieve this reduced price clubs will be asked to collate orders from their members and submit one order per club. The more maps a club orders then the cheaper the price per map will be. For further information on the new map codes and map details go to www.linz.govt.nz/topo50

Central Kaimanawa Access

Executive members Viv Milne and Barbara Morris have had a meeting with the Department of Conservation with a view to improving tramping access across the private blocks in the Central Kaimanawas. The Department has undertaken in its management plan to negotiate public access to the park. Any clubs who have had problems with access and those who have obtained satisfactory access across the central private land should contact Viv: milne@ps.gen.nz; or Barbara: btmorris@paradise.net.nz

Mountain Biking Developments – Consultation on Shared Tramping Tracks and New Bike Tracks

Federated Mountain Clubs is pleased that DOC has listened to both our and MTBNZ's concerns about consultation processes regarding mountain biking tracks on conservation lands. DOC also plan to let their area staff know that groups such as Federated Mountain Clubs and MTBNZ wish to be consulted before decisions are made on converting walking/tramping tracks into dual-use tracks, or when new mountain biking tracks are planned. We appreciate this action by the department and look forward to an improved consultation process in the future. If you feel this is not happening in your area, please contact Executive member, Barbara Morris: btmorrison@paradise.net.nz

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

We welcome 9 new members this month:

Senior members: Mark Henson, Mike Phethean, Robert Bettis, Kerry Summers, Sandra Beaubien + Phil Pharand

Family members: Annabelle Treacy, Olivia Treacy

Associate member: Mark Brandon

All senior, couple, life, and veteran members should now have received their FMC cards through the post. If you believe you should have a card and it has not arrived then please get in touch.

Jenny membership@wtmc.org.nz

Newsletter

The Mouth'n'Ear is now also published on the club's website – IN FULL COLOUR!

If you would prefer to receive email notification when the newsletter and other club publications are put on the website, instead of receiving printed copies in the mail, send an email to newsletter@wtmc.org.nz.

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.

All published trip reports (or other written articles that aren't committee reports) are in the draw to win a \$20 book voucher!

Hans Wiskerke takes the July voucher for his Penn Creek trip report. No draw was required, because Hans' report was the only entry. See how easy it is to win \$20!

Interested in climbing? Fergs in door climbing wall offers discounted entrance fees to all full WTMC members (those who received FMC cards). Members fees are \$5 on our club night (a Wednesday, after 5pm) and 8\$ on all other evenings. You may have to show your FMC card to get the discount so take it with you!

FROM THE GREEN CROCS

Well the weather is definitely getting warmer, and spring is just around the corner! The spring trip schedule will reach you with this newsletter, there are some really great trips on offer, so I hope you are able to get out and enjoy the great NZ outdoors with WT&MC. Thanks to all the people who have volunteered to lead trips, especially those who are leading trips for the first time. There are a few trips listed as Leader Required, if you would like to see these trips run, all volunteers to lead these trips (or any extra trips!) are gratefully accepted, Paul or Craig would love to hear from you.

Personal Locator Beacons are a hot topic right now, and at our last committee meeting, we decided that the club would purchase PLBs for use on club trips. I know that some members will not agree with the decision, and feel that the clubs current safety procedures are good enough, that PLBs are individual members responsibilities, not the clubs, and that there is a risk the PLBs will be misused by being set off when there is not a genuine emergency. All of these points are valid concerns, and the committee will be working to establish a robust procedure for the use of PLBs by club trips, and educating members in the use of PLBs. I will personally drive this process, and anyone who wants to help with this can contact me on president@wtmc.org.nz.

Most tramping clubs around the country have had a similar discussion around the purchase of PLBs, Some have bought PLBs, while some have chosen not to. The key argument for me that if we had a medical emergency on a club trip (which could happen anywhere, not just in remote areas) which required urgent evacuation, PLBs are the best way to get help right away (as per the June 2009 FMC bulletin). Put simply, PLBs could save a life, whereas our current procedures rely on cellphone coverage, which as we all know, is not reliable in many areas. So PLBs will be an extra tool available for trip leaders to use. They will not replace any of our current safety procedures, which begin by checking the track conditions and weather before leaving, and changing plans if the planned route may be unsafe or dangerous.

Senior members would have received an FMC card with their July newsletter, one of the best uses for this is getting an Annual Hut Pass from DOC for only \$63, down from \$90. You don't have to do much tramping to get superb value for money from the pass, and you are supporting an amazing network of back country huts.

This week, with regret, I accepted the resignation of Marie Smith as Vice President. Marie has contributed a lot to the club in recent years, especially in her 2 years as Social Convenor, and I am sad to lose her from committee.

I will be giving a slideshow on my Morocco trip on Sept 9th, so come along then, and I will tell you the story behind the camel photo from the July newsletter!

Darren Hammond