



the Mouth'n'Ear



Newsletter of the Wellington Tramping and Mountaineering Club



Club member Mike Phethean took this photo on May 23 from the top of Mt Everest

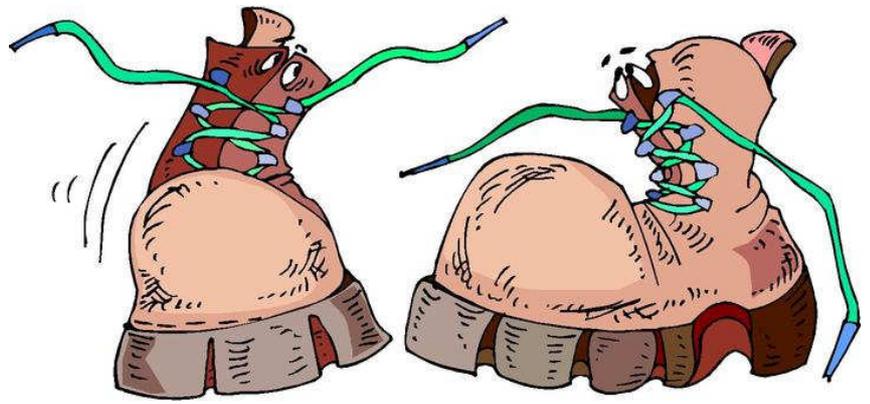
In this July issue: Two trips to the Orongorongo River; Journal Prizewinners trip to Christchurch; Kahurangi NP; Canoeing the Whanganui River; Mt Everest Interview.

Deadline August Newsletter: 23 July

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

Track Talk

with Amanda Wells -
Chief Guide



It's already time to start thinking about the Spring schedule, which runs from September to the end of January. This time, we're going to do the planning slightly differently.

At the moment, we're looking for ideas of road ends. You don't have to specify the trip(s), just a road end that you think it would be inspiring for the club to visit. Perhaps somewhere we haven't been for a while, or perhaps somewhere closer to home that you think might have some relatively unexplored potential.

By early July, I'll have drawn up the skeleton of the Spring schedule, with road ends against each date.

Phase two is planning the actual trips. On Wednesday 7 July, we're going to have a trip planning meeting from 5.30pm onwards before club, at the club rooms. There will be free pizza! The purpose of this gathering will be to plan trips for every road end on the new schedule - people will break into pairs or small groups, pick a road end or two, and come up with a selection of differently graded trips. There will be resources there on the night to help (books, maps, the club's trip database on a couple of laptops - plus any other resources you can bring), so you don't have to be a route-planning pro (though they are definitely welcome!).

How can you help?

- Email your ideas of road ends to chiefguide@wtmc.org.nz by early July
- Put Wednesday 7 July @ 5.30pm in your diary - or if you can't come in person, there will be opportunities to pick a road end and participate by email, just let me know.

Please put your thinking caps on so that we can have an exciting, diverse Spring schedule!

On another note, the Mountain Safety Council offers a number of useful courses for trampers. Coming up soon are Basic Navigation (2, 9, 16 August in the evenings, plus a day trip on 22 August – total cost \$105) and Outdoor First Aid (27-29 August, \$200). We're planning to run another club first aid course next year, but this is an excellent option if you want to upskill before then. Check out the training section of www.mountainsafety.org.nz for more info and to book.

This year, we've cancelled our formal Snowcraft course because punter numbers were down significantly on previous years. We're still running AIC this year – thanks heaps to Sharron and David and the other instructors for all the work they put in here – and Snowcraft will be back on the agenda in 2011.

Trips coming up in July

If you can lead any of the trips marked “leader required” below, please get in touch. There is an experienced person willing to be a buddy leader for the July 23-25 E tramp to Field hut, if you'd like to lead but would appreciate some support.

July 2- 4	AIC Lodge	AIC (Refresher weekend)	
ALP1 Inst	Snow Refresher	Sharron Came	
	Wgtn Based Day Walks		
Day E/M	Eastern Walkway Mt Climie		Peter Scolly
July 9-11	Lodge		
Instr F	AIC 1 David Jewell		
	Tararua FP (Putara Rd)		
Tramp E	Roaring Stag	Paul Andrews	
Tramp E/M	Ruapai Falls	Leader required	
Tramp M	Mt Ngomnina / Herepai		Bernard Smithyman
	Wgtn Based Day Walks (Kiwi bird options)		
Day E/M	Orongorongo River via Butcher		Barbara Keenan
July 16 - 18	Richmond FP (Northbank)		
Tramp E	Lake Chalice	Leader required	
Tramp E/M	Whakamarina / Onamalutu		John Hickey
Tramp E/M	Lake Chalice / Mid Goulter		Megan Sety
Cycle E/M	Marlborough Mystery		Anna Lambrechtsen
	Tararua FP (Otaki Forks)		
Instr All	Nature Awareness/Basic Survival		Paul Jeffries
	cost=\$165 (including all food) plus transport		
	Private Instructor(Steve Porteous)		
	Wgtn Based Day Walks		
Day E/M	Belmont Trig	Darren Hammond	
July 23 - 25	Lodge		
Instr F	AIC 2 David Jewell		
	Tararua FP (Otaki Forks)		
Tramp E	Field Hut	Required	
Tramp E/M	Waitewaewae Hut	John Hoffeins	
Tramp M	Kime via Rae Ridge	Required	
(Moonlight)	Tramp MF	Southern Crossing	Sam Kempthorne
Tramp F	Southern Main Range		Gareth Morton

Wgtn Based Day Walks

Day E/M Ngaio / Otari Peak [Paul Andrews](#)
Day Family Butterfly Creek buggy walk

[Mike Gilbert](#)

July 30 - 1 Aug

Eastern Ruapehu

Ski E Ski/Snowboard at Tukino Skifield [Required](#)
Alp1/Ski M Ski Touring from Whangaehu Hut/Rangipo Hut [Sam Kempthorne](#)

Social Corner



Kia Ora

Winter is upon us and it's good to see all the faces on a Wednesday night despite the inclement weather at times. To help us with the winter blues we are holding a ball this year so mark it in your Diaries now as it will be a night not to miss!

This is a black tie affair which includes a dinner and dance so put your glad rags and dancing shoes on and come join the fun.

When - **21 August 2010**

Where - The Long room at the **Basin Reserve**.

The Band is **Jonny and the Dream boats**.

Profits made will go to Wellington Search and Rescue

\$75 each for 2 or more early bird

\$80 each for a single early bird

\$90 each after 16th July

(early bird special prior to 16 July 2010)

To purchase tickets contact me on social@wtmc.org.nz or come to club on a Wednesday evening.

Now on to other stuff that is happening at club....

We've had some very informative and entertaining presentations recently. We particularly had fun with Des Smith from Zealandia giving an interactive talk about what native plants we find in the bush that we can use for food and healing and their properties. We have more to come;



- June 23rd This will be a social evening so club will be open from 7.30 – 8pm to sign up for trips and collect gear and then we encourage you to get together with other club members at the pub or another favourite venue for a general chat.
- June 30th Sue Walsh will be taking us through Iceland as a continuation of her travels last year.
- 7th July This night is vacant at this stage. It's just waiting for you to fill it so if you have been on any trips lately and have some photos then come and talk to me.
- 14th July Jenny Beaumont will be revisiting Dragons Teeth with us. She and others visited here at Easter time.
- 21st July Katja Riedel has been cycling around the Poukai Circuit and would like to share this with us.

Photo Competition will be in November and you might be thinking “oh, that’s a long way off” but it is time to be thinking about concentrating on getting those good shots in as the photos need to have been taken in the last 12 months. Just remember to use a high as possible resolution for your photos.

Thanks again and remember I am always looking for presenters and ideas for presentation if you don’t feel confident to give the talk. Talk to me on Wednesday nights or email me on social@wtmc.org.nz

Donna

Annual Journal

We are putting together the annual journal this year and we need your trip articles asap . We have very few articles so far. We want to avoid what happened last year - rushing to get everything together at the last minute. So please start sending your stories through now! Article length should be around 1000 to 2000 words. We want to hear about tramping, climbing, mountain biking, kayaking... We also want your best action shots for the photo gallery.

The Editors (Tony and Jackie) . *Send your journal contributions to journal@wtmc.org.nz*

Membership Report

Membership renewals are now completed - phew! Thanks to everyone who paid promptly!

Over the next few weeks I'll try to produce a contact list of all members details. I hope that I have everyone's updated details as a result of the renewal process - if not please update them asap. You can do this yourself by logging into the members page on the website and using your email address as your login.

FMC cards should be with you next month!

Any membership queries please find me on a club night or email me at membership@wtmc.org.nz. *Jenny WTCM Membership Officer*

Aunty Rata Interview with Michael Phethean

So on May 23 2010 Mike P made a successful ascent of Mt Everest. Now I know us Club members summit stuff all the time but to Aunty Rata this sounded like a good story. I was even prepared to fly out to Kathmandu in order to interview Mike but the newsletter editor said his budget only runs to book vouchers. Oddly enough all the airlines I called were not that interested in book vouchers. We did a virtual interview instead.



Congratulations on summiting Everest Mike and commiserations on the beard. How did you get into climbing?

When I was tramping the harder routes required scrambling so it is a natural progression. I started to get quite serious about 5 years ago.

Do you have any mountaineering heroes?

I am not really someone who has heroes, but there are quite a few people I very much respect who I have climbed with. I met Stephen Venables when I was a school kid but he managed to put me off Everest for quite a few years! Doing this sort of thing brings you into contact with quite a few people who are far better climbers and that is quite humbling.

Why Everest?

I think it was Mallory who said "because it is there". Between that and the fact that it is the highest...

What did you do to prepare for the climb?

Strained my hamstring is the honest answer. I tried increasing the amount of training too

suddenly and paid the price. When I decided to go last October I was pretty fit already so I eventually just kept up the same training which is about 9 sessions a week.

Which is more important for a climb like Everest, mental or physical training?

Probably mental. On the day I had to make quite a lot of decisions a lot of which were instinctive and thankfully the right ones. That goes down to experience. The same is true of the endurance, the cold and the lack of oxygen are hard on the body but you need to keep yourself going.

Climbing at altitude involves a lot of waiting around because of the need to acclimatise or because the weather is unsuitable, how did you pass the time given that the Club newsletter "Mouth n Ear" only comes out once a month?

Unfortunately unlike huts in NZ and with only email I missed a few editions of the Mouth n Ear. Not sure how I coped with out Aunt Rata's sage wisdom. However scrabble was the game of the expedition and we had a DVD player for the evening.

You were part of the Jagged Globe team, what was that like? What are the benefits of climbing with a professional guiding company?

The team was very well led by Robert Anderson, whose experience on Everest is pretty extensive and includes many of the harder routes. The team got on particularly well which helps on the mountain due to lots of mutual support.

The benefits of a professional company are three fold. One the logistics are very much taken care of so less troubles. I did a lot of the organisation for a trip to Mera peak when I was 18 years old and the devil really is in the detail.

The other big benefit was the quality of the Sherpas. They averaged about 4 summits each of Everest and their experience, calmness and strength really helped.

Finally the base camp was pretty luxurious. We had a qualified Western chef so food was amazing. You can't crave steak, chips and chocolate cake when they serve it to you at Base Camp. We also had good tents, DVDs and good communications.

(No I am not on commission but I would strongly recommend Jagged Globe.)

You had a few dramas prior to summit day, for example a stomach bug, how did you stay focused?

By taking drugs. Thankfully there are antibiotics and *Tindazole*. As to staying focussed it really is not hard when you are surrounded by lots of other people who all have the same aim. I tend to climb these sort of endurance peaks by focussing on the next step, thinking about the whole thing can be overwhelming.

Tell us about summit day. It was fairly drama filled as well wasn't it?

The climb started at 7:45 pm from the South Col at 7950m. It was still windy but dropping. There were perhaps 30 people ahead of us already, the large numbers at the camp meaning people were setting out earlier than normal. A queue of lights up the snow face. Initially this wasn't a problem but after about an hour the line ground to a halt.

Eventually my Sherpa Pem decided enough was enough and we started overtaking large numbers. This proved to be wise as the hold up was a group taking a rest on the fixed line. We were then near the front and we made steady progress as I could set the pace. The climb was on fixed ropes on slopes of about 25 degrees with odd rock steps of about 60 degrees which took the breath away from you!

We reached the Balcony (8500m) after 5 hours and things were looking very well set, considering I had been slow into the South Col camp.

Naturally things happened! The air inlet valve on the mask I was using became clogged with ice. This restricted my breathing and I tried to clear it. In doing so I broke the valve. This reduced the flow of oxygen to me and I began to slow down. Luckily Pem was carrying the spare for the group. About an hour later I realise that unfortunately size large did not fit my face! At the time dawn was breaking about us in a yellow circle like it does from an aeroplane.

I had by now got to the South Summit on limited oxygen but realised that it had taken far too much out of me. I used the valve from the large mask to fix my original mask and kept going. All this had caused two problems, my body was exhausted from lower oxygen supplies and I had taken my gloves off for a long time to fix my mask.

The first meant it took a while to get to the top very slowly. The summit ridge is sharp and spectacular but I was mostly focused on my feet. At 8:15am I reached the now crowded top. There was a panorama of other snowy mountains all around. After some photos Pem and I quickly turned around, never before have I so felt that the climb was not finished until I was down.

It was slow progress down. Normally gravity does the trick but there were many stops. One was for an hour at 8600m while we waited for a rope to be replaced (the original was used to assist in the rescue of a climber!) Eventually as I reached the thicker air of the South Col I picked up the pace a little and even overtook someone! The descent took about 6 hours. A long day.

As a result of the exposed hands my two right little fingers got frost bite. The doctor tells me it is not too serious and not to let any one chop them, they will take a couple of months to recover. Bit of relief!

How did you feel when you finally made it to the South Summit?

The south summit was probably quite an anxious period as I knew I had to sort out my mask. Strangely enough I was quite calm but just knew what I needed to do.

When did you feel you could just relax and enjoy the fact that you'd summited?

The celebration such as it was happened once I was on the snow plateau about 50 m vertically above Camp 4, (the high camp). I had been totally focussed on getting down alive and while reaching the Balcony was a relief it was here that I unwound and realised that I had done it.

What's the prognosis for your frost bite?

Good, I like the fact that the doctor said not to let anyone chop my fingers. The bigger finger looks pretty good now and the little one is not too far away from sealing up. After this the danger of infection will be gone. Hopefully a full recovery! I am missing the rock climbing at the moment.

Has the experience of climbing Everest changed you?

Yes I think I will shave next time. I have taken beards as far as is decent.

Any advice for people looking to fulfil their dreams?

It is fantastic when you fulfil them, I always thought Everest would be beyond me. Having said that I think the important thing is to find out. One reason I had a go was that I didn't want to look back and regret not doing so. Even if I had failed I would have known, which is still great.

I know you are taking a well earned break for a few weeks. What's the plan after that? Are you looking forward to getting back to NZ and going on a few Club alpine trips?

I have agreed to help out on the AIC and am leading an ice climbing trip. It will be good to be back home in NZ but not for the cold weather, I am very much enjoying being warm. Future plans will wait a month or two, I need the memory to fade again.

Soup on the Rocks – 5 June

Participants: Ilske (scribe), Deborah, Hugh, Ray, Nick & Jan, Steve

After what seemed to be weeks and weeks of rain this Saturday morning the sun was out again. A good start for the easy 'novelty' walk to the Rimutaka Forest Park organised by Steve. (Originally, the 'novelty' part was to be hot lasagne; later changed for soup.)

We met part of our group at platform 9 as usual and joined up with another group that was going on the same walk because their walk had been cancelled the week before (remember that Saturday?). The rest of the group was already waiting for us at the car park at the entrance. All in all we were a good sized group of eleven.

An easy hour and a half walk through the forest took us to the Orongorongo River and with a large part of the riverbed dry, it offered us a lovely sunny spot for an early lunch.



Everyone was quite keen to try to make a campfire to heat the pumpkin soup that Steve had brought along. Fortunately the bushes growing in the riverbed were still dry enough and combined with the use of a small burning rubber strip it did the trick. The more experienced trampers in our group got the fire going within no time.

While Steve's soup was heating he showed us how to use a magnesium flint to make a fire. Even in the quite damp conditions it was possible to light the wood shavings with the sparks.

After a very tasty and nutritious cup of soup and a cup of tea we cleaned up our fire place and walked back to the car park along the same track.



So a big thanks to the weather gods for a lovely sunny day, to Steve for the campfire and the delicious soup, and to all the other people on the walk for making this a great day.

Family Trip to Paua Hut – 8 & 9 May

by Mike Gilbert

Family tramps work nearly the same as the usual tramping that we all know and love. Early starts, gruelling days through all weathers, getting far into the backcountry - well, we don't do any of that. Four hours is a long day, persistent drizzle is enough to make us seriously consider staying at home, and our preference is for gentle, flat tracks with a nice hut at the end of the day.

Paua Hut is a perennial favourite because it ticks all the boxes. Close to Wellington, a track in that you can push a baby buggy along, and a great hut that you know you'll have all to yourself.

Saturday dawned and we were all at the road end bright and early at, well, 10:30am. I'd been promising for months that I'd picked this weekend especially because it would be still, fine and sunny even though we'd be well into Autumn, and so far my predictions weren't too far wrong. Apart from the thickening cloud, that is. Still, I was quietly confident we'd get away with a fine weekend.

There were 14 of us all up, with 3-year-old kids and 10-year-old kids and all ages in between. We had John, Christine and wee Tom, who impressed everyone with his walking abilities. He never let up even though he was only 4, and walked like a trooper born to it. Constanze, Christian and wee Gustav came along too - they are regulars on these trips and it was good to catch up with them again. Donna came along with her niece Jess (10) and nephew Oscar (almost 8) and Oscar proved great company for Toby. Wendy brought along her son, Matthew (4) and he walked very well too.

The accessibility of this track meant that Wendy's family (Paul and younger child in a buggy) came too for a day walk, returning to their car about halfway along the track. Ally and Simon came for the day as well.

Christian moved a lot of gear to the hut in the buggy (and Gustav at times too) and Paul and Simon also came with buggies and wee kids in tow. The Paua Hut track is more or less buggy friendly, as long as you're prepared to do a little bit of carrying in the rough spots. We've done this trip in the past where a buggy had been used purely to tote the vast amount of gear that families sometimes seem to need when out tramping.

Most of the kids had backpacks of some sort, with more or less stuff in them depending on their age. We loaded up Toby's backpack more than it has been in the past. He carried an emergency kit (an icecream container) with a glowstick, drink, chocolate and beef jerky and an emergency blanket. He also had a jacket, a fleece and a jersey for when the snows came. Plus his water (about 2 litres) and his snacking food. And unintentionally, some of my contact lenses in the backpack's top pocket. I have no idea how they got in there. I heard it

told later that he was offering them around at one of the rest stops! At least he was sharing nicely!

We reached the Midway bridge by about 11:40am, which was close enough to midday for an early lunch. We all got our various lunches out. Donna's niece and nephew had helped make mini pizzas that looked really, really yummy. Ally and Simon caught up with us, too. They're buggy walkers of old and turned up for the day, with buggy and children in tow.



We all played around the bridge while we ate. There were many trolls and billy-goats to be seen - not just here, but all the way up. Any bridge you went across, you had to watch for a small troll that would leap out at you and threaten to eat you. There was nearly always a bigger, tastier billy goat coming just behind you, so generally you could get away with it.

Before long the Orongorongo river beckoned. Jessie got very excited and in her haste to get there, took a nasty spill. She had cuts and scrapes that needed quite a few of Auntie Donna's band-aids. She was extremely brave!

The river was was incredibly low - the lowest I've ever seen it. We splashed through and headed to the hut.

We have laid down a law with Toby that says if he especially wants something (a book to read or a toy to play with) then he is responsible for carrying it in and out. Needless to say, if a toy is brought along, it is very small. But that doesn't stop him making wonderful finds on the way, and collecting things to carry. Trouble is, walking down a river, there are many great-looking pebbles, and stones, and BOULDERS, shot through with quartz or other beautiful colours. Toby's pack was really quite heavy by the time we got to the hut!

Paua Hut was great to see when we got there around 2pm. Three hours in, not a bad pace for small legs. The hut was very clean and tidy when we got there, and the swing outside was very popular as always. The children took turns seeing who could get fastest, highest, and closest to the one big tree that was within range of the swing.

Firewood was gathered and dinner put on. The dinner turned out well - spaghetti bolognese. I haven't found a child yet that doesn't like spaghetti bolognese. And the apricot truffle dessert went down a treat too.

Soon it was pitch black. Some of us were in tents - so Donna, Oscar and Jessie, as well as Toby and Angela headed off to their tents and sleeping bags, after an extra late night, around 7.30pm. The rest of us chatted for a bit, and at about 9pm I headed out as well. I was planning on sleeping in a bivvy bag but the weather was looking dubious so I snuck into our tent instead. The three of us can still fit in our wee 2-man tent, but every year Toby gets bigger and the amount of space gets smaller. There was enough room, just, but the tent quickly got hot and sauna-like. I had to open some tent flaps. Then it teemed and poured, and I had to quickly close them again. (I'd only promised dry *days*, which was lucky.) But I was glad to not be sleeping outside...

Next morning dawned, and it was Mothers' Day. I'd carried in some bacon for Angela, and I snuck into the hut and fried it up. So Angela got breakfast in bed. But I think Toby might well have eaten a lot of her bacon.

It was still misty from the night before but this quickly burned off. There's not much nicer in this world than sitting drinking coffee, looking out over the Orongorongo river outside Paua Hut. We tidied up the hut and got ready to go. But, Christine found that she had lost her glasses! Strange but true! Someone eventually found them - in the woodpile by the stove. Whew. We're yet to understand how they got there though.

We were off by 10am, and the walk back seemed to go faster than the walk in. Toby and Oscar were chatting away for a lot of the trip back, about the sort of things that 7 and 8 year olds chat about. Bakugan, Pokemon, Yu-gi-oh, Gogos Crazy Bones and Digimon. It's like a foreign language. We were at the car-park at 1pm sharp, just as Wendy and Matthew's ride turned up. Perfect timing!

All in all the weekend was another great family outing. It was great to see Donna there with her niece and nephew - I'm positive she got huge brownie points from her sister by giving her and her partner a weekend away. So there you go - if you have a brother or sister with children, take them away tramping for a couple of days. You'll be their favourite Aunty or Uncle, and your family will think you're awesome. Win!

If you are interested in family tramps or daywalks - email me (Mike) at [WtmcFamilies at gmail dot com](mailto:WtmcFamilies@gmail.com), or txt or ring me, 021 103 4119.

Pinnacles and Sheep

– the Journal winners go to Christchurch and beyond

by Mika Verheul and Hans Wiskerke

Late 2009 we were happily surprised by Tony and Jackie announcing we had won tickets to Christchurch with our journal contribution. As people often mention Chch itself is not too exiting, but it is a great gateway to the Alps, Kaikouras and Banks Peninsula, so we were happy to leave the exact destination for this Queen's Birthday up to the last moment. At least, that's what we thought back then....

Between late 2009 and early June 2010 the weather forecast for the Canterbury region had significantly deteriorated, showing rain, snow, hail and uncomfortably low temperatures. Also the Ministries of Finance and Energy had gone to great lengths to cut the amount of daylight hours as part of a greater plan to keep people indoors. Although it's still highly secret: this plan aims to reduce traffic, congestion and transport fuel; it will increase road safety, creativity and productivity, reliance on Sky and broadband, and most of all, you don't need too much outdoors as there's no daylight to admire it - might as well mine it? In addition to these promising conditions Mika injured her knee two weeks before departure which impacted on the possible range of activities. So what's wrong with a glass of wine and a wood fire, enjoying mountainous views?

A rental jellybean was waiting for us, keen to show its engine power driving up to Porters pass. Indeed quicker than cycling, but it might be the 4x4 closely behind us actually pushed the jellybean uphill. Anyway, after some photo stops and a 2nd lunch near Cass we convinced the little Dinky Toy to cross a real ford, and took a gravel road south to Lake Coleridge.



Arriving at Glenthorne Station, overlooking the lake and having a wood fire (theirs), wine (ours) and impressive views (see photos), we were quickly convinced we could leave the car and spend some time while relaxing in comfortable deck chairs reading a book – oh sorry, tramping down to the lake, crossing creeks, fences and muddy patches, to get hungry before dinner was served.

It wasn't until difficult decisions were taken early the next day (One or two eggs? Bacon and tomato? Sausages? More coffee?) that we split up: Mika exploring some gravel roads by car, and making photos, while Hans set out for a six hour tramp in a sleety drizzle. Some of the photos are shown here, so let's focus on the tramping bit: reaching the snow at 900 metres, a clear track followed the passage between Mt. Ida and some even higher but invisible summits, passing a small lake and some tarns on the way. Coming towards the Harper river the mixture of clay soil, Merino sheep droppings (can't tell the difference from normal droppings) and snow gave way to large pebbles and fast flowing water of unknown depth.



The highlight of the tramp supposedly were the Pinnacles, situated across the Harper, so assisted by a big stick the water temperature was tested – yak! After having seen the Pinnacles near Cape Palliser, these ones seemed midgets but there were dozens of them. Varying from less than a metre to probably five metres, it seemed like a metropolis of giant ant colonies but without any creepy crawlies. Certainly worth a visit if you're in the area! With one river and 10k to go to the pick-up point, Hans started counting sheep but probably missed a few of the 8000 merinos. Being satisfied that there was at least an element of tramping in this trip, the rest of the weekend was spent reading interesting books about tramping.

Coming back to the big government plan: it's of course the perfect time now to write an article for the journal! Remember those words on creativity and productivity? Jacky and Tony will happily receive it, and in the end all of you will appreciate it!

Mix and Mingle with Bush Lawyer Crumble M/F and F Tramps in Kahurangi NP – Queens Birthday

by Jenny Cossey
photos by Garry DeRose

There were three, or maybe four, punters signed up for the fit trip. At the last moment two punters signed up for the med –fit trip. Hence the fit group heading over Luna divided back into a fit and med-fit party, who then re-molded together as one group made up of two separate groups, until such time people wished to peel off the back. This decision was made

within the first half hour of the ferry trip and then Jenny retired to slumber as far too many changes were occurring.

The easy-medium trip punters (such kindly souls) allowed us the road end shelter at Rolling Junction. The shelter can sleep 7, but only four resided there, as one decided to camp and delayed the morning departure. Team spirit is useful, or was it team spirit to save us from snoring? (NB DOC are hoping to upgrade this shelter and the new shelter may not give such great shelter for road end early starts staying there)

Saturday was sunny and still, the beginning of three days of no winds, a novelty for Wellingtonians. The re/combined fit trips wandered up the Wangapeka Track in the pre dawn light to Gibbs Track. The river was low and easy to cross. A well marked track led us to the snow which started well below the bush line.

The fit group's decision to leave crampons behind in the van was a wise decision as the snow was too soft for them. The medium-fit group welcomed the fit group's snow plodding and trench digging, and found it just fine to follow. However a few more ice axes or walking poles would have been useful to prevent cold fingers as the snow was soft and involved thigh deep leg lifting.

It took 2 hours to climb the 1 1/4 km from the bush edge to the ridge. We estimated we had another 2 3/4km to go and at our current speed would not be off the ridge until after dark. Looking north the peaks were white and looked as though they had even more snow than our ridge. To the south, Mt Owen looked easier going. Fortunately the wind had blown the snow on the ridge northwards to create cornices extending out to a metre. The back of the ridge was hence slightly more crusty and two footsteps could be achieved before crashing through again. An improvement on the ascent ridge where only one leg stayed up for every two that broke through.

The views were stunning. The pale blue sky had a strange grey-pink light to the north indicated that something was slowly brewing and moving very slowly towards us. An eerie light, we hoped the forecast was right, heavy rain tomorrow, as we did not want to be here in the rain. Slab avalanches could be seen and the drop offs to the south were sharp.

Due to the previous mathematical calculations of time and distance, lunch was a short affair with wonderful views, while seated on one (of only two) patches of snow free tussock discovered on the whole ridgeline.

Travel was faster along the ridge than expected but by the time the two teams had descended to Kiwi Saddle Hut at 4pm, revolts in the ranks resulted in the days planned trip stopping here. No one fancied another valley and ridge to ascend today. So in a hut designed for 6, 15 Wellingtonians shared the hut and surrounds for the night. The unknown party of 5 Wellingtonians were known by people on our trip, so a good catch up was achieved. It was the fit trips' turn to camp, allowing some of the easy medium punters the shelter of the hut.

With heavy rain forecasted and the rain dripping lightly, the fit and medium fit descended to King Creeks' Hut the next morning. Two members called it a day and the remaining three continued to Stone Hut. A patch of blue sky and a hint of sun was noted while walking the track. The deepest puddle was on the wooden bridge and the most colourful objects were the bright blue stoat trap placement markers that had been laid that morning. A large patch of red scrambling bush lawyer (*Rubus parvus*) berries on the ground, enabled the forest's bounty to be collected and stewed for crumble that night. The mushroom display, in every shape and colour, was bountiful.



A DOC worker and volunteer were met at Stone Hut as the rain started. We were informed that 160mm of rain was expected in the next 36 hours and we were very glad to hear that there was a local telephone at the information kiosk at the Park entrance if we were stranded by high river levels on the wrong side of the river for the Picton ferry. We learnt a lot about the "Blue Duck Security Zone" which we were apparently in, and that 200 stoat traps were going to be laid along the Wangapeka Track between Chummies Track and Stone Hut in the next few months.

After the DOC employees had left we settled into a lazy wet afternoon by the fire doing yoga, reading, chatting and watching Illona create a feast and an amazing pudding, sour cherry and bush lawyer crumble... yum.

A pre dawn rise and stroll down the valley resulted in the fit trip being re-united with the rest of their party, and the easy medium trip at Kings Hut. The Fit mix and mingle trip then managed to recombine into a group of four and a lagging solo adventurer who had wandered off again. The clouds lifted and sun appeared. We wandered back to the vans earlier than originally planned as everyone wanting to know what was happening to the river level and if we would be able to leave the park that day. Scrubbed up and fed at Rolling Junction road end, we waited for the last team member to arrive before heading off to the ford in the vans. As anticipated the ford was too deep to cross. The local farmer arrived and told us to wait until the waters had receded to expose a particular rock before attempting to cross in our two wheel vans.

Booking shuttles to rescue punters from the other side of the river to get back to the ferry on time for an extra \$60, re booking ferry tickets and letting all the WTMC officials who needed to know what was happening fell on Illona's shoulders, who excelled at her second trip leader placement. So after saying goodbye to 15 members whose job was more important than a late ferry and feeling exhausted at work the next day, we had the most fun on the trip with the "Billy-Off" competition and eating vast amounts of food left over from all the other punters emptying their food from their packs so we would not be hungry while we waited a few hours for the water level to drop. Finally at around 6pm the drivers forded the river and we were on the way to the 10.30pm Picton to Wellington ferry.

The Great Billy-Off Competition

Or what to do when the river is too high to get the vans across

We had a few hours to wait while the water subsided. Although the weather was dry and the sun was trying to keep us warm, a brew was needed to sustain us while we waited. The challenge was laid down by Illona, and Sam immediately accepted it by diving into the nearest thicket to collect firewood. Almost caught off the mark, Jenny as self proclaimed judge, hurried off to collect her two billies and the measuring cup. Meanwhile crashing sounds from the undergrowth announced that manuka and other twigs were being collected. The rule of 3 measured cups of water to a rolling boil was communally decided.

Neck-and-neck the kindling was laid in a pyramid and square design. It was ladies first at the lighter. Although flames appeared first on Illona's bundle of twigs, Sam was quick to lead with flame size by using the billy lid technique, wild arm flapping and stretching his diaphragm to maximum to enhance lung capacity.

Tim was seconded by Sam to hold a 5m log off the ground for 20 minutes, a back breaking position of stooping at various heights to adjust the height of the billy over the flames. A staunch and solid team supporter, Tim did what was asked and kept the billy at the Sam prescribed height.

Richard took up a more relaxed squatting position with his 50cm stick that was delicately covered in lichen, which continuously caught fire and fell into the billy to heat the water from above.

Gary as professional photographer of the event wandered off to get his mug.

The judge's running commentary informed competitors of the opposition's techniques, which were either immediately followed or ignored after a quick sideward's glance. Ten minutes had passed and the water in the billies was still tepid to the judge's finger test. Sam decided to give it 100% and at near hyper-ventilation levels, sweat dripping off his nose, tears running down his cheeks from the smoke, he blew a mighty blaze of fire and smoke creating finger size red hot embers. His team mate's eyes smarted in his bent over position.

Illona, using a sage's wisdom of small is best, burnt vast amounts of brushwood that produced small flames and enough smoke to send smoke signals to the neighboring valley. She was first to reach the magic rolling boil in exactly 20 minutes. Sam, first to burst was ready to rest as a rolling boil appeared in his billy a minute later.

With hand shakes and a shared bush brew the merits of billy lip flapping, bums in air low level blowing and the size of the billy support log were discussed. It was agreed that size does matter, Illona's slightly larger billy and smaller twigs were the winning combination. Competition rules were discussed and set as Sam requests a future re run.

Rules for Billy Off

- 1 Size matters, identically sized club billies to be used.
- 2 Equal number of people in the teams.
- 3 The winning team is the team whose 3 Cups of water, first reaches a rolling boil
- 4 All teams have access to all wood supplies, and neither team can use what others teams have collected
- 5 An independent judge measures the water and ensures adherence to the above rules.

The next challenges were set, who could get the cleanest billy in the shortest time and at exactly what time would the river be low enough to cross?

WHANGANUI RIVER CANOE TRIP – WELLINGTON ANNIVERSARY WEEK-END

By Sharleen Grounds



*For the 4th year in a row for some!
we looked forward to another great
Whanganui river canoe adventure ☺
All the essentials were lined up...
Good company, food...even weather!
We love this place... with its stunning
scenery & nice out of the way location*



THE TRIP IN SUMMARY

This is an epic trip suitable for relative beginners as all the rapids are fairly tame, and some of the larger ones can be avoided anyway. We always do the 3 day trip from Whakahoro to Pipiriki, but you can do an extra 2 days starting in Taumarunui. Canoe Safaris in Ohakune provide us with all the equipment we need including watertight gear barrels and transport to the river, as well as very comfortable accommodation the night before ☺

It's a nice break from tramping trips, and you just need to bring the usual gear, minus the boots, plus swimmers! You can also bring lots of nice yummy food as the weight is mostly carried by the canoe rather than you... We always camp in the DOC sites to avoid the crowds at the huts and marae as this is one of the 'Great Walks'.

SPECIAL HIGHLIGHTS

- Stunning and varied bush scenery all the way down the river and on the Bridge to Nowhere walk
- Our very own Hawaiian theme night, BYO ukulele entertainers, and delicious chocolate fondue !
- Lots of waterfalls and caves to explore, and plenty of time for breaks and swims...and waterfights ;-)

TRIP PLANNING DETAILS

Saturday 23 January

Paddle from Whakahoro to Ohauora DOC campsite

- Get up early and pack gear into watertight barrels at Canoe Safaris
- Canoe Safaris minibus from Ohakune to Whakahoro, basic paddling lesson
- Paddle to Mangapapa campsite for lunch, then Ohauora camp for the night

Sunday 24 January

Paddle from Ohauora campsite to Upper Mangapurua campsite

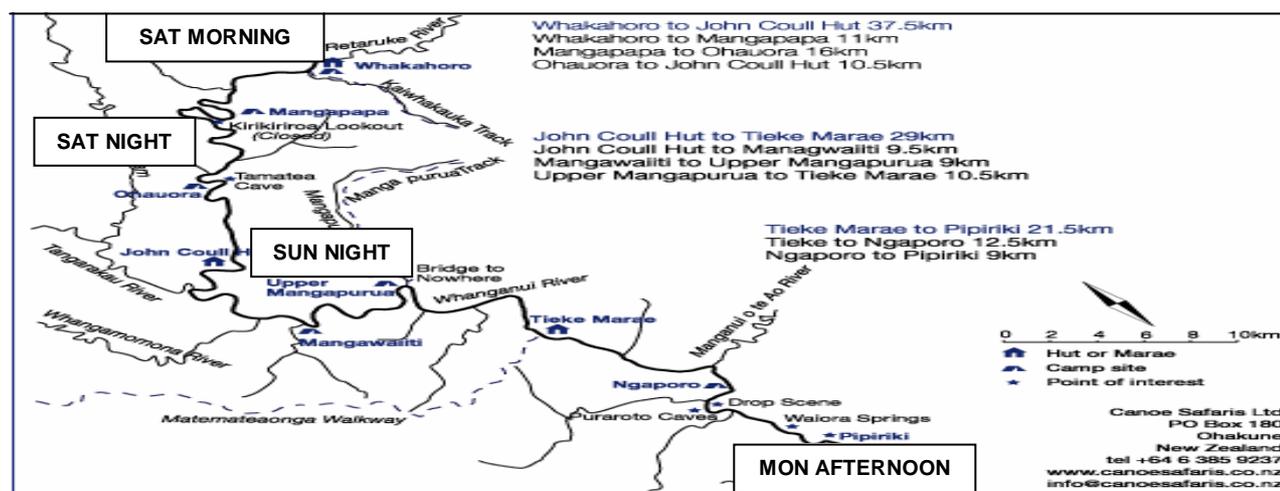
- Optional swim in rapid! Morning tea @ John Coull Hut, Mangawaiti for lunch
- Paddle to Upper Mangapurua camp for the night (**Hawaiian theme night**)
- Unload gear then paddle across river to optional Bridge to Nowhere Walk

Monday 25 January

Paddle from Upper Mangapurua to Pipiriki by mid-afternoon

- Paddle to Tieke Marae for morning tea, then Ngaporo campsite for lunch
- Paddle to Pipiriki (there is usually a bigish rapid but it can be avoided!)
- Canoe Safaris mini-bus ride from Pipiriki back to their depot in Ohakune

ON THE RIVER TRIP SCHEDULE



www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/tracks-and-walks/wanganui/whanganui-area/whanganui-journey/

KAI ON THE FLY

with Aunty Rata

Namaste people. Hope you are keeping warm. Congratulations to Michael Phethean who climbed Everest on May 23. Aunty Rata is delighted for him and I'm sure the rest of you are too. When someone realises a dream it is time for a smile, a salute and to be thankful that it didn't turn to custard.

The custard season has arrived. Custard is an excellent tramping dessert because it is warm, filling and relatively nutritious. Plus it's bright yellow colour serves as a reminder of what sunshine looks like!

While you might think cooking custard is a bit of a no brainer Aunty Rata recommends that you try making it at home before cooking it in the hills. The phrase "turn to custard" is in fact a reference to what happens if your custard execution is not up to scratch. Aunty Rata is a pretty average custard maker herself so I speak with personal experience when I assure you that without practice there is a high risk the outcome will be neither yellow nor tasty. You

have been warned custard novices. Try to remember to pack a whisk and a long handled stirring implement such as a wooden spoon.

Custard is excellent poured over cake, especially ginger cake or dried fruit. Soak the dried fruit in hot water to rehydrate it while you cook the custard.

Sunshine Custard (serves 4-6)

Ingredients

1 tb custard powder per person

1 tsp sugar per person

4 tb milk powder per person

Method

- Add water to the milk powder to make milk. 4tb milk powder makes 1 cup of milk.
- Put all the ingredients in a billy and mix well. If you have a whisk then great. Otherwise use a fork.
- Turn on your cooker, try to get a low heat.
- Cross your fingers or undertake some other good luck ritual. If you are religious now would be a good time to pray.
- Put billy onto the cooker.
- Stir the mixture constantly or it will burn. Burnt custard is horrible. For the first few minutes nothing much will happen but after that the mixture will reach boiling point and quickly start to thicken. There is an art to cooking the custard long enough to get it thick but not long enough for it to burn.
- Remove custard from heat and serve immediately. Cold custard is horrible.

If you are a custard veteran then you can do more advanced stuff with custard. The following recipe is great fun if you have a pit day or get to a hut early and have plenty of time for mucking around. Aunty Rata would not bother trying it on a fit trip. Remember to bring an extra billy or other serving vessel to put the trifle in.

Sherry Trifle (serves 4)

Ingredients

200g packet trifle sponge

Quarter cup jam – a tart jam like plum is best

Quarter cup sherry

425g can of fruit salad

4 tb custard powder

3 tb sugar or honey

8 tb milk powder to make 2c milk

300ml cream or a can of instant whipped cream (much easier)

Half tsp vanilla essence (if taking real cream)

1 tb icing sugar (if taking real cream)

Quarter cup chopped nuts (optional, could substitute chocolate chips or hundreds and thousands or more sherry...)

Method

- Mix up the milk powder to make milk and set aside
- Cut the sponge in half horizontally. Spread surface with jam. Sandwich the halves together to make a jam sandwich.
- Cut your jam sandwich into cubes and neatly arrange it in the bottom of a billy or other serving vessel if you have one.
- Spoon sherry over the sponge. Resist temptation to sample sherry.
- Spoon fruit salad over sponge. Set aside.
- In another billy mix the custard powder, sugar and milk into a paste and cook as per Sunshine Custard method.
- Poor custard over sponge mixture. Set aside to chill a bit.
- After your main meal mix the cream, vanilla essence and icing sugar together and whip it till it thickens. [Note you can cheat and bring the cream that comes in an aerosol can and save your wrists].
- Slap whipped cream over the sponge mixture. Sprinkle with nuts. Serve.

If on a fit trip make custard and serve with sherry on side or take a can of instant whipped cream and serve with chocolate biscuits, (thanks Mark Hanson), or just sherry. If worried that you may be in breach of the no alcohol without permission of Chief Guide rule heat sherry to burn off all alcohol.

Good luck. Send your tramping recipes to newsletter@wtmc.org.nz

17 May 2010

> AIR RESCUE AND AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE
 > WESTPAC RESCUE HELICOPTER & LIFE FLIGHT NZ AIR AMBULANCE

Wellington Tramping & Mountaineering Club Inc
 PO Box 5068
 Lambton Quay
 Wellington 6145

Supporter number: 038577

Dear Ms Smith,

Thank you!

I'm Dave Greenberg, Operations Manager of Life Flight, and I'd like to thank you personally for your support and your recent donation.

As Life Flight Operations Manager of our Air Ambulance and Westpac Rescue Helicopter service, I regularly get to experience the very real difference that you make.

In the 19 years I've been with Life Flight a lot has changed. With your help we have been able to continually invest in training and technology to save more lives. The medical equipment we carry is smaller, lighter and more sophisticated. Night Vision Goggles have made night flying in the helicopter much safer and helped save more lives.

The one thing that hasn't changed is the dedication our team has for the job we do. Our pilots are some of the most skilled in NZ, allowing us to safely carry out life saving missions in all types of weather conditions 24/7. Our crew are able to troubleshoot equipment problems, assist the pilots and medical teams, all while offering a comforting word or holding the hand of a patient or family member. And our doctors, nurses and paramedics are second to none.

With each mission many people are involved and teamwork is essential. You are a vital member of our team and together we make an enormous difference. Thank you for helping and for your commitment to saving lives.

Dave Greenberg
 Dave Greenberg
 Life Flight Operations Manager
 ✕

Thank you on behalf of all the team and crew!

OFFICIAL RECEIPT FROM THE LIFE FLIGHT TRUST: RECEIPT #: 368101

Wellington Tramping &
 Mountaineering Club Inc
 PO Box 5068
 Lambton Quay
 Wellington 6145

14/05/2010
 Internet General donation \$ 500.00

TOTAL: \$ 500.00

Life Flight is a registered charitable trust, and donations above \$5 may qualify for a NZ tax rebate.

PRINCIPAL SPONSOR



ISO 9001:2000 CERTIFIED
 AIA ACCREDITED
 REGISTERED CHARITY
 NUMBER CC24283

THE LIFE FLIGHT TRUST
 17 GEORGE BOLT STREET
 RONGOTAI
 WELLINGTON

PO BOX 14448
 KILBIRNIE
 WELLINGTON 6241

P 04 387 9591
 F 04 387 9619
 E admin@lifeflight.org.nz
 W www.lifeflight.org.nz

FROM THE GREEN CROCS

In my last column, I mentioned the committee planning day on May 29th, we had a productive morning discussing strategic issues that affect the club. One thing that we decided was that there was not enough visibility around what committee does, so we are taking steps to address that. Committee minutes will be available on the club website under the Downloads section, so you can see what we have been talking about at our meetings. The meetings themselves are open to members, they are generally on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, at a committee members house. If you would like to attend a meeting, just let me know. We need to know you are coming, so there are enough chairs :-). Note that you will not be able to vote on any motions, but your opinions will be welcome.

We have a couple of General Committee vacancies at the moment, if you are interested in having a voice at committee level, and helping out the club, why not attend a meeting and see if you'd like to join us?

One of the key areas of change we discussed at the planning day was around the website. Mike Gilbert has recently taken over from Shane Connolly as Webmaster, and will be making a number of changes to the website. If you have expertise in this area, and would like to help Mike out, let me or Mike (mrgilbe1@gmail.com) know.

I want to recognise the huge contribution that Shane has made to the club maintaining the website, which is obviously a very important part of the club communications. It is a largely thankless job, which Shane has done efficiently and without complaint for many years. Thanks also to Mike for stepping forward to take over in the role, and make our website even better.

And lastly, in probably the ultimate achievement in mountaineering, Club member Mike Phethean made it to the summit of Mount Everest at 8.30am Sunday May 23rd Nepalese time. Well done Mike, we look forward to hearing about it when you get back to NZ.

You can contact me on president@wtmc.org.nz, or I am usually around on club nights.

Darren Hammond

All published trip reports (or other written articles that aren't committee reports) are in the draw to win a \$20 book voucher! Congratulations to Tony Gazley, winner of the June draw, for the "Midnight Special" report.

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.