



The Mouth 'n' Ear

Wellington Tramping & Mountaineering Club Newsletter

Email: newsletter@wtmc.org.nz

April 2013



Stitchin' and trampin'
Mt Angelus, Nelson Lakes

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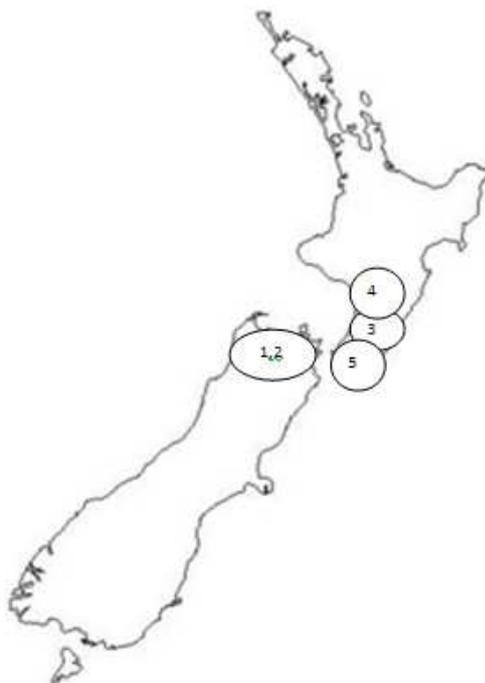
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Map of trip locations in this issue



1. Nelson Lakes
2. Nelson
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The Nature of Things

Sharron Came, President



With daylight saving ending and snow beginning in the South Island Summer has taken the hint and moved on. Check out the Winter trip schedule that Amanda is currently putting together to see what trips are coming up. It was fantastic to see a few new trip leaders come forward for the Summer schedule, hopefully some more members will be inspired to try leading a Winter trip – can't be too bad, it's dark most of the time.

You can check out the alpine trip schedule on the website. This goes right through till the end of the year. Be sure to contact us early if you want to go on one of these trips as some of them involve organising your own flights to Christchurch. David Jewell has taken over looking after alpine trips, alpine@wtmc.org.nz

Snowcraft 2013 will run in July/Aug if there is sufficient interest. The dates for this and information about what is involved are up on the website and in the Clubrooms. It is great to have Marie Henderson and Tony Gazley returning to the instruction team after a few seasons of doing other stuff.

Now is also a good time to think about planning your skiing sessions, check out the information on Lodge bookings in this newsletter. If you are interested in helping out with lodge promotion we'd love to hear from you too. lodgeconvenor@wtmc.org.nz or webmaster@wtmc.org.nz

Our AGM is on Wednesday 10 April at 8pm at the Clubrooms. By now you should have received an electronic link to the Annual Report and the Financial Statement, these are also available on the website along with an agenda and the minutes from the EGM we held a few months ago. You should only read these documents if you have an interest in the health of the club or care about how we spend your subscriptions.

The list of nominations we have received for the 2013 Committee are:

President	Sharron Came
Vice President	Amanda Wells
Secretary	Pete Gent / Megan Sety
Treasurer	Steve Austin
Chief Guide	Mike Phethean
Assistant Chief Guide	Debbie Buck
Social Convenor	Sue Walsh
Newsletter Editor	Sarah Young
Membership Officer	Helen Law
Lodge Convenor	Brian Goodwin
Transport Officer	Richard Lardner
Promotions Officer	David Heffernan
General Committee	Mike Gilbert, Craig McGregor, Donna Maher

Special thanks to Gareth Morton and Jenny Beaumont who are stepping down from the Committee after four years of service. They will be greatly missed. While it looks like we have a full committee there are a few of us who would be very happy to move on so if you are keen to take up a role it is not too late to put yourself forward. Also there is plenty of scope to help out without being on the committee. I hope to see you on Wednesday night. Generally the AGM can be relied upon to be both less painful and better value for money than a trip to the dentist. Bring a friend.

Congratulations to those whose photos picked up awards in the annual photo competition and best of luck for the FMC competition! Grant Newton, who was judging the photos, mentioned several times that the standard of photos was particularly high this year. This was due to Ian Harrison's superb organisation of the event. Tony Gazley won quite a few categories including the People's Choice award. For his sins Tony gets to produce the 2013 Journal. As the weather gets colder and the days shorter you may have more time to sit at your desk, eat chocolate, sort through your photos and write articles for the journal. Send your contributions to journal@wtmc.org.nz

While I'm on the subject of photos, if you want to share photos or messages on the WTMC Facebook page you can send material to our Facebook team at [fb@wtmc.org.nz](https://www.facebook.com/wtmc.org.nz) . This is a great way to promote WTMC.

Special thanks to Steve Kohler who, it transpires, is a dab hand with a sewing machine as well as excel spread sheets. He has made some new lime green bags for the poles and pegs that live in the gear cupboard. Finally, congratulations to Amelia and Mark White who as of April 2 are the proud parents of a baby boy.

Track Talk

Amanda Wells, Chief Guide



Three years ago I became chief guide, and I'm pleased to be on the verge of relinquishing this title to Mike Phethean. Not pleased because I'm sick of it or have stopped enjoying it, but because I believe that roles need to turn over in clubs like ours to avoid institutionalism. New eyes tackle things in new and innovative ways, and I know that Mike will do a great job! For me, chief guide has been a constant while everything else in my life has changed, and there's been a certain comfort in its routine of tasks. But now I'm looking forward to focusing on some other aspects of club life, including instruction courses, which I've become passionate about.

When you are chief guide you're aware of all the work that many people do in myriad ways to make our activities successful. A big thank you to all our leaders and to everyone else who serves our unique community. There are some more specific thank yous in the Annual Report, which I'm sure you have all diligently read.

At the moment we're in the middle of pulling together the Winter schedule. I'll be completing the leader-finding portion of this job before handing it over to Mike, so please make sure you've given it some serious consideration! There are lots of opportunities for interesting trips, including some good navigation trip suggestions. You don't have to be a navigation guru to lead one of these trips, so think about giving one a go. There's a great way to improve your off-track skills, and the difficulty is commensurate to the grade (ie, an EM nav has an easier nav component than an M nav).

One thing that's surprised me in the past year and half or so is how much I've come to enjoy off-track. I've gone from someone who was uneasy and nervous out of sight of a triangle to being relatively relaxed about 13 days in a Wilderness Area! While I credit my GPS with removing some of that anxiety, it's really the experience I've gained that has made the difference. The Tararuas is a great proving ground for off-track skills and I urge you to take advantage of the trips that we've dreamed up for this Winter.

Lodge update

Eric Evans, Lodge Booking officer



Please find the Ruapehu Lodge Information sheet for 2013/2014 included in this newsletter. If you plan to use the lodge this season it is important that you familiarise yourself with the sheet or the online information as there are a number of changes compared to the previous years.

The first change is with the opening dates for the season. As with last year, bookings for members open 1 May for the whole season, however this year is changed with non-members bookings opening on 1 June for the whole season. This allows everyone to plan ahead including non-members while still retaining the booking privileges for members between 1 May and 1 June.

The second major change is that we are trialling a non-member concession arrangement for the Winter season only. Non-members who have made bookings for 5 week nights or 3 weekends can make subsequent bookings at member rates for the rest of the season. This is particularly suited for those non-members that are based out of Wellington and could not otherwise join the club. So please feel free to tell all your non-member friends and family about this.

This year we are also implementing a 25% discount on lodge summer rates compared to the Winter rates. This is to encourage use of the lodge over Summer.

We are pleased to let everyone know we are continuing with the online booking system, we have had a lot of excellent feedback about this, particularly the ability of being able to do your own bookings and know and obtain immediate confirmation of the booking (subject to availability). The system is currently available for bookings up to and including Queens birthday weekend 3rd June. The system will allow bookings for the ski season from 1 May.

We have had to apply a slight increase in lodge rates due to significant increases in electricity, insurance and necessary maintenance. The good news is that we have left the cost of food the same as last year so the overall increase for the winter season is less than 5%.

If you have any questions regarding booking the lodge or anything else to do with the lodge this season, please refer to the Lodge information sheet, go online contact the Ruapehu booking officer as per the email address or phone number given in the Lodge Guide.

We'll see you up there!!

50th Anniversary congratulations

Helen Law, Membership officer



Barrie Noyce and Lindsay Cuthbertson have been active, valuable local members of the Club for 50 years. Congratulations to you both on reaching this fantastic milestone! Thank you for your long standing support (and the suggestion of an anniversary certificate – we'll look into that).

Also congratulations to four new Senior members: this month we welcome Ilske Verburg, Thomas Keir, Peter Schroder and Emily Shrosbree whose applications were approved in the committee meeting in March.

The annual membership renewals are now complete; time has now run out for you to renew your membership. Thank you to all of you who paid promptly. If you haven't paid and still wish to be a member please get in touch with me ASAP.

Up and coming talks at club



There are many exciting and interesting talks coming up in the next few weeks at club:

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|----------|--|
| 17 April | Favourite bit of tramping kit (Mike Gilbert). If you have a favourite bit of tramping kit, and would like to contribute to this talk, contact webmaster@wtmc.org.nz |
| 24 April | Gear only |
| 1 May | African safari (Richard Young) |
| 8 May | Dragon's Teeth, Kahurangi NP (Paul Christoffel + team) |
| 15 May | Tasman Wilderness Area, Kahurangi NP (Amanda Wells) |

Clubrooms storage cupboard cleanout

We get charged for use of cupboard space at the TTC Clubrooms and we are storing a wide variety of paperwork that is no longer needed for running the club. In addition the cupboards are damp so they are not great places for storing paper. If you are interested in taking any of this "stuff" home or elsewhere please contact president@wtmc.org.nz, before 8 May 2013, and I will loan you a key and you can come in and remove material one weekend. If the "stuff" is not wanted by anyone the plan is to take the material to the Southern Landfill.

What kind of "stuff" are we talking about? Old type written minutes from past AGMs filed in scrap books, old slide carousels, old photos glued to pieces of paper, some old banners etc. The best historic photos have already been transferred to a more appropriate storage place.

Results of the WTMC 2013 Photo competition

The Club's photo competition was very competitive this year. The judge Grant Newton noted that the standard was higher than in previous years and found it difficult to choose a winner in a number of categories. Despite this the results were dominated by Tony Gazley and Spencer Clubb. Tony won three of the categories with his winning hut and camp life image taken on Mt Hector also winning popular approval with the people's choice award. Spencer got a big cheer when he won the landscape category with a stunning shot of the moon over the Richardson Range; just reward after being runner up in the previous three categories.

Congratulations also to Mike Phethean who won above bushline (and tied for second place in the people's choice award) with his vertiginous shot of the Huascaran Range, and Rini Sugianto who won the below bushline category with a beautiful image of McKay Falls on the Milford Track.

Many thanks to Grant for judging again and for all who entered.

The winning photographs are published here and will be published on our website in due course.



Above the bushline

Runner up: Spencer Clubb; Winner: Mike Phethean



Below bushline

Runner up: Spencer Clubb; Winner: Rini Sugianto



Hut/Camp Life

Runner up: Spencer Clubb; Winner: Tony Gazley
This photo also won the **People's choice award**



Native Flora and fauna

Runner up: Tanya Krayushkina; Winner: Tony Gazley



Landscape

Runner up: Tony Gazley; Winner: Spencer Clubb



Judge's Choice: Tony Gazley

Historic (no prize given)

Trip reports

Mt Angelus stitch 'n' tramp

8-10 March 2013, Easy Medium tramp, Nelson Lakes (map #1)

Author: Meena Kadri

Stitchers: Illona Keenan (leader), Meena Kadri, Sharon Brandford

Non-stitchers: Alan Mitchell, Stijn Schepers

So the idea was to get crafty while on a tramping trip: to knit, needlepoint and natter our way across the ferry trip and beyond. Yarning started while waiting for a delayed ferry departure in Wellington, with craft consultations being undertaken while still on the pier. Projects got well underway on the ferry crossing with some side-line debates about English grammar which kept us well entertained. We camped overnight near Nelson Lakes and set off in the morning from Mt Robert car park in scorching sunshine.

As we headed up Pinchgut Track, we were rewarded with an at-level view of a kārearea (native falcon) floating on an alpine breeze. We shared a few laughs along the way, on discovery that one of our number was carrying a hefty 1kg of deluxe-style scroggin. Lunch was enjoyed on Robert Ridge where the crafty conversation extended to expert blister treatment. After a rocky trek along the ridge-line, we were welcomed by the sight of Lake



Angelus and descended to the hut. Most of us headed into the water, still icy cold despite the heat, but perfect after a long day on a hot track. Back in the packed hut we settled in to prepare an exquisite Pad Thai, orchestrated by Illona and got in a bit of stitching and knitting both inside and out while the sun set over the lake.

We were up early to catch an epic sunrise. Lake Angelus is a stunning spot, and possibly provides one of the best long drop views in the country. We headed off on the Speargrass Track, with a bit of a scree scramble followed by a descent into a scenic valley. Lunch was accompanied by more stitching and the last leg took us through bellbird-filled bush. We dropped into Lake Rotoiti for a refreshing dip then headed off to Picton where we managed a relaxing ale and hearty meal. While waiting in the ferry queue, we managed to dress the club van up with our flys and other items which needed airing – looking more like the Wellington Tramping and Mountaineering Circus than anything. The return ferry gave us time to get some more stitching down; though we never really made a dent in the 1kg of scroggin.

Dun Mountain

19-21 January 2013, Medium mountain bike, Nelson (map #2) Author: Andrew Bichan
Mountain bikers: Mike Gilbert, Andrew Bichan

Trip report continued from 'Nelson Mountain Biking' article in WTMC newsletter March 2013...

On Monday morning we thank Hans and Mika for their kind hospitality and throw bikes in and on the van. We are joined for the day by Julie and Thomas who, as seasoned bikers, will hopefully not mind travelling at our pace.



To avoid having to climb Tantragee Saddle at the end of the ride we park in Maitai Valley and start from there. After the short climb to the saddle, the Dun Mt track sidles from Nelson gradually up to 870m along an old railway built to service chromite mines on Wooded Peak. It is a very well-constructed track; easily graded and ride-able throughout. Signs are placed along the route with history of the railway (and related mining) and information on local flora and fauna. There are a few historic sites on the way including a shelter (Third House at 670m). The track is mostly through beech forest but there are a few spots with spectacular views across the Nelson plains.



After Third House the track gradually gets a little rougher but is still easily ride-able. We are distracted en route by a bush robin that has no fear. Hopping on bikes and feet and testing valve caps for potential edibility. It quite diverts us from our mission for a while.



It is cool in the beech forest but just before Windy Point at around 830m we suddenly break out onto the tops. This is not the normal tree line but the edge of a rock type that is basically toxic. From a distance, the delineation between rich forest and the harsh ultramafic landscape around Mt Dun looks like a farm fence line. Close up, we can see the contrast in vegetation. The plants that are growing are stunted and look like they're having a tough time getting by. The rock colours change from predominantly grey to browns, greens, black and, as we travel, more and more dun (due to oxidisation of the high iron content).



The area gives its name to dunite, an ultramafic rock composed largely of olivine (over 90%) and other minerals, in this case chromite. Dunite and related rocks are considered the major constituents of the Earth's mantle to a depth of up to 400 kilometres, and rarely found continentally. Mt Dun has a sister massif in Red Mountain on the southern West Coast 480km away displaced by movement of the alpine fault (info from Wiki and Te Ara).

With the trees behind us, the horizon to the west is broad; traversing from the Abel Tasman in the north, through Mr Arthur, Mt Owen and south. The track sidles to our highest point; Coppermine Saddle at 870m and for the second time this weekend a view into the Maitai catchment.



The downhill is MTBing nirvana. The fast flowing track is narrow and cut into the yellow brown soil with tricky sides and a thousand little surprises for the unwary. It can be taken at speed (keep your concentration or look out) but is equally passable at a more sedate pace for less foolhardy riders.



We lose height rapidly through the hairpins and chicanes, at 320m passing from the Dun Mt vegetation to more usual bush and the cooler air around Maitai Stream South. Our first casualty is experienced at this point with a snake bite puncture to Mike's bike. It is quickly fixed and we follow the track as it flattens and smoothes giving fast riding down the valley to Maitai reservoir.

Our second casualty occurs minutes later as a bee throws itself down Thomas' top. It gives him a bit of a souvenir but he has the presence of mind to stay on the track.



A convenient drinking fountain – a leak in the pipeline

We re-join yesterday's route at the bottom of the caretaker's hill to be back at the van and gone by 2.30; a little later than intended. The tubers are waiting at their road end up the Pelorus valley and in the end we arrive at the ferry 5 minutes after 'final' check-in but in plenty of time for the hour long wait in the queue.

Summary comments

Both rides are easily accessed from Nelson providing a lot of accommodation options. We took it easy on all days never spending much more than 6 hours. This could readily be trimmed if you were of a mind and of medium or better fitness.

Dun Mt. This is a great ride and the pick of the weekend. It has an easy grade up giving options for family riding, spectacular views and interesting history and geology. From Coppermine Saddle you can return the way you came or enjoy the exciting descent on a well-formed track to the Maitai. There's a fair part of the trip between streams and we

weren't keen to drink from small streams on Mt Dun, it's probably best to carry enough water for the whole trip.

Maungatapu is a do-able ride but there's quite a bit of pushing unless you are a strong rider. The down hills are exciting on both sides; Pelorus side because you can go very fast and Nelson side because they are steep and a little more technical. The views are pretty good. On balance we would recommend going from Pelorus as you can ride more of the uphill side and can ride down the sections you would be pushing up on the Nelson side. There are water sources on both sides but some gaps between the last stream on the way up and the first on the way down (including the amazing disappearing Maitai River North Branch). Bike bypass around road works in Maitai valley are catered for and the issue will probably pass before too long. Camping at Pelorus is a highly recommended variation.

All in all a successful first club trip leading experience. Compared to tramping there is a lot more gear and organising required for a MTB trip, particularly to accommodate repairs to bikes between rides, and even more so because our plan involved leaving a gear stash. However, the club arranged all the ferry bookings at good rates and provided the van, ready to go, which made things a lot easier.

Having good natured advice and assistance from a longer serving club member (this time in the form of Mike) is the sort of support that any first time trip leader would appreciate.

Drought busting Sunday – Kapakapanui day walk

17 March 2013, Medium day walk, Tararua FP, (map #3)

Author: Pete Gent

Trampers: Pete Gent (leader), Anna Lambrechtsen,
Barbara Keenan, Emily Shrosbree (photo 1), Tony Cimino (photo 2)

So with the Wellington drought in full force, I figured that not too much weather watching would be needed; this just being a day walk up on the Kapiti coast. However with maps packed and the final trip intention sheet sent out, it seemed that Sunday 17th March it was possibly going to rain. My colleagues in the office noted that for the greater good, it would be fine to be rained on, if the region wide drought was ended!

After rounding up everyone, including the Newlands pick up, we were at the road end a shade after 9am. Not bad for the trip leader who is not a morning person. Discussion was held over which way round the loop should be attempted. Initially a clockwise "gentle" up and steep down was on the cards but suggestions to go anti clockwise with a gentle down were met positively, so heading the other way was attempted instead.

After a flurry of boot changing and a final once over of the map at the road end, we were off. With the fields looking particularly dry, we wondered how low the river might be. 10 minutes later we found out that it was actually flowing, not with a vengeance, but deep enough to almost breach the top of my gaiters. Four crossings later, we came to the 3 way sign where the loop diverges. However we took the 4th option to continue up river! With an

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absence of orange markers noticed after a good 2 minutes (and an extra crossing) we back tracked to the 3 way sign. Upon closer inspection, it was noted that our intended anti clockwise route was straight up the bank, not with any flat sections. With that error corrected, we headed up. By up, it was 940 meters of up in a solid 2hrs 40 with no flat bits to write home about. A few stops for snacks and breath later, lunch was served on the edge of the bush line. A quick GPS check over sandwiches tallied with the map and ground features, confirming we were where we thought we were. The cloud (for the forecasted rain) was hovering about our heads however the air was cool enough for it not to stay around too long, with us discussing the finer points of the fifth element.



Breaking out of the tree cover, we quickly reached the summit and trig point. After a photo stop and a break to take in the view looking over the Southern Crossing on our right and out across to Kapiti Island on our left, minus any cloud impediment (and rain). After 20 or so minutes on the top, we finally reached the main section of tree cover to return back down to road end in our anti clockwise direction. Coming across the hut we made a stop for water, snacks, cell phone coverage and to write in

the hut book. It was noted that the Wellington Medical Students got 20 people in the hut a couple of weeks before us for the night; I suspect it was a cosy night for all. At this point the drought was broken, and the rain came down, but only in gentle waves.



Anyway the down continued, with the hut being at 860 meters, we only had 800m to go (in a vertical direction). 70 odd minutes later, we reached the bottom of the main section, with

4 bonus river crossings (well, stream) to get us back to the 3 way junction. Retuning down the river from whence we came brought us to the car still in drizzle. As the doors were unlocked it rained proper rain, like you get in Wellington when the drought is not on.

Thanks for everyone for an excellent day out, especially to Barbara for the wheels to transport us in comfort despite the size of the party.

Trains Hut

23-24 February 2013, Easy medium tramp, Whanganui (map #4) Author: Ilske Verburg
Trampers: Mike Gilbert (leader), Chris Davies, Ilske Verburg, Simone Musin,
Helen Law, Thomas Keir (photos), Paul Crozier, Peter Schroder

Lots of space in the van with eight people on the trip, best kebabs at Bulls and luxury camping (with hot showers) just past Whanganui, and that was just the Friday night... this was going to be a great tramp.



After an early start on Saturday morning, thanks to the 5am wake-up call from the roosters, we drove an hour or so along the windy road up the valley to the start of the track to Trains Hut. The track started off as a dusty farm road with stampeding cows, even though the small brown Waitotara river was "flowing" beside the track, the effects of the lack of rain were certainly noticeable.

But then the track turned into a lush bush track following the river all the way to Trains Hut. The track was easy to follow and by the time we passed the big swing bridge we knew that we were nearly there. Trains Hut itself is a pretty new and comfy hut set on a nice clearing with lots of camping space around.



With the beautiful weather and plenty of time before dinner some of us couldn't resist the temptation of having a swim in the river near the Terereohaupa Falls even though the water was not as clear as you would like it to be. After a nice refreshing dip we explored the stones along the river containing lots of fossilised sea shells and found proof that possums use bridges to cross rivers as well.

After a great dinner with chocolate and whipped cream for dessert we had night with some of us camping and sleeping in the hut. The night itself as peaceful as the beautiful views of way suggested; a weird loud worrying woke us up during the night and blood on the fly the next morning showed that a murder had taken place in the above. We didn't investigate further but pretty sure the criminal was a furry one.



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With a misty but almost on schedule start we were back at the van around lunchtime and after exploring whether the mysterious town of Taumatatahi over the bridge had an ice cream shop we made our way back to civilisation. Sunday afternoon coffee with great cake and live music in Whanganui to ease into it and then on to Wellington.



Bushcraft 2013

8-10 March, Training course, Rimutaka FP (map #5)

Author: David Sluiter

Bushcraft participants: Tracey Black, Mike Moore, David Sluiter, Chris Villasis, Ilske Verburg, Doug Jones, Javier Luque, Richard Salisbury, Adam Threkeld

The morning of Saturday 9th March dawned colder and wetter than had been predicted by both Amanda and the Meteorologists so I was glad I had packed a raincoat. From the house it was clear to see that it would be wet over in the Rimutaka ranges. Perfect conditions for an NZ bush-craft course.

Seeing that I had missed the entire preliminary bush craft briefing a few days before due to a miscommunication of start times, I arrived at the Wellington railway station a little earlier than the scheduled time of 0800. Amanda immediately impressed everyone with her ability to remember names and put them to early morning faces.

It was clear the group was international in flavour. The first give away were the non-short wearers, the second, their names and accents. We had Javier from Argentina, Chris from The Philippines, Ilske from Holland, Doug and Adam both from England, Richard a recent returnee from Australia and myself -a half Dutch- fully keen NZ'er. The rest of the party were genuine New Zealanders, namely Tracey, Richard and Mike.

Stuffing the mini-van full of backpacks, we piled in and Amanda got us underway.

Conversation was limited during the 40 minute ride in and I am guessing the steady rain and the sight of a rather grey and subdued Wainuiomata were responsible.

We arrived in the Catchpool valley car park and de-bussed. It was raining steadily and people were soon donning wet weather gear. My raincoat, ex-German Bundeswehr issue, was probably not the best choice. Chris subtly told me that in the Philippines camouflage gear was not recommended hiking attire, and when I replied that I realised it wasn't best practise for being seen in the mountains, he said the real reason was so as not to be mistaken (and shot) for an Islamic militant. Good advice I thought.

After we had geared up, Amanda collectively asked the group why we all liked tramping. The reasons varied from just getting away from the stress and confined work-space of the daily grind, to getting out into the NZ bush after 4 years of not doing so. One theme was common: it was just great to be outside and away from it all while enjoying the amazing scenery NZ had to offer.

Amanda split us up into different 3-4 person groups and each group headed off, staggered a few minutes apart, towards the Orongorongo River via the Catchpool valley track.

As tracks go, this one was extremely well maintained. You could have pushed a baby stroller along it without waking its cargo. Amanda was quick to point out that this track was in fact SO easy it would rate below the grade of easy on the tramping scale of difficulty.

Every kilometre or so we stopped to consult the map we had been asked to bring. We were then tasked to find our position on the map, using the terrain around us and the time we had been walking. Amanda would then see just how close or far we were by taking a GPS bearing. Lesson one of bushcraft - take a GPS! (...and a map and compass for back-up of course)

About 30 minutes in the rain stopped. Bridges which had been washed out by last year's floods were pointed out, and another positional exercise carried out. The topographical maps showed us that not all landmarks were necessarily marked, and in the case of bridges - subject to rapid change.

We reached the entrance to the Orongorongo river valley at 12 noon, and parking up just below the bridge had lunch.

Chris impressed all by munching down on a MacDonald's big-mac and fries combo, while Amanda offered round homemade Tararua biscuits. The secret to these apparently is a dash of mustard.

While lunch was being digested, the second serious lesson of bush-craft was taught - the river crossing. From the dry banks of the creek bed we listened to Amanda go through the basic rules of river crossings, the technique of linking up, and the importance of having a leader. The stick test was explained as was the importance of finding the right place to exit the river. Paramount in this section was the rule ' If in doubt - stay out'. Not crossing a river

was the surest way of staying out of trouble and backing out of one, or even attempting a crossing, was done via a group consensus. Brown rocks were to be avoided as slip hazards and never ever take your boots off while crossing. All good tips for the uninitiated and points which were not lost on us as Amanda revealed that most fatalities in the NZ bush were drownings.

A short time later we had formed back into our same groups and ventured to cross the trickling stream which was the Orongorongo river. Drought conditions and the total fire-ban it brought meant the river was *well* below its normal level. Several linked crossings later, everyone's boots were suitably soaked and we headed downstream towards Paua hut.

Arriving at the hut saw the group get a lesson in what to bring and what not to bring. Groundsheets/tea-candles/spare boot laces and the zip lock rubbish bag all left an impression on me. Cotton was rightly outlawed in the NZ bush and the tips of the experts were laid bare. Amanda again wowed everyone by revealing the weight of her pack and the relative luxurious inflatable pillow.

It was at this point that I heard Xavier mention that he didn't bring a sleeping bag. I thought I had misheard and presumed he meant a sleeping mat. 'No, no - I have mat' was his reply. 'I didn't bring a sleeping bag. It was a conscious decision'. Disbelief was soon met with unbelievable hilarity as Xavier revealed the cost of a sleeping bag was deemed too much, especially since he had spent a small fortune buying the boots, pack, pillow and one square meals.

'I will sleep in the hut, in my clothes. No problem' was the plan of attack for the coming night.

After socks had been wrung out and snacks consumed we were told to put the packs back on and head off up Paua ridge in a K-bar location exercise. We were given grid references of the approximate location of the packages and split-up into groups to start the search. Armed with compasses and badly folded top maps we stumbled up the hill trying to work out approximately how far up the teeth-breaking goodies could be found. Thankfully, our 'guides' were forthcoming in the clues as it became clear that the moment you couldn't locate your position on the map - the map became quickly irrelevant even if the exact location was clearly marked.

Packages found, we headed back down towards the hut. After revealing to those not acquainted to this NZ national treasure the tip of letting the K-bar sit in the sun to allow it to soften up, I was promptly told that even resting this on the actual surface of the sun wouldn't help. Adam had a point.

Arriving at the hut we were given a course in how to set up flys, and those who wished could sleep under them. Not having a sleeping mat, and preferring the warmth of the hut, the decision was easily made.

Dinner, a mix of Soba noodles, cream and vegetables, was expertly cooked and quickly consumed. The surprise of the evening was a custard covered sponge cake affair. On

dishes were Doug and Adam, the authors behind the well-lit fire and the slight smell of singed sock.

For those brave souls enjoying the evening under the stars, they missed out on several things: the cacophony of snoring (Amanda's tip of ear plugs deserve a mention here) and the tropical conditions of the fire. The mice went about their business unnoticed and Javier did not require the emergency blanket offered by Tracey, seeing the night out without incident.

Morning started with a quick breakfast and a talk by Amanda about hypothermia and the importance of merino base layers. Luckily due to the general improvement of clothing cases of hypothermia were not as common as they once were, but despite this, the signs and potential treatments were discussed.

Following the breaking of camp, gathering of firewood and a general tidy-up, we wandered down to the river to start the map and compass work. The basics were explained by both Richard and Amanda with bearings and declination discussed. We were tasked to find our position on the map and take a bearing to Brown's track across the river. In open country in daylight, the basics were easily mastered with Javier and Chris taking particular satisfaction in knowing which way to orient the map and following something as fundamental as a compass bearing. Doug and Adam in the meantime did everything possible to ensure dry feet were kept at all times.

Several bearings and shallow river crossings later we arrived back at the entrance to the track back to the car-park. The walk back was swift and warm, taking a brief break at the mid-way section to discuss tramping and the up and coming tramping club events. Again Amanda dispelled all myths that there would probably be no easier tramp than the one we had just completed.

All in all, it was a great overnight experience. The mix of people was great and I haven't laughed so much with strangers for a while. Amanda showed herself to be a very capable and informative tutor and the tips and tricks shared by the other experienced members were gratefully received.

Big thanks to Craig McGregor and Pete Gent who gave up their Saturday to help with the small group exercises and provide some expert navigation and gear advice.



Practicing river crossing and fly pitching

Other bits and bobs

'Shelter From The Storm: The story of New Zealand's backcountry huts'

Written by Shaun Barnett, Rob Brown and Geoff Spearpoint.

One of the defining and unique features of the New Zealand outdoors is the backcountry hut. New Zealand has a remarkably diverse network of these huts, unparalleled anywhere else in the world, and for those who venture into our wild places there is often a passionate attachment to these humble structures.

Shelter from the Storm is a landmark publication, the first wide-ranging history of our hut network. The authors provide an overview of who built the huts – tramping and mountaineering clubs, the Department of Internal Affairs, Lands and Survey, New Zealand Forest Service, Park Boards and DOC – as well as why they were built, which includes farming, mining, tourism, tramping and climbing, hunting and deer culling, science and as monuments. For each of these sections the authors profile a wide range of representative huts, and recount the fascinating stories that invariably surround them.

This is a wonderful book, meticulously researched and lavishly illustrated with a huge range of historic and contemporary photographs. Its significance and appeal is far-reaching, as this is a subject that has a genuine resonance with many, many New Zealanders.

This 340-page, hardback, full colour book weighs in at a mighty 2.72kg and retails at \$80. However, through the FMC we can get this wonderful resource, signed by one of the author's Shaun Barnett, for just \$64. I am going to make a bulk order if we have enough interest, so please email me at garethmorton@yahoo.co.uk before Sunday 21 April if you would like to purchase a copy. I can collect the books and bring them to club night for those who have pre-ordered and pre-paid me.

And a little bit of history

What more perfect article could I chance upon from the past than one about a bushcraft weekend in 1970:



Excerpt from:
Tramping and Mountaineering, Journal of the Wellington Tramping and Mountaineering Club, Inc. April 1970, Vol 13, No. 9.

Deadline for submissions to the next WTMC newsletter: Friday 1 March 2013

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



2013/2014 WTMC RUAPEHU LODGE GUIDE

This document contains; Schedule of Day / Week & Weekend trips,
Lodge Rates, Booking Rules, and Club Refund policy

HOW DO I BOOK?

ONLINE BOOKING - <http://www.wtmc.org.nz/lodgebookings> -- preferred method

This is the most reliable booking method. Availability and your booking will be confirmed by the online booking system immediately.

Alternatively your booking can be made by e-mail or by phone, however bookings cannot be confirmed until payment is made and online bookings will take precedence until payment is received.

The internet based booking system will give you an option to request either a double (shared) or single bunk and you will have the ability to state your bunk or room preference. Every effort will be made to accommodate your selected preference. However, depending on prior selection by others your bunk preference is not guaranteed.

E-MAIL – lodgebookings@wtmc.org.nz

Please read the rules and rates below before you email.

In your email, state the arrival/departure dates, number of nights, names of individuals, Member/ Non Member, booking type, e.g. adult (see rates table) as well as bunk preference (if you have one).

PHONE: The booking number is 04 479 6799.

This is the only number to use for lodge bookings or enquires about lodge vacancies (it is recommended the online system be checked for availability first). Please do not phone after 9pm.

Your request can be made by talking to the Lodge Bookings Officer or by leaving a message.

Please ensure that you leave your phone number clearly and repeat it on the message that you leave.

Bookings via email and Phone will be noted and will not be confirmed and manually entered into the internet booking system until payment has been received by the booking officer.

HOW DO I PAY?

Your booking is not secured until payment is received.

Online:

Online bookings are made through payment via credit/debit card and is the preferred method. If bookings are not made online, then one of the alternative payment methods will need to be used as listed below.

Internet Banking:

Account number is: **06 0582 0013409 03**

Use your name and arrival night as a reference, eg 'Joe Bloogs 23 July'

OR, Post a cheque, payable to WTMC – to:

Lodge Booking Officer, 35 Woodmancote Road, Khandallah, Wellington 6035.

WHEN CAN I BOOK?

Bookings for **Members** open 1 May.

Bookings for **Non Members** open 1 June.



WTMC RUAPEHU LODGE RATES

WINTER - 01 Jun 2013 to 28 Oct 2013*

	Members			Non-members		
	Weekend	Week	Weekday	Weekend	Week	Weekday
Adult	\$74	\$195	\$39	\$119	\$310	\$62
Youth (4-17)	\$64	\$170	\$34	\$93	\$245	\$49
Baby (0 - 3)	\$24	\$60	\$12	\$50	\$125	\$25

SUMMER - 29 Oct 2013 - 31 May 2014*

	Members			Non-members		
	Weekend	Week	Weekday	Weekend	Week	Weekday
Adult	\$36	\$90	\$18	\$70	\$175	\$35
Youth (4-17)	\$30	\$75	\$15	\$52	\$130	\$26
Baby (0 - 3)	\$18	\$45	\$9	\$36	\$90	\$18

Notes as follows:

- All values GST Inclusive.
- WINTER RATES include food / SUMMER RATES exclude food.
- For a 3 day weekend, the price is 1 weekend rate plus 1 day rate.
- A week is 5 consecutive nights.
- A weekend is Friday night to Sunday afternoon i.e. minimum booking is 2 nights.

- There is no charge for babies if they are not occupying a bunk.

2013 WINTER SEASON

Dates (nights)	Trip
June 2013	
31 st May - 3 June	Queen's Birthday
3 - 6 June	Week
7 - 8 June	Weekend
9-13 June	Week
14-15 June	Weekend
16-20 June	Week
21-22 June	Weekend
23-27 June	Week
28-29 June	Solstice
July	
30 June - 4 July	Week
5-6 July	Weekend
7-11 July	Week
12-13 July	Snow craft 1
14-18 July	Week (School Hols)
19-20 July	Weekend
21-25 July	Week (School Hols)
26-27 July	Weekend
August	
28 July -1 August	Week
2-3 August	Snow craft 2
4-8 August	Week
9-10 August	Weekend
11-15 August	Week
16-17 August	Weekend
18-22 August	*Booked
23-24 August	Weekend
25 - 29 August	*Booked
30 August -31 August	Weekend
September	
1 -5 September	*Booked
6-7 September	Weekend
8-12 September	*Booked
13-14 September	Weekend
15-19 September	Club Week
20-21 September	Weekend
22-26 September	Week
27-28 September	Weekend
October	

29 September-3 October	Week (School Hols)
4-5 October	Weekend
7-10 October	Week (School Hols)
11-12 October	Weekend
13-17 October	Week
18-19 October	Weekend
20-24 October	Week
25-27 October	Weekend (Labour)

* Weeks marked 'Booked' are weeks already booked by non-member groups.

BOOKING RULES

1. Booking priority - Bookings are first come, first served, with bookings open earlier for members than non-members.
2. Booking confirmation - Your booking is not confirmed until payment is received. NO PAYMENT = NO BOOKING.
3. Winter weekends
 - a. Run from Friday evening until Sunday afternoon, including all meals on Saturday and breakfast and lunch on Sunday. If planning to stay only one night in a weekend you still need to pay for the whole weekend.
 - b. Bookings for Members open 1 May. Weekend bookings for non members open 1 June.
 - c. From 1 June, non-members will have equal booking rights for weekends.
 - d. Bookings must be made by 9pm on the Wednesday prior to the weekend you want to book so that the food can be organised.
4. Winter weeks
 - a. Run from Sunday evening to Friday afternoon, during the winter ski season.
 - b. Member's bookings may be made from 1 May.
 - c. Week bookings for non- members open 1 June.
 - d. From 1 June, non-members will have equal booking rights for ski weeks.
5. Vouching for non- members - when a member books non-members into the lodge they are accepting responsibility for their behaviour and character. Bookings from non-members MAY be refused if they do not have Club members prepared to vouch for them. Non-members booking online will be required to enter a referring members name into the booking system.
6. Non- members concession - For this 2013 winter season only, non-members booking more than 5 week nights or 3 weekends can book any further nights within the season at member rates.
7. Transport - It is your responsibility to get yourself to and from the Lodge. If you need transport, then mention this to the Lodge Booking Officer; there may be car-pooling options available.
8. Refunds

- a. All cancellations must be made through the Lodge Booking Officer
 - b. Week trips – refund is lodge fees less a \$10 booking fee per person providing cancellation notice is received by 8pm 3 Mondays before the trip runs
 - c. Weekend trips – as above but cancellation notice is required 2 Mondays before the trip runs
 - d. Any other refund requests will be referred to the General Committee
9. Lodge Capacity - Lodge capacity is 32 persons including babies sleeping in cots. Due to safety regulations, overbooking the lodge on any night is not permitted.