



the Mouth'n'Ear



Newsletter of the Wellington Tramping and Mountaineering Club



Tararua Tops, by Jenny Cossey

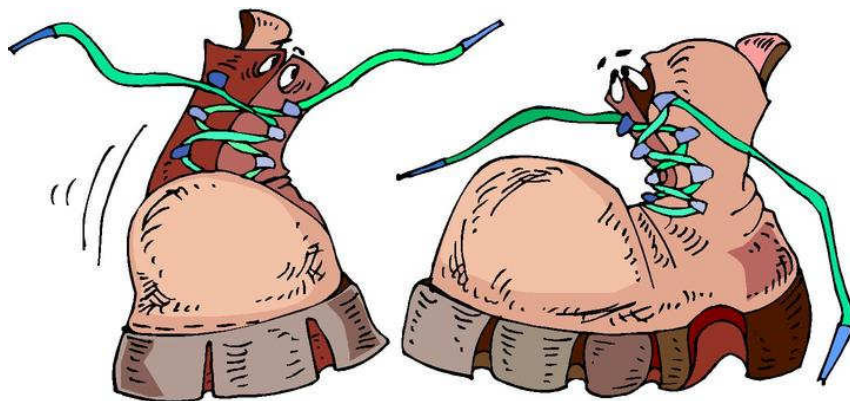
In this April issue: Pinnacles Hut (Coromandel); Cycling at Port Underwood; Arete Biv (Tararua FP); Dragons Teeth (Kahurangi NP); Alpine Courses; Lodge Update.

Deadline May Newsletter: 14 May

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

Track Talk

with Amanda Wells -
Chief Guide



It's always a challenge starting something new and figuring out how everything fits together. When I started tramping with the club almost exactly five years ago, the last thing I would have imagined was becoming chief guide. Just going along to club nights and heading out into the hills with strangers was challenging enough!

But after about six months, some new friends coerced me into trip leading and I discovered its strange enjoyment – and trip leading remains the most vital role that anyone in the club can do. I remember “losing” one of my punters on the second or third trip I lead: we had come over from the Wairarapa into the Orongorongo river and arrived far ahead of schedule. Because it was only lunchtime, a punter decided to head out to Wainuiomata rather than continue to our Paua hut destination. She would not be swayed from her decision, but I experienced a vague sense of leadership failure – exacerbated when we arrived at the hut and Ruth, the chief guide at the time, was there! Feeling that perhaps I wasn't really up to trip-leader standard, I confessed the situation. Her comments reflected the fact that, although people commit to a group trip, they remain individuals with free will. The more trips you lead, the more you realise that it's a continuous learning curve, as you slowly get smarter about group dynamics, physical limitations and menu planning.

Everyone feels uncertain about leading before they give it a go – so we've developed a course that covers all the questions you might have, as well as some you won't even have contemplated. This year the leadership instruction weekend will be held from 14-16 May at Camp Wainui. If you occasionally have nagging thoughts that perhaps you could (or should!) lead a trip, or fancy a refresher, please sign up or get in touch. Huge thanks to Sue Walsh, who is coordinating this course and has taken on overall leadership of bushcraft and instruction.

It's also time to start thinking about Snowcraft if you're keen to learn some alpine skills. Despite being a victim of the infamous “snowcave blizzard” snowcraft of 2006, I highly recommend this course to anyone who wants to tramp in winter/spring. Even the Tararuas get their share of the white stuff. Thanks heaps to Sharron Came and David Jewell who are again coordinating this instruction and sharing their ample alpine experience.

I'd also like to take this chance to thank those playing vital roles in the ongoing operation of our trips: Jackie Foster coordinates our system of emergency contacts, Mike McGavin

collects statistics from leaders after trips, Sally Colbeck is our new trip money person, and Simone Musin is now taking responsibility for trip sheets. And of course Melissa Hewson, who is continuing in the role of assistant chief guide. It's this combination of effort from many people – not least our leaders – that makes our trips happen.

As I write, we are putting the finishing touches on the Winter schedule – and we'll be leaving some "leader required" gaps so that those completing the leadership course get the chance to exercise their new skills.

Social Corner



Kia Ora

Winter is looming and looking like it will be a good one for those spectacular trips. We've had some very informative and entertaining presentations recently. The AGM went off without a hitch (even though Harry turned up for a short time!) We have more great Presentations to come. This is what is coming up.

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|------------------------|--|
| April 28 th | Melissa Hewson is talking about her Christmas trip in the Nelson Lakes area. |
| May 5 th | Art Buehler is taking us for a walk on the Inca trail. |
| May 12 th | Des Smith is from Zealandia and is talking to us about what we find in the bush and what we might be able to survive on. |
| May 19 th | Brian Johnston will show us a few day walks he has been on. |

This year WTMC are going to hold an interclub ball! This will be a great event and a chance for everyone to get dressed up into something other than shorts and tramping boots! So mark your calendars, its happening on Saturday the **21st August 2010**.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Sally Colbeck for everything she has done in the last year for the club and for me. We are losing her as Social Convenor but we will still get to see her face around as she will be collecting the trip money. I will miss our chats Sally and those cheery yellow dish gloves but I'm sure we will still have them (the chats that is!)

Thanks again and remember we are 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

Club Alpine Skills Courses 2010

Every winter the club runs a couple of courses designed to help Members explore the wonderful white stuff that coats high places every Winter (not to be confused with the Men in White Coats).

Snowcraft

Snowcraft is an introduction to safe travel in an alpine environment. The course is aimed at people with an interest in tramping and climbing above the bushline in conditions where snow is likely to be encountered.

The course covers trip planning, risk management and decision making, navigation, weather, gear, how to walk in snow with and without an ice axe and crampons, self arresting, glissading, alpine hazards, emergency shelters, food, equipment and a few other things. Instructor ratios are generally about 1:4.

The course will cost approximately \$300. A deposit of \$100 must be paid by Tuesday 8 June. The course dates are Tuesday 8 June 7-10pm at Crossways in Roxburgh Street, Mt Victoria and the weekends of July 9-11 and July 23-25 when we will be based at the Club Lodge on the Whakapapa side of Mt Ruapehu. If you are interested in doing the course you need to fill out an application form and sign up on the trip sheet at the clubrooms. You need to be a Club member. If you have any questions come along to club or email me at alpine@wtmc.org.nz

Alpine Instruction Course

For those with a good level of fitness and a fair amount of tramping experience who are interested in extending their alpine skills to include the basic skills needed for alpine climbing we run an alpine instruction course which covers everything that Snowcraft does along with basic techniques you need to engage in moderate snow climbing.

The course covers knots, harnesses, rope management, belaying, pitching and abseiling, rock, snow and ice anchor systems, basic rock and snow climbing using ropes (pitch climbing), glacier travel, crevasse extraction, advanced planning, risk management and decision making. The course will cost approximately \$520. The course dates are the same as for Snowcraft with two extra Saturdays for rock instruction – Saturday June 18 at Fergs and Saturday June 25 at Titahi Bay. There is also a third weekend based at Kapuni Lodge on the south side of Mt Taranaki on August 6-8.

The Club does not have a large supply of AIC instructors so numbers will be limited for the AIC. If you are interested get in touch with me alpine@wtmc.org.nz. If you are unable to do our course we can discuss alternatives with you.

Sharron Came

LODGE UPDATE

Enclosed with this month's newsletter is the Lodge Rates sheet for the 2010 season along with the booking dates for members and non members.

You will see that there has been a change in rates from the 2009 season. The over all change for winter is not high although the member adult day rate has increased by \$5. The bigger adjustment has occurred with the summer rates, in particular for members.

The increase in rates leads on to an issue that the sub-committee is focussing on this year. And that is increasing the patronage of the lodge. As a member it is fantastic to know that the lodge is there and bookings can be made as appropriate during winter and virtually any time during summer. It is a great resource for us. We have also been fortunate in the last few years of having a good snow base in winter so members are drawn to the lodge. Using the lodge in summer, particularly during the summer school holidays has many bonuses especially if people take part in DoC's summer programme.

The question though is how many of you are using the lodge, is this throughout the year, and can this be increased by any means. There are obvious down times in the usage of the lodge, for example at the onset of winter when there isn't sufficient snow for skiing and the weather is not that conducive for other outdoor activity. On the other hand, usage during the summer could be higher, and the usage during the ski season could be more consistent.

An obvious remedy to increasing usage of the lodge is to try and bring in more non-members. That raises a variety of issues in itself, not least is that non-member bookings might impact your ability to book in. And this gets to the heart of the matter.

As you will be aware, usage of the lodge is directly related to the income we receive and obviously more income is received from non-members.

The fixed costs for the lodge are currently around \$68,000 per year and this is increasing each year. There is further work that the sub-committee would like to undertake in the lodge including changes in the kitchen and bathrooms. To do this, we need to use the surplus generated by the lodge, which at the moment is not sufficient beyond keeping the lodge ticking over. The work that we carried out over the past couple of years has used the excess money that we are allowed to use.

So, my question to you is how can we increase the use of the lodge, and yet still ensure you get a fair deal to book when you want to? You can email your suggestions to me at lodgeconvenor@wtmc.org.nz and or you can call me on 04 232 9977. All sensible suggestions will be welcomed and put to the lodge sub-committee.

Sue Walsh
Lodge Convenor

Membership Report

Many thanks to those of you who have renewed your membership for 2010. Those of you yet to pay your subs please do so asap! Your membership's will expire on the 15th May - so please ensure you have paid up by then.

I am currently processing the many payments we have received to ensure that those who have requested electronic newsletters no longer get postal copies - and to ensure those of you who chose to receive postal copies get them! Please bear with me while these changes take place - if you receive a postal copy of the newsletter that you weren't expecting its probably because I've not processed your payment details yet!

This month we welcome David Moginie as a new senior member.

Please contact me with any questions about membership on membership@wtmc.org.nz or find me on a Wednesday night in the club rooms.

Jenny - WTMC Membership Officer

KAI ON THE FLY

with Aunty Rata

Ki Ora fellow trampers.

I hope you managed to get outdoors to enjoy adventures in our conservation estate over the Easter and school holiday period.

The government has finally made public its proposals to open up more conservation estate to mining. John Key reckons New Zealanders are evenly divided on this issue. Aunty Rata reckons now is a great time to decide where you stand on this issue and to speak up. After all, we wouldn't want government to die wondering...

A few questions i'm asking as i prepare my submission:

1. Is maximising NZ's mineral potential the best way to go about improving living standards for New Zealanders?
2. Where will it end? Schedule 4 land was supposed to be off limits to mining thereby providing certainty for the mining industry and environmentalists alike. Now a few areas have been identified for possible removal from schedule 4 which would mean mining companies could apply to mine in them while other areas are to be surveyed to gage their mineral potential, eg Stewart Island and could in the future be proposed for removal from schedule 4.
3. What does "environmentally responsible development of our mineral estate" mean? Some of us may take comfort from planning laws that enable management of the

environmental effects of activities. The mining industry argues that mining methods are much more environmentally friendly these days. But government is reviewing the RMA. The regulatory framework can be changed at any time – watered down, strengthened or done away with.

4. What value do we place on the conservation estate? How does this compare with the economic value of the minerals underneath it? To whom will that value accrue? Ideally we'd have sufficient information to do our own cost and benefit analysis and we could identify the distributional effects. Those of us who consider the conservation estate to be our backyard know that it has intrinsic value. Most people would allow that it has value for future generations. Our conservation estate has ecological, cultural, recreation and tourism value. Some of us chose to come and live and work in NZ because of its natural environment. For some of us this is a big part of why we stay. As other parts of the world steadily deplete their indigenous ecosystems what we have acquires scarcity value. The economic value of the minerals under conservation estate is hard to estimate even when a minerals survey has been undertaken and it has not been for most of NZ's conservation estate. The value of any minerals depends on a range of variables including the costs of gaining consent to mine, extraction costs, and market prices for the minerals. In terms of distributional effects the value associated with conservation estate accrues primarily to the current and future public, particularly the relatively few people who use the estate for tourism and recreation purposes. The value associated with mineral extraction will accrue to the private interests who do the extraction and to those employed in the sector. A relatively small proportion of value will accrue to the government through taxes and royalties until the mineral stock is exhausted.

Submissions on the discussion paper "*Maximising our Mineral Potential: Stocktake of Schedule 4 of the Crown Minerals Act and beyond*" close **5pm on Tuesday 4 May 2010**. The discussion paper and the electronic submission form are available on the MED website <http://www.med.govt.nz/>

Maximise your impact. Check out <http://2precious2mine.org.nz/>. Send a copy of your submission to the Minister of Energy and Resources Gerry Brownlee, the Minister of Conservation, Kate Wilkinson, the Minister of Tourism, John Key and your local MP. Encourage your mates to have their say.

Yes I do have a recipe for you. With daylight saving over it is time to mix a bit of winter tramping with your activism. For the colder months Aunty Rata favours those rib sticking classics guaranteed to keep you warm and motivated.

Tomato Mac Cheese (serves 4-6)

Ingredients

120g macaroni elbow pasta per person*
1 tb rich tomato sauce mix per person**
1 tb coconut cream powder per person (or milk powder)
1 tsp vege stock for every two people (or chicken or beef)
2 tsp minced garlic
1x 140g pottle tomato paste
1 pkt dried vege
1 onion
2 peppers
2 carrots or 2 courgettes
100-200g parmesan cheese#
100-200g salami or chorizo sausage
Handful sundried tomatoes (optional)

*small elbows are best

** preferably the rich tomato soup mix that requires cooking not the instant sachets, the flavour is better, you can buy this in bulk from Moore Wilsons

if group is vegetarian 2x100g parmesan cheese and no salami/chorizo

Method

- If you are using salami or chorizo chop it up into bite size pieces and set aside.
- Add a cup of cold water to a billy and place dried vege, sundried tomatoes, vege stock, coconut cream powder, tomato puree and soup mix in the water to rehydrate.
- In another billy sauté fresh veges and garlic with a little water. Set aside.
- Add more water to the first billy, enough for cooking the macaroni. Bring to boil. Add pasta and cook. Ignore the fact that the coconut cream is lumpy.
- When pasta is nearly done add vege mix if it will fit so it reheats, if it wont fit reheat briefly before serving.
- Serve the contents of the billies (separately if there isn't room to combine, punters can always mix the vege and pasta in their own bowls).
- Pass round the parmesan and salami/chorizo for punters to sprinkle on top and mix in.

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

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 Leeann Newton, winner of the March draw, for her letter to Aunty Rata.

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.

Christmas in the Coromandel

by Darren Hammond



After spending Christmas Day with the family, and Boxing Day with thousands of intoxicated young people at the Pirongia races, Sandra and I set off for 8 days in the Coromandel. In general, the weather was glorious, and we lay around at beaches working on our tans, but we did pack our tramping boots, and put them to good use on a day walk, and a 2 day tramp.

By the 28th we had ended up at Stony Bay, at the end of the road on the eastern side of the peninsula. There is an excellent DOC campsite, one of many such places in the Coromandel. For your \$9, you get (generally) a lovely setting, toilets and cold showers. As suggested by the name, the beach is covered with rocks, but the swimming was pretty good.

We woke on the 29th to a grey and drizzly day, but warm. We were off to Fletcher Bay, which is the end of the road on the western side of the peninsula. We were promised a 7 hour return walk via a loop track. The first half was easy walking along a flat, well benched track though bush with occasional views of the Hauraki Gulf. After a couple of hours we emerged from the bush to clearing skies, and great views north towards Great Barrier Island. At the halfway point, we headed up the hill to 540m ASL following a fenceline, it was a bit of a slog, but well worth it for the views. It seems most people take the bush track both ways, as we didn't see a soul on this half of the walk. Was a bit breezy at the top, but that just made me feel at home! The walk back down to Stony Bay was an easy hour down a 4WD track. We were relieved that it had not been a hotter day as there was no water at all on the upper section, and not much on the lower section either.

After a day recovering at Waikawau Bay...

we had planned to go to the Kauaeranga Valley, and walk to Pinnacles Hut via Moss Creek campsite, but the DOC officer advised us against this due to the 5 hours of walking including 2 hours of swamp from Moss Creek to Pinnacles Hut. He suggested that we go against the normal flow of walkers to Pinnacles Hut, and camp at Billy Goat Basin on New Years Eve, then walk to Pinnacles Hut and the Pinnacles the next day. It was a warm afternoon as we climbed up through the bush, but we were at our campsite in a couple of hours. The landscape is spectacular, steep bush clad hills, with dramatic rock outcrops. We were delighted to have the campsite to ourselves, it was a simple affair, just a flat cleared patch with an ancient long drop. DOC had provided toilet paper though, so we did get something for our \$5. After a delicious meal of porterhouse steak, quinone and courgettes, we settled

down to a quiet New Years Eve watching the clouds scud across in front of the nearly full moon. As Darryl Kerrigan would say 'How's the serenity?'.

We woke (well to be correct Sandra woke me up) at about 5.40 to listen to the dawn chorus. Even though it was bloody early, it was a great way to start 2010. Due to our early rising, we were on the trail by 9 am, and soon began passing some of the people who had spent NYE at 80 bunk Pinnacles Hut. The track undulated to Hydro Camp, where we hid our packs and took our lunch and some water for the walk to the Pinnacles. By now the day had cleared to a glorious blue sky, but with a cooling breeze. After about an hour we arrived at Pinnacles Hut, where we had a quick snack before setting off for the Pinnacles themselves. After about 10 minutes walk you arrive at a series of hundreds of steps to take you up to the start of the real climbing. The top of the Pinnacles is at 759m ASL, about 150m above the hut. After the steps, there are a couple of steel ladders built into the rock, then a series of rungs drilled into the rock. It is pretty straight-forward, but if you were acrophobic, it would be daunting. A viewing platform has been built at the top, giving great views north towards Whitianga, but you can easily clamber up another few metres to get 360 degrees views, south towards Whangamata, and west to the Hauraki Plains. It would be great to have seen this area with the old growth kauris still in it, but they were chopped down and taken away over a century ago. Progress?

We descend back to the hut, and ate our lunch with only one other person in the hut. Pinnacles Hut is impressive, the bunk rooms seems quite spacious, and they have cold showers and solar lighting. But it is hardly a back-country experience...

By now, we were ready to return to civilisation, and we made our way quickly to Hydro Camp, grabbed our packs, then sped off down the hill. Very hot now, and we are relieved to find a cool clear stream at the bottom of the hill. On the way up the hill are tonight's Pinnacles Hut residents, and they are battling the heat and large packs. Soon we are on the valley floor, and in no time we are back at the car, which I have very cleverly left in the shade. We make our way back to Thames and find a motel to stay at. Hot showers, fish and chips, beer, and a real bed. There is lots of good walking and camping in the Kauaeranga Valley, definitely worth a look if you are up this way.

Barry Brickell's Driving Creek Railway, neat Coromandel town is also a must see, but make sure you ring ahead and book!

Cycling Port Underwood 27 and 28 February

A story of early mornings, geo-caching and a small tsunami

by Hans Wiskerke



At the end of February six punters (Harry, Roger, Nicole, Rita, Mika and Hans) gathered on an early Saturday morning at the Bluebridge terminal with their bikes, awaiting the moment when they would be allowed access on the oh-so luxurious ferry to Picton. A lazy start of an active weekend; as hours passed by and the Saturday Dom Post was read in detail, including the puzzles, and caffeine-addicts were able to get a shot, we were getting closer to the start of a good ride!

As Picton would be the only spot to stock up on food, we popped in at the Dutch bakery and bought ourselves some crisp bread and yummie pies. Carbo-loading may sound like something for ultra-sporters, but it's actually quite pleasant!

The circular route we would be taking along Port Underwood required a major choice, and taking into account there was a slight northerly, we quickly opted to head south towards Blenheim over the highway. Not very interesting, but by doing the route anti-clockwise we kept the nicest stretches for the remainder of the weekend.

Less than an hour into the ride, Roger made us believe there was an interesting stop at a major highway junction. While most of us were counting sheep and trucks, he cycled back and started looking for a plastic lunchbox someone else had left behind. Apparently Roger's fresh geo-cache rage seemed to be contagious, so in no time we all participated in looking under the flax, near the trees, behind rocks and in caves expecting to find a hidden lunch box with a small notebook and some silly contents. To cut a long story short, a few km's down the road we found ourselves admiring the Millennium Monument (if anyone of you played Lotto before the year 2000, you have sponsored this rock with two holes – thx!), and a cry from the nearby shrubbery indicated that the cache had been found. Another twenty minutes and we explored two glow worm caves, but none of us had a clue where to find the related geo-cache this time.

Meanwhile the cycling got more interesting, as we left the Wairau valley below us and cycled up some steep bits along the beautiful coastline. As a good reward, nearly all of the larger climbs had a nice viewpoint.

The first day of cycling ended rather early as we arrived in White Bay, which is named after Black Jackson White, a negro who escaped from a boat and lived with the Maori on the coast for the rest of his life. While enjoying the sunny weather, the true heroes amongst us found out that the sea was not just cold, but freezing. Global warming has its limitations! The DoC-camping at White Bay is quite pleasant, and offered also some opportunities for short walks in the nearby native forest. The remainder of the day was spent exploring the beach and the rocky arch (where's the cache?), stretching and yawning, cooking and tasting Auntie Rata's veggie couscous and feeding the occasional mozzie or sandfly. No problem in finding volunteers to keep the tarp down!



Although we had not intended to sleep in, the waking-up by the DoC officer at 5.30 was a tad early. We were informed a major earthquake had occurred in Chile and there was a risk our lovely camping spot might be flooded by a tsunami in a few hours time. Having experienced how cold the sea was, we agreed it would be better to seek higher grounds and hit the road. We were closely watching the sea, and actually walked up to a nice high viewing spot at the predicted 08.30 AM arrival of the wave. At that point we had no knowledge of the severity of the tsunami, and considered it might have an effect on our road trip and possibly on our return sailing.

Fortunately the waves were rather small and only caused some mud in the bay to stir in semi-circular patterns: quite interesting to see, but no real worry. By now we started to wonder whether the DOC officer might have been overworked and made up the story to guarantee himself a quiet Sunday morning breakfast without any visitors on the campsite. Anyway, distraction was offered by the gravel road going up one hill, down another one, and up again – some sweat was lost but the excellent scenery and a motivating group spirit made it a nice experience. Nicole and Rita had even personalised their bikes and their two-wheelers Ruby and Julia were skilfully guided.



The weather was sweet and occasionally there was a stop for a third breakfast or a second lunch, a geo-cache or eventually a beginners course in sailing (as demonstrated by Harry in the photo),

After the last big hill of about 400mtr we concluded that the real aim for this sunny day should be a huge ice-cream! Picton was only two caches away (under the large flax bush near the sea, and near the geo-mark at Kawaka point), so we had plenty of time to check and compare ice-

cream varieties, pies and further healthy drinks.

As so often, the ferry trip was not the most interesting part of the trip, but hey – not everybody can tell they've cycled the Underrated Underwood Tour – better than the Grape Ride!

Four Seasons in the Tararuas

Fit Tramp to Arete Biv – March 12 to 14

by Jenny Cossey
photo by Paul Christoffel

As I passed Wellington airport with the orange needle horizontal on Cobham Drive, and the radio informing me that wind gusts of up to 140km/p/h were being recorded, I was beginning to wonder why I was heading into the hills. The horizontal hailstorms announced that summer had ended and autumn had begun. Buses were crashing in the street, branches and roofing tins were being flung about in space and yet again there was a large queue of frustrated passengers at the railway station waiting for a train, any train would do.



Being the last to arrive for the club bus, I got the back seat and to my delight was able to lie horizontal and go to sleep as we crawled along the Hutt motorway in winter weather. The usually Carterton eateries were visited and darkness descended. The stars were clear and

bright when Paul and I started walking from the Putara road end at 9pm. There was no wind and only slight water vapour in the air as we headed up the track to Herepai Hut. Another freezing cold hut night, winter temperatures were here.

The tops were in their glory as we ventured out at 8am, outside being warmer than the hut. But by 9.30am we were in cloud and gale force winds until mid afternoon. Although there was no rain the wind chill factor had us scurrying into our packs for all our warm gear and the compass. Where exactly were we between East Peak and West Peak? The forecast was for easing Nor westers and when they finally eased, and the ranges in their glory appeared, we were slightly weather beaten and climbing Logan. We changed to spring weather apparel and start a conversation on the thrills and spills of navigating in white outs as all previous conversation had been severely truncated by neither of us being able to hear the other.

Heading south to Arête, at a more leisurely pace, we could begin to admire our surroundings and arrived late afternoon to an empty, well insulated 2 man hut. A brew in our hands, two robust, *hard* blokes arrive from Mitre Flats. They had walked into the teeth of the gale over Mitre, not known for its shelter in a nor wester and were heading over to Te Matawai. Real man stuff!

A scrumptious dinner (Paul's catering was excellent), after dinner reading and discussion, was followed by 10 hours of sleeping

Sunday was one of those days you dream about being on the tops as the visibility was superb. From the top of Banister, Taranaki, Ruapehu, Kaimanawa's, Ruahine's, the hills behind Napier, Richmond Ranges and Kahurangi's could be seen. Morning tea passed and hours could have been spent admiring the view but we were on a bus pick up schedule and the foot travel was more tricky than yesterday. An airy rock descent from Bannister, we were glad summer weather had appeared, as this was not a place to be in gusty gale force winds.

The heat hit as we descended from Waingawa to Cow Saddle, where we followed the old DOC track from the saddle up the ridge to Blue Ridge over point 970m. (Thanks Alan Higgins for the tip. From Cow Saddle head up the spur from the Cow Saddle picture and there are pink markers up the spur on an easy to follow track. Where the spur reaches point 970 head south along the ridge until the main Blue Ridge track is reached. Where you join the track, there is a DOC sign (bent) pointing to Waingaura River and cut branches across this spur track. By using this route you do not have to descend from Cow Saddle into the Waingaura River and pass Cow Creek Hut).

A last picture stop on the Blue Ridge track, at the only view spot on the track, we could see Arête and the dip our previous night hut was in. It was now hot and the range is not known for its water supplies.

We arrived 7 minutes late at the pick up point, only to have an hour leisurely wait with washes, a brew, reading books, and discussing the nude trampler on the Blue Ridge Track we had met. May be the nude cyclist from Wellington has taken to the hills!

Dragon's Teeth, Kahurangi NP

Fit Tramp – Easter

by Stephen Healey



We began with a beautiful morning on Friday 2nd April, clear blue skies & no wind at all. Heading up Brown Cow Ridge we eventually reached the bush edge & then sidled across to where the track drops to Boulder Lake. Here wonderful views of Boulder Lake, Green Saddle, Dragons Teeth etc opened up in front of us.

The track up to Boulder Lake is really good travel; past Boulder Lake hut though we struggled through a long area of flats with really deep tussock, no fun to travel through at all. I wonder if we missed a route away from the river closer to the bush edge. As the flats

narrowed we eventually picked up a good cairned route leading up to Green Saddle. We arrived there rather late as we had numerous hold ups the first day but it was approximately 7 hours travel from the road end to the saddle

Drop off the saddle to the south of Green Saddle & you should find water just a few minutes down the hillside in the gully draining the pass. Reasonable tent sites for 4-5 tents can be found around here as well.

Dinner in the dark was slightly chilly as the breeze had picked up slightly, but we had shooting stars, satellites & stars a plenty for company

Next morning we set off & sidled around to the next saddle to the south, we then headed up Pt 1450, sidling it to the west until near the top. In doing this I believe we possibly missed a route sidling down from this second saddle to the eastern slopes of the ridge off Pt 1450.

There is no need to climb this peak as when you follow the ridge down from here to where it climbs again and becomes difficult, the track actually drops well below the ridge on to the northern slopes below where you pick up cairns & a track that sidles down & through the bush some distance below the ridge until they eventually merge & you again follow the ridgeline where travel is more straightforward.

Looking back up we appeared to see a trail sidling down the face from the saddle above which would have bypassed Pt 1452 altogether, good views from there though if you have the time and energy to go over it anyway. There is a fantastic outlook to Adelaide Tarn, the Dragons Teeth, Lead Hills etc.

The route along here is strong and easily followed in good weather
Below pt 1488 we meet a couple of Collingwood locals, (the only people we saw until Fenella Hut), they gave us a little route information for the route down to the Anatoki River which was to come in handy later. The line of cairns continued on & then turned up the hill leading you up to the Needles Eye, from where we dropped down to Adelaide Tarn where we had an early lunch. This is truly a place to linger, a gorgeous spot where I could easily spend a few days, perhaps having a recce over to the Dragons Teeth without packs while staying there. This was my favourite spot on the whole trip, just a stunning place to spend some time in fine weather.

Heading off we again followed a good line of cairns up the slopes above the hut till near the ridgeline above, here we reaped the benefit of the local's knowledge of the route. They insisted that it was much easier to leave the cairns heading left here, to instead turn right near the top & start along the route to the Dragons Teeth following that trail down to near the scrub line from here, where on the slopes below Mt Douglas, the travel is apparently easier & more open with less bluff's than the more eastern route the cairns would lead you down.

At the top we just stared & took photos of the impossible looking rock spires rising in front of us, here was the Jewel in the Crown of this trip, (the Dragons Teeth) they were looming in front of us, with the Anatoki Peak ridge beyond. We were just so thankful that the weather continued to hold allowing us wonderful views of this amazing place.

We dropped through the bush, good open travel, until eventually hitting the stream below somewhere about the 1100-1200 metre mark, (I forgot to check my altimeter for the exact height)

As soon as we hit the stream we picked up a cairn & continued to follow a reasonable cairned route staying above the stream bed on the True Left all the way down to Pt 744 where there are great campsites with an established fireplace right beside the river. This was approximately 6-7 hours travel from Green Saddle

Along the way we kept finding items lost or discarded by previous parties through here, about halfway down to the Anatoki from the bush edge we came across a shoe, in good condition it had probably been tied on to the outside of a pack & worked loose, an hour or so we found it's mate and then below there a walking pole. Somebody was being awfully careless with their gear.

Another interesting find was a proliferation of Giant Snail shells. These were very common, we saw numerous examples of these, though none with a snail in residence.

After investigating the bank on the other side of the river from the campsite & checking out the bluffs in the bush slopes above here we decided that the route must lie elsewhere, a few of us took off for a recce and Hans finally returned saying he had discovered some old but substantial cairns approximately 10 minutes below the campsite. These were on both sides of the river & obviously lead off up the hill above. This was good enough for us so we intended to follow these the next day.

That night we had a great Dehy meal followed by a fantastic Chocolate Mouse & once darkness fell we were kept awake by a chorus of bird calls, Moreporks, Wekas, Kiwis & other I didn't recognise, fabulous to hear & see the diversity of bird life down here, both day & night.

That night there were a few showers & we thought the next day might be miserable but the rain cleared & the morning was cloudy with little wind.

We dropped down river to pick up the old cairns, very overgrown, these lead off up the hill and had obviously been there a long time, we lost them for a while but picked them up again a bit further up the hill & were able to follow them all the way to the top after that, again good travel up through fairly open bush. Unfortunately there was a healthy wasp population all through here & as we ascended there was suddenly a chorus of cries from behind us & members of the party suddenly started flailing around & were running off in all directions. We must have disturbed a nest as a number of wasps had suddenly attacked the second

group as it passed where we had just been. Five of the seven of us were stung & everyone seemed to have the stings swell up alarmingly, a couple worse than the rest, Hans particularly was to be affected by these for the rest of the trip as he was stung on the calf & it swelled up alarmingly.

Further on we came upon one of the fattest Weka's I have ever seen, he wandered around just in front of us for ages seemingly quite interested in what we were up to.

As the trail broke out of the bush & up on to the tops, it then turned north and weaved around to a saddle north of the Drunken Sailors where it then dropped down into the valley leading down to Lonely Lake.

Lonely Lake hut does seem well named, it is a lonely little hut perched just in the bush below Lonely Lake, very different from Adelaide Tarn, it didn't feel like a place to linger to me, useful if it suits your needs but nothing more. Whereas I would happily return anytime to Adelaide Tarn & stay for days, I didn't feel like that about Lonely Lake hut.

We had lunch here about 3 hours after leaving the campsite in the Anatoki, from here on in we followed a good track for the rest of the trip, it climbs up through the bush above the hut, regaining the ridge after a short time & following this for the rest of the way, except for some interesting sidles where it avoids some gnarly peaks.

The weather had been holding off nicely for us, the peaks north of the Drunken Sailors were covered in cloud & the valleys to the west of us were cloud filled but it broke up against our ridgeline & the valleys to the east of us were clear with only high cloud above & until now there had been very little wind either, this was to slowly worsen though now as the day progressed.

As we turned right to follow the Douglas Range the cloud was pushing hard up against the ridgeline from the west & kept threatening to overrun us as well.

The tops travel along the Douglas Range is delightful, wonderful tramping country, there are a couple of big sidles, particularly across the shingle face of Kakapo Peak, but the travel is great all the way along here.

Eventually you drop back into the bush in a saddle below Kakapo Peak & after a steepish climb back up, just as you are leaving the bush again, the track takes a sharp left hand turn & drops down a steep gully before sidling again for some time as you follow the face below Waingaro Peak to where you reach the ridgeline again where a poled route leads you down to Fenella Hut

We were supposed to have camped up here at some tarns just south of this turn off but the last half an hour or so the weather had closed right in until it was now starting to rain, this got heavier & the wind picked up as we dropped down to Fenella Hut & we were glad to get down off the tops to the forest below.

Fenella Hut was rather full so we pitched the tents in the rain & ate our dinner on the deck of the hut before retiring for the night

Monday dawned fine so we packed up and enjoyed the walk out to the road end; this is a beautiful valley & a really nice way to end, or start, a trip. Besides from the natural attractions of the valley itself, there is the old Cobb Hut, followed by the Tent Camp & then the derelict Chaffey Hut.

As we approached the road end wasps became very prevalent again, like parts of Nelson Lakes, you could hear a permanent buzzing noise from the forest around you always a little disarming

And then we were out with a wash in the river a short wait for the Shuttle and our thoughts became dominated by takeaways & beer on the ferry to come

A great trip, the weather was kind; it rained twice overnight but was mostly clear during the day & we got the all important views along the Adelaide Tarn to Lonely Lake section that ensured the trip was a success

On the trip: Jenny Beaumont (Leader), Steve Austin, Charles Hatchwell, Mika Verheul, Hans Wiskerke, Garry De Rose, Stephen Healey

FROM THE GREEN CROCS

If you have been reading my last few columns, you will know that the club held its Annual General Meeting last Wednesday (April 14th). While the AGM is not everyone's cup of tea, it is an important opportunity for you, the members, to ask myself and the committee any questions you have about club affairs. The Annual Report was sent out with the March newsletter, and this gave a good overview of what the club has been up to in the last 12 months. I am proud of what the club has done in this time, and it is the result of much hard work by many people.

As is the norm, we had some turnover on committee this year, and I want to pay tribute to the departing committee members. Paul Jeffries has been in the demanding role of Chief Guide for more than 2 years, this is one of the most important roles in the club, and Paul has done a great job getting the trip schedules together, and finding leaders, as well as organising bushcraft and other training courses. I hope you manage to get out as a punter in the near future, Paul, you should be very satisfied with the job you have done.

Filling the position of Chief Guide is one of the most difficult jobs that a WTMC president has, I think, as most people in the club know how much work is involved. I am delighted that Amanda Wells has agreed to take up this role, many of you will know Amanda, and I hope you will give her all the help and support you can to make her job easier. Amanda has just had her 2nd term as our Promotions Officer, and she has been fantastic in that role, particularly in organising our Annual Info/New Members Night. Our new Promotions Officer is Megan Sety, she is relatively new to the club, but has been very active, and I know she will be excellent in this position.

Also standing down are the Secretary, Simone Musin, and our co-Social Convenor Sally Colbeck. Both Simone and Sally have given a great deal to the club in the last year, and I am sad to see them go. Sharleen Grounds will be our new Secretary, and Donna Maher will take over as the lone Social Convenor.

In non-committee roles, Anthony Mulick is taking over from Marie Henderson as Gear Custodian, and Jackie Foster and Tony Gazley will be producing the Journal again this year.

Continuing in their current roles are Ruapehu Lodge Convenor Sue Walsh, Newsletter Editor Michael Lightbourne, Treasurer Steve Austin, Membership Officer Jenny Beaumont, Transport Officer Gareth Morton, Social Convenor Donna Maher, Assistant Chief Guide Melissa Hewson and of course myself :-). It is great to see a number of first time committee members from last year so keen to carry on in their current jobs.

We still have a couple of vacancies on committee, two Vice President positions. This is a great role if you want to help out but don't want to have a specific portfolio. It could suit a new enthusiastic person who wants to help out, or a more experienced clubbie who wants to give something back. Let me know if you are interested.

I hope you will join me in heartily thanking the outgoing committee, and welcoming the newcomers. I would encourage you to get to know the committee, and talk to them about the club.

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

Darren Hammond