



# the Mouth'n'Ear



*Newsletter of the Wellington Tramping and Mountaineering Club*



*Katharina Monien took this photo during the Alpine Refresher weekend*

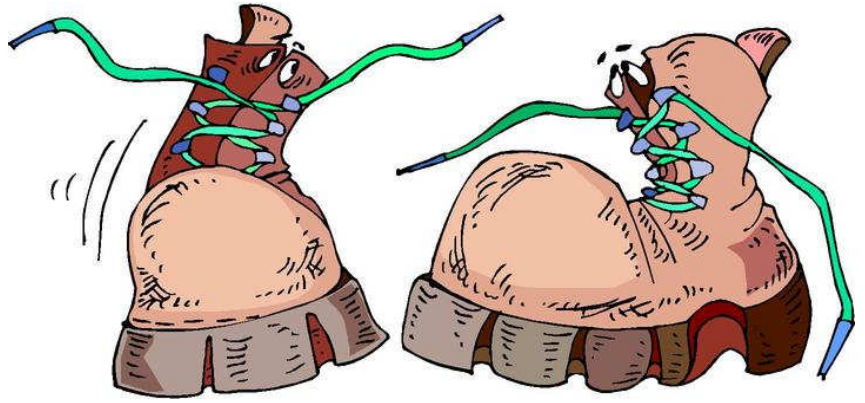
In this August issue: Alpine Refresher weekend; Jenny Cossey Interview; Billy-off Rules; Kai on the Fly.

Deadline September Newsletter: 20 August

Send contributions to [newsletter@wtmc.org.nz](mailto:newsletter@wtmc.org.nz), or PO Box 5068 Wellington.

# Track Talk

with Amanda Wells -  
Chief Guide



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Lately I've been thinking about relative risk. We might assume that our perception of danger is based on objective assessments of quantifiable facts, but experience generally teaches otherwise. I participated in Snowcraft 2006, which concluded with a lengthy descent from a snowcave through gale winds and poor visibility. "Worst experience of my adult life" was not an uncommon description. Five or six months later, I froze crossing an easy Aspiring pass that was coated in fresh powder. My assessment of the risk presented by snow had gone off the logical scale.

Last month, a few of us went up to the club's Ruapehu lodge for some "alpine refreshing". Some were practising with ropes and ice tools for climbing purposes, while others were relearning basic crampon and ice-axe techniques. My group went up to the crater lake, and during the long plod upward I realised that snow no longer frightened me in quite the same way, even if I still had no ambition to become an alpinist.

When I come to a river, it's useful to remember that others in the group might see a challenging crossing in the same way that I saw snow. Or when crossing a tricky bit of rocky exposure, that not everyone will react in the same way. People also react differently to the same obstacle at different times, depending on their fitness, level of sleep deprivation, and how stressed they are. At Queen's Birthday weekend, I went over the Tararua Peaks (twice, but that's another story...). On my only previous crossing, they had seemed terrifying; this time just slightly challenging and almost enjoyable. Extensive cabling has been added before and after the ladder since my first trip, but the amount of exposure remains unchanged.

Sometimes you need to push your tramping boundaries, because it's the only way to find out that the monster-under-the-bed isn't as sharp-toothed as you thought. Your confidence grows when you attempt things at the edge of your ability range, not when you only do trips that you're confident you can complete. The trips I remember most (for positive reasons!) are the ones about which I felt a slight edge of fear on the way to the railway station.

This month we're looking for leaders for the Spring schedule, which contains its fair share of exciting and challenging trips. But they won't happen without leaders. We have found it difficult to get anyone to lead "leader required" trips on the current schedule (of which there were many). So we're really intent on getting people to sign up to lead before the schedule is printed. If you're a member, please consider leading one or two trips, so we can

spread the load around. If your leadership skills feel a bit untried or rusty, it's no problem to set you up with a buddy leader – just get in touch with me. You can find a link to the schedule in the forums at [www.wtmc.org.nz](http://www.wtmc.org.nz) or email me at [chiefguide@wtmc.org.nz](mailto:chiefguide@wtmc.org.nz).

**Trips in August:**

<b>July 30 - 1 Aug</b>	Eastern Ruapehu				
	Alp1/Ski	M	Ski Touring from Whangaehu Hut/Rangipo Hut		<a href="#">Sam Kempthorne</a>
<b>Aug 6 - 8</b>	AIC Mt Taranaki Taranaki (Sth side)	Instr	F	AIC 3 (Kapuni Lodge)	<a href="#">David Jewell</a>
	Ruahine FP (Mangakukeke Rd)				
		Tramp	M	Kelly Knight Hut	<a href="#">John Hoffeins</a>
		Tramp	MF	Mangaweka / Pourangaki Hut	<a href="#">Amanda Wells</a>
	Tararua FP	Tramp	E/M	Tutuwai	<a href="#">Tim Frank</a>
	Wgtn Based Day Walks				
		Day	M	Kapakapanui	<a href="#">TBC</a>
<b>Aug 13 - 15</b>	Wgtn Based Day Walks				
		Day	Family	Matiu (Somes) Island buggy walk	<a href="#">Mike Gilbert</a>
<b>Aug 21 - 23</b>	<b>Black Tie Ball</b>	'Social'	'All'		<a href="#">Donna Maher / Sally Colbeck</a>
<b>Aug 27 - 29</b>	<b>Nelson Lakes 3 Days</b>				
	Alp1/Ski	M	Mt Angelus Ski Touring		<a href="#">Sam Kempthorne</a>
	ALP1	M	Lake Angelus		<a href="#">Steve Austin</a>
	ALP2	F	Mt Cupola		<a href="#">David Jewell</a>
	Tramp	Family	Nelson Lakes NP		<a href="#">Mike Gilbert</a>

If you haven't been tramping since you had a child or three, now's the time to climb up into the loft and dust off your boots and your pack. Because there's a family trip heading down to Nelson Lakes on August 26-29. It's time to back up those tall tales that you tell your kids with some real experience of our great outdoors, and build the next generation of trampers!

We'll be basing ourselves in St Arnaud, and doing daytrips or easy overnight trips from a lodge with dorm and private room facilities. For members it'll only cost you \$167 per adult

and \$85 per child - a bargain for ferry, transport by club van to St Arnaud, and three nights accommodation all included.

If you are keen or would like more information, please contact Mike Gilbert on 021 103 4119, or WtmcFamilies at gmail dot com.

## Social Corner



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**

Tickets are \$90 each. To purchase tickets contact me on [social@wtmc.org.nz](mailto:social@wtmc.org.nz) or come to club on a Wednesday evening.



## Lodge Update

The trip leaders manual for the lodge has recently been updated, including the copy that is kept in the lodge under the servery. A friendly reminder to all trip leaders to please refer to this manual, no matter how many times you have been a lodge trip leader. It is a good prompt for all aspects you need to be aware of, and all requirements that need to be fulfilled. A reminder too that contact numbers for the lodge sub-committee are in the back of the manual; these are to be used when anything untoward happens. Please make use of the numbers as they are there for a purpose - thank you.

And, there is snow there so don't forget to contact Brian to book your space for a weekend or week in this fantastic facility.

Sue

# Membership Report

All senior, veteran, couple, veteran couple and life members should have received an FMC card in the post this month. Please let me know if you did not receive yours!

The contact list of all members will be sent out next month with the Spring trip schedule.

Any questions about membership or FMC cards please find me on a club night or email me on [membership@wtmc.org.nz](mailto:membership@wtmc.org.nz)

Jenny  
WTMC membership officer

## Aunty Rata Interview with Jenny Cossey



*(Photo: David Jewell)*

Jenny Cossey is well known in Wellington outdoor circles as a competent, resourceful, resilient and experienced trumper, climber, rogainer and tango dancer. When she is not looking after her sons she can be found undertaking epic trips to remote places in the South Island or educating kids in classrooms.

Accidents that happen in the hills tend to get lots of publicity but I think this is because they are rare relative to accidents closer to home. Recently, on her way to Whakapapa for an avalanche awareness course Jenny was hit by a motorbike while crossing the road. Aunty Rata used the opportunity to catch up with Jenny, finding her in excellent spirits despite the extent of her injuries and the fact that it was the start of the school holidays. If it had been Aunty Rata she would be feeling a bit sorry for herself and complaining about life's unfairness. This is not Jenny's style. I found her busy managing her rehabilitation, planning her next trips and relishing the opportunity for an

evening stroll on the Seatoun foreshore on a rare night when Wellington wasn't windy.

If Mike Phethean's adventures on Everest are an example of living ones dreams then Jenny's approach to life stands out as an example of how resilience and choosing your attitude can help immensely with coping with the curve balls circumstance can throw up. I'm sure you will join with me in wishing Jenny a speedy and complete recovery.

**You invented the FE (faffing excluded) trip, how did that come about, and is the initiative working?**

Faffing is a wonderful, old, English word which is slowly spreading into everyday New Zealand language. Its precise meaning is to explain someone who takes a long time to do not a lot and makes a lot of noise about it. Note FE trips can be of any length or severity.

I have a policy on no f words in my classroom (faffing, fussing or fidgeting) and encourage s words (style, stillness, shape, and silence). This policy can be applied in the outdoors. Stylish packing, stylish gear, stylish menus, stylish bodies and people who enjoy moments of stillness to admire the shapes of the hills (rather than rummaging in their packs) and the silence at night from the banning of white supermarket bags to silent reusable ones!

**Do you have any advice for people faced with a challenging problem while out in the hills?**

Collect knowledge about where you are going before you go, assess the potential risks involved and then think fast and clearly when disasters strike. Reflect later on near misses to learn from them. Most accidents occur due to complacency, often mid to late afternoon on the way home.

Sometimes bad luck occurs in the mountains and elsewhere, where the real risk of an event occurring is very small, but you or a team member happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

If in doubt go on a trip with a mother, they know how to put on a band aid, sew things up, remember to pack things for others, picking things up after people leave them lying around, counsel them when the boyfriend does not love them any more, and deal with most other day to day crises.

**You have a reputation for being an excellent person to have around in a crisis. Can you tell us about the time you had to stitch up someone's knee so they could hobble to the nearest hut to be flown out?**

Bad luck moments occur and being able to think clearly when trauma occurs is useful.

Tony and I walked uphill on the western side of a stream for three hours late one afternoon under a hot sun, before camping in the hebes in an alpine basin. Although the previous day had been long, the travel up the stream day was not arduous and we had an early camp for the night. The next morning was refreshingly cool and we had the same stream to follow out of the hebes and over the pass, and with only two more days to walk south to Mt Cook in good weather.

On our first stream crossing of the day Tony slipped and a razor sharp rock slit his knee open to the bone, a bad luck moment. We both had a look at it and knew it had to be stitched before the knee would go anywhere. Knowing I had needle and grey sewing thread, Tony calmly sat on a rock and held the two sides of his knee together while I flushed the wound out with water and used my darning needle to put in 15 stitches, dipping the thread into my antiseptic solution and having to use a small rock to push the needle through Tony's rather

tough knee skin. Tony uttered no sound as the sewing was done without any local anaesthetic, a real man! Once stitched, a few sutures were placed over the 10cm wound, (for aesthetic purposes) and a crepe bandage wrapped around it.

Being old timers and knowing people have to make up their own minds about when to stop, and being in a safe place, we walked for five hours up and over the mountain pass and down to the next valley for lunch at Mistake Flat Hut. Total bleeding was the size of a 50cent piece and the leg was mobile until we stopped, when it swelled up.

At this point, with a new fast approaching front in the sky, (later discovered it was a cyclone hitting South Island), we knew it was time to set off the emergency beacon and call for a helicopter. Ninety minutes later the helicopter appeared from Christchurch with three paramedics. They were very happy to see the tell-tale wind indicator outside the safety of a hut, as well as two trampers in good spirits, with appropriate gear and experience for the terrain. We were also thanked for being a tidy rescue, ie calling them in daylight hours to a genuine accident and inviting them to this beautiful valley as none had been there before.

The paramedics complimented my needlepoint and left good alone until we got to the hospital when the shocked house surgeon face recovered a more graceful composure when he removed the stitches and saw the bone. The consultant seemed happy with my Himalayan style stitching, complimenting me on my neatness and evenness before giving me a sterile needle and thread as a gift for next time.

The shock did not really set in until later that day. Debriefing with friends after an incident is important, as is the need to accept what has happened and move on.

### **You have been with the WTMC for some time, do you think today's punters are different to those of say 10 years ago?**

Many punters today like a few more creature comforts than previous generations when gear, accommodation, travel was not as easy or accessible. The element of risk taking has also been reduced and softened by GPS, emergency beacons and ease of access by aircraft into the hills, which has reduced self sufficiency, encouraged punters to rely on electronic gadgets rather than to take time and learn skills from those more experienced. Also many punters choose to take numerous short holidays in New Zealand, saving their annual leave for long overseas trips, rather than taking long leave in the southern mountains.

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### **STEVE KOHLER SAYS: CAN WE FIRM UP THE BILLY-OFF RULES?**

The "Great Billy Off Competition" in the July 2010 newsletter was very inspiring, dealing with a piece of bushcraft that we don't use so much in these modern times, but which we would still find a blessing if a primus died, or we needed some serious drying out or warming up.

But having corresponded with one of the team members, I have been nominated to write this small article asking for further contributions to the rules.

The record at the moment is exactly 20 minutes.

The teams in that July article came up with good basic rules but if their time is to be beaten we have to do it fairly. I have suggested additional rules 6 to 9 (in italics). Can anyone contribute a further newsletter article which might standardise them even more?

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 no team can use what other teams have collected
5. An independent judge measures the water and ensures adherence to the above rules.
6. *No accelerants (such as rubber, paper, candles, fuel) - only matches or lighters allowed*
7. *Billy lid off during whole process*
8. *State month of year you did it (as hot months of the year would have a bearing)*
9. *Minimum cup size = so many cc (can someone suggest?)*

## Alpine Refresher – July 2 to 4

by Sharron Came  
photo by Katharina Monien

This year we decided to schedule an alpine refresher weekend ahead of the snow courses, the idea being that instructors would get in some practice before the courses started. However, with Snowcraft cancelled due to a lack of numbers, the weekend evolved into an opportunity for people who had previously done an AIC or Snowcraft to head up to Ruapehu and practice their skills before the alpine season starts in earnest.

6 instructors and 15 students headed up to the Club Lodge at Whakapapa. We were fortunate to experience great weather – just a bit of a sou-wester on Saturday and no wind at all on the Sunday. While there was not much snow, what there was had a nice crust to it, good for walking but probably a bit sketchy for skiing.

The AICers split into groups and headed off to practice stuff. Mark and Adrian were up at the crack of dawn heading to the top and then to Cathedral Rock to practice pitch climbing. These early birds were rewarded with spectacular views from the top which were fortunately captured on film by Mark for everyone to enjoy. Fraser, Ant, Kev, and Di headed to the slopes beside Delta Corner and eventually over to the Pinnacles. Yibai, Jenny, Charles, DJ and Spencer headed straight to the Pinnacles for practice setting up anchors and pitching. Yibai, Jenny and Charles managed to get some ice climbing in as well. Yibai proved himself to be a very determined mentor and did not let minor details such as the lack of frozen ice or the fact that Charles and Jenny only had one ice tool each get in the way of



bold assaults on various ice faces. Nor did his ice hammer connecting with his nose deter his relentless upward progress.



The Snowcrafters split into two groups. The summit club headed to the top with Steve while the rest of us got down to the serious business of practicing walking up and down snow slopes. We also threw ourselves down one of the slopes above Delta corner in order to refine our self-arrest technique. Our sliding manoeuvres were captured using special high speed film. We did not do as much self-arresting as we would have liked as the snow was hard and icy. Even so, several of us limped away with impressive bruises on our knees and Kate acquired a sore wrist. With the aches and pains mounting up we took a detour to the café for a medicinal hot chocolate and a squiz at the climbers on the Pinnacles before heading back to the Lodge.

After a delicious dinner we watched some climbing slides supplied by Yibai and Fraser. When it was time to watch the ice dancing the audience had slunk away to perform urgent tasks such as sleeping. Never mind, no doubt such a timeless classic will be equally well received next year. Big thanks to Ant who lugged the Club laptop and projector up to the Lodge and patiently set up the equipment making the slideshows possible. He failed to arrange for Argentina to triumph over Germany but hardly anyone held that against him. Most were still

recovering from Brazil's shock loss early on Saturday morning. The All Whites may not be the most gifted exponents of the beautiful game but they were the tournament's undefeated team. Go the All Whites!

On Sunday most groups elected to practice inside despite perfect conditions outside. This may have been due to the fact that an ability to come back from a demanding day on the slopes and whip up some tasty baked treats is fundamental to becoming a champion all round alpinist. Steve produced a chocolate cake to rule them all while Amanda baked scones – savoury and sweet of course. My group headed to Broken Leg Gully by a highly circuitous route. It is pretty difficult to take 2 hours to walk to the gully but I don't think it would be too immodest to say we made it look easy. The return trip took about 15 minutes and yep we did text Steve to make sure the scones would be coming out of the oven to mark our return. In bright sunshine we did a bit more self-arresting and tried to photograph ourselves climbing very steep slopes. Dave even got to use his snow shovel.

I think I am reasonably safe in asserting that the weekend was a success – good weather, plenty of practice to be had, excellent baking to sample and great photos to capture the best parts. The weekend could well have been the making of some very well rounded alpinists! Special thanks to Marie Smith who ran the Lodge for us and to the instructors who helped out on the weekend, the van drivers and Brian Goodwin and Andrew Trembath for overseeing the Lodge arrangements and food respectively. I have a feeling we may need to do it all again next year as I'm still waiting for pinwheel scones.

## KAI ON THE FLY

*with Aunty Rata*

Kia Ora trampers. Doesn't that snow on the Tararuas look great not to mention the snow on the Ruahines? Not much snow at Whakapapa yet but good dumps on the southern and eastern slopes of the big R and some of the ice climbing routes are looking like they may actually get into climbing condition this season. Hope you are making the most of it, I know Aunty Rata is, that is why this column is going to be brief. Sometimes there are better things to do than fuss around with food.

Curry. Yep that hardy fall back is as suitable for a meal in the hills as it is for a quick stomach lining bite in town. Everyone has their own version so I'll give you mine and you can compare and contrast. As always just take what you like and experiment. I offer only one note of caution – it makes sense for the cook to check out the heat tolerance of the punters. While a curry can always be spiced up after those with more sensitive palates have been served, it is pretty difficult to reverse the manoeuvre. Aunty Rata has discovered less is more when using cayenne pepper and generally cooks are most appreciated when the meal is capable of being eaten by all parties. So practice a bit of inclusiveness around the spices and nobody will be forced to raid their pack for left over scroggin .

## Green Thai Curry with Tuna (serves 4-6)

### *Ingredients*

120g basmati rice per person

1 tb coconut cream powder per person\*

1 tsp Thai green curry paste per person#

1 tsp coriander for every 2 punters

Couple pinches of salt

1 tsp crushed garlic for every 2 punters

2x185g tins of smoked tuna in oil

1 pkt dried vege

1 onion

2 capsicums (or something else in season)

2 carrots or courgettes

\*or milk powder but coconut cream powder is better

#depends on which Thai green curry paste you use, take more and taste test

### *Method*

- Add a cup of cold water to a billy. Add coconut cream powder, curry paste, salt and dried veges to soak. Set aside.
- In the other billy add garlic, onion, coriander and oil from the tuna tins. Fry. Gradually add chopped fresh veges plus a little water. When veges are almost cooked set aside.
- Add to first billy sufficient water for the rice and bring to boil. Add rice and cook. Set aside when nearly cooked. Rice will continue to cook.
- Reheat fresh vege mix and add tuna.
- Combine the contents of both billies if there is room otherwise serve separately into punters bowls.

Those who prefer a spicier dish can add more Thai curry paste or chilli powder to their completed meal. If you have vegetarians chopped tofu or cashew pieces will provide sufficient protein when the coconut cream is taken into account. If you like a sweet curry add some dried fruit such as raisins or chopped apricots. If you really like a fishy flavour consider bringing a bit of fish sauce along to add but it is very salty so ditch the salt if you go down this route.

Send your tramping recipes to [newsletter@wtmc.org.nz](mailto:newsletter@wtmc.org.nz)

Rumour has it there is a Club recipe book coming out at some stage.

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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 Ilske Verburg, winner of the July draw, for the Soup on the Rocks 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.*

# FROM THE GREEN CROCS

Winter has been throwing its worst at us over the last few weeks, so it is good to see plenty of people still getting out tramping.

Tramping in winter is a very different beast to summer tramping, and there is nothing quite like walking along a ridge in the snow on a bright blue, clear, crisp day. I managed to get out recently on a cold but mostly fine weekend in the Northern Tararuas, and it was fantastic!

Just a reminder that 3 Personal Locator Beacons are in the Gear Room, and are available for use on club trips. There is no charge for using these, and I would encourage all trip leaders to get in the habit of taking a beacon on their trips.

With the cold weather and the snow comes ski season, and I would encourage you to use the Club's fantastic lodge at the top of the Bruce Road, just a few minutes walk from the bottom of the Whakapapa chair lift. The lodge is available for members and non-members, at very reasonable rates, contact the Lodge Booking Officer, Brian Goodwin [lodgebookings@wtmc.org.nz](mailto:lodgebookings@wtmc.org.nz), for enquiries. Many thanks to the Ruapehu Lodge Sub-Committee for the hard work this team puts in to make the lodge the superb facility it is. The lodge is available all year round, and there are many other things you can do in the Ruapehu area if skiing is not your thing, or the fields are closed.

A successful Spring trip planning meeting was held at the clubrooms in early July, and we have a draft schedule, which covers September to December 2010, for which we are now looking for trip leaders. See Amanda or Melissa if you want to lead a trip, or add a trip to the schedule.

Senior members would have received an FMC card with this newsletter, one of the best uses for this is getting an Annual Hut Pass from DOC for only \$84, down from \$120. The price of a Pass has increased this year for the first time since March 2008, but still represents great value for money. You don't have to do much tramping to get superb value for money from the pass, and you are supporting an amazing network of back country huts.

I for one was delighted when the government backed down from opening up mining on Schedule 4 conservation land this week. The committee made one of the 42,000 submissions against the proposals on behalf of the members, and this is a victory for common sense I think. But we need to keep fighting to make sure non Schedule 4 land is not mined either.

You can always contact me on [president@wtmc.org.nz](mailto:president@wtmc.org.nz), or I am usually around on club nights

**Darren Hammond**

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