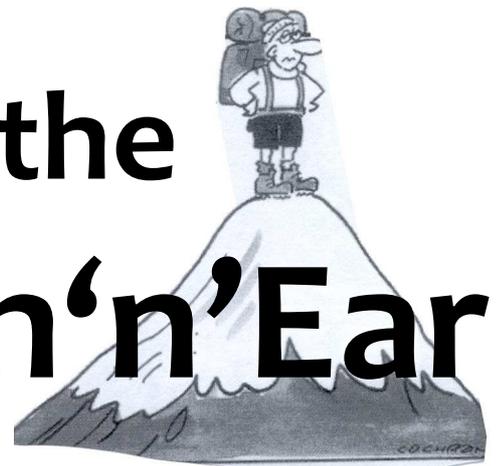




the Mouth'n'Ear



Newsletter of the Wellington Tramping and Mountaineering Club



Bernie Smithyman enjoys the snow near Heritage Lodge in the Ruahines (Photo: Mike McGavin)

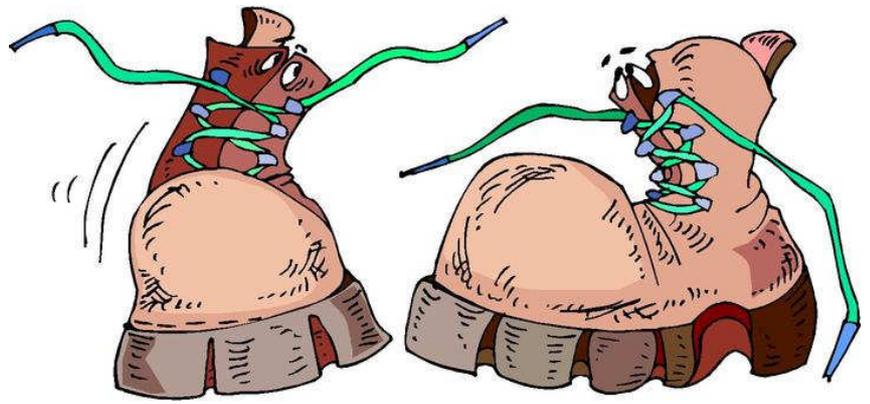
In this October issue: Heritage to Tunupo (Ruahine FP); Mt Cupola (Nelson Lakes NP); Tutuwai Hut via Mt Reeves (Tararua FP); Richard Young Interview; Kai on the Fly.

Deadline November Newsletter: 29 October

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

Track Talk

with Amanda Wells -
Chief Guide



My recent trip to Tasmania was costly in gear terms. And I'm not talking about what I bought or repaired to prepare for the trip; that's just normal wear-and-tearing updating. I'm talking about mistakes made due to tiredness, distraction or sheer stupidity.

It started on day one when I lost my sunglasses. While I am a big believer in Farmers eyewear, it's still galling to shell out for my third pair in less than a year. Unfortunately I have now learned at least twice that you should never hang sunglasses on your chest strap. Then my new gloves split in their second hour of wear (I'm still waiting for the refund). I had bought a pair of instep crampons for the trip (yes, they are a bit gimmicky but I was concerned about icy boardwalk). Now I have one; its mate pollutes some spot on the Overland track. When I finally got back to civilisation, I embarked on a bit of cleansing in preparation for New Zealand customs; my bootlaces sadly failed to make it out of Hobart. I hung up my water bladder to dry it out, with the tube lying across a line of light bulbs. Melting is not pretty. When I got home and attempted to cut the tube off, I sliced a giant cut in the bladder itself.

Generally tramping is not an expensive sport, though this week having bought new sunglasses, laces, bladder and annual hut pass, I could beg to differ. After that first punishing year of gear purchase (and perhaps a second punishing year when you release not spending the \$ for lighter/better gear was a mistake), things aren't too bad. You replace things every now and then, but new gear becomes a luxury rather than necessity. I might own three forms of shelter (fly, one-person tent, two-person tent) but have enough discipline that my desire for a bivvy bag remains unrealised

Spending a weekend in the hills, even counting transport costs, always feels much cheaper than hanging out at home, where going out and eating seem to suck up money in a logic-defying fashion. You also realise how peaceful it is to spend a couple of days without feeding a cash register. Because of the sheer amount of time it takes up, tramping gives better bang for buck than something like cycling, where your expensive gear might get used for only a couple of hours a week.

People sometimes ask about our trips fares and perhaps assume we are a money making operation. Far from it. Our costs cover only depreciation on our vans, their parking and maintenance, and fuel. You might only split petrol money when heading away with mates

but the car owner then pays the hidden cost of real running charges (generally spending on petrol is estimated to be half the cost of operating a vehicle). As a nonprofit organisation, we deliberately set our charges to match our costs as exactly as possible. The National Government has chosen to increase GST to 15 percent and we need to pass on this increase in our trip fares from 1 October – mostly it is only another \$1 or 2.

The Spring schedule may have only just sprung into action but soon it will be time to start thinking about our Summer programme. Keep a note of those exciting new routes you're dreaming up.

Trips during the next month:

8-10 October Ruahine FP – Mokai

Tramp EM Ironbark via Otukota - Anna Lambrechtsen

Tramp MF Wakelings - Richard Lardner

Day M Battle Hill Transmission Gully - Helen Law

15-17 October Lodge / Wgtn walks

Day EM Chateau/Mangatepopo - Garry Skipper

Tramp M Northern Circuit (photography) - Richard Young

Day M Wainui/Catchpool - Marie Henderson

Family All Makara Beach walk - Mike Gilbert

22-25 October Labour Weekend Nelson Lakes NP

Tramp E Mystery Nelson Lakes - Garry Skipper

Tramp EM Sabine/Blue Lake - John Hickey

Alp2 F Mt Franklin - Sharron Came

Kaweka FP

Tramp EM Kiwi Saddle - Megan Banks

Tramp M Kiwi Saddle/Manson – Michael Lightbourne

Tramp MF Kaweka Range/Makino Leader Required

29-31 October Ruahine FP – Kashmir Rd

Tramp E Irongate via Pohangina Saddle – Anna Lambrechtsen

Tramp M Longview/Howletts/Daphne - Simon Lillico

Tramp F Longview/Te Hekenga/Irongate - Mike Phethean

Day EM Skyline/Kaukau - Mike Gilbert

5-7 November Orongorongo FP (Guy Fawkes)

Tramp E Paua Hut - Garry Skipper

Tramp EM Paua via Cattle Ridge - Melissa Hewson/Sally Colbeck

Tramp M Catchpool/Lake Wairarapa – Hans Wierskerke/Mika Verheul

Tramp F Papatahi Pk/Mt Matthews – Bernie Smithyman

Day MF Mt Matthews - Murray Sutherland

Social Corner



As you all know we had the long awaited function of the year on 21st August. Yes you guessed it....**The Winter Ball.**

To those who came, well done you!

And to those who decided not to, you missed out on a Fantastic night of great food, a great band, a great venue and fantastic company! Although I would have liked to have more of you there it didn't stop me from having loads of laughs and fun.

Everybody got into the spirit of the evening and that's what truly made it a fantastic (in case I haven't already said it enough) event. So thank you to everyone who parted with their hard earned cash and made the effort to come.

I would like to say a big thank you to a few people. Without their help this event would not have been so successful.

Big Thank you to Jenny Beaumont who has been by my side the whole time listening to me blathering on about the event, coming up with great ideas and generally being bossed about.

Another big Thank you to Sharron Came who was a brilliant MC even if she was cheating in the Quiz!! (This by the way didn't get her or her team anywhere). Sharron had us laughing from the start and only stopped when the band wanted the microphone. Sharron thanks for creating a great atmosphere of fun.

Thank you to Jo Oldfield who sourced and sorted the band. They were great and had everyone on the dance floor for a great part of the evening. I bet there are others that went home with sore feet like me.

Thank you to the committee for being so understanding about the event and supporting me through the stressful times.

So if you missed it, you missed out!

OK the next thing on the social conveners' calendar is the Photo Competition. This will be held, as last year, at the end of November so get your cameras out, make your friends pose and start clicking! There will be more information in the next newsletter and on the website soon.

Please remember to help out as this club only functions with the voluntary help of its members. If you think you could help out by giving a presentation on a Wednesday evening I would really appreciate an email on social@wtmc.org.nz or talk to me on a Wednesday night. It can be challenging to find willing speakers for every week.

Cheers and see you on Wednesday.....Donna

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

We welcome 2 new senior members:

Mike Travers and Kerri Lukis.

If there are any new members who would like a copy of last years (annual) club journal please ask me (or a committee member) at a club night. We have a small number left over.

Any membership queries please find me at the club on a Wednesday night or email me on membership@wtmc.org.nz

Jenny

WTMC Membership Officer

Aunty Rata Interview with Richard Young

If you regularly come along to Club nights or the after match debriefs at the Welshie then Richard Young probably needs no introduction – he’s the tall, skinny enthusiastic guy who is into photography. Richard is a sparky by trade and this is a good description of his personality as well. Practical, enthusiastic, diligent and determined he has spent the last few years learning as much as he can about the hobby he is passionate about, applying his learning as he goes. As he handed in another photography assignment to complete another course I caught up with him for a progress report.

How did you get into photography?

I got into photography when I first came out to New Zealand in 2004, the landscape just inspired me to try and capture it. After being here for three months I realised I could take okay pictures with my little compact digital camera but I wanted to improve. So I brought an old manual film camera and signed up for a black and white darkroom course. Nine months later I found myself back in England digging up the garden to lay water and electricity to my outside shed for my own darkroom.

What do you most like taking pictures of?

Wild places. I am currently starting a new project documenting the wild places/wilderness of New Zealand. Hopefully some of these pictures can be used for education and conservation to help preserve what we have left.

You have done pretty well in a couple of competitions and gained quite a bit of recognition for your work, what has been the highlight so far?

I have been lucky over the last twelve months or so. The highlight has to be receiving the award for Best Mountain Landscape at the Banff Mountain photography competition in Canada. My picture, titled *Alpine Light, Mt Tongariro*, is going to be used in the advertising posters for Banff 2011 so it will be seen all round the world by outdoor film buffs. The Banff is

one of those prestigious competitions from which you see the winning images every year and think maybe one day... but as I said the Judges have been kind to me lately. I managed to achieve an *honours* and an *acceptance* for a couple of my photos in the NZ Alpine Club national photography competition this year and I was judged second overall in this year's NZ Alpine Club Wellington Section photo competition with a category win and about five other photos gaining *acceptance* from the Judges. (Acceptance means the photo has particular merit and is effectively shortlisted for award consideration). I have picked up a few wins as well as placings in the past in Alpine Club and WTMC photo competitions so maybe I have had more than a year of luck!



Alpine Light, Mt Tongariro – Richard Young's award winning photograph

You organised an exhibition of your photos. The exhibition was called *Alpine Light*. Your photos were on show at the Bay Gallery in Plimmerton in June this year and also at the Mountain Film Festival in Wanaka in July. How did the exhibitions go?

The exhibitions went really well. I decided I was sick of having all my photography under my bed or on my computer. It was time to display some of my work so hopefully, some other people could enjoy it too. I sold a large number of prints and got some really nice feedback and it was great to see the result of three months of preparation in the final prints. For those that missed it, the pictures can be seen at www.richardyoung.net under *Alpine Light* but these images are meant to be large prints, so it's hard to fully appreciate them on a computer. I've also got five prints on display in the Recovery Room Café in Newtown.

You went down to the NZ Mountain Film Festival in Wanaka in July, what was that like?

A bit stressful, mainly because of last minute logistical problems associated with flying 48kg of framed prints to Queenstown. But the Festival was really good, and there was a great vibe down there and I saw some amazing outdoor films, (as well as a few that were not so good). I managed to get a day on the slopes as well.

Are there any photographers whose work you particularly admire?

New Zealand landscape photographer Andris Apes for the moods and feelings he manages to capture in his photography and American Ansel Adams who made his name with his black and white photographs of Yosemite National Park, for the detail in his prints.

Can you foresee a day when you make a living out of photography or will it continue as an enjoyable hobby?

To make a living from photography would be nice but it would be hard to fund all my tramping trips from selling prints alone, I would have to diversify a bit so for now I will have to keep working as well.

In your day job you're an electrician, does this help your photography or vice versa?

It's been helpful for my current documentary project. I have been photographing the recent rail works. I was doing some work wiring the new substations for the tracks, which gave me my ticket in for access, and I suppose I have a bit of extra knowledge of lighting due to my job, which is often helpful.

Any tips for would be photographers?

If you are shooting landscapes, use a tripod. I know they are heavy to carry up a mountain (you can also improvise), but they make such a difference in low light as well as slowing you down a bit to make you think.

Think of the light. Sunny days are the best for swimming in alpine tarns, but not always for photography, this light is often too strong and flat. So don't put your camera away if it's a bit moody out there.

Take control. If you can, take your camera off auto and learn to control the exposure of the image yourself, instead of relying on a computer to get it right for you. Computers are often poor mind readers and therefore a little slow to figure out what you are trying to achieve. If you start to exercise control you can also start to put your own creativity into your photography.

What is next?

I'm doing another course with James Gilbert from Photo Space Gallery in Courtney Place and another one with John Williams to further develop my photography, especially project photography. The plan is to shoot Fiordland because it's the epitome of wildness, hopefully Fiordland will be the start of my new wild places project. I am currently trying to plan an adventure down there for after Christmas funded with my Banff prize winnings.

Incidentally, Richard is helping judge the WTMC photo comp this year. I asked him about bribes, and he mentioned that he would love a Sherpa or three to carry all his camera gear to the top of mountains for him...

Heritage to Tunupo

Medium Tramp – September 3 & 4

by Mike McGavin

Around the 3rd to 5th of September Bernie, Richard, Mike and I had plans to do some exploring around the southern Ruahines. We bailed out a day early with too much snow for the gear we'd brought, not to mention an extended mountain forecast of 120km/h gale-force nor-westerlies in exposed mountain areas on Sunday. Okay, the forecast was general enough to be for the entire North Island, but if there's a particular kind of wind the Ruahines are very exposed to, it's nor-westerlies. Maybe I was more personally concerned about this than I needed to be.

Our original idea was to go in via Heritage Lodge, head up Tunupo, around Toka and down to Leon Kinvig Hut, maybe poking down to Toka Biv on the way for a look. Then we'd have a long Sunday, looping up over Te Pohatu, past Longview, over Pohangina Saddle and back to Tunupo before dropping back down to Heritage. Actually, before the original plan we'd wanted to do a crossing trip, but we couldn't find anyone to drive to the far side and switch vehicles with us.

Friday evening had a mixed bag of weather. I was lightly hailed on during my walk to Wellington railway station, and I learned later that was the beginning of one of those extreme sudden cold snaps that leaves as quickly as it shows up. (The previous one of these was smack in the middle of my wedding rehearsal, which I remember being very interesting.) We must have avoided the full force of it as we drove north, but were being well and truly snowed on as we drove into the parking area half an hour from Heritage Lodge. Welcome to spring!

The snow was falling nicely during our 2 km walk to Heritage Lodge, which did more than I thought it would to reduce the effectiveness of torchlight. (I've not walked much through falling snow in the dark, but I suppose this is normal.) There was an interesting array of footprints in the fresh snow, too, including over the arch bridge that crosses Umutoi Creek... but I'm not enough of a hunting geek to know what the animal was. Nobody was home at the lodge, which made it easier for us to sort ourselves out without bothering people, and I think everyone was asleep by roughly 11pm, for a 6.45am wake-up. We woke up to a clear blue sky over a blanket of snow, and with the sun beginning to lift above the horizon, surrounding trees were noisy and dripping with ongoing morning snow-melt.

Despite the early rising time (for me), we had a lazy start and didn't properly get going until about a quarter past eight... not a concern as Saturday was likely to be a short day, anyway. The climb from Heritage Lodge is stretched out enough so that an 850 metre climb isn't too steep. The temporary surroundings of the morning made it very nice, coasting gradually upwards through the snow-covered forest, at first being rained on by snow-melt in the trees.

We reached the open bush-line shortly before 10am, and could finally look over the snow-capped ridge-lines, notably Mangahuia (1583m) in the distance across the far side of the range, and (I think) Maungamahue (1641m) further back as we climbed even higher. Ahead of us loomed Tunupo (1563m), which was very definitely blanketed in snow. Looming weather became clearer, too, with darker clouds starting to wisp over the range, bringing with them light but freezing wind. From forecasts on Friday night, we knew things could pack in further later this afternoon, too, as well as tomorrow, and a thought in the back of my own mind was the possibility of getting stuck in place like Leon Kinvig Hut for longer than we wanted. The hut itself is in a valley, but getting out without going over tops seemed impractical.

Therefore, when we started striking harder snow and were beginning to kick steps here and there, we had a chat and made a decision to turn around. I think it was partly because we didn't know where the conditions were going, and weren't perfectly equipped at the time for such conditions. (I'd certainly have felt more comfy with an ice-axe, that's for sure.) I think we'd have been fine getting up and along the ridge-line, at



least based on the nearby snow, but for me it was also the next day's forecast that was putting me off. Maybe it was overly pessimistic of me to think so in some ways, but sometimes it's difficult to gauge, and to be honest the thought of clambering along crusty snow on Ruahine ridge in gale-force 120km/h nor-westerlies without ice axes and crampons didn't appeal to me. I've been in that kind of wind in the Ruahines enough to know that I'd rather avoid it.

So, at 1480 metres (roughly 90 vertical metres below Tunupo, which was by then shrouded in dark grey cloud) we turned around, and had a nice walk back towards Heritage Lodge. Before long we'd removed however many storm layers we'd added to keep off the wind, but still had some surreal early-spring unmelted-snowy surroundings for nearly the entire distance down.

We were still able to make the most of what was a nice sunny day in the valleys, and on the way down decided to just head out to the road and leave a day early, rather than spend another night at Heritage Lodge. Sitting in the pub at Apiti — the small town with a golf club membership comprised of hundreds of Aucklanders (something about cheaper entrance to golf courses in Auckland) — I still think we'd made the right decision. There are some good

pub meals in Apiti, by the way. We sat around the table playing a game of “name the next Ruahine hut that nobody’s mentioned yet”.

Even more surreal than the walk down through the snow was hearing on the way home first that Christchurch had been hit by a 7.1 magnitude Earthquake (astonishingly not killing anyone as a direct consequence as we eventually discovered but still causing extensive damage to the city and its infrastructure), and secondly that New Zealand suffered its worst air disaster in 17 years.

The trampers were: Bernie Smithyman, Richard Lardner, Michael Lightbourne and Mike McGavin.

Mt Cupola Alpine 2 Fit Trip – August 27-30

by Michael Phethean

Team: David, Sharron, Mark, Simon, Phil, Mike

I looked at the weather forecast on the Monday and it looked alright. Rain on the Friday and Sunday and clear on the Saturday, the climbing day

By Tuesday the forecast had gone rotten, two fronts passing through one hitting on our Saturday. I sorted out a good book and made sure we had some cards in the group.

We met as usual at the station and took the Ferry and what is now a familiar drive to St Arnaud. We patently didn’t sleep in the shelter on the lake front as that is forbidden by DOC. Instead we erected flies in the traditional manner in the camp site. Shame as it rained a lot and if we could stay in the shelter we would have stayed dry.

The rain cleared by the morning and we caught the first water taxi across Lake Rotiti to cold water hut. Setting off at 9am a good pace was set, Sharron Came leading a blistering charge. We had a short break on one of the flats, the shortness due to the sand flies not having read the rule about no sand flies when it is cold. (I wish they would get with the program.)

We made John Tait hut before 1pm and dined upon various assortments of crackers. Then we knocked off the 600m climb to Cupola hut, which sits on the bush line with some occasional good views. We stocked up the wood pile and settled in for the night. It wasn’t the finest example of bush craft as I tried to disprove the adage there’s no smoke with out fire.

During the night it started to rain. In the morning it continued though petered off to a drizzle. Avalanche danger, the rain making a unconsolidated layer heavier, meant we could

not make a summit attempt but Phil, Simon and David had a wander around on the lower slopes.

More crackers and we descended back to John Tait hut to reduce the walk out the next day. Thankfully Mark who is more competent at fires heated the hut up. With time on our hands we turned the place into a Las Vegas of iniquity with plenty of poker, drinking games (Which seem to have the same effect when sober) and the odd (perhaps disturbing) shapely calf competition.

Sunday dawned and we headed back down the valley catching some good views of Mt Travers as we went. An early water taxi gave us plenty of time to get back to Picton where instead of the Toot and Whistle we had a beer in the Irish pub. Apparently the tea is expensive, but I failed to see the problem.

Lots of thanks to David Jewel for organizing and leading the trip and to Steve for driving.

See I managed to write this without mentioning the fact that Sharron and Marie got lost on their last rogaine and Sharron spent the weekend asking Simon (who is good at regaining) for advice. If I had mentioned this I would have got into trouble.

Oops....

Oh well.....

Tutuwai Hut via Mount Reeves Easy/Medium Tramp – September 11 & 12

by Peter Scolley

Paul, Mike, Mika, Hans, Dave, Andy, Russ, Romina, Esther and Peter

Tuesday evening before the tramp. I was supposed to be leading a Medium trip to Kime on the coming weekend but unfortunately one signed up. Thankfully, Paul Jefferies was leading an overnight tramp to Tutuwai and as there was space I decided to join Paul's trip.

Friday 17.00. At this point on a weekend tramp I would normally be rushing to the station to make sure that I was there on time. However, with Paul's trip not leaving until the Saturday morning this gives time to go for a run in the evening before packing my backpack.

20.00 At this point I am thinking that Paul is a genius and that leaving Saturday morning is a great idea. Plenty of time to pack your bag on Friday night leaving Thursday free to do other things.

Saturday 05.30. My Alarm goes off. Struggling to wake up and get out of bed I am thinking that maybe leaving Saturday morning is not such a great idea. I manage to get out of bed and am looking forward to a good day in the Tararuas.

06.45 My backpack packed I leave my flat and head for the station. Five minutes later I start thinking about what I needed to take on the tramp and remember that Paul said something about 100g of rice.

7.00 Arrive at the station and say hello to everyone. Check if anyone has excess rice. Nobody does. I head to New World to see what rice they sell. Meet Mika in the rice aisle at New World. Her and Hans also forgot to bring rice and we agree to team up and buy 500g together.

7.15 I met my fellow trampers for the weekend and introduce myself to the trampers that I do not know. We leave an overcast Wellington.



09.00 We arrive at the road end. Take the obligatory group photo. Mika suggests that by the end of the weekend we need to find out and remember everyone's name and what they do for a living. We start to climb the hill at around 9.30. A few people are keen to do a side trip once we reach the top of Mt Reeves. Therefore we split in to two groups. I head up in the first group which will do the side trip along with Mika, Dave and Hans.

12.15 We are making good time reach the top of Mt Reeves. It's a bit windy but there are some great views of the Wairarapa and for the first time in my life I have been in the Tararuas and been able to see some of the rest of the Tararuas.

We decide to do the route along the spur that will lead us to Cone hut. So we leave a note for Paul to confirm our intentions. Hans goes off to find the start of the track and to see if there are any markings. We stop for a quick break but decide to find somewhere more sheltered for lunch.

12.45. We managed to find a route and it had been marked by hunters. All was going well. We were heading north and the route started to head to the south west. We knew that we had to head off of the ridge that we were on to head North West at some point but where unsure as to whether we were far enough along the ridge. We stop to question whether the track is heading where we want to go or heading down a spur to Tutuwai.

We looked around to see whether the track had split. We could not see any alternatives however the bush was not too thick so it was easy not to be using the track. We check the altimeter that Hans has. If it is correct then we are not far enough along the ridge to start taking a turn off. We decide that the best thing to do is just to keep to the ridge and not follow the track.

13.05 About 20 minutes later we find a high point above the bush to check where we are. Thankfully being a clear day we were able to see the ridge and over to Waiohine River. We workout that we have actually gone too far along the ridge and that we need to cut across the valley. We take a bearing and have to do some bushbashing to get over there.

14.00 Thankfully we manage to get back to the ridge that we need to be on. We find a track. Could this be the one that we were on earlier but decided to leave? We followed the track. The next couple of hours consisted of walking for a bit then someone shouting “has anyone seen track marker recently” then we realised that we had lost it and then we spend 5 minutes looking around to find it.

16.00 We finally get to the DOC track to Cone. Pleased at this point to know exactly where we are. We make good time down to Cone hut. We arrive at Cone just before 5. A quick bite to eat at Cone then we head along the track to Tutuwai. It is flat and easy going with only the occasional mud pool to avoid.

18.00 It was just getting dark. There were a few other groups there but luckily there is still enough bunks free.

19.30 Paul cooked an excellent evening meal and we got chatting to the other groups in the hut. Andy mentioned that with so many people in the hut that it would be a warm night. I pointed out that he should have put his name down for my trip to Kime and we would not be having this problem.

Sunday 9.00 We leave the hut. It had rained over night and the rain was still intermittent when we left. It took us a couple of hours to reach the top of Mt Reeves again. The weather was slightly clearer today and there were amazing views of the Wairarapa out to the sea. We continued down the hill discussing what various side trips could be done and whether Mt Reeves would make a good day walk. Having mastered everyone’s names yesterday, I manage at this point to find out the occupations of people that I have not already learned.

2.30 We make it back to the van. Paul’s suggestion of a cafe stop in Greytown was well received and we headed there for some carrot cake before heading back to Wellington. Overall a great overnight tramp.

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 Angela Gilbert, winner of the September draw, for the Matiu/Somes Island report.

KAI ON THE FLY

with Aunty Rata

Buongiorno trampers

Aunty Rata has a soft spot for Italian food although it would be fair to say that pasta aside; it can be a little tricky to produce good quality stuff in the field. On the other hand, if you practice at home first, there is no reason why you can't progress to assembling a reasonable approximation of the authentic dishes out in the hills as well. One Italian dish particularly suited to filling up hungry trampers is risotto. Properly made risotto is just like ice cream only warmer - smooth, creamy and incredibly rich. I'm going to give you what I loosely classify as an authentic recipe for risotto plus the cheats version which to my mind isn't really risotto at all but it tastes okay so what the hell... Once you get the hang of risotto you can use pretty much any combination of vegetables. It is obviously best to go for whatever is in season and it is worth considering whether your chosen vegetables have compatible flavours. You definitely need a good stirring implement; Aunty Rata uses a wooden spoon.

Basic Risotto (serves 4-6)

Ingredients

Half a cup of arborio rice per person#

1 tsp stock powder per person (vege, seafood, chicken or beef)

1 cup water per person

50g butter

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 large onion finely chopped or a pkt of spring onions finely chopped

Half a head of celery finely chopped

2 tsp chopped garlic

250ml of dry white wine* or vermouth

100g parmesan cheese

#arborio is the proper rice for risotto but basmati will do at a pinch

*Sauvignon Blanc or Chardonnay. It should be good enough to drink but not so good you cannot resist drinking it instead of using it to make the risotto.

Method

- In a billy heat the olive oil and melt half the butter. Add the chopped onions, garlic and celery and cook until soft. Add the rice.
- Lightly fry the rice stirring it continuously so it does not burn or stick to the bottom of the billy. This is crucial. I didn't say risotto was for the lazy or inattentive. When the rice is well coated with the butter/oil mix add the wine and stir as the rice absorbs the liquid.
- Once the wine is absorbed start adding the water one cup at a time. With each cup of water add a teaspoon of stock. Wait for the liquid to be absorbed by the rice before adding the next cup. Stir continuously until the rice is cooked. If you run out of liquid before the rice is cooked just add more water.
- When the rice is on the verge of being cooked but before it becomes a glutinous stodge (the Italians refer to this as al dente) turn off the cooker.

- Add the rest of the butter and the parmesan cheese to the rice and mix everything together.
- Put a lid on the billy and leave the risotto to sit for 2 minutes before serving. This helps create the fabulous warm ice cream texture you are after.
- Serve.

Mushroom risotto -substitute celery for chopped mushrooms about 100g per person. Don't bother with onions.

Pumpkin and feta risotto – substitute celery and onion for pumpkin about a handful of peeled and cubed bits per person and substitute the parmesan for 200g of feta cubed, add some baby spinach leaves if you feel like it. Note you will need extra water to ensure the pumpkin is properly cooked.

Squishy pea risotto – substitute celery for dehydrated peas or fresh or frozen peas (yes I know they will not be frozen by the time you come to cook them, no problem), about a quarter of a cup per person, dehydrated peas should be soaked in cold water to rehydrate a bit before you start cooking. Up to you whether you bother with the onion.

Diamond Rice Risotto (serves 4-6)

Ingredients

3 x 200g pkts of Diamond Rice Risotto*

1 soup sachet per packet of risotto, flavour should match flavour of the Rice Risotto e.g. mushroom soup for Mushroom Rice Risotto, vegetable soup for Chinese Flavoured Rice Risotto etc

2 TB olive oil

50g butter

Fresh vege equivalent to 2 carrots and 2 courgettes and a pepper – whatever is in season and/or dehydrated vegetables (1pkt)

Water as required – you'll probably need 1 cup per person

*Available in supermarkets in the rice aisle, up to you which flavour, mushroom is nice. Open the packets and make sure you have half a cup of rice per person. If you are short bring extra basmati rice.

Method

- Rehydrate dried vege in cold water in someone's dinner bowl.
- Open rice risotto packets and tip all the rice mix into a billy. Add the olive oil and half the butter. Turn on the heat and fry the rice till it browns. Don't let it stick the billy.
- Add water along with the soup sachets and flavour sachets that come out of the rice risotto box.
- When the rice is nearly cooked add the chopped fresh vege, the rehydrated dried vege and the rest of the butter. Add more water if necessary.
- When the rice is al dente turn off the cooker and leave the risotto with the lid on for 2 minutes then serve.

Buon appetito

FROM THE GREEN CROCS

I don't need to tell you that we've had a very wet winter, so well done to those of you who have been getting out in the hills. We finally seem to be getting a few warmer days, so hopefully summer is not too far away.

Many of you will know that I am recovering from a fractured hip, so my physical activity is limited for a few more months yet. Those of you that have had a serious leg injury will know the frustration of wanting to get out in the hills, but your body telling you no! I hope those of you that can get out will make the most of the great selection of trips we have coming up.

As mentioned in the last newsletter, the club's Winter Ball was held on August 21st, and was a great night. Big thanks to Donna and Jenny for organising a great event, and Sharron for being MC for the night

This month we farewell two more people from the committee, our Secretary Sharleen Grounds, and our Promotions Officer Megan Sety. Both Sharleen and Megan joined the committee this year, and have made a great contribution to the club. We are sad to see you go.

What this means is that we now have 3 vacancies which we need to fill

Secretary – takes minutes at monthly committee meetings and sends out minutes and agenda of those meetings.

Promotions – organises door roster for club nights, and co-ordinates annual Info/New Members Night in February.

Gear Custodian – organises gear room roster, and deals with any gear repair / purchases. Note that is not a committee position i.e. you don't have to go to the meetings.

While all of these jobs do involve a reasonable amount of work, none of them are especially arduous, as long as you are well-organised.

You will all know that the club operates on a volunteer labour, and we need you, the members, to step up and help out. All 3 of the positions above are important to the smooth running of the club, so we need people to come forward and take up these roles.

Expressions of interest, and questions about the roles should be addressed to me initially, although other committee members may be able to answer your questions.

You can always contact me on president@wtmc.org.nz, or I am occasionally (☺) around on club nights

Darren Hammond