



the Mouth'n'Ear



Newsletter of the Wellington Tramping and Mountaineering Club



Marie Henderson and co's idea of a fun weekend in the bush. Report on page 9. (Photo: Erik van der Spek)

In this November issue: Bushbashing at Ohau (Tararua FP); Jumbo Holdsworth (Tararua FP); Mt Rolleston (Arthurs Pass); Mt Tappy (Kaikoura); Katja Riedel Interview; New Secretary.

Deadline December Newsletter: 3 December

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



Letter to the Editor

Greetings to your readers,

I have a favour to ask of them, and hope that you will print this in an effort to get word out there...

Context: Currently, if you wish to purchase a 6 month (or longer) back country pass, it's great if you live in Wellington as you can just pop into the centrally located (Manners St) office and pick one up. However, nobody else is quite so fortunate as our members who live in the city. Either a de-personalised system (and more expensive) of posting in a cheque with an extra administration fee is to be followed, or a long trip into Wellington by train or traffic jam.

I am asking you, your readers or anyone you know to request in writing that back country passes be made available at outlying visitor centres (eg Lower Hutt, Upper Hutt, Porirua etc). Letters should be addressed to:

Mary Challis
Dept of Conservation
PO Box 10420
WELLINGTON

Or wellingtonvc@doc.govt.nz (Subject heading, Attn: Mary Challis)

I would be most appreciative.

Regards

Margaret Craigie

Social Corner



Hi everyone

Just to let you know possibly the biggest, most exciting, awe inspiring and most talked about Wednesday night of the tramping club calendar (other than the ball!)..... the international, world famous WTMC photo competition awards night will be held the beginning of **March 2011**. The reason for the change is to give punters a chance to get some great photo's together over the summer, encourage and inspire

punters from the new members night to join us on our many trips..... and also maybe give you a taste of where you want to tramp to in the next year! So get your camera out and get snapping. Try to take the picture using a high resolution setting (ie 5+ Mega Pixels).

The categories are as follows

Flora and Fauna

Landscape

Dramatic

Water

Hut and camping life

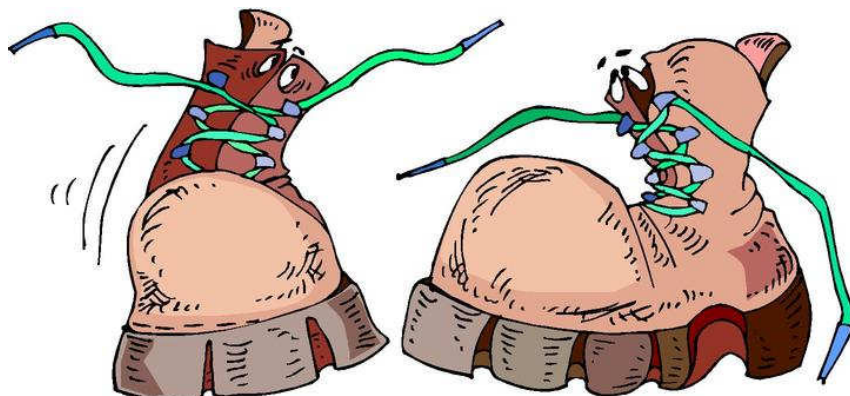
Just a reminder we are always looking for people to talk about their adventures, whether planned adventures or not, on Wednesday nights. It doesn't have to be a long talk either. It's been a fantastic year so far with some interesting topics. Thanks to everyone who have given presentations so far and we look forward to more to come. Speak to Donna if you are keen to help us out or email me on social@wtmc.org.nz.

Thanks and see you at Club

Donna

Track Talk

with Amanda Wells -
Chief Guide



Tramping can be a psychologically challenging sport. Aside from the difficulty of dragging yourself plus pack to the station when you'd rather be having a quiet drink, and the sitting for hours in a van, the trip itself can mess with your head.

A few weeks ago, we were heading into the Tararuas on the Wairarapa side. There were three groups in the club van and we stopped in Carterton for the compulsory kebab. While enjoying this delight, we met up with some other familiar trampers from Wellington. It turned out that they were going to Blue Range hut that night, where my group was also heading. And they said it was highly possible other groups they knew were in the hills that weekend would have the same destination. A climb on Friday night in the dark, rain and gale force wind is never an appealing prospect, but when its destination is an already full hut, sometimes you just want to go home.

Luckily the rest of my group was made of sterner stuff and looked only slightly perturbed. Our ambitious plan (given the conditions) for the weekend was also still viewed with favour by the other three! I reminded myself that Friday nights were often grim and that you can never predict how a tramp will turn out. Sometimes something you look forward to for weeks leaves you flat, while ho-hum Tararua expeditions become highlights of the year.

So we made our way up to Blue Range, with only slight navigational confusion. My thoughts of fly camping were flattened by the freight-train sound of the wind as we came over the ridge. The hut was indeed full but the four occupants (and their dog!) and our three recently arrived friends from Wellington double bunked so that us four could have the floor. It was fine. Similarly, the next day, somewhat to my surprise, we managed to make it over the snowy Waingawa peak and bush bash down to Arete Forks hut, where we again enjoyed the company of Lorraine, Simon and Caroline. Sometimes you just have to get out there and give it a try.

Two weeks later in the Ruahines, the route looked difficult on paper but revealed whole new degrees of challenge in reality. After a straightforward morning, a river proved an unexpected barrier before we could even start our main ridge bush bash. My mind starting entertaining thoughts of turning back; the options didn't look good. But we tried climbing a bank and grovelling through steep scrub and down again, and there we were, past that obstacle. Soon we were faced with another cliff-like bank to get to our ridge, and yet again it looked near impassable. But one foot in front of the other, we made it. I won't even attempt to tell the story of the rest of that trip, which defies superlatives in terms of bush lawyer volume and bodily damage. Let's just say Richard and I were beyond pleased (and somewhat surprised!) to make it out late Sunday afternoon to Kawhatau Base and the sadly sick Mike, who'd enjoyed an unplanned weekend staring at motel walls in Taihape.

Tramping seems to have taught me that just because you think you can't do it, and the weather and conditions seem to agree, it doesn't mean you won't make it or end up having a brilliant time doing so. An effective way of increasing your optimism quotient, perhaps.

At the moment we're planning the Summer Schedule, which runs from the end of January to the end of April. Thanks to everyone who's provided ideas of road ends – these will make up the skeleton of the schedule, which we'll populate with trips on Wednesday 3 November, at the club rooms from 5.30pm (free pizza!). If you're reading this online, it's not too late to put it in your diary and come along: bring maps, books and any ideas you might have. Novice trip planners are very welcome.

Upcoming trips:

12-14 November Richmond FP – Northbank

Tramp EM – Richmond Saddle Hut - Kate Cushing

Tramp MF - Richmond/Mt Fell - Katja Riedel

Day E - Colonial Knob - Annemarie Wood

19-21 November Taranaki NP

Tramp E - Lake Dive - Garry Skipper
Tramp M - Pouaki Circuit - John Hoffeins
Alp1 MF - Syme Hut - Steve Austin
Day M - Hawtrey/Lowry - Murray Sutherland
Family All - Paua Hut overnight - Mike Gilbert

26-28 November Ruahine FP - Pohangina / Tamaki West

Tramp E - Diggers Hut - Donna Maher
Tramp EM - Stanfield - Anna Lambrechtsen
Tramp M - Crossing - Tim Frank
Cycle F - Dannevirke/Porangahau - Harry Smith
Day M - Wainui Pk (Paekakariki) - Peter Scolley

3-5 Dec Nelson Lakes NP / Lodge

Tramp EM - Mole tops photography (Nelson Lakes, three days) - Richard Young
Day M - Hauhungatahi (Lodge) - Tony Gazley
Day F - The Goat mountain run (Lodge) - Sharron Came (places in the Goat are limited and you need to enter the event yourself, Sharron is coordinating transport/accommodation)
MTB M - Fischers/42 Traverse (Lodge) - Hans Wierskerke/Mika Verheul

Aunty Rata Interview with Katja Riedel

When Aunty Rata first came along to the Club she was put at ease by a friendly women with a big smile and a German accent. Katja was Club Promotions Officer at the time and I soon learnt that she also helped out with the Snowcraft and Bushcraft courses. These days she is more likely to be pushing her boundaries by creating customised wilderness adventures or expanding her skill base by attending a new course.

Imagination, curiosity and a methodical approach are the hallmarks of all good scientists and these qualities also come in handy if you feel the magnetic pull of the outdoors. Katja Riedel is a tropospheric chemist by training, undertaking research and teaching focusing on the lower part of the atmosphere, I'm guessing climate change and ozone depletion are in the mix. Through work and play Katja has accumulated a formidable array of outdoor skills and experience across a wide range of activities which means that time and resources permitting, she can design an adventure to just about anywhere involving just about any activity. So what is the poster girl for versatility and exploration up to these days? I decided to ask her.

How did you get interested in outdoor activities?

When I was a kid we lived close to the forest and I was always outdoors, climbing trees, building tree houses, kayaking, camping and sledging in winter. After I finished school I ventured further away to Norway, Scotland and Iceland. It got more serious when I

overwintered in Antarctica and since I am living in New Zealand I am really bitten by the adventure bug.



Katya kayaking from Nansen Island to Orne Bay, Antarctic Peninsula

You've been associated with WTMC for a few years now, what do you like best about the Club?

I joined the Club 3 weeks after I arrived in New Zealand. In the beginning it was a great way to meet people, do tramps that are not in the guide book and get to places without owning a car. At some stage I was on the Committee of the Club, now I am a bit slack and do only a few trips with the Club each year. The good thing is that whenever I come back to the club I find interesting and keen people to connect with. I also like the different activities we offer as a Club, kayaking, tramping, skiing and if there is anybody prepared to lead caving, horse riding or extreme ironing trips we should encourage them.

You are proficient in lots of outdoor activities (kayaking, skiing, tramping, cycling, outdoor photography), do you have a favourite?

I really like the variety, but if I had to choose it would probably be kayaking: remote beaches, swims, wine at sunset and mussels for starters..... And the photography goes with all other activities; I always have a camera with me.

With your qualifications and experience you could live and work anywhere in the world, what drew you to New Zealand and what keeps you here?

What drew me here? The outdoor possibilities, the wild places and only a few people I have to share them with. What keeps me here? Every good summer day in Wellington, when I am thinking what an awesome place to live! Hmm, vice versa, I sometimes wonder when the Southerly chills me to the bone and blows me off my bike.

You have been on expeditions to some really beautiful and remote spots beyond NZ including cycling, horse riding and tramping in Kyrgyzstan, kayaking the Patagonian Fiords, pack hauling in Antarctica, ski touring in Scandinavia. I'm guessing all these trips were special but is there one that stands out from the others and if so why?

From all those trips Kyrgyzstan is probably my favourite. Stuart and I were there for 7 weeks and we had so many different amazing experiences. The organisation was sometimes a nightmare, especially when we had to extend our visas, but we organised everything ourselves and that was very rewarding. I even learned some Russian before went there.

If you had to pick your top three NZ trips which would they be and why?

Lake Angelus in winter, I've just been there again for ski touring and I love the location of the hut, the frozen lake and all the snowy mountains. Pouakai Circuit at Taranaki, seeing the early morning sun on the snow covered mountain is spectacular. Kayaking Able Tasman in July or August with all the crowds gone and baby seals to watch.

Trips to remote places take lots of planning, how do you go about getting ready for a big trip?

I normally hear or read about a destination and that sparks it off. For the planning I get the Lonely Planet out of the library, spent vast amounts of time searching on the internet and talk with people who have been there. The next step is the most difficult one: make a plan, then change that plan a thousand times, panic because it is getting closer to departure date, then finally go and change the plan as you go.

What do you look for in team mates?

Wow, team mates, sounds really serious. ;-) I think the most important thing is to be honest and clear about what you want and what you don't want. If you have too different interests or ideas it won't work.

On expeditions you can prepare very thoroughly but still encounter the unexpected, otherwise it wouldn't be an adventure. What approach do you take when things don't go according to plan?

Panic and cry? To be honest I am not very good at handling the unexpected. I certainly go through a panic or anger stage when things don't go according to plan, sometimes it helps me to take a step back and ask myself "does it really matter?" and then some Zen like calm comes over me – I wish.

How do you keep yourself going when conditions are tough? Do you draw on your companions or your own resources or a combination?

I certainly draw on my companion, ask Stuart. He had to talk me through some situations where I plainly refused to go any further. One example was when we were tramping in the Northern Alps in Japan. We had no ice axe or crampons, I had soft trekking boots and the snow was icy and hard in the morning. I thought we were silly to be there, without the right gear, but he convinced me to go on, it was a bit borderline, but we got to a hot pool in a stunning mountain setting as a reward.

Are you planning your next adventure? Where to this time?

I am always planning, but this time it is big! I will take a whole year off next year to travel. I know it sounds like a cliché, but I really would like to see the Arctic before it changes drastically (because of climate change). Svalbard and Greenland have been on my list for a long time. I am hoping to go ski touring or kayaking there and I am still looking for travel companions. I also have lined up some field work in Greenland, measuring CO₂ emissions from soil in Thule or Kangerlussuaq. There will be more cross country skiing in Sweden and Norway, cycle touring in Europe, tramping in Tibet or Northern India and lecturing on a cruise ship going to the Antarctic Peninsula.

Introduction of the new secretary

Although it is not a habit of the secretary to fill the pages in the newsletter, it seems to be a good opportunity to introduce myself to the club as the new secretary.

First of all, my name is Mika Verheul. Now by saying that I hear some of you wondering whether it is actually Mika, Meeka, Mieka, Mieke or Miek, as everyone seems to spell it in a different way. In addition to this my initials might further confuse you, as you may eventually find the initials 'J.M.W.' on my official documents, which stand for Johanna Maria Wilhelmina which in turn doesn't seem to relate to Mika. To help you out, I can assure you that the name my parents gave me at birth was Annemieke, a very common Dutch name, from which the nickname Miek was derived. Indeed, as you might have guessed, this wasn't very helpful during the immigration process. My surname is Verheul, which probably requires some Dutch tongue exercises but can be freely pronounced as 'Fair-hull' and also requires spelling.

Because I got annoyed by all the spelling I decided to simplify my name a bit by using just four letters in a made up name 'Mika', which, as I found out later, happens to be the artist name for some obscure transsexual Japanese musician. But no worries, whatever way you spell it, I won't take it personally. Maybe just call me 'Sec' as a suitable abbreviation for the one providing minutes?

I moved to New Zealand three years ago, together with my hubby Hans Wiskerke. Having lived in The Netherlands for a comfortable 40 years, we were looking for a change of scenery and believed Wellington and its vicinity to be the right place. No regrets so far. For more information about our first impressions of New Zealand and our experiences with the WTMC, I refer to the story 'How to become a NZ tramper' in the 2009 WTMC journal.

I'm a medical doctor and like to combine different tasks and activities, which so far resulted in having three part time jobs: medical doctor at The Traveldoctor, sports massage therapist at Bodybalance clinic, and swim teacher in Johnsonville.

Regarding my qualifications for the role of secretary for the WTMC I could bother you with an overview of more or less relevant facts, namely that I have several years of experience

with official meetings in The Netherlands, as a secretary of the University Rowing Club; as a secretary of the National Recreational Rowing Federation; as a board member of the Regional Youth Health Board; and as president of the Works Council in my former job.

But maybe I applied for this position in the committee because of it being a unique and pleasant way to better my English? Being involved in the activities of the club for a couple of years now, I still struggle with the pronunciation of words like 'road ends' and 'rodents', 'pegs' and 'pigs'.

Therefore I hope to get some useful clues by listening carefully to the other committee members when they discuss these subjects during the meetings. Also, in writing I am pleased to know that the committee and the club members will read and review my notes and minutes. Without any doubt the WTMC with its inside information and motivated and experienced people can easily compete with a communication course at Vic University.



By the way, I am sure the WTMC found a good secretary in me because the job description states that the secretary is responsible for the club's common seal: I love seals!

Looking forward to meet you all within the positive buzz of the WTMC,

Mika Verheul

The hard way to Waiopahu Hut Medium Tramp – October 2 & 3

words by Marie Henderson
pictures by Erik van der Spek

Punters: Erik, Gareth, Jo, Rowena and Kaya (the track finding dog) and Marie.

It promised to be a wonderful weekend in the sunny tararuas. And for once they were actually meant to be sunny! We set off Saturday after a week of rain from the railway station. On the way up I noticed the higher than usual flow in the rivers when we crossed the bridges... it occurred to me we may need a back up plan to the Makaretu Stream route to Oriwa that was planned as the hills were still draining. Not to worry it wasn't a big deal to take our heads in closer for a look.

After checking with the farmer (who was nice enough to drive close by us) we crossed the paddock to the stream. A few crossings later it became apparent that we could have a very long day ahead of us or we could bail up a ridge to the track. Bailing up the ridge was

generally acceptable to all and so we headed up and along... and then along and up... through the bush. Great fun. We intersected with a cut track further up and progress, now minus fighting the supplejack, went much faster.

We popped out at the track to surprise some scouts who were also heading up to Waiopehu Hut. When we reached the hut, Rowena and I went up to Waiopehu itself for a look. Once back down we were treated to dinner which meant of course we had dishes duty – only fair. Erik had brought along a home made super yummy lemon slice (thanks Victoria!) and we asked that he supply the recipe to share (see below).

I am not a fan of either of the tracks back down to the Ohau road end from Waiopehu Hut. So I was glad when it was decided to come out via Yeates track and the South Ohau River with the same backup plan of bush bashing up a ridge again to the track if we must. The river was good though and so we could come all the way down to the track junction. We left the river there. It being not yet warm enough in the season to go through the lower (and larger) pools! At least for me!

I love coming down the South or North Ohau in the sunshine – it makes you feel very special – it is such a treat! So although I still have to go back and do the Makaretu Stream-to-Oriwa route sometime, it was still a very good start to the river trip season.

Victoria's uncooked Lemon Slice

Ingredients:

Base

1 packet super wine biscuits
1 ½ cups fine coconut
100g butter
½ tin condensed milk
Finely grated rind of 3 lemons
Juice of 2 lemons
½ packet preserved ginger

Icing

1 cup icing sugar
Small knob butter
Juice of 1 lemon
Finely grated rind of 1 lemon

Method:

Base

Melt butter, add condensed milk and stir continuously until runny
Crush biscuits
Chop up ginger into small pieces
Grate lemon
Juice lemons
Combine biscuits, coconut and wet ingredients, then mix everything else together and spread into slightly greased pan

Icing



Melt butter, add icing sugar, lemon juice and rind and spread over slice. Put slice into fridge for 30 mins, cut into squares then return slice to leave in fridge to set.

N.B: you can also substitute some of the lemon rind for orange rind to make a mixed citrus slice

E/M/F Trip to Atiwhakatu and Jumbo October 2 & 3

by Mika Verheul

Punters: Ian, Marc, Phillip, Nathalie, Donna, Hans, Snaiet, Colin, Deborah and Mika

One of the easy aspects of this E/M tramp was the Friday evening to sort out your stuff and fill your pack, although a little voice in the back of my head kept telling me we had to get up reasonable early on Saturday. Indeed the alarm went off shortly after 6AM, allowing us to assemble at the train station around 7.30. With the van being manoeuvred easily across the Rimutaka Hill,



we arrived at Holdsworth Lodge and were all ready to go at 9.30 am. The weather was very promising with a clear blue sky and hardly any wind. Maybe soon the nights would be spent under a fly again. Totally convinced that spring was in the air it was tempting to leave some heavy clothing behind, but we decided not to, as you never know in the Tararuas.

We got a bit worried when we saw the amount of cars parked at the end of this school holiday. Dozens of people already appeared out in the hills on this nice and sunny day, but hopefully many just walking their dog, or running up to the outlook point. Jumbo is quite a big hut, but still....?

To spread the risk of finding overcrowded huts we had already agreed to some alternative plans for this trip: three punters would occupy strategic bunks in Atiwhakatu Hut, one punter would distract other tramping groups and send them up the Baldy spur to the Pinnacles, and the main six-pack would run up Raingauge spur straight to Jumbo Hut and block the front door.

Whilst Hans set out at a steady pace to Baldy, Mid King and Angle Knob, the rest of the group enjoyed the stroll on the fairly easy track along the river. We were informed by Doc that one of the bridges couldn't be used since the last heavy downpour, as a slip had caused

foundation instability, but this proved to be no serious issue. Around noon we had a leisurely lunch at Atiwhakatu. Snaiet, Colin and Deborah would spend their night here and they were indeed in time to claim some comfortable bunks.

The planned run up Raingauge Spur turned out to be rather challenging, with most of the team taking their time for the exercise to get up to the bush line. One social convenor (no names here!) sprained her ankle and got more value for money out of her trip, at least in walking hours.

The last part of the climb to Jumbo Hut was definitely less enjoyable for her which made the arrival at the almost empty hut very welcome. It also made a good opportunity to check the contents of the first aid kit, which was well appreciated for its bandage and strapping tape, allowing Mika to demonstrate her strapping skills.

In the course of the afternoon more people trickled into the hut, and various parties moved around the dinner table to prepare and eat their dinner. Our bunch had cut the veggies and counted the nuts and couscous grains at the time Hans walked in around 6.30 pm. Although he had not been able to divert any trampers away from Jumbo as planned (having seen nobody since leaving Atiwhakatu) there still was a mattress free and dinner was nearly ready – good timing! It had been a bit windy on the tops but the scramble along the Pinnacles was not too hard and resulted in a good appetite. Today's dinner special was Moroccan nutty chickpea couscous, making many others in the hut a bit envious.... which got even worse when we had warm custard with fruit cake for dessert.

Apart from the early warning at 6 AM by some ringtones, Sunday turned out to be one of these lovely mornings with a perfect sunrise, with people outside on the deck squinting to see some of the Wairarapa plains and the ranges beyond.

The plan for the day was to walk uphill, turn towards Mt. Holdsworth to enjoy the good views and then head down along East Holdsworth Track to meet the other group at the carpark. It's probably fair to note that the speed of progress was very high for someone with a sprained ankle, but obviously there were a couple of walking hours in between us and the carpark. Several ideas involving wheelbarrows, paragliders and other alternative forms of transport were discussed, but Donna definitely won the tough gal trophy for pretending being cheerful on the steep slopes and continuing walking all the way. In the meantime Ian had the opportunity to make carefully considered photos and Hans opted for a power-nap on a particularly inviting blanket of soft dry moss in the sun.

The team from Atiwhakatu Hut had made their own choices: Colin and Deborah had taken a detour up to Mountainhouse shelter and then down along the Gentle Annie track. To their surprise they found Snaiet at the lookout, halfway Gentle Annie. She had walked out to the roadend, dropped her pack, and then decided it was a perfect day to enjoy the views and too early to leasure.

Although the last ones to arrive at the roadend were slightly delayed for the 3 pm meet, nobody really bothered as the soft grass and the sun were good company. At the end of the

day there were ten punters again, sun tanned and grinning satisfied, and only an occasional sandfly. It felt good to have been out again, enjoying the Tararuas on two nice days.

We later heard Powell Hut had been very busy with several trampers coming in very late and the whole floor space occupied. Atiwhakatu had been filled with a couple of families and Jumbo was also pretty packed, but fortunately neither of us needed to sleep on the floor or outside. So probably in the end our plans had worked!?

Mt Rolleston – Arthurs Pass

words by Sharron Came
pictures by David Jewell



Accompanied by a light westerly and drizzle we pulled our packs out of the car, switched on our head torches and headed up the Coral track. This could be a short, steep, sticky night time jaunt to the bush line and back if the wind doesn't abate we joked, philosophical about our chances. Unlike previous evenings there had been no overnight freeze and with temperatures soaring to the mid twenties most afternoons during the week, our chances of encountering favourable snow conditions higher up were not great. All the signs pointed to the need for a genuine alpine start and therefore we had set our alarms for 2am, only it didn't feel like 2am because it wasn't cold. Sweat dripping off us we trudged upwards shedding clothing at regular intervals. Clear of the bush line but still in darkness we cast

around for the appropriate route trying to gauge where the ridges were and the general direction of Rome ridge, the classic summit route to the low peak of Mt Rolleston (2212m).

As we continued to gain altitude the sky gradually lightened as the stars faded. No sign of the wind as we crossed isolated patches of snow which was, much to our relief, reasonably firm underfoot. At about 6am an orange circle peeped over the horizon indicating that sunrise was imminent. A little higher we paused for a snack and to admire the herds of snowy peaks emerging from the gloom like ghosts, backlit in orange then pink. Higher still the rosy light softened the steep looking face of the Low Peak, a lot closer now. First though we had to plod our way up a steep gully. Mike made steps and we used both our ice tools to follow him up and onto Rome ridge.

Rome ridge is all graceful curves offset beautifully by precipitous drop offs, the surrounding peaks and a big blue sky drained of both stars and clouds. The westerly rejoined us. Not strong enough to necessitate a retreat but a reminder that gale force westerlies were forecast for later in the day. We pushed on along the narrow ridge for a bit before DJ directed Mike to traverse to the east with a view to finding a way back up to the trickiest bit of the climb where you need to negotiate the gap between the ridge and the bottom of Low Peak. At this stage Steve and I decided to retreat leaving Mike and DJ to continue.

We were soon back on Rome ridge and descended slowly enjoying the spectacular views and occasionally turning round to monitor the progress of Mike, DJ and a team of 4 from the Canterbury Mountaineering Club who had caught us up. Soon we spotted our guys, tiny specs of black ascending steadily up the Low Peak with the CMCers not far behind. Steve and I were glad everyone had successfully negotiated "the gap". We knew because of the speed with which the figures had appeared that a rope had not been necessary. Later Mike and DJ confirmed that there was nowhere suitable to place an anchor. Probably a good thing Steve and I turned back then...

At about 9am we observed Mike and DJ summit the Low Peak. Steve and I continued our leisurely descent enjoying the tranquillity of the mountains, watching a pile of clag roll out below us from the West Coast towards Arthur's Pass village like a giant fluffy carpet. By the time we reached the car park at 10.15am the clag had burned off but the westerly was gradually strengthening. We headed into town for morning tea then back to wait for Mike and DJ.

At 2pm just as we were contemplating abandoning our cramped positions in the car and absconding for a third lunch we heard the familiar crunch of tramping boot on gravel and turned around to see a grimy, weary duo approaching. They had descended down the Otira Slide rather than Rome ridge necessitating a 3 kilometre walk along the road to the car park. Still their big grins left no doubt that they were well satisfied with their efforts.

The westerly started to muscle up in earnest and turned nor-west sometime in the night and with this change came the rain. Next morning we braved the deluge to visit Geoff and Renee at their new Bed and Breakfast in Arthur's Pass village. They have a lovely spot in an amazing



place. If you are down that way go visit, or even better book in to stay with them. They sent us pictures on Monday after the southerly came through – snow all over the ground. That is Arthur's Pass for you – a place of extreme beauty and extreme weather - sunny with mid twenties temperatures one day, strong winds and rain 24 hours later then snow. It is probably sunny again now.

Thanks to the team – David Jewell, Mike Phethean and Steve Austin. Special thanks to Geoff Keey and

Renee Habluetzel for morning tea, the grand tour, great stories and good beta on snow and route conditions.

Mt Tapuae-o-Uenuku – Inland Kaikouras Alp 1 Medium Fit – Sept 30 to October 3

by Steve Austin

Punters: Steve Austin, Tim Frank, Harry Smith, Spencer Clubb, Peter Scolley, Stephen Healey

The journey to Mt. Tappy is one of the highlights of the WTMC winter schedule and this year was no exception.

The trip got off to a poor start from a punctuality viewpoint as we arrived into Picton 90 mins late at half past midnight. The ferry staff put on free fish n chips to make up for the late departure and getting to the Hodder Rd end at half two in the morning is all part of the experience I guess.

A few hours later (i.e. sunrise – not a cloud in the sky ☺) we slowly got things underway with breakfast, packing up the tents and checking we had our crampons, ice axe etc safely stowed in packs. Our warm up was the 3km farm stroll to the start of the Hodder River.

The river level was up compared to what I've seen in the past few years reflecting recent rain fall and high snow melt. This led to a few challenging crossings while we each sized the river up. We had a team huddle before continuing any further and I asked if everyone was happy continuing on remembering that we had another 57+ crossings to go. Harry said that he'd seen it like this before and that it was doable plus the weather and time were on our side so we continued and found that the crossings were much more comfortable linked in 3s. Not the usual tranquil river but still good fun and we reached the huts about an hour shy of

nightfall – a chorizo pasta meal for dinner and then early night before the half four alarm. The six of us were well housed in the Tararua Hut (The first of the two huts built on the site – now maintained by the Marlborough TC).

Fast forward 7 hours (and a whole load of snoring) to the wake up call. A quick brew and breakfast and we were off – head lamps on and anticipation growing of the snow conditions and the climb ahead. Five minutes south of the hut the track involves negotiating a trail made in the extensive scree that slopes steeply down into the Hodder River – this is much easier on the return journey in the daylight a point proved by two of the team who had difficulty navigating when their torches started failing.

Mt Alarm at the head of the Staircase Creek basin looked impressive bathed in the early morning light. Up and around the corner to the left the first big slope comes into view and is soon felt by the legs as the slope steepens. We had put on our crampons about an hour earlier and the conditions were good for the climb. Near the top the wind picked up and the temperature dropped – not a place to stay in one spot for too long. The summit ridge isn't too far now though when we got there I didn't recognise it at first as the amount of snow had changed the ridgeline I was expecting. With the top of Tappy in sight one of the team decided to turn back ... a respectable thing to do if not comfortable with the ridge climb ahead. The rest of us pushed on and were at the top about a half hour later. What a view – Kapiti Island and the lower NI ahead to the northwest, the Clarence River to the east and a crystal clear Seaward Kaikoura range beyond with the southwest view dominated by snowy mountain tops.

We had about half an hour enjoying the summit before descending the northern slopes and looping back around down into Staircase Creek basin. Back to the hut for a well earned meal & sleep before the journey back to the van & home on Sunday (via a much lower Hodder River)

Thanks to the team for a great long weekend. Roll on Mt Tappy 2011 !



KAI ON THE FLY

with Aunty Rata

Greetings fellow trampers, I hope you made the most of the great Labour weekend weather to be had everywhere but Wellington! The bank holidays or as we Kiwi's call them long weekends are traditionally very busy for the Club, particularly for trip leaders who often find themselves with big groups of people to manage for the weekend. With the Xmas trip season coming up instead of recipes I thought this month I'd share a few tips on how to be a good trip participant.

1. **Be punctual.** There are two dimensions to this, first the obvious need to turn up for the trip on time and adhere to time specific requests that relate to your trip. This may seem obvious but it does take a little personal planning and organisation. If you are delayed make sure you contact the trip leader asap. The second dimension relates to information requests. On every trip the leader will ask for certain information. Having to chase it up is time consuming and irritating. Key information that needs to be supplied promptly includes the following - your Club Contact Person + their phone number, any pre-existing medical conditions or current injuries, any food allergies or preferences, whether you can drive the Club van, whether you have any useful group gear such as a cooker. The trip fare also needs to be paid on time preferably by electronic transfer.
2. **Be proactive.** Before the trip, and during the trip consider whether you can do anything to assist the trip leader and therefore the smooth running of the trip. Maybe you can drive or cook or you might be particularly good at navigation. During the trip there are always jobs that need to be done particularly in the evenings when dinner needs to be cooked and when leaving the hut. Sadly in the NZ bush there are no hut fairies available to cook the dinner, clean up afterwards and sweep the hut before you leave. Likewise the trip leader does not have eyes in the back of their head and nor are they skilled at mind reading. If you are feeling tired or notice someone else in the party is suffering you can do something about it, talking to the trip leader is a good place to start. You may be fit enough to carry some extra gear.
3. **Be prepared.** Yep just like the Girl Guides /Boy Scouts it is a good idea to read the trip plan and make sure you understand it. If you don't understand it talk to the trip leader before the trip starts. Get hold of the relevant map and study the route. Check the weather forecast before setting off. If something happens to the trip leader you need to have a good idea about where you are and how to get out. Also familiarity with the route and weather conditions helps you to decide what gear to take and what food. More importantly checking this stuff out for yourself helps you to get better at the

business of walking in the hills. If you are new to tramping or even just new to the Club go onto our website and read the trip information so you know what to expect. There is a good gear list which can be printed out and used as a checklist when packing. If you are a light sleeper you may wish to take ear plugs - the Club is well endowed with snorers! Make sure you know who has the Club first aid kit and the personal locator beacon.

4. **Be persistent.** The trip leader is not a tour guide. If the plan is not clear then ask about it, you might not be the only person not sure what to expect. If you have alternative suggestions or questions then share them in a constructive and timely manner. It is entirely possible you may think of something that has not occurred to the leader, you may even be more familiar with the area where the trip is running. There is not much value in announcing after your group has completed a complicated river crossing that you knew there was a bridge 100m further up the river... Likewise if you can feel a blister coming on it is better to get the group to stop so you can tape up your foot before half your heel has rubbed off and you need to be carried out of the hills. If you need to stop to change clothing or to eat something or to go to the toilet make sure someone else in the group knows, losing people, even temporarily is generally undesirable.

So there we go my friends, with a bit of good communication, planning and anticipation plus a lot of chocolate everyone can have a fun time in the hills.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

We welcome Garry Skipper as a senior member this month.

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

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 Mike McGavin, winner of the October draw, for the Heritage to Tunupo report.

DIRECTIONS TO MINIBUS STORAGE LOCATION.

Both club vans are now stored with Freightlines Shed 29A within the Centre Port complex off Waterloo Quay.

If driving into Centre Port take the first left at the mini-roundabout which is signposted as "Lane Seven". Follow the large signs which say "Coastal/Coldstore" as the road loops. Turn right in front of the main office building marked Wellington Centre Port and continue to follow the road down the left-hand side of a large brown brick building. You will now come to a T-junction and turn right. You will see in front of you a brown log cabin attached to a warehouse with a Freightlines advertising board attached. The vans should be parked on the left-hand side of this warehouse, directly adjacent to the BNZ building. You may park your car here over the weekend but please ensure you put the plastic covered "Freightlines" sheet on your dashboard. Exit Centre Port the same way you entered.

If walking in to Centre Port head up Hinemoa Street which is straight over the mini-roundabout and walk down the far side of the large brown brick building, then turn right at the T-junction as described above.

The Freightlines office should be manned until 7pm each night so if you cannot see the vans please go in the log cabin and ask at Reception. Their phone number is 04 494 6512 and our contact person is Craig Roddick.

You are not allowed to enter the warehouse unless advised by Freightlines.

The vans are to be returned OUTSIDE where you picked them up from.

Gareth Morton.

Transport Officer
021 065 2399.

FROM THE GREEN CROCS

Last month I mentioned that we were looking for some new club officers, and I am very pleased to tell you that all 3 vacancies have been filled. Megan Banks takes over as Promotions Officer, Mika Verheul is our new Secretary, and Pete Gent will be Gear Custodian. Many thanks to those members for volunteering for those roles, it is great to have some new blood on committee.

There was a story in the Labour Weekend papers about the 2 trampers who died in the Tararuas last July, and while the article missed a good chance to offer some basic advice, I think it is a good reminder of why we take the safety precautions we do on club trips.

Firstly, we always carry flies or tents even if we plan on staying at a hut. You never know what will happen, and when you will need your own shelter. Next, the club has personal locator beacons, which are free for use on club trips, and may be needed on any grade of trip. It is worth having a cell-phone as a backup, while coverage is not guaranteed, it is pretty good these days, especially above the bush line.

Lastly, you should always check the weather forecast carefully before you go, and pay close attention while you are out, as conditions can change extremely quickly out in the bush. With most of our groups, there will be a range of fitness levels and quality of gear, you need to make sure that all of the group can get to your destination, sometimes the best decision is to turn back, or to stay where you are.

This is also a good opportunity to give credit to the club members who volunteer for Search and Rescue. We hope we will never need them for one of our trips, but we will be in safe hands if we do!

Club transport officer Gareth Morton is getting married in early November, nice one mate! While Gareth is away on honeymoon, Erik VanderSpek will be acting transport officer. The email address transport@wtmc.org.nz will be the best way to contact Erik for your transport needs.

Finally, an update on my hip injury, I cast off my crutches a few weeks ago, and even managed a 4 hour day walk at Labour Weekend, with no ill effects. So hopefully I will be tramping again by the New Year!

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

Darren Hammond