



The Mouth 'n' Ear

Wellington Tramping & Mountaineering Club Newsletter

Email: newsletter@wtmc.org.nz

June 2011



WeiMin Ren: Tararuas (from the article 'Musings on a Jumbo trip')

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The Nature of Things

Sharron Came, President



Last month I said I'd be reporting back on any special projects to be undertaken this financial year. At this stage we are putting a bit of extra energy into three areas:

- Membership acquisition
- Lifting usage of the club Lodge
- Improving the club website

These three areas are interrelated. Ideally we want to replace departing members so membership is stable plus it's useful to attract fresh faces with new ideas, experience and skills. In terms of the lodge, we need to be financially self sustaining in an environment characterised by rising costs and continuous maintenance demands. Plus the lodge is such a great place it would be dumb not to use it as much as possible. A more user-friendly website will complement these initiatives.

Membership Acquisition

A quick scan of the club night attendance data indicates new people come on Wednesday nights but we aren't great at converting them into members. Now some of these people probably aren't interested in tramping, but it takes quite a bit of effort to actually turn up on a Wednesday night so I think we can safely assume that most of them did not call in accidentally and therefore have at least a passing interest in us.

With this in mind we have launched a charm offensive. Yep, we are trying to be a little bit more welcoming towards the Wednesday night virgins, those who are relatively new and those returning after a long absence. It can be a bit daunting encountering a hall full of strangers particularly if everyone is busy talking to somebody else and you are unfamiliar with our protocols. It is easy for the rest of us to forget what it is like to be new. To help ease the transition from outsider to insider we are returning to having two people at the door to meet and greet and we would love regular Wednesday nighters to chat with new people and help them sign up for trips.

You will also notice that Donna has been introducing some of the regular members at the start of each meeting to give people an idea of who is who. We could wear name tags but that would be pretty uncool. We think it is important to foster a club culture of being friendly, welcoming and fun without being naff. If you have time to help on the door or any good ideas for picking up new members please chat with, or email Megan at promotions@wtmc.org.nz or Helen at membership@wtmc.org.nz

The other way you can help is talk to people you go on trips with about joining the club, how they found out about us, what they like or dislike. Any feedback would really help us and sometimes just minor changes can make a big difference.

As well as compulsory smiles on a Wednesday we are thinking about some more targeted measures for attracting new members. Maybe you would like to join MAG (the Membership Acquisition Group). The plan is for MAG people to catch up at a pub or café from time to time to partake of some refreshments while working on ideas for attracting new members. If you are interested have a chat to Helen, Megan or myself.

Lodge

I'm not going to detail our plans for the Lodge as they are well documented elsewhere in this newsletter. Suffice to say I hope that all of you will do your bit to ensure anyone you know who goes skiing knows about our Lodge and how to book it.

Club Website

We have been working on the club website behind the scenes for some time now and shortly you will begin to notice some changes. A few of them may even meet with your approval. Web Master Mike and his right hand man Steve now have a sounding board/governance outfit in place to help streamline decision making. Our aim is to make the website user friendly and welcoming for both members and prospective members alike. Currently we are looking at how members access their part of the site and the design of the front page. Further down the track we have plans to trial easy ways to sign up for trips on-line along with an on-line lodge booking system. Web design is an activity fraught with controversy and challenge, well I hope it is I didn't jump aboard the Web Master's ship for a dull life. We may get some stuff wrong or come up with some lame stuff along the way but hey, we can always change it. Got some ideas or some expertise to contribute? Feel free to get in touch at web@wtmc.org.nz

So hopefully I've given you a bit of a heads up about what we are up to and how you can contribute. Don't forget to get out tramping during winter, there are some great trips on offer, and while you are out there think about what trips you want to see run in spring and summer. Let's see if we can shock Amanda and Richard by actually volunteering some trip ideas before they come round asking for them. There is not much welcoming, friendly and fun about having to nag people to do stuff.

Speaking of which, we are on the hunt for someone to edit the club journal and for articles to go in it. If you have been on an interesting trip and/or have some good photos winter is a great time to sit down and organise your material and send it to newsletter@wtmc.org.nz. The journal is a great advertisement for the club and a good reflection of what we get up to

in any one year. We want the 2011 journal to be as great as the previous ones. If you think you can help out we'd love to hear from you. Have a word with anyone on the committee.

Track Talk

Amanda Wells, Chief Guide



My trusty MSR cooker must have boiled thousands of litres. A brush with immolation in 2006 meant it sported a slightly melted pump handle but I viewed this as a useful theft deterrent rather than a disability. Annual servicing maintained its reliability, as well as giving me the ability to reassemble its impressive array of tiny pieces.

So I was pretty surprised earlier this month when it experienced sudden and terminal failure. Blearily attempting to light the cooker on a Saturday morning at Atiwhakatu hut, I soon realised that fuel was flowing somewhat too liberally and in the wrong directions. Closer examination revealed that the plastic thread onto which the check valve screws had snapped off, meaning it was impossible to get a seal between the pump and the fuel line. Most gear failures can be macgyvered away but not this one.

The silver lining was the presence of Hans' Medium group in the same hut that morning. Without too much arm twisting, they agreed to loan us one of their two cookers. Even though, to Harry's undoubted disappointment, we didn't have enough fuel for multiple cups of tea that afternoon, spent listening to the rain come down on Mid King biv, we at least had a hot dinner.

Back in civilisation, I priced up a new pump but started to wonder about its "life-time guarantee". I emailed Ampro, MSR's New Zealand reseller, to relate my tale of faithful service and unexpected demise (perhaps usually I would have tried the shop first but the cooker had been purchased from the sadly departed Mainly Tramping). The next day I received a reply asking me to send them the pump. I enclosed a note explaining the long-standing but harmless nature of the melted handle and its lack of relationship to the current problem. But it's fair to say I was not overly optimistic about a happy ending. I just hoped that, if rejected, they would send the pump back so I could cannibalise its parts.

Two days later, a new pump turned up on my doorstep, to my delight. And when I examined the packaging more closely, I saw they had thrown in a new heat shield as well. There are a few stories around at the moment of people returning faulty gear to certain shops and being told it must be sent back to Australia for assessment, adding frustrating days (even weeks) to the process. Service like Ampro's reminds me that it's not only where

your gear is made, but who sells it to you and whether it is distributed by a New Zealand-based reseller that can make a difference.

Winter is here but that doesn't mean hanging up your boots. We've got some interesting trips during the next month:

17-19 Jun Ruahine FP – Kashmir Rd

Tramp	EM	Daphne hut	Jo Boyle
Tramp	M	Howletts hut	Hans Wiskerke/ Mika Verheul
Tramp	MF	Tunupo - Leon Kinvig	David Jewell
Tramp	F	Black Ridge -Sawtooth - Howletts	Bernie Smithyman

A chance to check out the Eastern Ruahines, and possibly even some snow if you're lucky, from the comfort of well-maintained and cozy huts.

24-26 Jun Lodge and Rimutaka FP

Social	All	Lodge Solstice party	Donna Maher
Day	All	Lodge-based	<i>Leader required</i>
Family	All	Paua hut overnight	Rene Van Lierop

Don't miss the annual solstice party at the club lodge on Ruapehu – unless you want to stay at our other lodge-like hut in the Orongorongos.

1-3 Jul Kahurangi NP and Tararua FP

Tramp	EM	Waitewaewae	Megan Banks
Day	EM	Butterfly Creek	Barbara Keenan

Take a classic all-weather Tararua trip to the spacious Waitewaewae hut or head into the Eastbourne hills for the day.

The Heaphy MTB trip down on the schedule for this weekend has been put off till late September, due to a lack of early interest (bookings are needed well in advance). Get in touch with Pete Gent (peterbgent@gmail.com) if you want to sign up, sooner rather than later.

8-10 Jul Ruapehu Lodge

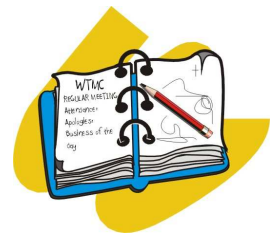
Day	E	Photography	Amelia White
Alp1	M	Tongariro Crossing	Spencer Clubb
Instr	MF	Alp1 and Alp2 alpine refresher	Sharron Came
Family	All	Rimutaka Incline walk/MTB	Sarah Young
Family	All	Colonial Knob	Constanze Schwind

Head to the lodge again for some photography or to sharpen your ice axe, climbing or crampon skills; family day trips offer more gentle adventure closer to home.

To book onto any of the trips above, come down to club on a Wednesday night to sign up on the board.

Editor's thank you

Sarah Young, Newsletter editor



Thank you very much to all of you who provided feedback about the WTMC newsletter. What was said was extremely constructive. Many of you provided some really good ideas on how we can improve this publication such as: be consistent in font, improving the layout; include more trip reports, provide more context about future trips, publish information about what is going on in the wider tramping / outdoor community and keep involving Aunty Rata. We have started to put some of your ideas into action in this newsletter and hope you will like the improvements.

This newsletter would not be thriving if it was not for your contributions every month. Thank you very much to all of you for telling your stories ... we love them!

Murmurings from the kitchen

Donna Maher and Jenny Beaumont, Social convenors



Kia Ora

Winter is upon us and it's good to see all the faces on a Wednesday night despite the inclement weather at times. We've had some very informative and entertaining presentations recently. It was great to remind ourselves of safe methods to cross rivers and to remember the answer to the question "Do we need to cross?" is always "NO". Also to plan, plan and then plan again. If you already have an alternative plan for when a river is too dodgy to pass then there is no need for difficult decisions to be made when you are out there as they are already made and no need for the contact person to worry as they will already have this information.

This is what is coming up in June.

- June 1st Barry Durrant will take us on a photography tour of 50 years of tramping and mountaineering.
- June 8th Rowena Johnstone will talk to us about Land Search and Rescue and what they do
- June 15th Steve Kohler will give us a practical presentation on how to make a primitive fire. You make the fire with Steve's supervision.
- June 22nd Kevin Cole will take us through some of the Alpine trips he has been on and what happens on some instruction weekends at the Lodge.
- June 29th Stuart Palmer – Katja and Stuart spent some time in Norway in the snow.

Yes it's the time of year you have all been waiting for.....our annual mid-winter social gathering up at the lodge.....Solstice. The theme for the weekends entertainment is "Dead or Alive!" so sign up, get your thinking caps on and come join the fun. The Theme can be interpreted in whatever way you want, a famous person Alive or Dead, a fictional character who may be wanted Dead or Alive. Let your imagination go. If you can't make it for any reason (mind you it needs to be a good reason), never fear I'll make sure I have enough fun for all of you and those who know me understand I don't need much encouragement to act the fool!

Just to let you all know, we have entered photos from our photo competition in the FMC competition. We entered the runners up and winning entries. The results will be announced

at the FMC AGM/Conference on the weekend of the 11/12 June. Good Luck to those who have entries photos for.

Thanks again and remember we are always looking for presenters and ideas for presentations if you don't feel confident to give the talk. Talk to either Jenny or me on Wednesday nights or email us on social@wtmc.org.nz

Lodge update

Sue Walsh, Ruapehu Lodge convenor

The ski season officially kicks off from 2 July. To ensure you get the skiing and or mountain experience you want, make sure you get your booking in and a deposit paid to guarantee you a bed in the lodge. Bookings for the school holidays are open now. The new lodge rates have been confirmed for the 2011/2012 season and are up on the website. You will notice that the rates have increased and this is to take into account significantly higher insurance costs and higher DoC annual rental costs. The lodge schedule is also up on the website and will be posted out to all members in early June along with the FMC card and bulletin.

Please note:

Lodge code: this has changed. You will be informed of the change in code when you make your booking.

Confirmation of booking: your booking will only be confirmed when you have paid your deposit.

Menus: these are currently being updated and enhanced and the new recipe book will be in the lodge for the start of the season.

Food stock-take: a reminder to please complete these at the end of each weekend and week. None of us want to get to the lodge and find that something essential has run out and the Food Officer has not been informed.

Menus and Food

As mentioned above the menu's are being updated and enhanced and will also include vegetarian options. The recipe book will also appear on the club website under the Lodge section. The purpose of this is to make the menus we have more easily accessible so trip leaders can make choices about menus, if they wish to do so, with some knowledge about the choices that are available. Please note: this is not intended to create a free-for-all with multiple menu requests for a weekend/week.

If you have suggestions for the recipe book be it further enhancements, additions or deletions please email them to me at lodgeconvenor@wtmc.org.nz and we will incorporate the changes when we revisit the recipes at the end of the ski season, unless it is an absolute burning issue which needs to be addressed straight away.

Working Party

We've just had the mid May working party cleaning the lodge and bringing up some of the none perishable food items ready for the winter season. We're endeavouring to cater more so for vegetarians and welcome feedback as to whether we're on the right track or need to make some further changes.

And finally

I know a lot of you will be waiting for the snow to fall and to see how good the season might be. No matter the weather or snow depth, I encourage you as much as possible to use this amazing asset we have. We have a great location and there are so many options of what can be done on and off the mountain. Please don't be complacent about it, put your thought into action and book in for a wonderful weekend.

To book email: lodgeconvenor@wtmc.org.nz

Membership

Helen Law, Membership officer



First of all, we want to say, *"Congratulations to Allen Higgins, Doreen Quirke and Dianne Aitken on their 50 years membership of WTMC ... they have been with the club since 1961."*

Secondly, look out for your 2011/12 FMC card and June FMC bulletin arriving in your letterbox, you should receive them by middle of June.

Lastly and most importantly, I am seeking comments and feedback, from members and non-members, on our current membership eligibility:

- Do you think our current criteria of 3 overnight non-lodge base trips, where two of them need to be tramping/ mountaineering trips, is a bit excessive?
- Should we be more relaxed with the rules to allow certain day walks to qualify too?
- If you are not yet our club member, what is the reason?

If you would like your say, please send me an email membership@wtmc.org.nz and I will raise your comments at our next Committee/ planning meeting.

Thank you everyone. Don't forget to keep warm and stay dry out there!

Ruapehu round-the-mountain

Easy medium, Easter 2011: April 21-25

Amelia White

Punters: Amelia White, Mark White, Mike Travers, Annie van Herck, Lieselot Whitbeck, Jonathan Karp, Tim McGurk, Vincent Grealish, Jo Boyle (part time at least)

Thursday

Thursday 5.30pm found Amanda and I corralling punters into our respective vans at a very busy platform 9 on a warm and overcast evening. We were headed for the club lodge for the night; the other van was headed for somewhere north of Taupo. Unusually, we encountered no traffic issues; we were all the way to Waikanae without delays. This seemed simply too good to be true! We still stopped for dinner in Levin, popping in to the supermarket to buy the frozen chicken for Sunday nights roast, and any other “essentials” people had forgotten.

Arrival at the lodge was at a good time, about 11pm, and in good conditions. There was a bit of snow hanging around on the path up to the lodge, but there was no depth to any of it, which was good.

Friday

We knew we had at least 7 hours walking ahead of us, daylight would run out at some time around 5.30pm and there was an hour's drive before we could start walking. So we were aiming to be out of the lodge by about 8.30. On arrival at the Waihohonu Carpark, we unloaded ourselves in the cold breeze and said goodbye to Jo, who was taking the van and staying at the Lodge for the weekend.



The walk in to the New-New Waihohonu Hut (as opposed to the now Old-New hut, formerly across the river) was a doddle. A slight climb over just on an hour and a half, on easy ground. We stopped briefly to explore the hut and had a light morning tea while chatting to the hut warden - WTMCs own Paul Jeffries! He strongly encouraged us to visit the Historic Waihohonu Hut on our way through, advice we eagerly took and certainly didn't regret. (In fact, I recommend the Historic Hut and the nearby springs as a good day walk).

From there, it was a long trudge up the track – it was like walking uphill on a beach! Soft, sandy soil that didn't allow you any push, and had no solid sections you could walk on instead to make it easier. By the time we stopped for lunch we were all really glad that we had covered what appeared to be most of the sand before lunch rather than having to do it after! Needless to say, some people found this quite tiring, carrying three days food and lots of water.

It was a long slow march through a massive variety of terrain for the rest of the day, and at times the walk seemed interminable. I am ashamed to admit that this day really got the better of me. Eventually, we got to the Tukino Skifield access road, a point where Paul had told us we would be only an hour from Rangipo. We all felt relieved. By this stage it was about 3.30pm and we were all getting cold from the wind and tired from the long day's walking.



The most challenging bit of the day was certainly in this last section, crossing the Whangaehu River lahar path. The signs are ominous: "Do not stop" "Do not enter if you hear a roar upstream". We entered the valley as we couldn't hear anything (and there wasn't a high lahar risk), and discovered that this was actually some of the most tricky terrain we had yet encountered: clambering over large rocks, a double

dip valley before getting to safety, a single person bridge halfway across. I commented to Mark when we got out the other side that if we had heard noises upstream, I would have had to dump my pack to get any momentum, and even then I would have been lucky to get out of the valley in any hurry!

The last of us (being me) arrived at Rangipo Hut just on darkness at 5.30 to find it fairly full, rather dark and VERY hot. Dinner and drinks were prepared outside on the deck (the only decent space), and the Thai Green vege curry was probably a tad hot. We were all so exhausted we skipped chocolate fondue for dessert, and along with the rest of the hut, most of us were in bed about 7.30pm.

Saturday

To start with, we made good time, arriving at the top of the “Grand Canyon” (aka the drop down into the Wahianoa River) within just over an hour. We watched a German tramper we had met the day before ambling his way back up the far side of the valley as we pondered the task ahead of us. Amazingly, even with a short stop at the bottom to ensure no-one had fallen off the track, we were up the other side less than an hour after we had left the Rangipo side, a drop of nearly 200m (in just over 300m) and a climb again of about 150m. Talk about extreme landscapes! That said, it was nowhere near as bad as it had looked from the top, especially the sidling climb out of the valley, although you would have had issues if you had a fear of heights, as it was steep and high (and would have been a nasty run-off if you had fallen).

The next stop was lunch, and Tim (an angel) took pity on me and came the 15 minutes (at his pace) back to us and took my pack off me for the last of the walk to the rest of the groups lunch stop. The terrain and weather, after we left the lunch stop, changed again. It got very hot and I had to dig all the way to the bottom of my pack to find something I could change into from my long sleeved thermal I had been wearing (I had packed it at the bottom, expecting a continuation of Friday’s cold weather). We were now also walking in and out of patches of forest, which was pleasant, and patches of bog, which were not. Parts of the track had obviously received some work in the past, but some of these changes actually made the walking more difficult: steeply angled boardwalks made of 2x2 with a 2x2 worth of space between each plank, that you then needed to step off down to another steeply angled boardwalk that was more than knee-high below you. For someone like me, who has ongoing knee issues, this was not fun, and so I found I slowed even further through some sections. Eventually I succumbed and stopped to take off my boot and put on a knee brace. It didn’t make me any faster, but it did mean I was in a bit less pain.



About 15 minutes after the next scheduled stop and regroup time, we came across the group, relaxing in the sunshine at the bridge that I knew with certainty was about 500m from the hut. We looked across the river in awe to the perfectly formed boardwalk on the other side and dreamed about it being that way all the way to the hut.

Alas, it was but a short section of nice track, before returning to the norm of ladder-like boardwalks and slippery bogs. The others were so excited about getting to the hut in the early afternoon that they powered off ahead, and by the time Tim came back and took my pack off me again, we were still 10 minutes from the hut! On arrival at Mangaehuehu Hut you walk on to the deck from the north and look over a very awesome landscape down to



Ohakune, Waiohuru and the Ruahine and Kaimanawa Ranges. It's incredible. Then you turn around to see Girdlestone Peak, and Glacier Ridge. This hut has one of the most stunning outlooks of any I have ever visited.

The sun was shining, so most of us took advantage of an early afternoon arrival at the hut

to enjoy some time on the deck with another party who arrived not long after us. About 4.30pm we decided we should light the fire to ensure the hut stayed warm. The fire was so efficient we had to leave all the windows open all night so it was cool enough to sleep! Dinner soon followed: Rice risotto (partly cooked on the fire), followed by cheesecake with chocolate sauce (leftover from no fondue the night before) and gummy bears. The clear weather also meant many of us spent time outside in the early evening taking photos and stargazing, and a respectable bedtime of 9pm was had by most.

Sunday

About 6.30am I woke again to a beautiful pink sunrise. So I struggled out of bed again, grabbed the camera and a warm top and headed outside. The mountain was beautiful and it was lovely to have some time to myself (a rare thing on a longer tramp with a larger party). Unfortunately, about the same time the other party who were sharing the main room of the hut decided it was time to wake up and share out their chocolate.



Our aim for the day was to get back to the van via a detour to Blyth Hut in time to be back in the lodge for a late lunch. Mark and I were again bringing up the rear, as both my knees were complaining a bit, but we were making much better time, and having started in warm weather and with a known short distance ahead, everyone felt good. After what felt like a surprisingly short time we were crossing our third of five bridges

(being a great marker of distance) to discover Jo waiting on the other side with fresh donuts having walked in from the road end to meet us. The track continually improved; we were often now walking on well-made boardwalk.

Jo took charge of the bulk of the group who wanted to head to Blyth Hut, while Annie, Mark and I meandered slowly back to the van, stopping only when we got a bit misplaced crossing a stream that had an island in the middle of it, and to view the Waitonga Falls. The wind picked up a LOT as we were on the boardwalk through the middle of the bog around Lake Rotokewa and it actually got quite cold. We wound up being about half an hour ahead of the Blyth Hut visitors, and everyone loved arriving at the van for an Easter egg hunt put on by Jo.



Back to the lodge via a toilet stop in Ohakune, showers, lunch, dinner prep and off to the hot pools. Talk about a fantastic afternoon! We arrived back at the lodge bang on darkness with showers developing, to discover the chicken was already cooking and the veges were ready to throw in the oven. Apple crumble and custard followed for dessert and a fun time, including giant jenga, was had all around.

Monday

One word: Traffic.

After having lots more food (attempting to eat as many leftovers as possible) and cleaning up, we were on the road in the rain not long after 11am. We hit traffic at Waouru, then again at Taihape (at just on 1pm as KFC was opening) but arrived at Bulls at 2pm for a late lunch. 2.5 hours later we had arrived in Otaki (80km away), but at least we had fun getting there as we were all very well rested. The van was returned to its car park at just after 6pm and it was home to do laundry and other such things before returning to work.

Wainuiomata catchment day walk

Easy day tramp, 22 May

Sam Buckley

Punters: Helen Law (photos), Annika Magdorf, Chirstine Montgomery, Cecelia De Suza, Sam Buckley, Clinton Hunter, Celia Wong

Do you know a place within 30 minutes from a city where you can walk amongst predominantly pristine podocarp forest? Yes – from Wellington! Just go past the Petone waterfront and over the hill into the Wainuiomata Water Collection area!

The Wainuiomata Water Collection area has stayed almost completely intact, except for a little logging in the main valley, since it was designated as a catchment area around 1878 when an earth dam was built on the Wainuiomata River and a pipeline was laid to Wellington. Developments since that time include the construction of the Morton Dam in 1912, water collection weirs and a pipeline tunnel from Orongorongo Valley in 1926, and a

simple water treatment plant in 1964. However, by the late 1980s the system had reached the end of its working life and the Morton Dam was decommissioned and the lake was drained in 1989.

In 1993 a new treatment plant was constructed which took water from both the Wainuiomata and Orongorongo Rivers. That treatment plant still operates today and produces up to 60 million litres of high quality water daily, supplying a fifth of the water consumed by the greater Wellington metropolitan area.

Water was originally gravity fed to Wellington, but is now assisted by pumping (it takes c10-12 hours for water to get from Wainuiomata to Karori). Today there are 3 other main water collection areas in the Wellington area: Gear Island (Lower Hutt, near the Petone bridge), Waterloo (Lower Hutt), and at Te Marua (Upper Hutt). If required, water could be pumped from one collection area, if for example there was a disruption to water flow, from say an earthquake. It is interesting to note that all these treatment plants are essentially on the fault line!



Group looking up into a substantial rimu
Dacrydium cupressinum

You can't just arrive at the Wainuiomata Catchment and walk on your own, as this is a protected area due to its use primarily for catchment reasons. You can however book as an individual or group (we went as a WTMC group of 7, organized by Helen Law). Tour dates are mainly advertised on the Greater Wellington Regional Council website and are led by an experienced tour leader.

On our 22nd May trip the leader was Grant Timlin who was very informative not only about the water collection history of the area, but also on the botanical side of things. As well as Grant there

were 5 volunteers, and with them we all walked together as one whole group of around 24 visitors. We started the visit with a hot drink and biscuits while watching a 12 minute video on the 4 main catchment areas around Wellington, then began our walk which lasted from around 9:30am to 2:30pm, including a lunch stop. We went on an 11km tour: Up the road in the direction of George Creek to the tunnel entrance and back, then up the valley past Sinclair Creek as far as Hill Creek. After lunch we returned the same way with a loop back around to the entrance.

There is scope for more extensive walking within the catchment boundaries. On a very hot sunny day in early March 2007 I was part of a WTMC group that did the 24 km loop walk up into the Orongorongo Catchment, which included a fantastic view across to Mt Matthews. We then continued on a track which went past the small gauge rail tunnel and

eventually descended into George Creek. As part of that tour one can see more relics of the dam and catchment history. I would recommend that longer trip for keener people who want a more invigorating day walk that really allows one to more fully go through and amongst the range of forest types, in parts on a real track, as opposed to a road!

You might ask what's so special about the area? This is a valuable remnant of the sort of mixed podocarp-broadleaf-rata lowland forest that was once widespread over much of New Zealand. More locally it gives one an experience of what the Hutt Valley and hills up and over Korokoro, Maungaraki, Belmont etc would have once been like. Amongst the podocarp species there are some big rimu and kahikatea which would be anywhere from 300-500 hundred years old, and within the area there are even older trees! Many of the big podocarps have *Astelia* (a flax) and other epiphytic plants species growing high up on the branches, which I feel adds to the experience of being in an ancient forest. Indeed, the late Geoff Park, a noted New Zealand botanist and eco-historian in his book *Nga Uruora - The Groves of Life* (Victoria University Press, 1995) writes in his first chapter that such a forest with these giant podocarps would have been in



Mature Northern Rata
Metrosideros robusta

existence as far back as the age of the dinosaurs - as long as 160 million years ago. He adds that when some of our bird species had been evolving for about 60 million years that the mighty kahikatea had already been around for approximately 100 million years. The thought of this makes me feel very insignificant and humble!! There are also some beech stands in the George Creek area (I think predominantly red beech), and as well there are some enormous mature northern rata.

Regarding wildlife, on our walk we saw fantail, bellbird, tui, wood pigeon, tomtit, rifleman, and even spotted a pig on the bush edge near to a road junction! There are kiwi (I think a North Island species) which was introduced into this area about 4 years ago, and some are now breeding! In this catchment area, as with most of New Zealand there were once more undesirable introduced creatures in abundance such as pig, deer, possums, stoats, rats, feral cats etc, which all have historically reduced native bird, fish and frog species throughout New Zealand, and sadly in some places to extinction. However, with an extensive and continuing pest eradication programme in the Wainuiomata Catchment unwanted pests are now in low numbers, enabling the forest to retain its primordial, prehistoric quality. Because the catchment area ideally wants a pristine environment, including intact forest for premium water quality, let's hope that the area continues to remain safe and protected so that this rare forest environment stays available for discovery, education and wonderment, not to mention repeated exploration and enjoyment! Wainuiomata Catchment – if you haven't been there yet, explore it one day soon!

Not your usual weekend trip

Lodge working party weekend

Ray Walker

Helpers: Sue, Marie S, Anita, Mike, Karl, Mark, Amelia, Donna, Colin, Barbara,
Ray, Andrew, Hannah, Pete, Kev and Barrie

It was an offer I could not refuse! It included free accommodation and food at the club lodge for the weekend. There would be no sleeping under a fly at a shitty road end, no grovelling through Tararua mud, and I probably would not get my boots wet. Of course there was a catch! It was the annual Ruapehu lodge spring clean and food resupply mission.

Sue Walsh (our Ruapehu Lodge convener) had convinced a van load of club members to take part in this mission. We were not the first people to arrive at the lodge on Friday night; Andrew Trembath and his daughter Hannah, Kev Griffiths, Pete Goodwin and Barrie Noyce were already there. These good folk, along with Sue, do a tremendous amount of work looking after the lodge.

There was no sleeping in on Saturday morning. After breakfast it was into the cleaning. Although the lodge is cleaned every time it's used, we carry out a more extensive clean before the ski season each year. It's a case of just working through a check list. With more than a dozen people involved, it's no major drama.

As well as cleaning, the other focus of the weekend was restocking the lodge pantry. This is not just a case of nipping into New World and filling a few shopping bags – it involves the delivery and sorting of all the non-perishable food required for the next 12 months. The food was delivered by truck to the car park around mid-morning. There were two pallets of supplies for us and another two for Serac Lodge (our neighbours on the mountain). Yes, this is a heck of a lot of food, and it all had to be carried from the car park up to the lodge. The club has a number of specially adapted frame packs that are used for this purpose. So once all the supplies were unloaded quite a number of trips were required to get everything up to the lodge. Once this was done, the food then had to be sorted, checked and stored in the pantry (under Andrew's careful supervision).

Our efforts during the morning meant that most of the work had been done. One other task that needed attention was the lodge's standard recipes. Sue along with some of the other punters spent quite a bit of time updating these recipes. Other punters got out of the lodge for a bit of an amble. I chose to have a well deserved nap.

We got lucky with dinner. We have an arrangement with our neighbours (Serac Lodge) on this day each year. The arrangement is that one of the clubs cook the evening meal for

both lodges; it was Serac's turn this year. Dinner included roast beef, veges and Yorkshire pudding – not the usual tramping fodder!

As most of the work was done on Saturday, we had a bit of free time on Sunday before returning to Wellington. A few of us went for a walk down to Whakapapa village via Meads wall and the Whakapapanui stream. Barbara kindly came down in the club van to pick us up.

A Bit more About the Ruapehu lodge

Our lodge on Mount Ruapehu is the club's largest asset, but it does not get fully utilized especially over the summer months. The club is trying to encourage members (and non-members) to make more use of it. There are probably quite a few members who have never visited the lodge. So the words that follow are intended for these people.

The lodge is not a back country hut. It has electricity, hot water, heating, proper bathrooms, and a lot of the comforts you have at home. But there are no en suites or spa baths, and there is definitely no room service. Bunk rooms vary in sleeping capacity and layout. All people can be catered for.

The lodge is located very close to the road at Iwikau Village and is only a short walk from the ski field chair lifts. The lodge can be used as a base not only for skiing, but also for other activities such as tramping, climbing, and cycling. There are hot pools not too far away.

Non-members are also able to stay in the lodge. So you are welcome to bring your friends, relatives and work colleagues.

Mt Holdsworth day walk

Easy medium. 6-8 May

Mani Maniparathy

Punters: Mike Gilbert, Simon Clark, Ally Clark, Dom (3yrs), Annemarie Wood, Mani Maniparathy, Ayesha, Saeran (13 yrs), Azmarah (10 yrs)

On a slightly overcast Sunday, we set out for a day on the tracks of Mt Holdsworth. We got out of bed in uncivilised hours (7:30am) for a Sunday morning, packed lunch and left home around 9:00am. My wife would have rather enjoyed a traditional Mothers' Day, tucked up in bed 'till 11am pampered by the kids, but grudgingly joined the rest of the family for the walk. After 90 minutes, drive over the Rimutakas and a brief stop for coffee in Greytown, we arrived at Mt Holdsworth car park. All dressed responsibly for a day of unsettled weather.

We started the walk around 10:45am. The first part of the track was very well laid and a gentle uphill to Rocky Lookout Point, almost good enough for wheelchair access. This part of the track was sheltered, by a thick canopy of beautiful natural fauna, from the gusty wind being experienced higher up the mountain. Not far into the walk we met the overnight campers returning with the horror story of wind, rain and a sleepless night. Thankfully, the weather had improved and there was no sign of the previous night's storm except water streaming down between rocks around the track. It took us 90 minutes to reach Rocky Lookout Point, somewhat at a slow pace set by younger members of the walking party. From the lookout point we could see towards the East (I think); the Wairarapa landscape covered by the thick forest of Holdsworth.



Anne-Marie, Ayesha, Azmarah, Mike, Saeran, Dominic (background) and 'invisible' Ally

Everyone tucked into their lunch. Unfortunately, we could not sit on the flashy newly built lookout platform, as the gusty wind was bad at the exposed point. We took cover behind the Rock. After 45 minutes break, Simon and Ally with their young children decided to turn back.



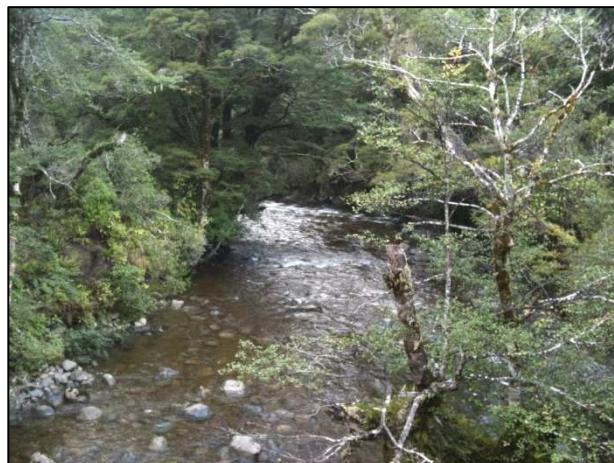
Walking through the beech forest of Atiwhakatu Valley

The rest of us headed up towards Mountain House Shelter. Soon the track became a bit untidy, no longer wheelchair friendly!!, with protruding rocks and an uneven surface – but still a pretty easy track. This part of the track along the ridge was a bit exposed to the wind. From the ridge track we could get a good view of the contours of Mt Holdsworth. It took us around an

hour from the Rocky Lookout to reach the shelter. The shelter had posters containing interesting historical facts about a lodge where the shelter stands now. We could also see the lodge up on the hill, another two hour walk away, where overnight campers would have spent the previous night. Mike recounted the recent history of the lodge on the hill being burned down along with a fugitive involved in a drug deal gone wrong, real life story for silver screen.

After another 45 minutes drinking coffee we brought along and eating jelly beans supplied by our ever so resourceful trip leader, we started the return walk. Soon after we turned left at Pig Flat towards Atiwhakatu Valley, the track got steep and rocky. Some parts of the steep incline were covered by beautiful beach forest. I started to hear complaints from the

two tiring kids. The more experienced Mike and Anne-Marie charged ahead of us. Wishfully I assured my grumpy wife and tiring daughter that we should get through this 2:1 steep section of slope in half an hour. The steep downhill continued for well over an hour, before landing on the flat ground of Donnelly Flat. It was getting late and we sped along the easy track perched above the Holdsworth Creek. The last section of the walk was really beautiful, but due to faltering light we sped along without taking time to absorb the views. We finished our walk around 4:30pm, taking lot more time than more experienced walkers would do.



Holdsworth Creek

The walk had the right balance of sections of easy and more difficult terrain for the kids, just stretching their physical limits. Along with the physical exercise, we also socialised with like minded people. Mike and Anne-Marie were ever so polite walking companions. If not for the walk we would have had a lazy 'Mother's Day' gorging on food. It was a great day out for my young family. My wife may disagree, you'll have to ask her!! Anyway, we made up by visiting McDonalds for a cheap and lazy dinner when we returned to Hutt. My kids rate McDonalds better than Logan Brown and Ayesha was happy not to have to cook dinner – everyone was happy.

Ruahines Easter egg hunt

Private tramp, Easter 2011

Marie Henderson

Punters: Allen and Sue Higgins, Marie Henderson

I have never spent much time in the Ruahines. Too far from home. Too difficult to get to. You have to read a map just to work out where the road end is. Too similar to the Tararuas. Why would anyone go that far just to get away from a bit of wind? But after a bit of to-ing and fro-ing I got talked in to a trip to the Ruahines for Easter. It turned out okay. I could even be tempted to go again.

We left town on Thursday night, the forecast wasn't flash, but I trusted my trip leader. After a bit of 'take this road until intersection X' and then 'go on to intersection Y', which I observed in complete calm from the back seat, followed by a 15 minute wander around to get to a picnic spot 2 minutes from the road end, it was dark but we were set. From now on it was on foot, so pretty straight forward.

Good Friday



Allen high above the pool

The mist cleared overnight to a fine day. A quick jaunt up a broad creek to Standfield Hut, where we met a couple of hunters, followed by a track on a ridge over to Cattle Creek hut for lunch, I was beginning to appreciate how different the Ruahines were. This is no place to think a wander off track at any time could be the go. The bush would be very slow going and quite annoying.

We 'scrambled' up creek to Pohangina Hut, where we met another couple of hunters. Not really a scramble, but the creek has been washed out a bit so it was not as straight forward or fast as it used to be (reading the hut books confirmed). Again, any off track adventure would take real dedication, now because of the loose, non-vegetated nature of the terrain. The

DoC short cut across the ridge to the hut is reasonably entertaining by DoC standards.

From here we headed up river to Ngamoko Hut, where, at exactly the right time of day, we saw no hunters. This was our stop for the night. The river was full enough to keep you interested without being dramatic. But it was cold with no sun in the valley. A tidy hut with a nice fire and supply of dry wood kept all punters smiling. Plus gooey creme eggs!



A rest on the tops

Easter Saturday

The barometer looked good, so as a break from the creeks and rivers we headed up to pt 1350 just south of Whaihgapuna and along the ridge to Toka. Along the ridge we met a group of three hunters and saw another pair before heading down to Leon Kinvig Hut where we saw no hunters. Another nice tidy hut with an open fire and lots of dry wood cut. Plus a pair of whio in the river. This was the night for marshmallow Easter eggs! The tops were a fine variation, a fantastic choice to go up.



Lunch on the ridge above Birch Whare

Easter Sunday

Time to start to go find the road end with the car... Where did we park it? The hut log books gave a few hints about the route. And as we were forewarned we made good progress, coming across pt 1232 (no worries), down to Birch Whare (a good pointer for getting out of the creek in the hut book helped) and along the ridge back to Cattle Creek hut. The ridge route is unmaintained and so quite interesting. It was hot on the final big climb out from Birch Whare and I got a sunburned nose. We saw no hunters, had caramel Easter eggs and were disappointed by the state of the fire place.

Easter Monday

The wind picked up over night and a bit of driven drizzle set in. Not to worry as we had two packets of crisps in the car! It was a simple wander back to the road end. We took the high route to keep things different.

So some trips you should let yourself be talked in to. I loved the nice huts and varied route and was puzzled by the non-off-track nature of the terrain. Sure you can do it in the Ruahines, but you need to take more care on the route or have oodles of time and patience and maybe a spare layer of elephant skin would help too. Certainly worth another look.

Easter eggs and tramping in Whirinaki

Easy medium tramp, Easter 2011

Annika Magdorf

Punters: Oleg Vlasov, Barbara Keenan, Annika Magdorf, Marie Smith, Sam Buckley, HelenLaw (leader), Anita Su'a

Easter this year starts with rushing out of the office on Good Friday to meet the Easy/medium tramping crew at the station. On schedule, the caravan packed with eager trampers and heaps of backpacks starts towards Turangi. Just before 10pm we arrive at the backpackers and it takes less than 20 minutes until all of us are in bed and getting a rest ready for the next three days of outdoor activity.



Giant Rimu

Friday morning starts early as we want to be on the track as soon as possible, and we still have a couple of hours drive to the road end. In Manganui we meet Gary who drops us off at the beginning of the track and takes care of our van during the weekend. And off we go into the drizzle and into a mystical forest. Some trees are so massively big and high, we have

to be careful not to flip over backwards when we bend back to look up to the top. I'm excited - it's my first tramp with the club and I am not quite sure what to expect. Half an hour later, we get to the river and after crossing it a couple of times and struggling to find markers to get to the path, we decide to simply follow the stream towards Mangamata Hut. I quite enjoy the experience of 'river-ing' (rather than tramp-ing). As we arrive at the hut after more than five hours walk, we are happy to change into dry clothes and the luxury of an afternoon nap. Helen performs magic and turns the random combinations of communal food each of us has carried into a delicious pasta meal with Easter eggs as dessert.

The next morning starts dry and we are rewarded with a fantastic view over the valley and rising mist above the forest. This time we beat DoC's estimated walking time and arrive at Central Whirinaki hut at lunchtime. Again, a beautiful walk, much easier because we just follow the track and there are only a few river crossings. After our lunch break, it starts

raining again, we refer to the 'easy' approach of the tramp and stay in the cosy hut. The 'library' consists of a variety of hunting magazines and we learn about duck recipes, guns and other martial tools. There is also lots of time to chat to other trampers about outdoor adventures.

After a good night's sleep we get into our clothes that have in common a smoky smell of the fire place – and the perfume of two massive steaks pan fried the evening before (yes, those guys carried them in). We start off in a dry and promising day. First highlight are two blue ducks who 'sing' their special morning song for us and perform some paddling against the stream, resulting in a funny backward swim. The walk out of the park is easy, apart from some 'limbo dance' under fallen tree trunks. With perfect timing we meet Gary and our van, all arriving at the same time at the road end. Some massive clouds are coming in, the forecast looks rather grim. We have a choice to make, Camping at the nearby camping site, or check out the local farm stay. The result is not revealed in this newsletter, sorry. We can reassure you though; all of us had a good time.



Group photo

Three passes

Medium fit trip. 22 - 25 April

Nicole Miller

Punters: Mike (Leader), Sharron, Antone and Nicole

The closer it gets to a long weekend the more often the weather forecast pages are up on my Internet browsers. No different for this years Easter weekend. The weather patterns



At the start of the track

coming up over the West Coast of the South Island and over Arthur's Pass were changing every time new data was uploaded, but had one thing in common - red colours and severe weather warnings. Nevertheless two parties were set up to walk over the three passes starting from both ends with a car swap.

Mike, Sharron, Ant and I were heading towards the West Coast to walk up the Styx River and around a couple of big slips towards Grassy Flat Hut. After a lunch break and perfectly timed regulation breaks we made use of the weather and went over the Styx Pass and up the Arahura Valley to Harman Hut. Shortly after

we arrived rain settled in and the next morning we decided to have a well earned rest day. We had to bear the hard consequences of a hut day including hut philosophy, lots of sleep, a lot of chocolate Easter eggs and planning the next day.

Rain was supposed to settle and with an early start we decided to head off towards Browning Pass. Rain eased after a couple of hours and after a steep decent towards the Clough Memorial and some bush bashing we had lunch at Park Morpeth Hut. Heading up the Cronin Stream we made our way along the river bed towards the Cronin Glacier with a final steep ascent towards Whitehorn pass. The ice field on the other side was washed out with large bridges over the stream, so we had to traverse along steep gravel slopes and finally climb on the icefield further down the valley. By the time we reached Harman Pass it was still too windy to set up a campsite so we tried to descend the Taipo river gorge as far as possible before daylight finished. The Clough cable way was a welcome alternative to cross the White River at night and with a couple of breaks and two people at the wheels we managed to get everybody on the other side. Some boulder hopping later and after climbing over more slips we arrived at Carrington Hut after a long day.



On Brownings Pass

The walk out the Waimakariri River was straight forward and the thought of having a beer in the pub at the road end got more and more appealing towards the end of the tramp...

It's a bit like the Tararuas

Medium fit tramp. 29 April – 1 May
Kylie Biv/Colenso Spur

Mike Pheathean

Punters: Morag McConville, Siobhan Murray,
Bernie Smithyman (leader) and Mike Phethean

As usual we met at the train station on Friday night for our trip to the Ruahines.

We stopped for kebabs on the way and then in what seemed like no time at all were at the road end. We had a few hours to walk on the first night to get to Parks Peak hut to make Saturday a reasonable day. The path was well graded and we made good progress dodging a slip or two.

When we arrived at the new hut, I couldn't help but shake a feeling of déjà vu. The hut seemed bigger than the six bunks it held. It was kindly warmed up for us by an earlier arriving couple who had lit the fire.



Despite the promise of good weather we woke to a bit of Tararua dew (light rain to the uninitiated.) It went before we had finished our breakfast. Tales of Harry elicited the question “Oh you’re in the tramping club”, who needs more club PR when we’ve already got Harry!



The day would be a long day (though not as long as the day some idiot took his medium fit punters out for 15.5 hours). The route over the tops was well marked to the bush line but then the path was buried in the soft snow.

The snow definitely slowed travel but thankfully Bernie made the steps, for once I was saved the hassle. This did mean I was left at the back speaking motivational words. I think I will be forced back to making steps given my performance in this task.

Being at the back gave me time to reflect on the scenery around me and that sense of déjà vu got stronger. This was a bit like the Tararuas. You know where you go over Baldy and the Broken axe pinnacles. It struck me that if I was giving a club talk about the trip I could share this wonderful and original insight with the whole of the club.

Once back on the path the descent to Barlow Hut was welcome and then came that sense of déjà vu, the hut seemed a bit like Jumbo. I shook off the feeling as I chopped veges for the evening meal. A shorter Sunday saw us head back to the tops to descend to the car park.

Again that sense of déjà vu it all looked like the Tararuas - you know the bit along Mt Holdsworth. Good thing we hadn't just done the Baldy, Broken axe pinnacles route though as that was on the club schedule for the next weekend.

City to sea

Easy medium day tramp, 30 May

Kay Eden

Punters: Spencer (leader), Kay, Sam, James, Barbara, Weimin and Deborah

No one can say that it was an 'early' start at 10am, but then that is what the City to Sea day walk was offering us, an easy ramble with some sightseeing and chatter for five hours, on a Saturday.

This is a very well known walk, described as a walkway that starts in the heart of central Wellington near Parliament and ends at the south coast, 12 kilometres away in Island Bay.



Surprisingly, even our esteemed leader struggled to find a map of this "popular" walk, resorting to the City Council or was it DOC? Whoever was willing to trawl through their archives to find the much desired pamphlet.

Needless to say, we were all happy for the trivia as we started off from the city, uphill through the old Wellington cemetery. Our 1st

highlight was the metal sculptures that sit above the Wellington rose gardens, toi toi, a flax bush, a cabbage tree and what we think was a pohutakawa moulded carefully out of metal, amongst the natural fauna of the botanical garden slopes. Beautiful!

At this stage we wondered if this was really going to be taxing at all, with the sun stripping us of our outer layers, walking through quiet gardens and with sunhats duly donned, could this really be Wellington in April??!!

Like all WTMC walks, there was a considerable amount of chatter as we ambled up the back of the city, stopping for what proved to be the only convenient public bathrooms at the top of the cable car (and a sneaky tourist pic) and then down into Victoria University grounds. Two team members hailing from San Francisco wondered aloud what the true difference was between flatting and living in dorms on campus....ah how to explain baked beans on toast for 7 days for a household of eight students....?

The city to sea walk then took us into Aro Park where we discovered the Tanera Community gardens, still working organic plots that can be hired and to date have about 33 plots with gardeners from around the world finding a bit of peace to grow veges in the centre of bustling Wellington City.

It may sound like it had been all roses so far and actually it was but lunch was well overdue with all that fresh air. To be honest, I think we were lucky enough to choose one of the days that coined the famous phrase – you can't beat Wellington, on a good day. While we stopped on a small hill to eat our lunch, which conveniently housed a picnic table next to the Scottish Athletic Club, we surmised that it was not even windy...yes a hat blew off the table, quickly followed by the top of a lunchbox – but that's not even a breeze by Wellington standards!



After lunch, we wound through parts of the city's western suburbs as we walked through well tended tracks cutting behind the houses of Brooklyn and Vogeltown and dipped in and out of civilization before another necessary stop for bathrooms at MacAlister Park. A quick catch of breath outside the Berhampore Nursery and relief as we narrowly missed taking the wrong driveway that would have lead us into the local retirement home (it wasn't that slow a walk!), then we entered the Municipal golf course (opened in 1915). Not a golfer in sight as we crossed behind the 7th hole and started the first decent trail uphill towards Tawatawa trig point.



How could we not stop on that ridge and take in a breath as well as the views – letting our handy Explore Wellington pamphlet help us to spot Erskine College in the background of Island Bay Parade (founded in 1905 for a Catholic girls college but now used as an art college and function centre) and Tapu Te Ranga Marae below us (established in 1974, working in

conjunction with Te Manawa Karioi, committed to restoring much of the open space surrounding the marae to native bush). Look at that relaxed stance – do we look like this was a hard walk? I don't think so, but we really got one of the most spectacular days....

Hills, winding up to the next ridge, made the conversation drop off for a while and sugary snacks made an appearance from our day packs - as we realized that the sun has some heat in it and Wellington is definitely still a hilly city by foot.

At the top of the next ridge we all fall silent as we take in the spectacular 360 degree views. Later, we all commented that this was our favourite spot of the day. Skies so clear that we could see snow on the Tararuas to the north, Tapu Te Ranga Island in all its glory in the Southern harbour, Owhiro bay below us and our eyes could even follow the Interislander on its path nearly right into the Marlborough sounds of the South Island.



The Marae has placed a powhenua (carved post erected to symbolise the relationship between Māori iwi, hapu and the land) on the

top of this hill, which we couldn't resist the temptation to climb up alongside and have our photos taken to prove we made it to this highest point of the walk!



From there it was a downhill walk, with some challenging steps up over the final ridge to finish at Island Bay (settled by Italians and famous for its picturesque fishing boats). We were mostly interested in finding a good café (tick – done, thank you Smashed Pipi) and swapping our personal highlights of a classic day walk across Wellington City.

To anyone who is thinking of doing this walk in their spare time – we think it is a fantastic introduction to Wellington, and really gives a good orientation of the how the city is laid out. Is it challenging? Not really but on a good day, it offers all the fresh air, gentle exercise and escape from the rat race that you could need for one day.

We hope WTMC keeps this walk on their annual list of guided day trips.

Musings on a Jumbo trip

Medium tramp, 6-8 May

Hans Wiskerke

ZhingYie, Weimin Ren, Colin Boutell, Hans Wiskerke (leader), Kate Cushing

Transitions...from CBD to backcountry within a few hours, from a toasty van into the pleasantly cool evening air, from road end car park onto a rooty track, and then into an overly toasty Atiwhakatu hut with windows wide open. Changing from a horizontal mattress to breakfast, to a vertical position while going up a steep track, absorbing views, noises, smells, some raindrops and lots of oxygen. The real work-out finished



already before lunch at Jumbo: heavy packs dumped on the floor. The afternoon starts as a promising amble along the ridge, admiring transitions from cold and humid yet transparent air into thick white clouds and back again, obscuring or showing Holdsworth, McGregor and the Kings and changing every minute – fascinating! Further away Kapiti Island lies on its back in the sea, its huge belly soaking up the autumn sun, and in the southwest our imagination transforms a faraway greyish line into a glimpse of the South Island.



Reality kicks in with wind and rain; in silence plans are made to buy a new jacket, or make a hot soup once back in the hut. Cheese and crackers together with some copies of North & South comfortably allows the afternoon to fade away into darkness. Meanwhile Hutt Valley makes their dinner, and three Musqueteers seemingly enjoy their Backcountry tinnies. Not much later Moroccan spices fill the cooking area, and

soon our dinner is ready. Einstein already jotted down in shorthand that Energy = Moroccan Cous², however our easy-ish day and Kate's absence mean surplus food is available. One Musqueteer is tempted to become a WTMC member just by shoving some spoonfuls of MC² his way, and he definitely wants to join after Ernest Adams and freshly whipped cream are provided.

In the evening discussions drift from Hone to fossils, linger around theology and spiritualism, touch on ACC, Transmission Gully and Greece, and seem to go on deep into the night. Must have been 10PM..... A rainy night lets Jumbo shake and rattle in the gusty winds, and develops into a lazy Sunday morning. Hut Valley peek outside and opt for a

quick exit to the rodent; meanwhile our club new member is lured away by his old mates by a bacon breakfast.

Only after another hour of exchanging thoughts on Falun Gong and the Wellington railway system we say goodbye to these three wise men, and literally go with the water flow as we retrace our climb of the day before. Rain changes to drizzle and then to blue skies, some muscles demonstrate their memory during short bits uphill, and Weimin's TimTams don't make it back to the van.



While lingering in the sun our other club-members arrive from their longer trip, and with no further excuses left we head back to Wellington. Great place to anchor the mind during the week before it wanders off too far...!

Quickest learner: ZhingYie; Fastest running photographer: Weimin Ren; Most colourful person: Colin Boutell; Tour guide and scribe: Hans Wiskerke; And dearly missed: Kate Cushing

How to inspire – In memory of Jane Marie Perkins

4 October 1961 – 9 April 2011

Illona Keenan and Megan Banks

Jane started tramping when she was eleven, after being invited by her friend Dianne Tipene's family to do the Milford Track. She must have been hooked, as a couple of days after finishing the Milford, she did the Hollyford. Many adventures followed, including in 1984 when her Dunedin flatmates undertook a trip into the Young Wilkin. (see photo: Gillespie Pass). Soon after this photo the rain set in, being stuck on the wrong side of the Makarora River the flatmates flagged down a passing helicopter and were subsequently rescued by a jet boat.



Gillespie Pass 1984. Flatmates Tim Angus, Janet Dunn, Liz Lightfoot, Jane Perkins, Dugald Wilson

After tramping with a number of special friends throughout the eighties and nineties, including

kayaking and cycling in Nepal, Fox River adventures, sailing to the Cook Islands, alpine courses in the Southern Alps, trips to the Kawekas, Ruahines and Tararuas, Jane joined the Wellington Tramping and Mountaineering club in about 2000.



Fohn Lakes, January 2008, Fohn Saddle, Aspiring National Park

Jane was an encourager, teacher and great instigator. Before I became a member of WTMC, Jane would look at the club night schedules and invite me along to interesting talks, encouraging me to hear about ice climbing adventures and epic Himalayan cycle tours. Then when we were out tramping, we would meet other people in the hills, and Jane would say “they are a member of Club”. Jane would talk about places such as 1000 acres, and mention there was a club trip going – encouraging me to sign up for my first club trip.

Later further club trips followed thanks to more Jane encouragement. On these trips I would see her having entertaining in-depth conversations with the likes of Alistair Young, usually about different dietary preferences (carnivore versus vegetarian), films or something more philosophical.

As a Documentary Maker, Jane ensured that our trips together were well photographed. After returning, Jane would always provide other trip participants with an envelope of photos, with the place and date written on them. These packages serve as a wonderful reminder of epic adventures and something I will always treasure. Jane’s artistic expertise was obvious in the composition and subjects of her photos.

She was also inspiring by writing about her adventures, in December 2007 she wrote:

“We climbed up to Mt Holdsworth and got spectacular views. Several bumps later (and a lot of sweat on my part) we were at Jumbo peak, then Angle Knob, then we started looking for the cairn to the track to McGreggor Biv, which was obvious in such great weather. The biv is very cute, nestled on the bush edge.

I was so pleased to go there as it opened up views of Dorset ridge hut and Nicholls hut across the valley, and the route to Carkeek hut. Plus I could see the twins behind Waiopahu hut, and Te Matawai and Arete, and pretty much everywhere! Illona and I had been up on Arete in a white out at Labour weekend in October, so it was good to see where we were.”



December 2007, Jane above McGreggor Biv, Tararua Forest Park

Talking to other tramping friends of Jane's, one thing that we all noticed was the large size of her pack. The aim of reducing this load, led to "small pack" people being asked to show and tell the contents of their small packs in the huts at night. Spreadsheets of tramping gear weights were emailed around. There were phone calls the night before trips, about what could be left behind. Unfortunately Jane was very good at justifying the presence of everything that was in her pack, meaning that reducing her pack weight was a rather difficult task.



January 2008, Jane Lake, off the Dusky Track, Fiordland National Park.

Jane had many many friends, and a lot of those friends were people she met in the hills, either on Club or private trips. She was very good at keeping in contact with people she had met on trips. Her encouragement to go tramping and her enthusiasm when she was out there is something that I will cherish and remember for the rest of my life.

Kai on the Fly

Aunty Rata

Kia ora fellow trampers

Snacks are very important on tramps and when engaging in other outdoor activities where shops are not close at hand. Nobody gets very far on an empty stomach. There are a few obvious things to take into account when choosing tramping snacks. Snacks need to be tasty, nutritious, light, durable, robust and good value for money. These attributes are so obvious I don't think they require further explanation. However, there are a few additional considerations when selecting your tramping snacks.

Tailor the snack to your trip

Ask yourself what grade is the trip? On a hard trip you may not get many opportunities to stop but you want to keep your energy levels up. You will need snacks that are easy and quick to eat that provide an instant energy hit. I'm thinking lollies and carbo gels and yes I

know, some of you do not consider these to be valid food groups. On easier trips you can possibly afford to indulge in elaborate, messy, heavy stuff of dubious calorific benefit – cucumber sandwiches and oranges if you wish, a lunchtime pint, no wait the club has a no alcohol policy. On kayaking trips weight will not be a big issue but you may want snacks that still taste good after a quick dip in salt water or being smeared with sand and sunscreen. What is the weather forecast? If there is a heavy rain warning you want snacks you can eat on the run. I'm thinking something like the Healy Double Down (two slabs of cheese with a slice of salami in the middle). If gale force northerlies are forecast lollies in paper wrappings are just asking for trouble as you chase after the rubbish heading south over the hills. Likewise there is a risk your lightweight scroggin will end up down the front of your fleece, in your hair or in the face of the person next to you rather than in your mouth. Heading out in a heat wave? Not going to the Tararuas then. Snacks with a high moisture content such as tins of tuna will be welcome. On the other hand your chocolate will likely melt and any yoghurt or salad will go off, and yes punters do take yoghurt and salad on trips.

Trial and error

Snacks are very personal. Just because your buddy likes tinned oysters doesn't mean you will. By all means take note of other people's snacks and experiment with them but it is unwise to try a new snack for the first time on a long trip without some back up nourishment. Don't forget to change your snacks from time to time otherwise you will get sick of them. Boredom is not good because this will lead to you pinching other people's snacks or under eating. Both outcomes could make you unpopular or slow and tired which will have the same result. You want to reach your destination in daylight. Just as you can be a gear freak you can be a snack food freak. New snack foods are constantly coming onto the market giving you different stuff to try out.

Aunty Rata has three favourite snacks: unsalted, unroasted mixed nuts, Em's Power Bars and diant jelly beans. Nuts fill you up and provide protein, fat and nutrients. Em's Power Bars provide slow release low GI carbs and a bit of chocolate. I'm surprised giant JBs are legal. They are colourful, shapely, taste delicious, lift the spirits, ignite the soul and provide an awesome, if fleeting, sugar high.

Variety is the spice of life

See my comment about boredom above. Do not rely on sweet snacks. Okay you may have a sweet tooth but your body will start to crave savoury, salty stuff after a bit of a workout and if you don't have the appropriate snacks you risk getting cramp or just under eating because you can't face any more sugar. Salty nuts or pretzels are a good option as is chomping down on some of the cheese and crackers you brought for lunch. If you tramp with the same people on a regular basis you may be familiar with their snack preferences and you can mix and match accordingly. This is a subtle difference between trading snacks and bringing snacks you don't like.

Accessibility

You can have the most amazing snacks but if they are not within easy reach you may as well have left them at home. Snacks need to fit into and be stored in, shorts pockets or the top pocket of your pack. Unless you have exceptional taste in snacks and lots of them to share, you don't want to be the one keeping the rest of your party waiting while you empty out the entire contents of your pack looking for your snacks.

Quantity

It is best to have more snacks than you think you will need just in case you are delayed or need to bribe the trip leader but unless you are a really annoying punter there is no need to go overboard. If you do not take a packed lunch and rely totally on snacks for your nutrition during the day then you will need more snacks than the people who produce sandwiches, last night's left overs or a thermos of soup for lunch.

Finally what about a new game? Why don't you guys send in your tramping related questions to the newsletter editor and I'll answer them. Dream up a cool pseudonym. Now possibly you're thinking Aunty Rata is not an expert on all things tramping. Well, we will have to see won't we? Send your questions to newsletter@wtmc.org.nz and Sarah can forward them on to me.

Other news, notes and reminders

Federated Mountain Clubs conference

The 80th conference for the Federated Mountain Clubs (FMC) is taking place on the weekend of 11 and 12 June at Te Papa, Wellington. What will the future for public conservation land look like? How do we protect what we value? Do go along and be part of debate and dialogue that will shape that future. For more information go to: <http://www.fmc.org.nz/conference>

FMC newsletter now available

The FMC May Newsletter is now available at www.fmc.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/Newsletter/Club1105.pdf. This edition includes:

- Update on Mackenzie Forum
- National Policy Statement on Biodiversity
- DoC Conservation Management Strategy Surveys – Northland, Auckland and Waikato
- While We're on the Subject of Surveys... What is "Quintessentially Kiwi?"
- Old Ghost Road Issues
- Walking Access Commission – Informative Visits to Clubs Available

- Book Release – Summits and Shadows, about Jack Clarke, one of the early mountaineers in NZ
- New Map Product. A technique has been developed to print Topo 50 maps (or any other map) onto cloth. The maps are rugged and water proof.

Te Araroa - Pukeatua Track Opening – 18 June 2011

Celebrating completion of the Levin - Wellington section of New Zealand's national trail. The Wellington Te Araroa Sub Trust invites you to the official opening of the Pukeatua Walking Track, which completes the Wellington-Levin section of Te Araroa-The Long Pathway.

Saturday 18 June 2011, School House Flats Camp, Otaki Forks. Walk commences at 10am to grass ridge lookout, followed by sausage sizzle and official opening at 1pm by Hon. Nathan Guy, Minister Internal Affairs and Kapiti MP.

For more information please contact Bill Wakelin, Chairman Wellington Sub Trust
Phone: 04 479 3557 or 021 609 540

Kevin Harvey (1933 – 2011)

Kevin was Vice President and President of the WTMC during the late 1960's. He was an expert bushman, a Mountain Safety Council Instructor, a member of Search and Rescue as well as being an able administrator for the WTMC and Kaumatua Tramping Clubs. Kevin Harvey died suddenly at home on 1 February 2011 of a stroke aged 77.

Paying for your trips

When you pay for your trips, one of the easiest ways to do so is online directly into the WTMCs bank account. The bank account number is: 060582 0013409 02

WTMCs online database of members

Being a member of the WTMC allows you access to all club members details through the online database. Go to: <http://www.wtmc.org.nz/members/> and key in your user name and password. If you can't remember this information click on 'find password', type in your email address and click on 'Get password'. Your password will be sent to you within a few minutes.

Deadline for submissions to July's WTMC newsletter: Friday 24 June