



The Mouth 'n' Ear

Wellington Tramping & Mountaineering Club Newsletter

Email: newsletter@wtmc.org.nz

February 2012



Random tarn on the way up Mt Philistine

David Jewell

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The Nature of Things

Sharron Came, President



Happy New Year everyone, I hope you had a great Christmas break. If you missed the snow in the Tararua's at Anniversary weekend don't worry there are some good tramping and cycling opportunities coming up. Check out the summer trip schedule and sign up for some adventures. If you have any ideas for future trips don't forget to pass them on to Amanda.

Although it is not on the trip schedule, we are planning to run a Bushcraft course the weekend of 23-25 March. There will be a trip sheet going up at the Clubrooms and we will be promoting this at our New Members night on Wednesday 22 February. The course will be run by Hans and Mika and it will be fantastic. If you are relatively new to tramping or just want to brush up on your tramping skills and meet some new people with similar interests this is an excellent opportunity. The course will be open to members and non-members so spread the word. You can also email Mika at secretary@wtmc.org.nz

As you may be aware the new financial year starts on 1 February. You should have received an email or letter by now inviting you to renew your membership for 2012. If you have not received a notice please contact Helen at membership@wtmc.org.nz. If you have done your two overnight trips and want to join the club now is a great time to fill out an application form and give it to Helen for processing. Application forms can be downloaded from the website, obtained from Helen or you can pick up a hard copy on any Wednesday night.

We will be having the Club Annual General Meeting on Wednesday April 18 2012. This is your opportunity to come along and find out what the Club has been up to all year, to ask questions about the Club finances and to elect Officers to run the Club for the 2012 year. As usual a set of audited accounts and an annual report will be sent out, probably with the March newsletter. Meantime we are calling for nominations for the various roles on the Club Committee. If you are interested in being nominated for any role you can download a nomination form from the Club website, see the copy on the back page of this newsletter or contact anyone on the Committee, we are happy to forward you a form and second your nomination if required.

Any member can put themselves forward for any position on the Club Committee. You do not need to be a super active trumper who has been in the Club for 10 years or the best mate of the President. We would love to get some relatively new members involved. If we have more than one person offering to fill a role we will have a vote at the AGM. We know we have vacancies for the following roles: social convenor, promotions officer, Ruapehu lodge convenor and transport officer. Other committee roles include - president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, chief guide, assistant chief guide, newsletter editor and membership officer. If you have accountancy skills we would love to hear from you. Steve Austin has been our Treasurer for many years and he would relish the opportunity to take on a different role.

A few weeks ago we had a committee barbecue at Steve and Jenny's place. This is an annual event where we try to get together all the people involved in the various sub-committees or who otherwise play a major role in helping make sure the club runs smoothly. We had great weather, excellent food, and superb company. I think this bodes well for the year ahead.

Last but not least, congratulations to Jackie Foster and Tony Gazley who climbed Mt Aspiring in early January. What an exhilarating way to kick off 2012!





I hope you've enjoyed the outdoors over the holiday period. If, like me, you were in the North Island, this enjoyment may have been tempered with slight frustration at the volumes of rain and wind. At Anniversary weekend, Richard and I were in the Ruahines and woke up to snow settled outside McKinnon Hut, with more drifting down through the murk. It wasn't a great day to have forgotten the GPS... though even with one, I suspect we would have abandoned our traverse of the Hikurangi range. Time for plan b.

As we walked around from Kawhatau Base to the road end holding our car, we were lucky enough to get a ride from the farmer for the last 3km. He talked about the number of times he'd been called out when people came to navigational grief around Hikurangi and the amount of time this consumed. It was good to leave a farmer with the impression that not all trampers are idiots (unlike some of our previous adventures in the area!) and helped alleviate some of our frustration at watching the clag lift during the long gravel walk.

There has been navigational grief aplenty during recent months. In December, Richard, Kate and I were doing an in-and-out along the Three Kings to Tarn Ridge, in the Tararuas. When we reached Atiwhakatu hut on the Friday night, we encountered four members of another tramping club. For reasons that will become obvious, I won't specify which, but it was not Wellington-based. We were slightly surprised at their initial lack of friendliness (or perhaps WTMC just has a more consciously friendly culture?!) but they did thaw slightly in the morning. They were pleased to hear that we were not, like them, off to Dorset Ridge hut, and they set off by 7am for their far-flung destination. Soon after, we were heading up Baldy and then started along the Kings. Lunch time saw us near Mid King, enjoying the calm but very misty weather. Three trampers approached – it was the other group, having taken a longer route via Jumbo and the Broken Axe Pinnacles. As they moved off, I said to the tail ender, “weren't there four of you?” He replied that the other guy was somewhere ahead. We expressed our puzzlement at this, given that we had been on the range for at least 45 minutes and had not seen him. “Maybe he sneaked past you,” was the response.

We leapfrogged them when they had their lunch on North King, though they soon passed again, still having not caught their missing member. We mused on the unlikelihood of him having passed us, and on the risks inherent in letting someone get too far ahead in poor visibility, and on our belief that our club trips would be smarter than to allow this, especially given the conditions. At Girdlestone, we had some navigational confusion of our own that involved coming back to the trig twice in fresh attempts to actually head in the right direction.... Simple mistakes are so easy when visibility is nil. Each time we were relatively quick to realise the error and since we were all close together it was easy enough to turn

around and retrace our steps. We arrived at Tarn Ridge Hut, maybe an hour wasted, but it was still relatively early so levels of contentment were high!

The next day, the story of the other group, which had become the subject of significant musing by us, continued to unfold. As we headed back along our route, on Baldy we spied some other, new people. "Are you the other ones from the [tactfully unnamed] tramping club?" they asked. "No," we replied with interest, "but we know who you mean!" It turns out that the missing member had spent the night at Jumbo, and was described by this very friendly couple as acting "somewhat sheepishly". We could only guess that in the clag he had made a significant navigational error and, by the time it was obvious, had only enough time to retrace to Jumbo.

The hut book at Atiwhakatu gave a happy ending to the story: all four were in it, reunited, having passed through not long before us. The Dorset hutters must have made a very early start to get down to Dorset Creek and up Jumbo, then down here before us. I thought of how I would have felt that night; worrying about the missing guy, what might have befallen him, and how we as a group had let this happen.

A couple of postscripts: when we got home, we saw news reports of some other trampers who had run into navigational confusion in the Arete/Tarn Ridge area that weekend and ended up being airlifted out. They had been due at Tarn Ridge hut the same night as us, but obviously we'd never seen them... And earlier this month, Richard and I were at Dorset Hut, and we saw that the other group had written in the "activity" column, "looking for [missing member]"... (and I have to note that during that trip, we met some very friendly trampers from other tramping clubs).

This story throws into relief some of our club values that are most important to me: being friendly and welcoming; functioning as a team; continually adapting behaviour to conditions. I was talking to one of our members currently based overseas, and her experiences of a club in her new city seemed totally opposite to the WTMC ethos. Having a "survival of the fittest" mentality, where people lagging behind are told to hurry up rather than being supported, and taking unnecessary risks, runs counter to any notions of best practice.

At this time of year, we get a lot of new people coming along on Wednesdays and heading out on trips. I hope that every member on a trip, leader or otherwise, takes the chance to demonstrate our values to newcomers.

Hans and Mika have kindly offered to run a Bushcraft course on the weekend of 24-25 March. This is a very basic introduction to tramping suitable for people without any experience. Feel free to point any potential participants their way.

Upcoming trips:

10-12 Feb Ruahines – Rangiwahia

Tramp	M	Irongate to Heritage	Steve Austin
Day	F	Jumbo Holdsworth	Megan Banks
Family	All	Rimutaka Incline cycle or daywalk	Daniel Moore

17-19 Feb Tararuas – Putara

Tramp	E	Herepai Hut	Clinton Hunter
Tramp	EM	Roaring Stag Hut - fauna and flora appreciation	Illona Keenan
Tramp	M	Dundas Hut	Dirk Naish
Tramp	MF	Haukura Ridge nav	Kate Cushing
Tramp	F	Bannister crossing	Sharron Came
Family	All	Otari/Wilton bush buggy walk	Constanze Schwind

25-27 Feb Ruahines – North Block Rd

Tramp	E	Sunrise Hut	Marie Henderson
Tramp	EM	Top Maropea Hut	Pete Gent
Tramp	F	Howletts via Sawtooth	Mike Phethean
Family	All	Paua Hut tramp	Angela Gilbert
Day	FE	Mid Waiohine/swim	Tony Gazley

2-4 Mar Taranaki - North Egmont

Climb	EM	Rock organpipes	Yibai He
Family	All	Wairarapa cycle trip	Kelvin Thiele

9-11 Mar Tararuas – Kapapakanui and Otaki Forks

Tramp	EM	Waitewaewae Hut	Steve Austin
Tramp	M	Elder Hut	Paul Christoffel
Tramp	F	Neill Winchcombe to Kaitoke	Richard Lardner
Family	All	Atiwhakatu Hut	Richard Lyth

16-18 Mar Tararuas and Richmond Range

Tramp	EM	Mangahao Flats Hut	Megan Banks
Tramp	F	Mount Fishtail Hut	Mike Phethean
Day	EM	Belmont Regional Park	Barbara Keenan
Cycle/Tubing	E	Waiohine Gorge	Harry Smith
Family	All	Ruapehu Lodge	Mike Gilbert

Membership

Helen Law, Membership officer



2012 subscription renewal

Thank you to those who have renewed your 2012 subscription early (before 1st February) and took advantage of the prompt payment discount.

For members who are yet to pay, please make payment as soon as possible. The fee structure is as follows:

Membership Type	2012 subscription
Senior	\$ 62
Couple	\$ 85
Veteran	\$ 52
Veteran couple	\$ 76
Family	\$ 38
Child/ Children	\$ 38
Friend of the Club	\$ 38

Please renew your subscription and make payment before the end of March to:

Account name: **Wellington Tramping and Mountaineering Club Inc**

Bank/branch: **National Bank of NZ, Manners St, Wellington**

Account number: **06-0582-0013409-02**

Please use your name, "subs" & invoice# (as shown on your invoice which begins with 2012xxxx) as payment references so that we can easily trace your payment. Alternatively you can post a cheque to the club mailbox at PO Box 5068. Please remember that if you want to receive newsletters by post within NZ, please add \$11 to your payment to cover part of the printing and postage costs. If you have misplaced your invoice, please contact me on membership@wtmc.org.nz.

Joining WTMC

Also a reminder that if you have completed 2 tramping trips with the club, you are qualify to become a member. There are lots benefits of becoming a member, including discount on club trips, priority lodge bookings, club journal and lots of discounts with your FMC card. Best of all, you will be a member of the best tramping clubs in NZ. So don't forget to fill in the membership form (which can be downloaded from our website – under The Club's Paperwork) and hand it to me during a club evening. Any questions please feel free to contact me.

Calling all club photographers!

Donna Maher and Jenny Beaumont, Social convenors



The WTMC annual photo competition is closing in fast. Now is the time to sort through your photos from the last year (or go out and take some!). Entries close on the 15th February 2012.

We have aligned our categories with that of the FMC photo competition so that we can enter our winning photos into the FMC competition (unless winners ask us not to).

The categories:

Above bush line
Below bush line
Hut and camp life
Native flora and fauna**
Outdoor landscape**

** no people in these photos please

Please note:

- No more than 2 entries per category per person
- Photos should have been taken since 1 January 2010.
- If you are into digital manipulation, please restrict it to cropping, sharpening and tonal/exposure adjustments.
- Photos should be as high as resolution as possible (up to 5MB) and submitted as .jpg files.
- Please label your photos with the category_your name_number (1 or 2 if it's the second entry for that category): e.g. above bush_BeaumontJ_1

Entries should be handed to Jenny or Donna (or another willing committee member!) on a Wednesday night on a CD or flash drive, or can be posted in to us at WTMC, PO Box 5068 Wellington.

Deadline for entries is Wednesday 15th Feb.

All entries and results will be presented on the 7th March. Put the date in your diaries now!!

Any questions please ask us at club or email us: social@wtmc.org.nz

We're also always looking for people to talk to us on a club night so if you've got any trips you want to tell us about please get in touch!

Trip reports

Waiohine-Cone-Neill Forks Hut-Totara Flats-Waiohine

Tararuas, 14-15 January 2012, Medium tramp, Place (map #1)

Debbie Buck

Punters: Gareth Morton (leader), Steve Austin, Graeme Corin, Debbie Buck, Christine Thomson

Five keen trampers set off from Wellington on Friday night, sustained by a Carterton Turkish dinner. We were not too enthusiastic about the rain and the gale-force winds that greeted us at the Waiohine road end campsite. After one casualty in the wind – Gareth's tent pole – our fearless leader and one other chivalrous chap retired to the van for a night of deep slumber. The rest of us persevered with probably less sleep and something more like real camping: one in the toilet block, and two of us as ballast in the two tents.

A dryish ascent up to Cone, motivated by Steve's brisk pace and Gareth's bottomless bag of snakes: essential kit as per 'Tramping Leadership 101'. The woosh of the wind got closer and more-serious sounding the closer we came to Cone, so we were well rugged up and psyched up by the time we emerged into the tussock at Cone and felt the full gravity-bending effects of the wind.

The exposed half-kilometer travel along Cone Ridge was the crux of the weekend for me, staggering, bracing every step to counteract the sideways wind force, wondering what random break-dance move the wind would send my body into next, applying martial-arts falling skills as I was flung crossways then downwards into a bush or a rock. Sorry, all photos have too much blur to depict the reality.

After tramping that brief fine line of scariness and excitement, the sanctuary amongst the contorted, moss-laden trees further along the Ridge was welcome. The noise of the wind followed us part of the way down the steep ~500m descent to Neill Forks hut. The changing vegetation and the example set by Steve's brisk pace distracted me somewhat from the realisation that tomorrow morning we would ascend the same 500m! Satisfaction at arriving mid-afternoon at a cosy wee hut, and another personal record: sleeping on the most mouldy mattress I have encountered in a DoC hut (or anywhere that I have travelled). A few hours to while away the afternoon reading the selection of current affairs and not-so current affairs magazines in the hut, and snoozing before dinner.

Dinner was sublime: gourmet cheese and dip entrée served by Christine, Gareth created (and directed sous-chefs) a sensational hot curry (perfect fuel for racing up hills the next morning) and Steve was the purveyor of chocolate biscuits. Contented, we slept soundly, albeit with some consciousness that it rained a lot during the night.

A calm and slightly drizzly morning greeted us. Residual curry and morning cuppa powered us quickly up to Neill Forks junction, where it sounded even windier than the previous day. We took in more of the scenery as we descended to sunny Totara Flats Hut for lunch. Definitely a treat to arrive in a hut with gas and brew up a hot drink for lunch.

The next few hours along the river, heading back to Waiohine road end went smoothly and sunnily until we lost time near the slip - literally! If anyone finds a watch in that area,

Gareth will be eternally grateful and may even reward you with some motivational snakes! Apart from that, a pleasant journey through the trees back to the bridge. The tramp finished on the swing bridge with a moment of reflection on another fabulous weekend in the mountains with an awesome leader and fantastic tramping companions.

Mini tubing trip on the Hutt River (Birchville)

13-15 January, Tubing trip, Wellington (map #2)

Snaiet Shalav

Punters: Snaiet Shalav, Jo Boyle , Joanne Shirtliff, Paul Clarke , Spencer Clubb

Planning any outdoor trip, especially a river activity around Wellington is dicey before you even set off. We managed to get a hot, sunny day with very strong winds.

The recent rainfall caused a change of plan upon arriving at the river, which was three times its normal size and looking mighty turbulent at the final rapid, which is rough at the best of times. My excellent group patiently waited while we scouted out options and decided on a shortened route that we ended up doing twice.

Spencer got to play around with his raft, adding stone weights to it for better stability and we discovered that Warehouse paddles snap under pressure. A kayak double-ended paddle or flippers on your hands work best.

The vicinity of Harcourt Park is lovely for river activities and there is also a nice cycle track if you wanted a nice day out with multiple things to do.

Joanne and Paul had perfect vehicles for transporting all people and tubes backwards and forwards. We managed to get five people and floating devices into two cars, although several ferrying rides were required once the devices were fully inflated.

Floating down a river in the sun is just magic. I am thinking I might have to invest in a waterproof camera to capture images of such a picturesque activity but the river has tremendous power and it is easy to forget that anything can happen at any moment. We had one capsize on the second run which resulted in a very bruised thigh and lost paddle. Good reminder that a wetsuit and life jacket are a must in the water.

Not the Polar Range

20 – 23 January, Fit tramp, Arthurs Pass (map #3)

Stephen Healey

Punters: Sharron Came, David Jewell, Michael Phethean,
Tom Rose, Mariusz Drodowski, Stephen Healey
and occasionally Geoff Keey

Saturday morning saw us heading off up the four wheel drive track leading to Temple Basin in the clag. The morning was misty and cool, with a chilly breeze but we hoped it would clear as the really bad stuff was not supposed to arrive until tonight.

Sure enough, as we gained height the cloud started to disperse and the views opened up around us.

It's a steep haul up the ski field, at one point there is a line of stakes with a rope strung along between them as an aid to pull yourself up the steep rocky slope, it is the first time I could have used a Jumar device while tramping.

As you approach the top of the final ski tow, the best route is to head slightly left to the low point as this appears to be the actual Col and it is straightforward to cross here on both sides.

We stopped here for a while, for snacks and to bask in the sun and take in the view.

Directly below the col there is a great little shingle slide, so I took off down this at speed, only to realise as I reached the bottom of it that I had left my gloves back at the col.

My pack came off and I had to retrace my steps at a somewhat more leisurely pace back up the hillside to retrieve the missing items. On the plus side I did get two shots at the shingle slide, while the others only had one.

The route down from here is occasionally cairned and is straightforward with good visibility; you wouldn't want to get off it though as the drop off on either side is considerable. We had taken our ice axes and crampons as we were lead to believe that there might be snow on the northern slopes of the col. There was not, however, a drop of the white stuff anywhere; so while we might have looked like serious punters, the hardware was to stay attached to the packs.

Reaching the river we followed it down to where it gorged up and sidled up on the true left as advised. The route here goes a bit pear shaped and we tried both higher and lower versions without any real success. The ground here is scrubby and you are continually dropping in and climbing out of a number of awkward little gullies; I would advise the higher option until able to see a line down to the flats. Then it is 50/50 whether to stay high or drop down to where a trail finally appears again on the flats, both routes join up around the corner as you sidle up the true right of the Mingha to where you can find a crossing point and reach the luxury of the boardwalk up to the Goat Pass.

While about halfway across the scrubby side, I thought I spied a cairn lower down, so I dropped my pack and headed down to check it out, it turned out to be a false lead though and when I returned back up the slope my pack had done a disappearing act. I searched frantically through the snowgrass climbing higher and higher with no success. Finally realising I had climbed higher than my starting point, I stopped and zig zagged back down the slope trying to rediscover my pack, the feeling of panic as you contemplate life in the hills without everything you need to survive is somewhat unique. Fortunately it reappeared, I had left it sitting up, but it had toppled forwards and slid into a hollow underneath a snowgrass bush making it invisible from below. This was the first time I had ever misplaced my pack and as these things usually come in threes I was wondering what I could possibly misplace next!

The others meanwhile were waiting patiently ahead, wondering what on earth I had been up to.

By the time we hit the boardwalk the breeze was picking up and the cloud cover starting to return so we headed to Goat Pass Hut for lunch. Here we got a weather forecast via the hut radio: winds up to severe gale around the tops, a sharp drop in temperature, with rain overnight and rain or hail for Sunday afternoon.

This was enough for us to rethink the high camp at Lake Mavis that night. Instead we left our gear at the hut and headed off up the hill to at least have a look at the lake.

The wind got stronger and stronger as we headed up the hill and the cloud base lowered to start covering the tops again. There is a reasonably sheltered campsite at the head of the lake. Lying on the small grassy flats there the wind was nonexistent, whereas on the route up it was quite strong and very cold. After photos and a look around we headed off back down, this time taking the scree slide back down to the hut, this is recommended if you are up this way. The route up follows up from a cairn just off the track further south and would be the best way to ascend, but the scree slope dropping back down to just along from the hut is fast and fun.

That night we turned to cards, where Sharron and Tom won a game of 500, while Mike won one all by himself, (I was pretty much a partner in name only at that point). Not to be outdone though I called and won a hand which also won the game, those who have played with me will realise the magnitude of this. I probably only bid a handful of times over three games, so this was quite a big deal and cause for some celebration.

The promised rain arrived overnight and the morning was cold, wet and miserable, there was supposed to be a brief clearance before the next cold front swept in though so we hung round trying to come up with a plan that worked. Finally patches of blue sky started to appear so we left around lunchtime to head down the Mingha and out to Arthurs Pass. The forecast for Monday was good so we hoped to achieve something as a day trip then.

As we came out of the bush on to the open riverbed the temperature dropped again and it started to rain, as we progressed downriver we also got the occasional view of the tops above, now freshly coated with snow.

Geoff had been up the Edwards planning to meet us to traverse the Polar Range and he had both hail and snow as he descended the track down from Edwards Hut.

That night Geoff caught up with us and convinced us he had a good route up Mt Philistine that we could all manage. So the next day found us heading up the Otira River, arriving at the footbridge we headed up the hill to where the usual route follows up a steep spur, carrying on past this to the north there is a very nice line that follows various ledges, gullies and stream beds to arrive at the flat spot on the shoulder above where there is a lovely tarn with a magic view. From here we rejoined the usual route up and some 2 ½ hours after leaving the road we were on top. The day by now was gloriously fine and warm with almost no breeze. The snow from the day before had coated most of the surrounding peaks and ridges and was ankle deep on top of Philistine. Even Temple Basin was covered in snow for the first half of the day.

Fantastic views, with Rolleston up close in front of us, the trip up Philistine is highly recommended if you have a spare day down this way.

This was a great finish to the trip and went a long way to easing the disappointment of missing out on the Polar Range.

Thanks again to Sharron for leading and organising us.



Photos, clockwise:

Tom descending shingle slide from Lake Mavis

Mt Rolleston from tarn on Philistine ridge

Team at Lake Mavis



Team on summit of Mt Philistine



Random tarn on the way up Mt Philistine

Job opportunities in Nepal, Everest region

September – December 2011, Nepal (map #3)

Hans Wiskerke and Mika Verheul





For more information visit www.IPPG.net. Look out for Hans' club talk on trekking in Nepal in March 2012.

Other news, notes and reminders

WTMC would love your help

We are looking for volunteers to help us ...

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| ... on Wednesday club nights with: | ... with outdoor activities: |
| - staffing the door/answering punter questions about the club | - leading trips |
| - club gear room duty | - club contact person for trips |
| - occasional slideshows | |
| - tea making | |
| - running the evening | |

and are always keen to know of people who have specialist skills such as:

- accounting
- marketing/promotion
- communications
- secretarial
- web design
- programming
- navigation
- first aid/medical

If you'd like to volunteer with any of the above, please contact membership@wtmc.org.nz

FMC newsletter available now

The January FMC Newsletter is now available on the FMC website at:
www.fmc.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/Newsletter/Club1201.pdf

Deadline for submissions to the March 2012 WTMC newsletter: Friday 24 February 2012

The views expressed in the articles in this newsletter are not necessarily the views of the Wellington Tramping and Mountaineering Club. Any queries or comments should be directed to the writer of the article. The editor of the newsletter reserves the right to edit and publish articles.



***Wellington Tramping
And Mountaineering Club***

Wellington Tramping & Mountaineering Club

Nomination Form

I, _____ hereby nominate
(name of nominator)

_____ for the role of
(name of nominee)

_____.for the 2012/2013 committee.

I, _____ accept the nomination for the
(name of nominee)

role of _____ for the 2012/2013 committee.