



The Mouth 'n' Ear

Wellington Tramping & Mountaineering Club Newsletter

Email: newsletter@wtmc.org.nz

November 2012



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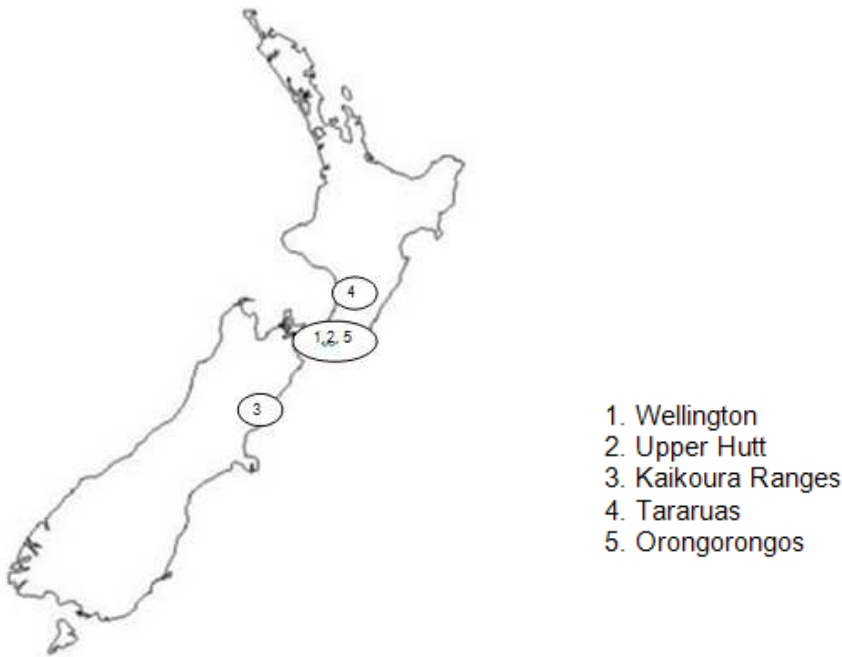
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65 years ago this month, a group of keen outdoors people got together and formed the WTMC. What a good idea that was! On Wed 28 Nov we are having a retro night. People will be showing old school slides from various tramping expeditions. Feel free to come along adorned in your best black singlet and swandri if you have one. Perhaps leave the stubbies shorts at home, bit of a risk of being arrested for indecent exposure wearing those in suburban Wellington these days. This will be a chance to look back at the way things used to be. If you want to contribute to the evening's entertainment get in touch with Jenny social@wtmc.org.nz

Back to the future, the material relating to amendments to the club constitution is up on the club website. Notice of the EGM will be sent out with the next FMC Bulletin, hopefully in December. Have a look when you get the chance and we'll see you at the meeting in January 2013. The 2012 Journal will be out shortly providing us with some great Christmas reading. Big thanks to everyone who has contributed to this project especially Tony Gazley the Journal Editor and Sarah Young the Newsletter Editor.

You may have noticed that the website is displaying a fresh set of pictures - photos from our photo competition held earlier in the year. The web team continues to beaver away behind the scenes fine tuning the website and your feedback is always welcome. If you see Mike Gilbert around give him a pat on the back he has been toiling away night and day on the Sisyphean task of getting all the backdoor bits to work.

It is almost time for us to start preparing the 2012-13 accounts and annual report so we have been thinking about succession planning. A number of key spots on the committee will be up for grabs as people who have worked long and hard for the club either stand down altogether or switch to different roles. We have started talking to a few people about the possibility of joining the committee. If you are interested we would love to talk to you too. Contact anyone on the committee in person or by email to find out more. Role requirements including a comprehensive list of the key performance indicators, accountabilities, qualifications, experience, reporting lines, salary and other benefits are available on the website.

Finally, with the warmer months and the official silly season approaching more of us are getting out into the hills. As the vast majority of us are human and therefore prone to forgetting stuff, (I went on a day walk over Labour weekend and "forgot" to take my lunch), it feels like a good time to remind you of the 3Ds of tramping.

Don't be ignorant. Be aware of your experience, training and the information you need when you head out on a trip. Do you know where you are going? Have you told someone reliable where you are going? Do you have the skills necessary to get there and back safely? Have you done what you need to do to prepare? *Reading and understanding the trip plan is a great place to start.*

Don't be casual. Casualness, complacency and overconfidence may serve you well when executing a pick up line down the pub but sooner or later they will trip you up in the outdoors. *Practice self awareness so you are familiar with your limits – fitness wise, skill wise and experience wise.* There is a fine line between pushing your limits and getting out of your depth. Try to stay on the right side of the line. You may have no idea what you don't know. Just because you got away with doing something stupid last weekend doesn't mean you should make a habit of it. This is where heading out with more experienced people and observing their behaviour and listening to their stories can be really helpful. Everyone has tales of mistakes or near misses – it's what you learn from them that matters.

Don't be distracted. *Try to keep your focus and stay in the moment.* Don't worry there is no need to take up yoga to achieve this, trust me! What the person beside you can get away with may not apply to you. Sources of distraction are many and varied. Sore feet, feeling the need to hurry, taking pictures instead of watching where you are putting your feet, feeling nervous or tired, blurred vision from staring too long at stripy polypro long johns or fluro- green sleeping bags, fireworks November = Guy Fawkes after all and being so busy talking to the person next to you that you miss the turn off. Have a great November and stay safe in the hills.

Track Talk

Amanda Wells, Chief Guide



The fact that I seem to have written the last newsletter column only five minutes ago clearly indicates we're on the downhill slope towards Christmas. But before then we need to get another trip schedule planned, lead and published! It's not too late to get your road end ideas to me – email chiefguide@wtmc.org.nz before 1 November please.

And make sure trip planning next Wednesday 7 November is in your diary. At 6pm we'll meet in the hall for free pizza before getting down to the business of assigning trips to each roadend. If there are particular road ends you're keen to look at, please bring maps. Beginners welcome.

Today I've been doing some cooking and dehydrating in preparation for a couple of summer missions. One thing you don't want out in the hills is a lack of food. But this has happened on a couple of recent club trips due to punters failing to bring their allocated ingredients for the evening meal. Now if you're allocated garlic, this isn't a big deal, but if you're carrying most of the carbohydrate component, eg pasta or rice, then you'll have some hungry fellow trampers. If you're reading this newsletter, then I doubt you need this reminder. But it pays us all to ask that simple question of others at the station, or before the last supermarket – and not to let what can feel like nagging always fall to the leader! Leaders have many tasks, with not all visible to the naked eye. A vital one is submitting your intentions to the weekend's designated emergency contact. This is a great strength of the club and at the forefront of our safety processes, rather than an optional extra. Please

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make sure if you're leading a weekend trip (or a daywalk away from civilisation) that you submit your intentions – and text when you're out.

In that same cautionary vein, please can I remind leaders (and punters if necessary) to report to me any incident on a trip that could or did result in mishap. We are always looking for lessons that can be learned when things don't go to plan. These can be simple or complex, with those of us involved in instruction keen to learn from both our and other clubs' incidents so that we can keep people as safe as possible.

Part of gaining tramping experience is the realisation that things don't always go to plan. Earlier this month, Richard and I were doing a nav trip from North Manakau Road (just north of Otaki) to Waitewaewae hut. This was unfamiliar territory, and study of the map had produced an eight hour guesstimate. But it took more than 10 hours to reach the hut, due to a near-total lack of ground trail and a few tricky ridge/spur junctions. I was glad we'd managed to get dropped off at 8am, and for daylight saving! Harry would not have been impressed at the number of times the GPS was consulted...

The next day it was great to catch up at Otaki Forks with the club trip who were our ride home. We're encouraging people to take advantage of our van transport to do private trips. Bear that in mind next time you're dreaming up possibilities.

Upcoming trips:

9-11 November Orongorongos – Guy Fawkes

Tramp	E	Paua Hut via Cattle Ridge and party	Mike Gilbert
Tramp	M	Paua Hut via Whakanui	Maarten Ruiter
Tramp	F	Papatahi – Paua Hut – South Saddle	Marie Henderson
Family	All	Paua Hut and party	Angela Gilbert
Alp1	F	Manukau	Mike Phethean

16-18 November Wellington region

Tramp	E	Akatarawa surprise	Tony Gazley
Day	E	Hemi Matenga	Ray Walker
Family	All	Butterfly Creek camping	Sarah Young

23-25 November Tararuas – Putara

Tramp	EM	Roaring Stag Hut	Richard Lyth
Tramp	M	Cow Creek Hut – Ruamahanga	Paula Vincent
Alp1	M	Seaward Kaikouras	Debbie Buck Tony Gazley
Family	EM	Tramp Pouakai Hut (Taranaki)	Mike Pratt

31 Nov- 2 December – Kaitoke

Family	All	Camping	Beth Piggott
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7-9 December Tararuas – Otaki Forks

Tramp	M	Waitewaewae – nav new track	David Heffernan
Tramp	M	Penn Creek via Vosseler nav	Craig McGregor
Alp1/2	M	Ball Pass	Marie Henderson
Day	EM	Te Kopuhou Reserve	Helen Law
Family	All	Mangatarere Camping	Richard Lyth

14-16 December – Wellington day walks

Day	Day	Polhill Reserve	Sarah Young
Day	Day	Te Araroa – Otaki to Waikanae	Pete Gent
MTB	MTB	Skyline Red Rocks	Craig McGregor
Family	Family	QEII Park day trip	Beth Piggot

Membership

Helen Law, Membership officer



This month we welcome Rory MacLellan and Clare Todd joining the club as senior members.

As we head towards the end of the year, it is time for me to prepare your annual subscription invoice. Like last year, I will email or post the invoices out early December – which is only one month away. If your email and postal addresses need updating, please send the details to me so I can dispatch these invoices promptly. Thanks.

Lodge update

Brian Goodwin, Ruapehu Lodge convenor



Well the ski season for our Lodge is over for this year but remember the Lodge is available over the summer period.

Four or more people are a good number for the economics of people staying but we can accept less at the discretion of the Lodge Booking Officer.

We will be shortly having a sub-committee meeting to discuss future maintenance and or improvements for the lodge. If anyone has any comments good (preferably) bad or ugly or if you have any item on your wish list your input would be appreciated.

Please give your comments to any sub-committee member, the Lodge Booking Officer or myself.

Social corner

Jenny Beaumont, Social convenor



Upcoming talks

31st October - Adventures in the Pyrenees (Sharron Came)
7th November - High camp on Ngauruhoe (Marie Henderson)
14th and 21st November - TBC - please watch the club website
28th November - Retro night! (Debbie Buck). Please get in touch if you have a few slides to put in Debbie's projector of tramping in the good ole days!

Celebrating 65 years of the WTMC!

We will also mark the 65th anniversary of the club on the 28th November (thanks to Sue Walsh for the reminder!). We will waive the door fee that night and there will be cake☺
See you there!

Help needed

I'm not going to be able to make many club nights after Christmas so I'm looking for volunteers to help out and run the club night. This will involve buying milk and biscuits (which the club re-funds), putting the tea out, setting up the projector, and clearing up afterwards. It doesn't take a lot of time or organisation - you just have to be able to commit to being at the club on certain weeks. Please email me or come and chat on a club night if you're able to help out.

Please also get in touch if you'd like to talk to us on a club night - find me at club or email social@wtmc.org.nz

Happy Anniversary!

Congratulations on achieving 65 years!

Formed in 1947 after the Outdoor Club and Ruc-Sac Club joined forces, we were originally known as the United Tramping Club. In 1948 we changed our name to the Wellington Tramping & Mountaineering Club and became affectionately known as the Tongue n Meats.

Over the years we have:

- Built and further developed our “simple mountain hut” that has resulted in our wonderful lodge
- Tramped and climbed all over the country and around the world including the formal expedition to the Andes in 1968
- Consistently been involved in search and rescue
- Built and maintained, and in some cases burned down, our huts in the Tararua’s
- Inherited and maintained Paua Hut
- Owned and operated our own transport from The Duchess to the Orient Express to the transit vans;
- Up-skilled members through bushcraft and leadership courses, the old AIC course and newer snowcraft and alpine instruction courses, first aid and basic search and rescue courses;
- Expanded our activities to include mountain biking, cycle touring, tubing and sea kayaking;
- Taken part in interclub marathons, ski sports, tug o’ wars and billy boiling;
- Celebrated our highs and pulled together during the lows.

To this day tramping and mountaineering continue to remain our core activities and in winter we brush off the skis and hit the slopes.

The club has gone through many changes over the years, as is only natural. The enduring aspect though is our love of the outdoors, of adventure and sharing these experiences with like-minded people.

We have come a long way in 65 years and we still have a long way to go. We have a rich history behind us and many many characters. Our history is what has made us today, and today is what will make us tomorrow. We have achieved a lot and we are a club we can be very proud of.

Happy anniversary Tongue n Meats!

Trip reports

Belmont family walk

22 September 2012, Family tramp, Wellington (map #1)

Artist: Alice Moore

Punters: Ally Clark with Dom and Hamish, Paula with Charlie and Jess,
Christian with Gustav and Daniel Moore with Charlotte and Alice

Who needs words when a picture says it all...



Canon Point walkway

29 September 2012, Easy day walk, Upper Hutt (map #2)

Ray Walker

Punters: Sandra Naschberger, Chris Bolton, David Barker,
Michael Lightbourne, Jason Samuel, Ray Walker (Leader)

It had been quite a number of years since I had done the Canon Point walkway. So when this walk appeared in the club schedule, I decided it was time I did it again and signed up to lead it. Early indications were that this was going to be a popular trip, however, in the last 3 days 5 out of the original 11 punters dropped out. So we were down to a total of 6 on the day; a more manageable number.

We arrived at the start of the walk in the Upper Hutt suburb of Totara Park just before 10.00am on Saturday morning, and short time later we were on our way. The first part of the walk comprises largely of an easy up hill 4-wheel drive track. Vegetation over the length of the walkway is mainly regenerating bush, but also includes gorse and a bit of mature native bush at the south end. After reaching the Canon Point trig we stopped for a scroggin break and to admire the view. It was quite a nice spring day – warm, but a little overcast. We stayed here for a good 10 minutes. As I had previously lived in Upper Hutt, I was able to point out some of points of interest in the valley below us.

From the trig we continued north. There is a route known as the 'Zig-Zag track' which leads from the top directly back to the car park, but as this would make the walk a bit too short we carried on north to the Birchville reservoir. This part of the route is mostly down hill. We arrived at the reservoir in good time for lunch. The reservoir used to be the main water supply for Upper Hutt. The dam is about 5 metres high and the water from the lake behind it cascades over almost its full width – surprisingly spectacular! After finishing lunch we continued the circuit which ended with a short road walk back to the car park.

The Canon Point walkway is good outing if you don't want to commit the whole day to a walk. It is only about half an hour from Wellington, and can be done in less than 3 hours (It took us a bit longer, but that included a couple of breaks and a leisurely pace). There are some good mountain biking trails in the area – you can get to Karapoti from Canon Point.

Mt. Alarm (2877m) / Mt. Tapuae-o-Uenuku (2885m)

4th to 7th October 2012, Alp2 Fit, Kaikoura Ranges, (map #3)

Michael Schier

Punters: Debbie Buck, Stephen Healey, Steve Austin, John Hickey, Weimin, Ant Murdoch, Mike Phethean, Michael Schier

Yay, weekend! Flee from work, pack your backpack, don't forget the communal dinner ingredients, and off you go to lonely landscapes and snow-covered tops, away from the constantly humming sound of city life.

Debbie's, Stephen's, Steve's, John's and Weimin's plan was to ascend Mt. Tappy, the highest peak of the Kaikouras whereas Mike, Antone, and I wanted to knock off Mt. Alarm, the slightly lower neighbour of Mt. Tappy. After postponing the trip from September to October due to bad weather conditions, the forecast didn't look too bad for the first October week. Although rain was predicted for both Friday and Saturday afternoon/evening, we were quite confident that the fair-weather window in-between would allow us to reach the summits.

We took the 6 o'clock ferry and were rewarded with a lovely sunset right after leaving Wellington's bay.

After arriving in Picton, we drove straight to the end of the road where the Hodder River enters the Awatere River and set up our tents. Mike had the pleasure to share his tent with me, and surprisingly, he managed to get some sleep that night even without his earplugs.



Early next morning, we headed off to the huts (1400m) that are closest to the peaks and we had to master quite a number of river crossings. If Weimin counted correctly, we crossed the damn river 54 times. But I really don't want to complain, that's actually what makes tramping fun! Around 2 o'clock, we reached the huts which unfortunately had no fireplace but, apart from that, were in a very good condition.

One Mt-Tapu-Team member arrived slightly delayed as the card-gambling session of the previous night on the ferry had turned out to be too exhausting.



After having a very delicious meal (spaghetti Bolognese without spaghetti, I had forgotten a minor thing at home...), we destroyed some crackers and chocolate to fill up some additional carbohydrates to be prepared for the next day. The plan for the next morning was simple: get up at three o'clock, when the wind is not too heavy, run off, otherwise take a nap for another hour. Repeat until you can finally convince yourself (and everybody else) to leave the cosy hut.

When the alarm finally went off at 3am, the sky was still clouded and the howling of the wind didn't exactly sound inviting. So we slept a little longer and finally got out of the bags around 5am. After warming up with some cups of tea, we left the hut shortly after the other five punters who headed to Mt. Tappy.

On the way to the snowfield, we met John again who was fighting a cold and had decided to prefer the comfort of our hut over the inhospitality of the icy and windy peak. After reaching the first snow and putting on the crampons, the terrain got gradually steeper and also more exhausting. However, the view was amazing and rewarded us for all exertions.



We first tried to ascend Mt. Alarm via a couloir in the middle of its north face but then decided to take an alternative route to the left as the original route turned out to be too icy to climb with only two ice screws in our packs. The new route worked better and the snow consistency was perfect for an ascent without having to mess around with ropes. Unfortunately, a combination of the weather getting worse and my carbohydrate level dropping below minimum prevented us

from reaching the summit, and we had to turn around roughly 140 meters below it. I am pretty sure that this was the right decision, but in retrospective, the lousy 140m hurt a bit.



Without any troubles, we descended again and reached our huts around 2 o'clock where we met the other party again who were equally unlucky in reaching their summit. To solace ourselves, we prepared a delicious (i.e. non-vegetarian) couscous menu and spent the rest of the evening playing 500.

The next day, the weather was really nice, in fact so nice that I spontaneously, but, to be honest, not entirely voluntarily, decided to take a quick bath in the Hodder river. And yes, it

was refreshing, I have just been lucky to still own a functional camera. After another 50 times crossing the river, we were all happy to see the WTMC bus again and to get our feet dried.

Holdsworth Jumbo

22-23 September 2012, Easy medium, Tararuas, (map #4)

Various authors

Trampers: Paula Vincent (leader), Rory MacLellan, Alix Laferriere, Pete Saunders, Clare, Thomas Keir, Meena Kadri, Paul Groom and other Peter Tunnicliff

Rory: Well, after an exceptionally early 7am meeting at the train station, (I am used to 9am) introductions were made, bacon and egg English muffins were crammed into mouths and we were on our way with Paula only stalling the manual van a few times before getting to the destination.

Rory: After about a 1.5 hour twisty drive over the Rimutakas and nice views of the Tararua tops with patchy snow on top we were at the car park and all got their gear on to begin the trip, Thomas needed a bit of a refresher on the proper dress-up of gaiters. The group was a bit surprised at the steepness of the beginning but all were happy with the rest and views at Rocky Lookout.



Paula: The climb up from Mountain House shelter seemed to go on forever and I was relieved when all the party reached Powell Hut, bodies and spirits intact. The trail up to Mt Holdsworth and along the ridgeline was marked out with snow, providing a handy reminder of where the edge was when cloud blew through. To our East the view went out to the horizon and Kapiti Island seemed very close.





Paula: The cloud closed in by the Jumbo turnoff and we were all excited to see the hut, though getting to it took longer than it looked!



Pete: We dropped down towards Jumbo hut and could see smoke streaking from the chimney. We had a nervous few minutes wondering whether or not we would be putting up the tent if the hut was too crowded but when we arrived we just about managed to squeeze everyone in. After everyone had enjoyed the amazing views across the Waiarapa we set to work creating a delicious gourmet vegetarian chilli con carne with the smoothest puréed guacamole I have ever eaten.

Meena: Once we reached the Holdsworth trig, the mist had set in and we were amongst snow – a stark contrast to the sunshine we had set out in. Canadian snow lover, Rory, created a makeshift sled with his sturdy bed roll. Others joined in, though none quite met Rory's experienced moves. As we set off along the ridge line, we were still laughing about these alpine antics.





Alix: I awoke to Paula asking: "Does anyone wanted to go back up to the top?" Yeah I did, out of the warm sleeping bag and into frozen boots: ughhh! I had not picked up on Thomas's dressing miscue with the gaitors, and attempted to put the gaitors of 'tramping-angel Illona' on upside down and backwards before being set straight by my fellow trampers.

After a nice walk up through icy patches





and cool winds, we were awarded with excellent views and clear skies. As I looked out at Kapiti Island, I was feeling really happy I had made the jump to move to New Zealand and it was so worth leaving the cocoons of the hut. What an excellent first tramp in New Zealand!

Thomas: My first tramp in a while. and first with the WTMC. I wasn't sure what to expect. Despite the unwelcome addition of a bung knee, I had a great weekend. Everyone was really supportive, and the views up the top of Holdsworth were amazing.

After a steep climb down, we had a great walk along the river, and Paula parted with her encyclopaedic knowledge of trees and stuff. Looking forward to the next one.

Rory: The drive back went well, with a number of trampers nodding off to the twisting and turning of the Rimutaka Hill pass but all arrived unscathed. All departed the van and



thanked the leader (Paula) for what turned out to be an excellent trip, with great views and great company. Little did the unsuspecting van know what was to take place in the coming hour...



Mukamuka Munter (lite edition)

28 October 2012, Medium / Medium Fit, Orongorongos, (map #5)

Mike Gilbert

Trampers: Mike Gilbert and Josh Tabor

Summary: 10h total walking (including breaks), from Catchpool to Mt Matthews, out down Mukamuka stream and to Wharekauhau, South Wairarapa. Would likely be a Medium weekend trip or Medium Fit day trip.

Weather: Warm with broken overcast and strong/gale northerlies.

Access: Start at Catchpool road end - we left our car there and retrieved it later. Requires a kind person to collect you in South Wairarapa (google 'Wharekauhau' for directions). Suggesting a day in the Wairarapa for them, finishing with a nice dinner in a cafe in Greytown is a great strategy to encourage this.

Phone: spotty reception between south saddle and Mt Matthews. Don't rely on it, but handy to update your pickup person.

Approximate Timings:

19:30-21:30 (2.0h): Catchpool roadend to Turere Lodge

07:30-09:00 (1.5h): Turere Lodge to start of Mt Matthews track

09:00-10:00 (1.0h): South Saddle junction

10:00-12:00 (2.0h): Mt Matthews return

12:00-15:00 (3.0h): South Saddle Junction to Wharekauhau road end

Total: 9.5h

The Orongorongo valley never ceases to beckon. Its great accessibility, fantastic scenery and interesting terrain is one of Wellington's greatest and most under-appreciated assets. It's perfect for spur-of-the-moment tramping, when the weather is clear and you want to get into the hills with a moment's notice.

I'd read about the Mukamuka Munter in the October WTMC Newsletter, and thought 'I can do that!'. It all looked pretty straightforward, apart from the need for extreme physical fitness and endurance and mental toughness. I had none of those things, so what to do? A more leisurely approach was called for.

To make up for taking the course at a dawdling pace, we thought we should bag Mt Matthews on the way to take in the panoramic views from the top. And there's always something satisfying about starting in Wellington and finishing in Wairarapa, so we decided as well to come out at Wharekauhau and offer a support-team plan of cafes, shopping and play for the day in the Wairarapa. But the distances looked just a little daunting for a day trip - especially since neither of us had done this trip before. Could we do the whole thing in a day? Maybe, maybe not. We decided to give ourselves a head start, and do some of the easy access walking the night before.

Fri night after work we headed in, stopping briefly for a fine dining experience at Wainuiomata McDonalds. 7:00pm saw us parking up at Catchpool and leaving the car. When would we see it again? The plan was to retrieve it much, much later. Then we gently wandered in up the Catchpool valley and to Turere Lodge in the gathering dusk. This track can be a bit like Piccadilly Circus during the day, with buggy walkers, hunters, runners and scout groups cheerfully jostling for space. So walking it in peace and quiet with nothing to disturb us but morepork and the occasional call of the kiwi was quite magical.

Our plan was to sleep on the Turere Lodge porch, since it was unbooked but cost prohibitive for just two of us to pay \$85 to rent a mattress for 8 hours. When we arrived it turns out a family group had booked at last minute and were well settled in and playing a complex dice game in the lounge. They were cheerfully accepting of two random punters turning up and setting up on the porch. (A side note - that is a smart move on their part! Turere Lodge books up months in advance for Saturday night, but you can book last minute on Friday night and have a quick walk in, a leisurely evening and morning, then a pleasant wander out again.)

We sat out for a while watching the broken cloud scud past at a great rate of knots and throw itself at Mt Matthews. It was calm and pleasant in the valley. But what would the tops be like?

We were up early eating breakfast and running hot coffee through Josh's magic gold-filter tramping coffee filter. Off the track we set and passed Haurangi Hut after about 20 minutes. This would actually be a better stopping-off point as it's that little bit closer to your destination - it's a similar price to book but is similarly new and has a great porch too.

We reached the Whakanui track junction which was our marker to drop onto the river and look for the Mt Matthews track. (Whakanui track would be a good alternative way in - and might be a bit quicker too.)

We rapidly found the Matthews Stream a little upstream. It's a big braided stream with a big orange triangle marking it. Never saw Baines Hut though, which is allegedly in the bush just at the Matthews Stream mouth. Either it's been washed away or it's well hidden. There were enough correlations with the map, though, that we convinced ourselves we were in the right place.

We wandered up the stream bed then followed orange triangles taking us off to the true-left of the stream, across another tributary, and to our first spur. This is where we went from gentle wandering to proper hard work, with a steep scramble for an hour or so. We were relieved to see South Saddle junction sign loom up above us, even though there was no let-up in the slope.



Although we were still very sheltered and the air temperature was quite warm, the wind was starting to pick up through the bush. Here was where we had to make the call whether or not to head up Mt Matthews.

We decided to proceed but constantly reassess how the conditions were. We could always descend again if it was dodgy up top. So we wrapped up warm and dropped our packs at the junction. Eventually the track emerged just above South Saddle, on the ridge we'd follow to the top. The wind was very strong, but it wasn't too cold, and there were spectacular views into the Wairarapa and the river mouth that would be our destination.



So far so good. We decided to try for the next knoll.

As it turned out the Mt Matthews track is actually very sheltered with battered dwarf beech trees protecting us. It was only the odd time when we emerged briefly into the wind that made us appreciate the degree of shelter we were getting. So we carried on and made the summit after an hour or so.

A slip just before the summit made for quite a bit of scrambling and contorting. An hour's work with a hatchet or bush saw would make everyone's lives much easier.

The top of Mt Matthews would be great in fine, still weather but for us we were welcomed with unpleasant gale winds and driving mist. We crouched under the gnarled trees and took 'been there' photos. Josh bagged the geocache we found in plain sight at the top. We didn't hang around.



We rapidly descended to grab a lunch of one square meals, chocolate and carrot sticks at the South Saddle junction. We took advantage of a bar or two of cellphone signal to text out to reassure our pickup party and give them a tighter ETA. Then it was time to hit Mukamuka. But first, we had to cross South Saddle.

South Saddle gave us the worst conditions of the trip. The wind was funnelling through the saddle making it hard to stand. We huddled and shuffled our way across the saddle and dropped into the Mukamuka valley, where the wind rapidly dropped away to nothing.

Various maps have the path down Mukamuka stream as a track, a route, or nothing at all. It's very much a track. The first part was very clearly marked and recently maintained, with foliage and trees cleared and felled. Eventually the stream began to get quite large, and after a while the markers became fewer and stopped. I guess DOC figure that if your navigation skills don't let you follow the stream then there is no hope for you! It was quite technical going with slippery unstable rocks and dead wood making slips and ankle breaks a potential at every step. Don't know how the Muntees do this competitively at

speed. Ligaments of iron, lots of experience and oodles of self-belief I guess.



The river became bigger and bigger, and a little more straightforward going. We found ourselves in a fairly gorgy bit, with scouring on the side of the banks showing the river's power when it was in full flood. Further down, where the river really opened up wide, we found a very sad, crushed and battered Mazda 323. Looks like some enthusiastic locals had driven it up the valley, got it bogged, and then the force of the river had well and truly dealt to it.



The wind slowly rose again as we got closer to the coast, and the funnel effect of the valley began asserting itself. It was fortunate it was a tail wind. Again, I don't know how the muntees kept their spirits up with an interminable uphill *and* a strong headwind battering them.

The south coast suddenly came into view, which was a welcome sight. Our hopes that the wind would drop at the coast were for naught; we wrapped up again as wind drove spray and sand into our faces. Job done! We had bagged Mt Matthews and defeated the Mukamuka valley. Now we had the walk out before our mission was completed.



Another option here is to turn right instead of left at the coast, and walk back to the mouth of the Orongorongo, then back to Catchpool, or a car left at the end of the coast road (about 10km drive on from Catchpool). That would make it a there-and-back, but quite a bit longer and with hours of interminable trudging along the coast around Baring Head.

But for us, it took maybe an hour of strolling along the coast road 4wd track, until we met our pickup

driving towards us.

We were prepared to keep walking until we either met our pickup or reached tar-seal. The

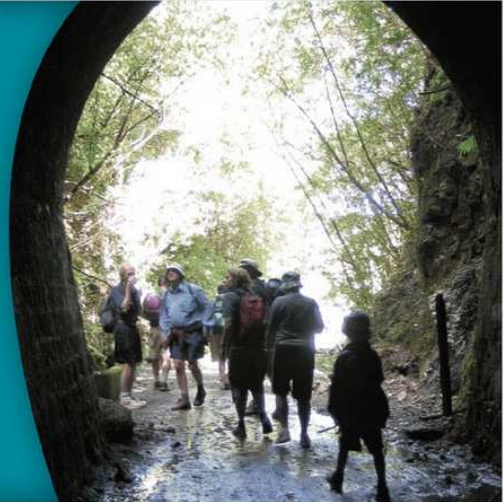


road gradually changes from gravel road to 4wd track, with two big fords and a gravel fan to cross before your pickup driver reaches Wharekauhau township. The fords were straightforward on our weekend, but whether your driver can make it that far will depend on their confidence and how much the rivers are up.

We had stashed a change of clothes in our pickup car, which gave us a semblance of neatness - enough to get us into a Greytown cafe for craft beer and tapas. I've decided that more tramping trips need to end with craft beer and tapas! We made it back to Wellington in plenty of time to get back to our Catchpool car, though our plan was to wander in again the next day to get it back. As we arrived we found the SAR team kitting up and setting out for what we hoped was an exercise but turned out was very much for real (but with a happy ending).

So the Munter is a great trip even if you're not the sort of person who thinks of running over a mountain in a few hours as a pleasant Saturday morning diversion. It's eminently do-able as a daytrip, albeit a long one with an early start and the likelihood of needing a head-torch for the last wee bit along the coast road. And there are many variations to make the trip longer or shorter or logistically easier. Who knows, maybe you'll be inspired to run it, too?

Celebrate *the* 25th Anniversary *of the* Rimutaka Rail Trail



Join us along with the Governor-General, Lt Gen Rt Hon Sir Jerry Mateparae to mark 25 years of this popular trail.

Walk the gently graded 10km trail from Kaitoke to Summit, taking in important heritage features, such as restored railway bridges and historical tunnels.

Gather at Summit at 12.30pm for speeches and cake. Then enjoy the walk back to Kaitoke or do the 8km walk from Summit to Cross Creek in the Wairarapa.*

This is a free event. All welcome.

WHERE: Pakuratahi Forest, Incline Road, Upper Hutt (off SH2).
Parking at Kart Sport Wellington

WHEN: Saturday 3 November 2012. Start the walk anytime between 8am and 9am. The walk to Summit will take up to 3 hours

BRING: Lunch, water, sturdy shoes, a jacket, sunhat and torch (for the tunnels)

*Shuttles will run from Cross Creek back to Kaitoke from 2pm. Cost: \$6 per person.
Seats are limited, bookings essential – 04 830 4041 or bookings@gw.govt.nz.



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Deadline for submissions to the December 2012 WTMC newsletter: Friday 30 November

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