



The Mouth 'n' Ear

Wellington Tramping & Mountaineering Club Newsletter

Email: newsletter@wtmc.org.nz

July 2013



How fun to find a weta in your sleeping bag!

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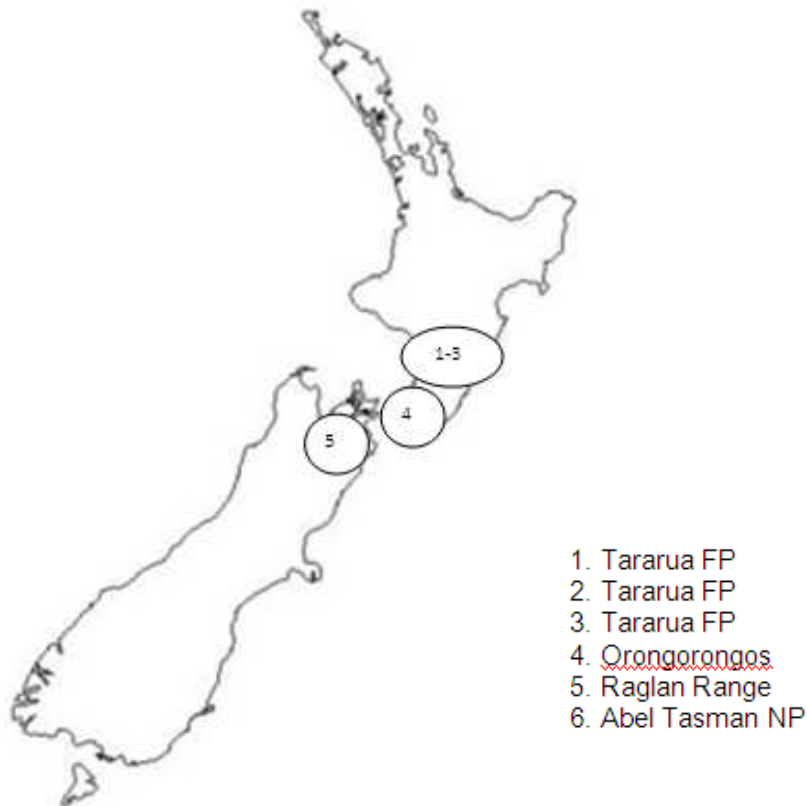
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The Nature of Things

Sharron Came, President



After nearly two and a half years of editing our newsletter, this one is going to be Sarah's last. As newsletter readers you will have noticed that Sarah has used her time in charge to transform our newsletter. Her legacy will be one of faithfully producing each month an informative and entertaining mega-snapshot of our Club life with contributions from all corners of the membership and beyond. Sarah has also directed the transformation of our website with great results as measured by site hits and length of stay on the site. If you have accessed the site, and I'm sure most of you do frequently, you will know exactly what I mean. The site reflects who we are and what we do better than it ever has before. Fortunately we have not completely lost Sarah's services. She will continue to help out on projects through her role in the Web Group, helping out with the Club Journal and I'm pretty sure she will still be getting outdoors leading or otherwise participating in Family tramps as often as she can. Sarah is a dream to work with because she is practical, low maintenance, diligent, patient, reliable and supportive. Best of all she gets things done which is why her legacy is so impressive. WTMC is very lucky to have her on board and I wish her, Alistair and the girls well as she takes on fresh challenges.

We are very fortunate that it did not take long for Megan Sety to pinpoint Australia's shortcomings and plot her return to Wellington via a few globe-trotting adventures in Asia and America (there must be some slideshows in the pipeline). Megan has generously agreed to assume the newsletter editor role and carry on the fine tradition of delivering great stories for us to read. Megan is usually round on Wednesday nights so make sure you introduce yourself if you see her. You can also support her efforts by continuing your habit of sending in trip reports and Club news. While overseas Megan gained qualifications for teaching Yoga and she is planning to run some "Yoga for Tramping" classes in the Clubrooms before our Club nights starting in August. Keep an eye out for more information about these classes.

If you did not make it to our quiz night on 12 June you missed an excellent evening, perfectly timed for before the great southerly storm that delivered more firewood than Wellington really needs. The quiz was won by Ray Walker (who knew Ray was a closet mountaineering geek!). Big thanks to Sue for all the hard work she put into organising the quiz and to Gareth Morton for acting as quiz master on the night. Don't forget Sue is always looking for people to help out with the Wednesday nights, even if you aren't keen on doing a slideshow you can easily show your support by coming along to watch the Wednesday night entertainment, getting others to put on slideshows or helping put out the chairs or washing up the tea cups. If you're coming in you may as well sign up for door duty as well – check out the spreadsheet on the website, sign up on a Wednesday night or email David at promotions@wtmc.org.nz I know it is easy to just stay at home and socialise with the television and your Facebook Friends on cold winter nights but the best way to warm up and lift your spirits is to come out and mingle with people face to face. Feeling competitive? We have another quiz planned for later in the year.
social@wtmc.org.nz

Thanks to recent weather patterns Whakapapa has an unseasonably generous serving of snow available for your enjoyment. Spread the word. If you have a workplace, local school, gym or church that displays community notices or know somewhere crying out for a bit of graffiti get in touch with Brian and he will email you a Lodge poster that you can print off and display, or he can give you an actual poster if you prefer.

lodgeconvenor@wtmc.org.nz.

If you are staying at the Lodge, particularly if you are leading a trip and are unfamiliar with how it works you can learn about what is involved by looking on our website. Hypothermia beckons if you get to the Top o the Bruce and you don't know how to access the Lodge, turn on the electricity or you've forgotten your sleeping bag. It is definitely better to know what is required before you turn up.

Fancy some free pizza? Mike and Debbie are planning the Spring Trip Schedule. Pizza munching will start at 6pm on Wednesday 24 July. If you are on a diet or can't make it email your road end ideas to chiefguide@wtmc.org.nz. The dynamic trip duo are always on the hunt for people to help out with trip related tasks so if you have time and energy to contribute please have a chat with them or send an email. New trip leaders or people prepared to mentor trip leaders are always particularly welcome as are people prepared to help hand out and collect back in Club gear on Wednesday nights.

Enjoy your winter tramping trips. One way to reduce the workload of trip leaders is to refrain from signing up for a trip unless you are sure you actually want to go on the trip. We have noticed a relatively high rate of drop outs this year. This may be because newer members do not realise that the trip sheets are not for saving yourself a place on a trip "just in case" you want to come along. While this practice may be convenient for you it is highly inconvenient for the trip leader who then sends out an email to trip participants only to discover that half or more of the punters do not actually want to come on the trip. The practice is also inconvenient for other punters who did not sign up because it looked from the trip sheet like the trip was full or for punters who did sign up and were looking forward to the trip only to have it cancelled due to insufficient numbers.

I get that sometimes your enthusiasm for a trip wanes with a perusal of the weather forecast or the arrival of a better offer however we are the Wellington Tramping and Mountaineering Club not the Fine Weather Tramping Club or the Last Resort Tramping Club. Weather forecasts can be wrong. Honouring a commitment is character forming, you cannot be sure the better offer will be better. If the weather really renders a proposed trip infeasible the trip leader will either cancel, postpone or, more likely re-jig the route. Tramping like life in general is a journey heavily populated by less than stellar weather forecasts and the cloud of a better offer hovering just over the horizon. Whether you enjoy your tramp is up to you not the weather.

Track Talk

Mike Phethean, Chief Guide



During the next couple of months myself and Debbie will be carrying out my first trip schedule planning. We do these planning sessions three times a year and the next schedule to be produced is for the spring time.

The schedule should be a reflection of where the club members would like to go and therefore I would like as many members input as possible. If there is a particular tramp that would you like to do then please email with the details at chiefguide@wtmc.org.nz. This does not mean that you have to lead the trip but if you do that would be even better.

From this list of requests and some of our creativity (?) we compile a list of road ends for our trip planning night on the 24th July at 6pm at the club rooms. Please feel free to come along to this evening. We even bribe you to do so by providing free pizza (and witty tramping anecdotes.) During the pre club session we divide up into small groups and plan the tramps using maps and guidebooks (please do bring any you have.)

Do not be intimidated if you are new to tramping and have not yet gained a large experience of the NZ outdoors. This is a good process to learn and we will happily pair you up with someone more experienced if necessary.

After this night there is the leader recruitment stage. Last schedule we had a good number of first time leaders and it would be good to repeat this. Even if you are new to the club please do consider leading a trip, the sign up spreadsheet will be advertised on the forum.

Finally I would like to draw people's attention to the alpine schedule. As alpine trips are harder to lead we nowadays plan them pretty much for the year to suit the leaders availability. This task has been done very ably by David Jewel and the annual list can be found here:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0AoXWnLQs81kRdFRXUDVQS0Z0aTJvRXNKdVZSd21HvHc#gid=0>

This is a good resource for all the snowcrafters to consolidate their new skills by getting out on the ALP 1 trips. (ALP 2 trips require a higher skill base.)

Membership update

Helen Law, Membership officer



This month we welcome the following new members:

Child members: Finn & Billie Griffiths, Ella and Oliver Cuthbert
Associate member: Georgie Griffiths
Senior members: Adam Threlkeld, Doug Jones and Barry Cuthbert

Members are encouraged to keep the club's database up to date with any changes in contact details by emailing me at membership@wtmc.org.nz

Some interesting presentations coming up

Sue Walsh, Social convenor



We held the Tongue and Meat quiz night recently and it seemed to be a great success. Congratulations to Ray Walker who won the \$250 prize from InterIslander for travel to and from the South Island, and thanks to Gareth Morton who was the Quiz Master. The answers to the quiz will be posted on the club forum.

This coming month we have a lovely mix of presentations, as follows:

3 July Niall Mackay from Life Flight (Westpac Rescue Helicopter)
10 July Katy Glenie talking about climbing Mt Aspiring
17 July Wayne Stevens on LandSAR
24 July Sue Keall, Victoria University of Wellington, talking about Tuataras and Sue will bring a Tuatara with her
31 July Shaun Barnett, co-author of "Shelter From The Storm"

As you can see the topics are quite varied. All speakers will of course be excellent and I hope there will be a good turn-out for all the nights.

I'm always on the lookout for more speakers so please don't be shy. You can volunteer yourself or dob someone in! Just drop me a line at social@wtmc.org.nz

See you down at the club rooms.



Ruapehu Lodge update

Brian Goodwin, Lodge convenor



So, we have snow at Whakapapa and hopefully by the time this reaches press the ski field will be up and running.

The ski field operator, RAL, have approval to remove three T bars: the valley T bar, the Knoll ridge T bar and the waterfall T bar and replace them with one chairlift running from the top of the waterfall to the top of the Knoll ridge and another chair lift following the same path as the existing waterfall T bar.

They also have plans for the west area in the future. An extensive plan can be viewed on the Ruapehu website under 'RAL the company' which takes some time to sift through.

This may be completed for next ski season 2014.

Back to 2013 we have a few ski weeks available for use at the lodge.

Week	Availability
30 June to 4 July	The lodge is available
7 – 11 July	The lodge is available
14 -18 July (school holidays)	The lodge has some spaces available
21 – 25 July (school holidays)	The lodge is already fully booked. Enquiries subject to any late cancellation.
28 July – 1 August	The lodge is available
4 – 8 August	The lodge is available
11 – 15 August	Jan and I are intending to stay dependent on any others joining us?
18 – 22	The lodge is already fully booked. There may be very limited space at last minute notice.
25 – 29	The lodge is already fully booked. There may be very limited space at last minute notice.
1 – 5 September	The lodge is already fully booked. There may be very limited space at last minute notice.
8 – 12 September	The lodge is already fully booked. There may be very limited space at last minute notice.
15 – 19 September	Club week. Book now and invite your friends!

The weeks following this have available space including the September school holidays which are steadily filling.

All the weekends have space and can now be booked equally by members or non-members so book now to avoid disappointment.

If anyone is interested in joining Jan and I for the week 11-15 August or part of the week please let me know or book online, or both.

Thank you for all your support

Sarah Young, Newsletter editor



I could not have turned the newsletter around without so many of you bowing to my demands and regularly sending stories of your tramping times for inclusion in the newsletter. Every month I was amazed by the number of varied and interesting stories that arrived in my inbox ... and this month is no exception.

I met Megan Sety for the first time last week, plied her with food and wine, and she has agreed to take on the role as newsletter editor. I have no doubt that she will do the most fabulous job and will make the newsletter her own. I very much look forward to reading her editions.

Thank you very much to all of you for the time spent writing and submitting articles during my time as newsletter editor. I know life is busy ... so really appreciate your efforts! I hope you will continue to support Megan as you have me.

Trip reports

Field Hut family trip

18-19 May, Family tramping, Tararuas (map #1)

Author: Joshua Tabor

Punters: Barry & Ella Cuthbert, Josh & Duncan Tabor,
Yingjie Zhang & Alex Huang, Mike & Toby Gilbert, Richard Lyth (without Hamish!)

A small contingent from WTMC family group made the climb up to field hut on Saturday night (18 May). The party consisted of four 10-year olds and a rag tag assortment of five adults. The weather was overcast and dry - as dry as walking through the clouds can be. The tramp included five families and four children (Richard Lyth having failed to convince

Hamish that a trip to field hut was way more fun than a birthday party.) We started out for the hut at around 12:30 after keeping Barry and Ella waiting patiently for half an hour.



The climb up is sharp and steady. One young punter had decided not to eat lunch. 45 minutes into the hill he was in tears and beside himself. The adults conferred on the options and decided that a radical sugarectomy was required. Thus the hike up to the hut was punctuated with chocolate, gummy worms, and jelly beans at 20 minute intervals. The young punter,

having consumed a decent amount of slats, fats, proteins, and sugar was much recovered by the time we got to the hut.



Coincidentally, the lower bound of DOC time is set to the pace of a 10 year old. All four (see photo) made the trip within minutes of the four hour mark.

The hut is tidy and rustic. Being built in 1924, the hut wears its age well. It is not as fancy or snug as the modern Turere lodge or the new Kime hut, but it is serviceable and functional.

As the fire making crew went to work two problems became apparent: no

dry firewood and no firewood cutting tools. Richard made a noble effort using the remains of a Pulaski that undoubtedly dated back to the making of the hut. Mike Gilbert and Duncan Tabor also made an effort to find firewood with little success. Mike observed that all the big firewood had been picked over or rotted so quickly as to be useless. This meant picking over the piles of dry kindling to find a suitably thick twig to try to sustain a fire more than 10 minutes. Yingjie Zhang did a remarkable job teasing out a fire most of the night.

Dinner was Auntie Rata's famous beef stroganoff. The proportions were just about right and left overs were given to Matt from Otaki who unexpectedly found himself sharing the hut with a family from the WTMC.

Pudding proved to be less successful, with Auntie Rata's rich chocolate mousse recipe more difficult than remembered. It may have been a result of the fact that the ratio was judged to be about 1 litre of water to about 1 cup milk powder to about four packets of mousse. More likely it was that the measures of those amount were carried out on an intuitive estimation of volume and weight. This is about 1 litre of water, that looks to be about 1 cup of milk powder, and she'll be right with four packets of mousse. Either way, the result was less of a mousse and more of a thick chocolate soup. The young trampers



hardly seemed to notice and consumed admirable quantities along with an entire can of whipped cream.

The evening's entertainment was a rollicking game of UNO played by Ella, Alex, Toby and Josh and adjudicated by Richard, Mike, and Barry. Josh was clobbered by the 10 year olds.

Everyone turned in around 9pm with the blowing out of the hut candles being the highlight of the night for some of the 10-year old crowd.

Then the rain started.

From midnight intermittent showers pelted the hut, making the numerous late night and early morning bathroom runs damp.

The rain would prove to add just enough adversity to make this the-most-epic-bad-weather-tramp-ever-in-our-lifetime-for-the-Wellington Tramping and Mountaineering Club*. The group mustered out of the sleeping bags around 7am for a hot breakfast of either weet-bix or porridge. Just as we finished breakfast the rain switched from intermittent to steady. The bags were packed snugly, pack liners we checked, and rain covers were deployed. The hut was cleaned, and by 9:30 we found ourselves with a clean hut, packed packs, and a two hour downhill hike. With nothing left to it we donned rain jackets and warmies and started out.

The down hill hike was quite exciting for the young trampers. Ella Cuthbert set the pace and held the boys to their place behind her. There were new islands to be claimed for the crown, new inland oceans had appeared overnight, and solid mud had turned into deep quagmires. The excitement of the hiking down a raging river bed as well the natural descent help to carry the kids down the hill. The rain had stopped by 10:15 and by 11:00 am we were at the bush line. The young trampers arrived at the car park at 11:45 happy and content.

The rag tag assortment of adults arrived slightly later.

* as experienced by four 10-year olds on the field hut hike.

Waitewaewae Nav

14-16 June, EM/Nav tramp, Tararuas (map #2)

Author: Gareth Gretton

Trampers: Debbie Buck, Rebecca (Beccy) Day (photos), Gareth Gretton, David Heffernan (trip leader), Alastair Shelton



David's plan for this EM nav trip was to investigate rumours of an alternative route into the YTTY hut. This route was purported to depart from the track somewhere in the vicinity of a large slip, which has already forced a short re-routing of the original track, and ascend towards the summit marked with a spot height of 876 (about 1.5km NW of the secondary summit marked as Waitatapia, 862). The route would

then descend northwards to rejoin the main track at the watershed between Saddle Creek and Plateau Stream. At least I think that was the plan!

So after a Friday night in Parawai Lodge we headed YTTY-wards looking for tracks. The first possibility came about 30 minutes in, and lead upwards from the first spur after crossing the Otaki, just before we would cross the first stream marked on the map. After a brief discussion, it was decided to carry on, as it seemed a little early in the day to be going off-track, and we weren't anywhere near the location of the aforementioned purported track.



After about another km there was a second spur, shortly before the second stream. From here, a patch of relatively clear hillside was visible on the far side of the second stream, which looked like another potential off-track option. This would lead up directly to 862, but again, it seemed a little early in the proceedings.

A further 1.5km or so further on, and between the third and fourth stream crossings, Debbie spotted some pink tape tied to some trees. I would have walked straight past. Only weak evidence of a track associated though, so we decided to carry on a little until we found the slip.

This came only 5 minutes or so after, and just after the fourth stream. Here there were large orange triangles directing us up from the original track, so up we went. Around the top of this diversion around the slip, we decided to have a go at bashing up the hill (no evidence of a track though). This proved to be rather unsuccessful, as after just a few metres of ascent we hit a more or less impenetrable wall of supplejack.

Back to the track with the pink tape then. We followed this for maybe 20 minutes. After initially ascending, it then started to work its way round the hill, crossing the fourth stream. There was then evidence of pink tape carrying on around the hill and red tape going up the hill, so we went up for a bit, before the red tape also started working its way around the hill.



Best guess was that we then weren't far from the top of the slip with the supplejack. After a bit of debate, the general mood was that we could quite easily run out of time exploring all of these tracks, so we beat a retreat to the main track, with the aim of looking for a track from the saddle.

Following the main track was then pretty straightforward,



and we took our lunch at the remains of an old log hauler (think stationary steam engine). Hard to imagine just how they managed to get it there. Shortly after this, we met Saddle Creek, which the track follows up, spending about half the time in the creek and about half the time on alternate banks.

At the saddle there was pink tape leading off to the right, just before dropping down and crossing Plateau Stream. We did a brief recce on this, and it seemed to be a half-decent track, the general plan then being to potentially use that route on the way out. Interestingly (for the cartographic pedants out there) there is the best part of 1cm i.e. 500m of the Plateau Stream missing from the Topo 1:50k map around this point.

With the hut now as the clear goal for the day we made relatively quick progress to the plateau marked with a spot height of 530m and then started to descend down towards the Otaki. Where the track meets the Arapito Creek we had the option of either the

dry route or the wet route, with the wet route being the one you want if you want to keep your feet dry. Now, I have to say, not being a Kiwi I don't feel that I need to be thigh deep in water before I've had a good day out, so I was for the wet route. Motion carried and we were at the hut in about 45 minutes (against an alleged 10 for the dry route, which is to say the one where you get wet).

No one at the hut when we arrived, but a party of 6 + dog arrived soon after. Following a delicious meal of salmon and pasta and then banana dumplings in caramel sauce we retired to bed, but sadly it wasn't to be an early night due to some later commotion . . . I could elaborate, but I'll spare you the details – suffice to say too much alcohol for someone in the other party, or was it food poisoning? Whatever it was, it was on the floor. [Dave: I would love to elaborate, come and talk to us at club night. ☺]

We awoke to rain on Sunday, although not as heavy as it could have been given the forecast. First decision of the day was a repeat of the wet/dry choice, with David and Alastair feeling the pull of knee deep water and the rest of us opting for dry. We, which it to say the dry party, arrived at Arapito Creek in a little under 40 minutes, but no sign of the wet party. 10 minutes eh? David and Alastair arrived about 5 minutes later, claiming that

they missed the Arapito Creek and therefore had to double back. Obviously this wouldn't be a problem in the opposite direction . . .

Back up at the Saddle/Plateau watershed we had a confab regarding the pink tape, with the general mood being that the over-the-hill option mightn't be so much fun in the rain; that and the fact that we still weren't sure whether the pink tape went all of the way through, and the prospect of descending into supplejack.

So, back on the main track, with a couple of short excursions up the third and first spurs near the end. Both of these seemed to have tracks, but no markings. Both were pretty steep too, and would be hard work up or down. My suggestion would be to explore all of the options on a day trip from Otaki Forks.

All in all a good weekend out with great company, and some interesting explorations!

Cone Hut

25-26 May 2013, Easy tramp, Tararua FP (map #3)

Author: Tracey Black

Trampers: Barry Cuthbert, Fiona Elliott, Murray Sutherland (trip leader), Tracey Black

The punters who'd signed up for this tramp dropped like flies this weekend – so much so that we managed to fit the E, EM and M groups all in one van! However, given our trip was going to the rather cosy Cone Hut (which DoC alleges is a six-bunker, but that's taking a liberal interpretation of "bunk" in my opinion), we weren't too worried about going from a party of eight down to four.

We headed off for Waiohine Gorge on Saturday on a nice morning, and got to the roadend about 10am. We and the EM group were heading in the same direction, with Cone about a three-hour up-across-down stomp. The EMs were off to Tutuwai Hut, a further hour or so south along the Tauherenikau River.

As we started to puff up the 500m ascent, some of the people on the EM trip helped to make us feel a bit better by telling us about a trip they'd done the previous year, when they did the roadend-Cone leg of their Medium tramp on the Friday night, with head torches. We were quite happy to be in the daylight, and able to stop for snacks and drinks regularly, in true Easy style!

Although there was the option of waiting until we got to the hut for lunch, we got a bit hungry before then (well, I got hungry) and found a spot for lunch on the top of the ridge, before starting to head down. On the way down, we came across an enormous, wolfish-looking dog (part Husky), whose owner was a few too many metres behind for comfort. Standoff with the dog ensued; it turned out the dog didn't like people wearing packs. Excellent!

We got to Cone Hut around 1:30pm and piled into this wonderful historic hut with the four EM people, who'd arrived ahead and were eating their lunch there. It's small, built originally in the 1940s (then restored in the 80s), and has a single platform for sleeping, which you couldn't really describe as level. The EMs soon headed off to Tutuwai, teasing us about our rickety accommodation, while we put the billy on for afternoon tea. After that, we thought we should maybe see what we were missing out on, so headed off to Tutuwai ourselves. It is indeed a spacious and well-appointed hut, but lacking the rustic charm of Cone (no, I am not a real estate agent, but you get the drift).

It turned out that Tutuwai also lacked Cone's peace and quiet as, after we had got back and were cooking dinner, a troop of eight Scouts (with three adults) arrived at Cone. We heard them coming before we saw them. Given it was twilight by this time, we were a bit nervous about what their intentions might be – but fortunately, they were also headed to Tutuwai. Result!

Sunday dawned, and we continued sleeping (well not Barry, whose back was playing up). Later, over breakfast and coffee, we read the DomPost, which we carried in just for a lazy Sunday morning. And after a second cup of coffee (for me) we pushed ourselves to get going by 10 am – the Easy tramp is the life! Even better –it's only a 330m ascent coming back, so we got back to the roadend in about 2.5 hours. Lunch was enjoyed at the picnic table in the sun, where the M and then the EM people soon joined us.

We had a good trip back, with a quick stop in Greytown for pies/chips/coffee/custard squares, and got back to the railway station in the late afternoon. What a fantastic weekend – it felt like we had been away for days instead of just overnight. And all this just a couple of hours' drive away.



Big Bend camp; family trip

15-16 June, family, Orongorongo (map #4)

By Ella with help and ideas from Ollie

Trampers: Richard (leader) and Hamish Lyth, Barry, Ella and Ollie Cuthbert

Hi I am Ella and I'm 10 years old. I went on a tramp to the Big Bend campsite in the Orongorongo river valley with Dad (Barry), Ollie my brother aged 7, Hamish who is 8 and his dad Richard. It was quite a simple walk. It was Ollie's first tramp with the club.

At the Midway Bridge, Ollie and Hamish had races across the swingbridge. I refused to race because I much preferred the sweet taste of chocolate. Soon after Midway bridge there is this monkey tree that grows across the track that I really enjoyed climbing.



We arrived at the river and on the other side of the river there was a large bank of loose stones. Hamish and I were the first to climb to the top. We thought it was a great place for making landslides. Richard made a tree bridge across one part of the river. Ollie really enjoyed making avalanches on the stony bank, as well as finding sticks and cool looking stones in the river bed. We didn't tell him that we used some of his sticks as firewood later.



After that we kept on walking to the campsite up the river. It was Ollie's first time crossing big rivers and the water was freezing. Just as you were getting warm again after the last crossing you walked through another one. Finally we arrived at Big Bend campsite.

Big Bend was a cute little campsite with cow pats everywhere. We put up our tents and collected firewood. Hamish, Ollie and I went off exploring. We found the remains of an old hut

and an old track that we walked along for a while. Eventually the Dads found out where we had gone and it was time to come back to the camp ground once they had caught up to us.

We lit the fire and cooked our dinner. Richard had brought along some sparklers of different colours and we had cool fun waving them around and making cool patterns. We also toasted marshmallows over the fire, making s'mores by squashing the burnt marshmallow between warm toasted Girl Guide biscuits.

Just before bed time I got called to come quick! I HAD A PET WETA ON MY SLEEPING BAG. He was named Max but he didn't like being around people so he jumped away like a grasshopper.

Then we had another unexpected visitor. A possum was rustling through the packs. Dad chased him up a tree and threw stones at the possum but he missed.

The next morning it was cold and raining. Ollie and I really hated having to put our cold clothes and wet shoes back on but once we started walking again things weren't so bad.

On the way out everyone got a Star Wars name, Ollie was Ewok, Hamish was Yoda and I was Princess Leia. The Dads were boring old stormtroopers. At least they handed out dark brown squares of Jedi Fuel every so often to keep us going. I really enjoyed my trip to Big Bend.



Bounds Peak (2044m)

1-3 June, Alp1, Raglan Range (map #5)

Author: Andrea Wiechern

Trampers: Debbie Buck, Jenny Cossey, Elizabeth (Bob) Claridge,
Brendan Eckert, Bryce Hamilton, Mariusz, Tony Gazley and Andrea Wiechern

A group of eight members and non-members set off from the Railway Station under the guidance of trip leader Tony Gazley. It was my first trip with the club, but I knew a couple of people on it. After enjoying a beer on the windswept Interislander deck, in an attempt to avoid sea-sickness, we arrived in Picton and drove to our DOC campsite in the Wairau Valley for the night.

Our plan had been to go up the Leatham Valley, climb the only spur with a visible fence-line and walk along the ridge to our campsite nestled beside a river and in the shadow of Bounds. From there we would climb Bounds the next day and return to camp, with a short walk out on the Monday.

The forecast, however, didn't look at all that good for the weekend, with rain expected on the Sunday and Monday accompanied by severe gales. To try and minimise the impact of the weather we decided to base ourselves at Hidden Hut so we'd at least have a dry place to cook if the wet weather did eventuate. From there we would skirt around the back of the mountain to Turkey's Nest Biv and attempt Bounds from there, avoiding the wind for as long as possible.

The walk in to Hidden Hut was lovely. Climbing the steep spur above the river, alongside the fence, a remnant from a time this area was grazed, meant we gained spectacular views of the steep hills and winding river of the Leatham Valley, as well as the odd glimpse of Bounds as it appeared briefly through the mist. It looked very impressive and was something I wanted to stand on top of.

Having gained the ridge we had lunch beside the river where we had originally planned to camp, drank the essential cup of tea and then continued on. We passed over very bouncy terrain and streams partially covered in ice with water running beneath. There were a few goat skulls lying around or attached to markers, but I didn't see any live ones. We headed down into the forest and rested in a 'fairy' grove with the most magnificent mushroom growth surrounding one tree. After multiple stream crossings we arrived at Hidden Hut just before dark. It was situated in a clearing beside the Wye River and someone had been there recently—the fire was still warm. Hidden Hut sleeps five people, was cosy with its fire and well set up with a woodpile and sheltered cooking bench. Hunters had claimed two of the bunks so only three of us slept inside that night, the others camping outside. We had a nice meal and went to sleep early in anticipation of the next day's climb.

The next morning was cloudy, but it wasn't raining yet. We set off in the dark, crossing the river back and forth until we gained the path. I wondered why there were white circles drawn on the path when Bob yelled out that there was a live possum caught in a gin trap. It turned out to be a 'duke' trap, which is apparently legal, but was a horrific way of getting rid of our country's pests. For the next hour or so these traps were dotted along the

narrow track, or, in some cases, right in the middle of it. This was a DOC track on public land, so it was a bit disturbing to think that anyone with a small foot, say a child or dog, might step in one accidentally and do some real damage. Skinned possum carcasses littered the banks beside the path—one was even stuck in a tree where the lazy trapper had tossed it. Another possum was in a bad way and dispatched by the group ahead. As much as I know possums are a pest, they are still living creatures and there must be more humane ways of killing them than this. If dealing with possum traps wasn't enough, I lowered myself down a steep bank but accidentally disturbed a wasp nest. They boiled out and one unfortunately stung Bob, who was walking just behind me.

I was glad to arrive at the stream which marked the end of the trapping line and headed up hill again to Turkey's Nest Biv. The faster group started ahead on their ascent up Bounds. We followed behind and, not thinking we could go all the way up the gully, we fought our way through thick wilding pines, an hilarious experience as our ice axes struggled to free themselves in the trees. Eventually we made it out onto the snowless scree slopes and continued our way up. The wind increased as we ascended and by the time we made it to the ridge, decorated with another rusty long-forgotten fence, the wind had become so strong I almost took off. My bag straps kept whipping me in the face. It was only another 1 km of distance and 150 vertical metres to the summit but we decided it would have been too dangerous. I was disappointed, but as we descended and the wind continued to strengthen and I was glad of the decision. After many bruises from being blown into rocks and my inability to slide down scree properly we made it back to Turkey's Nest Biv, lunch and a hot cup of tea. We couldn't see the other group and hoped they were safe in the wind. The rain was still holding off. We dropped back down to the humidity of the forest, set off all the possum traps with rocks or Tony's walking pole, avoided the wasp nest and set free the still-languishing possum, arrived back at the river and the other group had caught us up. They had made it very close to the summit but had to turn back as they could barely place one foot in front of the other in the gale. We'd arrived on dusk, tucked into another dinner with gusto and sat around the fire trying to figure out Bryce's riddles, a game at which I was hopeless. The hunters had not arrived back so we took their beds.

The next day we set off up through the forest. Getting down the steep slope of slippery farmland had been a struggle. We had lunch with a bellbird which expressed its displeasure at our arrival, but quickly ignored us and sang its heart out. Bryce had gone ahead to bring the van up to the ford saving us a further 3 km walk out on the road. Just as we arrived back at the van (and another cup of tea) it started to rain. It was unbelievable that we'd had a dry trip especially after what we'd been expecting. It turned out the front was running a day slow and the Cook Strait and Wellington were hit with very heavy rain and a strong southerly the following day. I enjoyed the club tradition of a pub meal at the Toot & Whistle in Picton.

It was a shame that we didn't make the peak, but I still had a brilliant weekend with a great bunch of people and discovered an area few have been to.



Abel Tasman coastal track

Queen's birthday weekend, EM, Abel Tasman NP (map #6)

Author: Meena Kadri

Trampers: Donna Maher (leader), Edd Lucas, Fiona Elliot, Ingeborg Hickey, Tatiyana + Meena Kadri

On the back of a smooth Cook Strait crossing, our only challenge on arriving in Picton was getting our compact rental van boot closed over our packs, filled to the brim for a long weekend camping adventure. Happy Apple Backpackers in Motueka was a great place to crash overnight and we set off to Marahau to catch some gorgeous morning light the next day. A bunch of cheeky fantails chirped about to set us off on the track and we soon arrived at picturesque Apple Tree Bay. After some scenic detours we headed over to Anchorage where Ed was the only one amongst us to brave the water. (I did make great claims that I would take the plunge as well but didn't get further than a first few icy steps)

All lunched up, we tramped round to Torrent Bay and set up tents before having a wander around the collection of baches and the beach. We'd heard about Donna's culinary expertise but none of us were prepared for the awesome chocolate fondue that followed dinner – to a backdrop of fireworks set off by a friendly group of locals.

We continued on the next day, grateful for Donna's local knowledge about epic spots like Cleopatra's Pool (though we did think it was a bit chilly to imagine Cleopatra taking a dip there at this time of year).

After lunch at Bark Bay, we headed round to Onetahuti where we set up camp for the night.

Exploring close by we found a cave complete with glowworms and cave wetas plus managed a pretty hilarious game of gin rummy. Dinner was a jovial affair in the haven of a semi-covered kitchen spot.



Last day we ambled over to Awaroa. Checked out eels, pukeko and more in the wetlands while we waited for our water taxi. Pretty strong winds meant there was a bit of rock 'n roll as we boarded – all made worth it by our friendly driver who detoured to check out seals, gannets and other local highlights. Back at Marahou we managed hot showers at the local campground and piled into the van for our return journey. By the time we hit the ferry, the rummy stakes were high – made all the more entertaining by a Wellington ragtime band who were onboard and played a few sets. An upbeat close to a great long weekend.

And a little bit of history

Broken River 1995, by Marilyn Duffy



Tongue & Meats at BR

Roger Bolam

Saturday 5 August

Wet, cold morning in Wellington. Met team at airport, assembled impressive pile of luggage, flew to Christchurch with most of it. Wet and cold there too - skifields all closed, so no rush. Mike's boots and Angela's sleeping bag off to Queenstown, van driver nearly arrested by airport security staff for taking liberties with parking zones, headed off to Riccarton to borrow a sleeping bag, buy food and liquids - heard porter hights was opening - off to Gnomes of Darfield to hire boots and better chains. To Porter Heights for lunch and skiing in the clouds. Lovely snow, would have loved to see where I skied!

Saturday evening

To Arthur's Pass Youth Hostel, group melding and mellowing over dinner followed by a walk to explore the village; humour spot when our fearless leader harassed a possum found minding its own business by the road - poor scared beast retaliated and tried to climb the nearest tall object, ie Roger, who showed amazing agility when under threat - turned out the possum was the local police officer's pet.

Sunday 6th

A chilly start - Tod wanted to see snow on the trees, and he did - about 20cm of it on the entire landscape all the way to Broken River turnoff. A chain mishap en route left us with three useful chains, and one of them suspect, heavily laden rent-a-dent struggled on the access road, so we abandoned ship and walked the last kilometre or so. Felt a little sorry for the unknown punters who did likewise, and trudged heavily laden up the road for 20 minutes to discover they were at the wrong skifield!

Broken River here we come. Untold gratitude to the instigators, designers, and builders of the inclinor which carried our gear up the hill and made the final drudge up to the lodge tolerable. A quick lunch then off to ski! Yet another trudge to the ski shed and access tow,

and that horror of horrors, the nutcracker - after several very nervous false starts a kind local named 'Whale' deftly clipped the first timers on and we made it to the skifield.

Caught glimpses of old hands Sue, Roger, Allan and Jan by now enjoying Broken River snow. What snow it was: knee deep powder such as seldom seen in the North Island.

Very difficult to ski down, even harder to get back up the run. Those pulleys on the nutcracker proved highly intimidating, I wondered why I had come. A whole week to go, I'd better learn to cope or it would be a long week, I told myself. Everyone else could do it. At least falling didn't hurt.

Sunday evening and another trudge to the van and back to retrieve more gear and some of the liquid substances purchased in Christchurch. A meal and some liquid cheered everyone up.

After dinner a formal welcome and introduction to the staff, plus the do's and don'ts of Broken River life. Met 'Joe' the Scottish snowboard instructor and 'Jason' the Canadian ski instructor. Sorted ourselves into lesson groups, I was once a level 3 going on 4, but that was on groomed snow a million miles away. Decided to be a 2 going on 1 for first lesson - good call.

Monday 7th

Sue's soon-to-be-famous porridge started the day. A beautiful bright, clear, calm morning, back to do battle with the nutcracker and THAT snow - lesson proved helpful and actually learned to turn AND keep skis on - a good start to the week. Managed to keep up with some other Tongue and Meats for a while; forgot to pace myself and should have stopped at 3 instead of 5pm - having too much fun to stop - staggered back to the lodge thoroughly exhausted but much happier; discovered the sauna. Bliss!



Tuesday 8th

Snowing and windy, no skiing today (aching thighs were grateful). Know I should have worked more on fitness. A day of resting, reading, cards, eating and socialising - didn't even go outside. Ski tuning session in the evening in lieu of lessons.

Wednesday 9th

Still snowing but looking more hopeful; went up late and skied. Lesson was an 'all in' fun session - everyone thoroughly covered in snow - snowed most of the afternoon, but not too cold for fun. Average of three skiers out most of

the time. Games night at Linden Lodge; Roger and Kara revealed hidden talents and won some points. Bribery and corruption failed us; we lost, but had a lot of fun doing so.

Thursday 10th

Perfect day, photos at sunrise, more porridge, then off to ski awesome fresh untracked snow. A day for fun and more photos. Wanted to photograph own tracks but couldn't stop skiing (or turn) to get camera. Lesson on the baby tow today for my group; using gates certainly showed up the flaws, and great fun. A group excursion to the top for photos and to watch the sun go down. A superb clear, calm evening with a full moon for a bonus - perfect conditions for night skiing. At 6:30 a quick stop for an excellent barbecue prepared by the hardworking skifield staff, then back to ski, and ski, and ski. Went in at 8:30 for coffee and came out to find the tow had stopped; only three tired skiers left by then. My first experience of night skiing, and I thoroughly enjoyed it. I'm sure I ski better in the dark! Others kindly agreed with me.

Friday 11th already

Not much week left. Learned it is not called a snow plough, it is a Power Wedge and it is OK. The words carrrrve, carrrrve, carrrrve etched into my brain (that is Canadian for edging); by now some impressive moguls to ski around; experienced Roger's unique version of ski instructing, and ALMOST mastered the 'backwards uphill snowplough'. Another magic day - staggered down to the lodge in twilight again.

Saturday 12th

Last ski at Broken River - why do holiday weeks fly by so fast? Crowds of visitors today; at least 50 more skiers crowding the slopes; had to wait twice to get on the tow. Even had to find my tow ticket; poor man laughed when he saw it, mangled specimen it was by then, victim (like me) of many dunkings in the snow.

Last back to the lodge to complete the dreaded final pack-up and trudge down to the van. Opted to ski down. Should have realised when the old hands walked down that it wouldn't be a clever idea. "Power Wedging" down a narrow trail of very firm snow proved tough on skied out muscles and not as much fun as it looked. A subdued group dug the van out and loaded gear on board, most of it anyway. This time Allan's boots had vanished.

Saturday night, drove to Flock Hill, cosy bunkrooms, and some serious eating and drinking.

Sunday 13th

Another chilly start - loaded up again - then off to Porter Heights (by popular demand) to see what we had skied a whole week earlier. It was not to be. The rent-a-dent expired, and most of us spent the day sitting amongst the tussock by the road waiting for our replacement vehicle, alternately eating, wandering, chatting, studying and playing cricket in

the sun. Some went skiing, courtesy of Porter Heights staff. Help finally arrived and thanks to some skilful piloting by Captain Bolam, we made it to Springfield and a new van. Back to civilisation and the airport in time to check in and make a quick trip to Cathedral Square before winging back to Wellington.

The agenda said 'Monday 8:30 back to work, still buzzing and ready for work'; a quick phone around some of the punters revealed work was far from anyone's mind.

What an amazing week! Plenty of snow, good weather (only 1 whole day and 2 part days lost due to the weather, out of a potential 9 days). Long hours of skiing, a lively group of punters, interesting locals, cheerful, hardworking skifield staff taking excellent care of us; all the ingredients of a wonderful 9 days. May there be many more Broken River trips.

WT&MC has had a long association with Broken River Ski Club and it proved to be a popular decision to arrange another trip. The punters were: Sue Webb (a perennial BR skier from Auckland), Tod Rutter (a natural at snowboarding), Allan MacLachlan (Club President and 2nd timer), Kara Mulvein (all the way from the UK to sample life on a club field), Jan Goodwin (been there often, classy skier, and now snowboarder), Sarah Higgins (skied like we all wished we could), Mike Gilbert (skied since a baby, working on snowboarding), Angela Emmerson (another convert to snowboarding), Marilyn Duffy (scribe and first timer to Broken River) and last but not least, our hardworking leader Roger Bolam, whose wit and wisdom kept us all on our toes - we may have to go back to perfect that uphill snowplough!

Excerpt from: <i>WTMC Journal 1995</i> .
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Deadline for submissions to the next WTMC newsletter: Friday 26 July 2013

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.