THE BUSHBASHER

A determined weta bushbashes onward. This issue's cover picture was taken by Geoff Donkin during the Labour Weekend expedition

MAGAZINE OF THE NAPIER TRAMPING CLUB INC ISSUE 20, SEPT 2010

Crowds went wild in the Kawekas...

Middle Hill to Whetu, Tira Lodge, Mangaturutu, Makino Hut, Saturday to Monday June 5-7. Map: BJ37 Kuripapango

Trampers: Alison Greer, Les O'Shea and reporter Geoff Donkin

ON the drive in, we passed a group camping at Ball's Clearing. This was a portent for Labour Weekend. Four of us headed off from the Middle Hill car park, along with the day party going our way, in good weather.

After a brief stop at Middle Hill Hut, we continued up Camp Spur to Whetu, meeting two trampers coming out from Ballards Hut. They assured us that they had had the best day, on Friday. Above the bushline, we joined the day party for lunch in the open, away from the protection of the bush, even though there was a cool breeze.

At Whetu, we stopped for a photoshoot, but we could see cloud building up north of the Kawekas. We met another group of three trampers, heading down Makino Spur, and another two on their way to Ballards Hut; they had come from Tira via Rocks Ahead and said there were three trampers from Hutt Valley Tramping Club (HVTC) who were probably going on to Mangaturutu Hut. Looking back, we could see a party of seven or eight who appeared to be following us. The place was getting crowded!

Previously, we had discussed whether we should stay at Ballards Hut as per the original plan or go on to Tira Lodge. The latter choice was thought the best, as it would mean that we would not be out in the open when the weather turned bad the next day. We decided to continue on to Tira Lodge. The tramp is not too difficult except for the last bit, where you face a short steep climb out of the saddle.

We arrived at Tira Lodge at about 4.15pm. Empty... Wow! And DoC had done a bit of work recently. There were new concrete pads below the deck and under the stove, and a new tap mounting on the water tank. The hut was very clean and tidy, with a good pile of firewood. Alison got the fire going, and the billy was on when eight trampers from Victoria Uni's Tramping Club (VUTC) arrived. They included Keiran, a fellow club tramper's son. Mum Jude was in the day party; she and Keiran must have missed each other by about an hour, somewhere around Whetu.

North Kaweka, approaching from Whetu

On Sunday, the forecast rain turned up - not heavy, but the wind was quite strong. We headed off about 8.30am across the saddle to Mangaturutu Hut. There are fewer bumps going in that direction. Once out on the open tops, a strong wind tried to push us off our feet.

At Mangaturutu Hut, we had a longer food stop because we weren't sure of finding a good lunch spot. Off again. A change to be going down from Mangaturutu. It's much easier in this direction. We descended to the three-wire bridge across the Makino River and once over it, we had lunch.

The track follows the river's true right and then heads up a spur. Light rain became heavier. We were passed by all of VUTC. Their plan had been to go down the Makino River to Te Puia, but they decided against it due to potential rising river levels after the overnight (and continuing) rain.

Two VUTC guys stopped and asked us for directions. They didn't have a map. They knew they were going to Te Puia but the sign said Makino one way and Ballards the other. Not good preparation, perhaps…

We forged on along a relatively level track through beech forest with horopito (pepper) trees, reaching Makino at about 3pm. >P2

There were three HVTC in residence plus eight VUTC swirling about. Thank goodness VUTC were all going on to Te Puia.

We settled in. Some of HVTC had been at Granity Pass and Wangapeka area when we were there in January 2010. What a small world... At about 4pm, more VUTC turned up. They had come from Ballards and had taken all day to get to Makino. High winds out in the open meant they had to hang onto each other for support. They went on to Te Puia to join their friends.

At about 6 - 6.30pm, more HVTC arrived in the dark, head torches ablaze, heads looking wet. They had come from Rocks Ahead, following us via Tira and Mangaturutu. One was more than 70 years old! We re-arranged ourselves to make room.

Next day, HVTC got up at 6am and set off at first light. As two of their medium group were struggling, Alison suggested they walk out with us and she could drive them to a suitable pick-up point. They had arranged to stop at DoC Puketitiri on the Friday night, so we agreed to drop them off at the same place.

We rose in the daylight and set off at about 8.30am, pointing out the delights of the Makino Bivvy, the views of Mohaka River and farmland across the river, arriving at the main car park after about 2 1/4 hours. Unfortunately, we had to change in the rain.

It had been a good trip - a great day on Saturday, and we managed to avoid most of the bad weather on the following two days, all due to the sound decision-making on Saturday to tramp through to Tira Lodge and minimise open-top tramping on the wetter and windy days.

A few days later, we got an email from a member of HVTC thanking us for the ride.

Day trippers, Saturday June 5

Trampers: Ted Angove, Ray Slavin, Murray Goss, Gordon Tapp, Jude Paton, John Marshall, Matt Green, Wade Sawyer, Marc Marchal, John Gray and reporter John Dobbs

MIDDLE Hill and The Three Gorges was the intended trip but, as the weather looked pretty good and fining up, the decision was made to try for Whetu instead. We had a vanload of 11 day trippers along with four for the weekend circuit in Alison's car. After a lot of recent rain, we had checked with the local farmer that it would be OK to cross their bridge - and a wise move it was, as the creek was running muddy and swift. There was already one car parked just in front of the ford.

So we headed off from Makahu Road around 8.30am, all more or less together. Ray and Gossie intended to hole up at Middle Hill Hut and John Gray and Gordon decided that would be enough for them, too.

Morning tea at Middle Hill Hut and there were four hunters in residence. In fact, we were to encounter several other groups of hunters during the day.

Winter Solstice revellers, pictured before they got totally out of hand, as is traditional...

The track up Camp Spur was good and the climb meant we shed the layers. I spotted a weta just beside the track, and took the photo opportunity. We emerged into the open before the final climb onto the range and Whetu. It was midday, so we found a few hollows away from the cool breeze and enjoyed lunch with a view.

Within minutes, the weekenders joined us, but Julia (who was part of them) was making heavy weather and decided to head back down to Middle Hill with Ted.

The wind was quite sharp as Jude, Marc, Matt, Wade and I plodded steadily up. The views all around on the tops and particularly out to Ruapehu were spectacular. We had a long way to go, so did not linger, saying goodbye to the remaining three weekenders, and carrying on south towards the actual peak of Whetu in a biting wind, a thin layer of cloud and a light dusting of snow. Just as we were about to turn left and begin the descent of Ihaka Spur, we met a contingent of Victoria Uni trampers.

Ihaka Spur is a bit gnarly in places; we did a slight zigzag and regularly referred to the map. At least the clear conditions made navigation easier. Finding the entrance into the bush lower down took some time, and lucky spotting by Marc of a tree marker in the distance helped a lot. It was a relief to finally be in the shelter and safety of the bush again and on a well-marked track. We tried to make up a bit of time, and literally jogged down to Middle Hill Hut.

A black and white Winter Solstice

Winter Solstice party, June 11-12, at Robson's Lodge, Kaweka FP

Revellers: Ted Angove, Paul Exeter, Ray Slavin, Murray Goss, Sue and Gary Marshall, Alison Greer, Gillian Dalton, Sue Martin, Simon Hill and reporter Julia Mackie

IT was a beautiful winter's morning when we arrived in convoy at Robson's Lodge. The lodge was built in 1908 by David Lumsden who began farming with his partner Leo Lopdell at Kuripapango in 1906. The Lumsden family farmed in the district for 44 years until they sold the farmland and house to the New Zealand Forest Service. The house was used by Morrie Robson, New Zealand Forest Ranger, and his wife Coral from 1952 until 1966 when Morrie died. Coral lived in the house for another year. Since the 1970s, it has been used as overnight accommodation and base for school trips and camps*. The history is well documented in the lodge lounge, along with photos taken of the Lumsdens and Morrie and Coral Robson.

We set up camp and got the wood burners going, one in the kitchen to heat the water and one in the lounge, which kept us nicely overheated.

A cuppa was called for and so we relaxed on the verandah for a short while. Six decided to do a small day tramp from the Lakes car park up to the Kuripapango mast and then down the Smith Russell track to the water gauge and Kuripapango DoC campground. Those not tramping would continue the tradition of decorating the lounge and a newly cut Christmas tree. They were spoilt for choice in their selection of a Christmas tree, as there are many saplings just off the Kuripapango Road.

We enjoyed the views from the lookout 15 minutes up from the start of the track, then made our way to the top. It got breezier as we ascended. Magnificent views from the mast, then the quick trip through the contorta to the junction of the Smith Russell track down to the Cameron car park. We decided not to have lunch as we could not find a spot out of the wind, but walked back to the lodge for a late lunch/afternoon tea.

Sue and Gary had done a wonderful decoration of the ceiling and tree. Lunch was accompanied by sausage rolls that had been heated in the wood-burning stove. Then it was time for a hot shower and change into our party gear. The theme this year was Black & White and some excelled in their choice of costume, raiding op shops or daughters' wardrobes.

We had a merry time, and cooked two roast chickens on the portable gas BBQ that Alison had brought along, plus a lovely casserole that Sue (Mrs H) had made. The men had

At the Three Fingers trig...

provided the vegetables with white cheese sauce and some pavlova dessert. We also had Julia's dessert of dried fruits (prunes, figs, apricots, pineapple etc), cooked in orange juice and red wine. We ate to bursting point.

After dinner, Santa Claus dropped in and everyone had the chance to sit on his lap and pick a pressy from his bag. Santa's gift to Simon was envied by the girls as we have all been trying to source the widget with the screw-on top that doubles as a wine glass.

By this time, everyone was getting very hot and so a walk outside to look at the stars on a clear night was very pleasant.

On Sunday after breakfast, we cleared up and decided to have a look at Blowhard Bush. We have passed it many a time, but some had never been around it. We all walked the Tui Track and paused at the lookout. Bad weather was rolling in from the south-west, so it was time to head home.

We all enjoyed the stay at Robson's Lodge and the short walks. It's a shame that more members didn't join us, as there was plenty of room and the ease of access made it a comfortable and easy Winter Solstice trip.

** Info. from DoC website*

Midwinter ramble to Te Iringa and beyond

Kuripapango, Te Iringa, to Roberts Hut and return, Saturday June 19.
Map: BJ37 or U20

Trampers: Marc Marchal, Roeland Pootjes, Sue Martin, Isobel Holdaway, Geoff Donkin, John Marshall, Murray White, Ray Slavin, Sue Marshall, Paul Exeter, Ted Angove, Matt Green, Julia Mackie and reporter Gordon Tapp

FIFTEEN trampers travelled in three 4WD vehicles to the car park halfway up the Gentle Annie.

The weather was fine, with the sun peeping through the cloud at frequent intervals. Climbing up the somewhat overgrown track with its short, greasy, bare clay sections, the party reached the 1191m point and enjoyed views over the Northern Ruahines, and to the farmland on the distant Tahuhunui Range to the West. There were small traces of snow.

... and screeching down the scree

Further on, we reached the next feature at 1324m, the Te Iringa high point complete with survey trig. Sidling around just below the trig, we had some magnificent views of Mt Meany, Ngamatea Station and - in the far distance - snow-clad Mt Ruapehu with adjoining Mt Ngauruhoe covered in cloud.

A short distance on, while walking close to the beech forest, we discovered a tarn full of water with old beech stumps protruding out of it - an eerie sight. We were exposed to the cool north-westerly wind and covered up a little more. The way to Roberts Hut was not obvious, but a cairn indicated the route was down to our right. Dropping into a valley, and beside a stream, we found the hut.

Roberts is an old private hut, built with a frame of tree branches with aluminium cladding and rubber sheet roofing. It has four bunks constructed of timber frames and sacking bases.

A clear stream flows alongside the front of the hut, and there is a bridge across the river leading to a rudimentary toilet structure with plastic toilet seat and cover. Altogether, it would provide comfortable accommodation.

Lunch was enjoyed in the sun on the spur above the hut. Returning the way we had come, we discovered a hunter's tarpaulin bivouac in an area of beech forest just short of Te Iringa. Water was trapped in the bottom end of the fly, and there were camping remains indicating it had recently been used.

We negotiated the steep clay pans, with one member deciding there was safety in sliding down on one's bottom, and arrived back at the vehicles at 3pm after a most enjoyable winter tramp in fine weather.

Scratches and blood didn't spoil the scree

Three Fingers to Bob's Spur, Saturday July 3. Map: BK37

Trampers: Murray White, Julia Mackie, Alison Greer, Colin McNatty, Geoff Donkin, Sue Martin, John Dobbs, John Marshall, Sue Marshall, Gordon Tapp, Ted Angove, Paul Exeter, Murray Goss, Isobel Holdaway, Jude Paton, Viv Bramley and reporter Marc Marchal

IT was a crispy cold Saturday morning when a large group set off towards the Ruahines. By the time we arrived at the start, the sun was starting to show and with no wind the promise was for a nice walk.

We walked over farmland to the fence and bushline to the start of the track. The first part climbing Three Fingers was quite well maintained, although slippery in places. As we reached the first exposed parts of the ridge, the wind found us and it quickly became quite cold. Everyone was searching their backpacks for windbreakers.

Morning tea was in a sunny and reasonably sheltered spot. We had only been going again for a couple of minutes when we saw a goat in the bush calling out for its baby. From here on, the path is no longer marked and we worked our way further up through low shrub and skirting the tree line. The track then dips down into a small stream with a hunter's bivvy on the other side amongst the trees. We climbed to the trig and stopped for a group photo.

We then made our way across looking for the ridge that would take us through to to Bob's Spur. This proved a bit of a mission. After a couple of attempts, we found the trail and Julia tied some orange tape to the kanuka. The track goes in and out of the bush until it descends more steeply. There were a few old markers here and there. After a short descent, we found a sheltered spot in the bush to have lunch. From here the trail disappears and bushbashing is the only way to go in the required direction, down.

Many falls, dirty bums and bloody knees later, we finally reached the highlight of the day, the shingle slide. A 150m run down in a minute or so, fantastic fun. From the bottom of the slide, we followed a path back to the farmland. And after crossing a couple of paddocks, we reached the vehicles in high spirits - a great day out.

Rockin' all over the Ruahines

Ruahine Hut, Saturday July 17. Map: BK37

Trampers: Ted Angove, Paul Exeter, Marc Marchal, John Marshall, Colleen Perreau, Isobel Holdaway and reporter Julia Mackie

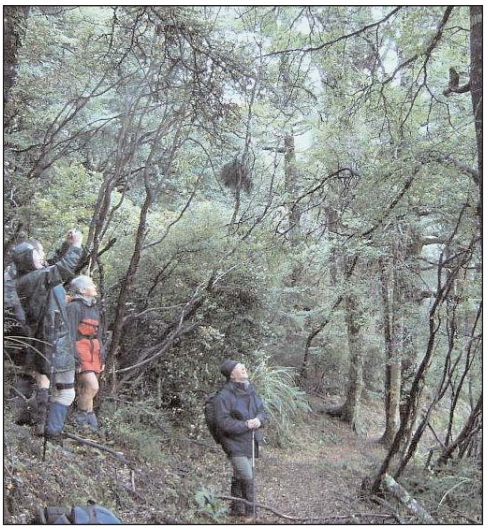
TED and Paul, our two drivers through Big Hill Station, needed skill as the road is getting very rutted. The wet winter has not helped, but at least we did not have snow. "Rock 'n roll", said Colleen. I'm glad I wasn't driving.

At Ruahine Hut, another party of two men and young sons were already about. We decided to attempt the circuit heading to Koau Stream on the Shutes Hut track, on to a little-used track down to the Ngarururoro, and back up onto a ridge to join an old vehicle track. The walk is through kanuka scrub and young beech trees, until you reach the drop-off down to a stream. Then it becomes bushy with many large astelias. The track seemed in good order and was well marked. I understand it was cut around eight years ago. Up the other side, snowfall in only a few places required negotiation, as did some kanuka trees across the track, which was also slipping downhill in some places. Back up onto the top and across open scrub again, and then open tussock. A little undulation and then back onto a ridge and a gentle descent. A lookout point through the kanuka gave a view of a huge slip on the western side of the ridge.

We missed the turn-off, (although Simon saw it but didn't say anything). We realised within minutes and made our way back up and spotted the cairn with the deer's antler indicating the turn and drop-off down to Koau Stream. The zigzag down the grassy slope made the going easy. Marc spied the orange marker down below, indicating the route to cross Koau Stream. On the other side, we had spotted the fallen down shed/hut, and after crossing the stream, which was flowing clear but fast, we had a brief look. Nothing much left except a roof and the wall studs. On a flat area close by, there was evidence of a campsite. We saw the markers for the Shutes Hut track, but searched for the track to take us along the stream, so that we could make our way to the Ngarururoro. We could not find it and got bluffed out by the stream, so backtracked for lunch in the sun on the top of the ridge at the antler turn-off.

Lunch in the sun was welcomed by everyone, with lovely views of the Longfellow Range. Ted checked the map, and concluded that if we continued down this ridge we would be better placed to drop into the Ngarururoro. I think that he is right, so we might give this a try sometime.

After lunch, we made our way back up the ridge and back to Ruahine Hut. We had left at around 9am and returned at around 3pm, so in all a good six-hour tramp. Yes, the easy/medium grading was about right. Our thanks to Ray Slavin for the loan of his 4WD vehicle.



Clockwise, from top left: The drop down to Koau Stream on the Shutes Hut track; Spot the birdie - a morepork (*ruru*) enjoys his photo opportunity on the Kaweka Flats track; In the leatherwood, nearing the top of the Ruahines, on the way to the A-frame (Travers Hut)

A figure of eight, in a roundabout way

Waipataki Beach, Aropaoanui Beach Circuit, Wednesday July 21

Trampers: Kelvin Shaw, Paul Exeter, John Marshall, Marc Marchal, Viv Bramley, Ron Morison, Loretta Pearson and reporter Alison Greer

THE van headed north-east on the Wairoa highway. It was calm and overcast. After a short discussion, we chose to start at the bottom of the Waipataki hill and do it in reverse.

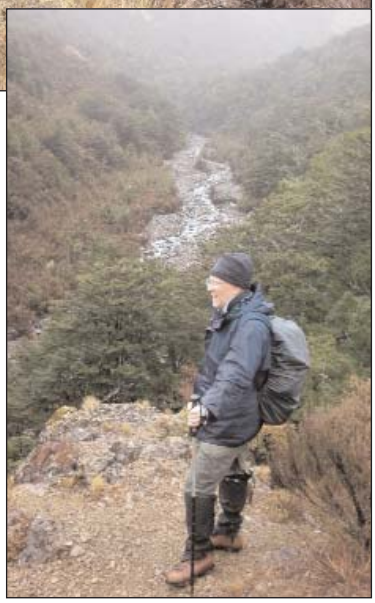
Leaving the van at the bottom corner of the reserve, we headed up through beautiful nikau palm groves to the top on Aropaoanui Road. We followed the road towards Aropaoanui to the double gates that lead down The Old Coach Road. The track down through pine forest was muddy with large puddles to negotiate, then it opens out and you look over a small gully, towards the reserve we had just come through. The area was looking lush and green after so much recent rain. The trees had lots of lichen hanging from their branches, like fine green lace.

We arrived back where we had started in time for morning tea and then headed for the beach, taking a detour through a small reserve that runs beside the road to check out the huge white pine trees and climb up behind the baches to a good lookout.

The track round the coast is above the high tide mark and is kept in very good condition, although there was evidence of recent slips from the cliffs above, making it a little slippery. The sea was very calm, with only an occasional swell breaking on the rocks below. Our lunch spot was on a small shingle beach with a weak sun on our backs and a couple of seagulls for company.

Aropaoanui Beach was deserted and we made our way up beside the river, passing a farmhouse, and out onto the main road by the bridge. Unfortunately it was then all uphill, passing the double gates we had been through before, to the car park on the Aropaoanui Road.

After a quick drink stop, it was back down the reserve to the van. With walking in a sort of figure eight pattern, an easier day turned into a longer one than expected - but enjoyable all the same.



Clockwise from above: The tarn near Te Iringa, in the Kaweka Forest Park; Dermot takes a breather after climbing out of the stream on the the Kaweka Flats track; The A-frame atop the south-eastern Ruahine Range

Cars and a trailbike in *our* wilderness!

Tamaki River car park to A-frame Hut and Stanfield Hut, Saturday July 31. Map: BL36

Trampers: Murray Goss, John Marshall, Colin McNatty, Sue Martin, Marc Marchal, Jude Paton, Simon Hill, Geoff Donkin, Isobel Holdaway, Les O'Shea, Gillian Dalton plus Julia Mackie and reporter Gordon Tapp

THERE was a heavy coating of snow on the central Ruahines as we drove down Highway 50 to the Tamaki West River picnic area car park. A group of three from Manawatu Tramping and Ski-ing Club was heading to Mid-Pohangina Hut. The sky was clear and sunny, but a cool northerly was blowing and it increased in strength as we climbed directly towards the top of the range. This track is quite steep and it was slippery in places, particularly as we neared the top and encountered some ice.

The track led us directly to Travers (the A-frame) Hut at the top of the range and to the adjacent four-wheel-drive road. Just as the hut came into view, two 4WD vehicles passed along the road, which was a bit of an anticlimax following our achievement in tramping to the top. Extensive views were enjoyed out to farmland and Dannevirke to the east.

Travers Hut is in a very exposed position, has a concrete floor and the wood fire has been removed, resulting in a less-than-inviting appearance; but no doubt it's a welcome shelter for tired trampers.

Good progress was made along the four-wheel-drive road, and we branched off at point 1170m to a somewhat overgrown bush track with flax bushes sprouting in the middle in places. There were good views of snow-clad mounts Ruapehu and Ngauruhoe along this ridge.

We spotted a farm motorbike on the side of the track and met the hunter who owned it further on, before having lunch in the sun on a sloping, north-facing section of the track.

Julia moved off first to get down to Stanfield Hut and further on to Cattle Creek Hut to join Paul, Sue and Ted who had travelled directly up the Holmes Track to the hut for an overnight stay.

Turning south, the track led us straight down to Stanfield Hut. We encountered two hunters who were staying there, and they planned to hunt deer down the spur to the north. We enjoyed a snack break in the sun outside the well-maintained Stanfield Hut, and then moved down the river to the track leading up to a four-wheel-drive road on the true left side of the river.

Arriving back at the Tamaki River reserve and our van, we could look back on six hours of enjoyable tramping in fine winter conditions.

Tamaki West Road-end to Cattle Creek Hut, Saturday/Sunday July 31-August 1. Map: BL36

Trampers: Ted Angove, Paul Exeter, Sue Marshall and reporter Julia Mackie

WE took a group photo at the road-end, before the day and weekend parties split for their respective tramps. I joined the day party climbing up to the A-frame (Travers Hut). It had featured in the August 2010 *Wilderness* magazine and I'd not been up there before. The walk up the Holmes Track was led by Sue Marshall. They reached Stanfield Hut, and made an entry in the book before continuing upstream.

Ted, Paul and Sue were not aware of the change at the bottom of the ridge so, on reaching an impossible two-metre step up, realised that the cairns that they had made to guide me were in error. They retraced their steps and walked upstream until they sighted an orange marker. This was not visible further downstream. The new route up onto the ridge, with DoC signposts, has been in place since mid-April 2009. Ted, Paul and Sue lunched on the tops in the sun.

On arriving at Cattle Creek, Ted and Paul took the track towards Mid-Pohangina Hut, which follows the creek. The party from Manawatu Tramping and Skiing Club had had to slide down a big drop at one point on the track, leaving skid marks. Ted and Paul retreated to the hut and I arrived after my detour to the A-frame. I was 1 hr and 15 minutes behind them. We soon warmed up and had the hut to ourselves. The walk out over the Holmes Track next day was leisurely, with time spent botanising. We'd all had a good weekend tramp.

No need for a shower after this...

Makahu Saddle to Middle Hill Hut, Wednesday August 4. Map: BJ37

Trampers: Kelvin Shaw, Robyn Smith, John Marshall, Paul Exeter, Murray White, Murray Goss, Vic Bullock, Ken Ross, Alison Greer, Dermot McCaughan and reporter Julia Mackie

WE set off from Makahu Saddle car park in cloudy weather and the threat of heavy rain. Robyn and I wanted some exercise and so kept up a good pace through to Kaweka Flats Bivvy. The wind was strengthening and rain becoming steady. We holed up inside the **>P6**

bivvy and had a hot drink. The door was propped open so we could see the rest of the group approaching. They had spotted a more-pork in the trees and had stopped for a photo opportunity.

After everyone had arrived and had a snack and drink break, we headed for Middle Hill Hut for lunch. There was no point in hanging around in this weather. The drop down into the stream and then up the short and sharp uphill was testing for some. The track then undulated until reaching the hut. Three of our party who had brought the van around to Middle Hill car park on Makahu Road were already there, as was a hunter out for a day walk. We arrived in dribs and drabs, all very wet.

The rain grew steadily worse while we had lunch and the hunter started a fire in the open fireplace, while Gossy advised him how to do it. It's amazing how just the sight of some heat can help, even with a hut full of smoke; an open window was essential.

Some set off back down the track to check on the progress of others, still arriving from the bivvy, but no assistance was required except encouragement for tired legs. The last stage out from Middle Hill Hut to the car park was in steady rain, so there were no views or stops. We all got back safely and had enjoyed stretching our legs.

We find a new bridge over troubled waters

Makino Ridge, Te Puia Lodge, Saturday August 14. Map: BJ37 and BH37

Trampers, Makino Ridge: Matt Green, Alison Greer, Geoff Donkin, Simon Hill and reporter Julia Mackie. Te Puia via the Mohaka River track: Ted Angove, Paul Exeter, John Gray, John Marshall, Jude Paton and Murray Goss

IT was 17 deg C outside at 7 am, according to the van's temperature gauge. You could feel it too. But the forecast was not good. Rain was on the way.

The Makino five started our tramp in dry weather, but at the first plateau, raincoats went on. The bush was eerie and damp with a dull light, quite different from the summer. We reached the junction for Te Puia in good time, and stopped for a photo shoot of the Makino five. The exposed section of the track down through clay pan and shingle was going to be interesting in the wet and wind, but turned out to be a breeze - it must have been the Omni Grip on the new day tramp shoes I was trying out. The tops were covered in light grey cloud, but still magic. More photos to take. Down to the bridge in no time at all, and what a sight… The new bridge installed to allow larger school groups to cross the Makino River at speed was not quite finished, we think, and the sign has yet to be moved. These improvements will ensure even better access to the Mangatainoka hot springs.

We moved on after the bridge inspection to the hot pools, as we had oodles of time. The

The new bridge over the Makino River, en route to the Mangatainoka hot pools

Mohaka River was flowing higher and dirtier and faster than we'd seen for some time. We had lunch on the benches by the hot pool, and Simon had a dip.

Then it was back down the track and on to Te Puia Lodge where the other party had already been and gone. The wet weather was not suited to hanging around. On the trip out, we were joined by Jude, who had been shown the hunter's bivvy by Ted and Paul. The Terrace Hilton looked in good order, she advised. On the walk back to The Gums, we would check it out too.

Arriving back at the shelter, we changed in the dry, and made our way home. The rain had not stopped since we put on our raincoats, but was only light and not the predicted downpours. We were all glad to have decided on getting out and enjoying the walk, despite the forecast.

John Gray reports (River route)

FIVE trampers left the Te Puia Lodge track, heading up-river in dry conditions. We made our way as far as the first Mohaka River flats and made a detour to inspect the 'Terrace Hut', a small private hunters' hut, which as the name suggests, is on a terrace above the river flats.

The river was running quite high, due to overnight rain in the headwaters but, as always, we enjoyed the walk to Te Puia Lodge. After a snack, we went up to look at the new bridge across the Makino River, adjacent to the old one.

After lunch at the lodge, we made our way back to the car park. It was still raining, but not too hard! We changed into dry clothes and waited for the others to arrive soon after. We arrived back at Park Island around 5pm after an enjoyable day, fortunately not affected too badly by the rain.

Freezing makes it that much faster

Rangiwahia Hut, August 28-29. Map: BL36

Trampers: Sue Marshall, Denise Payne, Ted Angove, Paul Exeter, Les O'Shea, Julia Mackie and reporter Alison Greer

RANGIWAHIA Hut (or Rangi for short) sits in a hollow just above the bushline on the Whanahuia Range in the western Ruahines. The hut has extensive views over the western and lower North Island, taking in the volcanic plateau and the rugged hills and valleys of the Rangitikei district.

From the car park on Renfrew Road, the track sidles along a ridge through beech then podocarp forest before meeting a large slip. The track deviates up, around, then descends to join a main track just before a lovely arched, oriental-looking bridge. This spans a narrow chasm about 70 metres deep and is a great photo spot. From here, the track climbs (at times steeply) over a mixture of rocks, tree roots and zigzags, crosses below a small waterfall and then emerges onto a broad tussock ridge. The 12-bunk, serviced Rangiwahia Hut is then within sight and takes only a few moments more to reach.

Four of the group had taken this route, with three deciding to take the alternative Deadmans track route. This track starts from the car park but climbs up the ridge to the south. It's well marked and leads up through beech, podocarp, and hardwood forest with the fabulous mountain cedar making an appearance.

Climbing steeply at first, the track flattens out before climbing again at a gentler gradient through a corridor of sub-alpine scrub and leatherwood. On reaching the open tussock, you can look across the valley and see the

Brrrrrr! The junction on the Whanahuia Range, to Rangiwahia Hut and Triangle Hut

ridge that leads down to Rangiwahia Hut. For us, it was time to put on extra layers as the wind was cool and the predicted weather change was on its way. Snow lay between the tussock and got deeper the higher you went, making the going much harder. We had a very quick lunch by the tarn, checked the map for our position, and more layers were put on before the last ascent to the signpost on Mangahuia at 1583m, the high point of the day. We seemed to have steered clear of the dark clouds all day.

Photos were swiftly taken of some great views, as it was too cold to linger; then it was down the poled, snow-covered ridge trying to keep to the clumps of tussock for better footing. Les was going like a bat out of hell, as he was very cold. We all managed to fall over at some stage, with one or two full face-plants thrown in. We could see in the distance three members of the other group who had come up to meet us and were watching our progress. We met up and they were impressed that it had only taken four hours to do the loop.

With the weather closing in, we made our way down to the hut where the gas heater was going and the kettle was on. That night, we shared the hut with four women from Wellington and in the morning had an uneventful walk out to the car park.

To pastures (and native forest) anew

Te Waewae Station, August 18

Trampers: Vic Bullock, Paul Exeter, John Gray, Alison Greer, John Marshall, Les O'Shea, Kelvin Shaw, Peter Slagter and reporter Ken Ross

THIS was an eagerly anticipated new tramp. Te Waewae is a station inland from Kotemaori, off the road to Wairoa. After a drive of close on two hours on generally very good roads, we were met at the gates by Ian, the station owner. He not only met us but had planned our route for the day and was going to accompany us.

As well as the cleared land, where Ian farmed sheep, cattle (Welsh Blacks) and horses, there is a large tract of native bush that Ian has covenanted to protect and preserve it. This, along with another large area covenanted by his neighbour, forms a very large native forest along the east bank of the Te Hoe River. We were to spend most of our day in this forest with its many giant matai and rimu and others that Ian said could be up to 2000 years old. The under-storey is lush, as trees are re-establishing themselves following pest eradication measures.

We set off in overcast, damp weather along a track that had been the farm access road until it was washed out by Cyclone Bola in 1988. Then we branched off with Ian in the lead on what was to be a circular route to later return to our start point. We generally followed west and south and although I always had confidence in our leader, more than once he admitted to not being on the intended route. Ian assured us that we were never lost; we were just not where he had intended us to be. We sat at the base of a magnificent matai for a mid-morning break before a long descent to what appeared to be a riverside plateau where we had lunch. No river, though, but nevertheless a pleasant spot for a well-deserved rest after a morning's off-track tramping.

After lunch, we continued south before emerging from the bush on a ridge with magnificent expansive views. We were looking down onto the Te Hoe River and Mohaka River confluence and Te Kooti's Lookout was opposite. On the other side of the Mohaka River was Waitere Station. What a panorama!

From here, it was across the farm, mainly on tracks, back to the start. On the way, we took time out to admire Ian's old but well preserved totara slab hut. From there, it was to another magnificent viewing point, which was the site of a memorial to the pioneer family who had broken in the original farm. After a cup of tea, we farewelled and thanked our host for a most enjoyable day.

One out of the box - and Gold-plated

Gold Creek, August 28. Map: BK36

Trampers: Gordon Tapp, Isobel Holdaway, Gillian Dalton, Sue Martin (trip leader), Murray Goss, Marc Marchal, Paul Hendy, Kelvin Shaw and reporter Jude Paton

ON a mild, sunny, windless morning, nine of us headed for the hills with Kelvin (who'd come to check out the Saturday trampers) at the wheel. The sun catching the snow-topped ranges looked amazing. We set out over farmland at 8.25 taking the 'shortcut' (a bit of a challenge, since none of us had been that way before), in order to save ourselves the climb up from the river. A short way along the fenceline bordering the bush, we spotted **>P8**

The Mohaka as rarely seen, above its confluence with the Te Hoe River

A sunny spot by Gold Greek, ideal for a short stop and Kelvin's group photo

the arrow pointing 1km downhill to the river and the DoC sign board; we were back on track. Looking back, we had fantastic views of the braided Makororo spread out way below us. We ambled along a gently climbing track through lovely bush and moss with dappled sunshine, in high spirits.

After two hours, we reached the drop-off point down to the hut. Who said only 10 minutes to morning tea? A half hour's steepish descent later, we splashed through the stream and discovered an old Forest Service four-bunker with a fresh coat of orange paint and new skylight - airy and very tidy. A sunny spot by the stream was the setting for our leisurely brunch. Strangely, no one opted for the downstream route (Ted's words ringing in our ears: "Cold Creek") and instead we braced ourselves for the uphill trek.

Due to the scintillating conversation, our feet did the walking and 40 minutes later we were surprised to be back on top again. The sky to the west darkened and a shower had us scrambling for raincoats. A few minutes later, the skies cleared and a rainbow appeared. One of the party then remembered her pole was leaning against the tree where she'd put on her raincoat. Two of us hot-footed it back to retrieve the stick. The rest continued down to the memorial above the river, before dragging themselves back up the hill to the van, arriving back at 2.45pm.

After a stop at Tikokino, nine happy trampers returned to town after a leisurely day's adventure in excellent company and ideal conditions. Well done team!

Finished reading? No, there's more

JOHN DOBBS has taken charge of the club library and encourages everyone to make use of our excellent resources. There is a new alphabetical database of titles and authors, which will be regularly updated. A new loans book records your take-outs and you have three months to return them, otherwise John will be on your case.

Books fall into these broad categories:

- Tramping resources (handbooks on parks, manuals, etc)
- Good yarns (great reads here, from NZ to overseas and many historic)
- Nature and conservation (many manuals on trees, plants, birds, fungi, and accounts of conservation issues, campaigns and more)
- Hawke's Bay (lots of useful stuff; we even have three copies of *HB for the Happy Wanderer*)
- Climbing, mountaineering and polar (fascinating stories and stunning pictures in some books)
- Biographical (not many titles, e.g. Ed Hillary, etc)

We also receive the *Wilderness* magazine each month, along with publications from a few clubs. These will be held for just 12 months. Old magazines and other items will be released as give-aways to members. John welcomes suggestions for additions to the library, the latest of which are:

- *South Island Weekend Tramps* by Nick Groves
- *Castles in the Sand, What's Happening to the NZ Coast?* by Raewyn Peart
- *A Wee Walk in the Wilderness* by Rex Hendry

Calling happy snappers: Your mag needs you!

DON'T keep those fantastic tramping pictures to yourself. Send them in to *Bushbasher*. We're now using the best - or most unusual - in the magazine's front-page masthead. Just pick the top shot (or two) from your outing and email to trans@ction.co.nz

Use the highest possible resolution and try to avoid photographing other people's backpacks. Instead, order them to turn round and chorus: "Freeze!" The Editor has suggested that the Page 1 picture wins a free ride to the next tramp, but our cost-conscious committee will have to decide on that most excellent idea.

The Anniversary bash

THIS year's Anniversary Dinner is on Thursday October 7, in the Oceans Restaurant at Napier Cosmopolitan Club on Marine Parade. Drinks are from 6pm, with dinner at 7pm. All wives, husbands and partners are welcome.

i TRAMP

www.napiertrampingclub.org.nz

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The club meets at 7.30pm every second Thursday at Port Ahuriri School, before each weekend tramp. Please check the club website for dates and upcoming topics.

This newsletter is also available as a PDF file. Email trans@ction.co.nz for a copy.

The club thanks Band Limited at 50 Ossian Street, Ahuriri, Napier, for printing our newsletter.

Napier Tramping Club also thanks the Eastern and Central CommunityTrust for its financial support.

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For the latest information, visit www.napiertrampingclub.org.nz

To stay right up to date - just click and get RSS alerts via email