



Footprints

2010



Disclaimer: The club would like to thank AUSA for its contributions toward the publication of Footprints, and other events through the year. Opinions expressed in this journal are the views of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Students Association or the club.



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Hey kids,

Well . . . it seems like it's time to wrap up the year that was . . .

It's hard to know what to write really. Looking back over past Captain's Reports, they all seem to say the same thing (it was an excellent year for the club, we did some stuff, we'll do more stuff next year). Nonetheless, it is true that 2010 was a lot of fun, highly educational for many of us, and regularly somewhat frenetic. These then, if you will, are the edited highlights.

We have had the great good fortune to welcome aboard John Cater as our new President, following the retirement of David Gauld. John has already proved himself a valuable committee member and a contemptible dancer, so we're on safe ground there, one feels. On behalf of the club, I would like to thank John for taking on the role, and David for his many years of sterling service.

Financially, the club's position is sound, with a surplus for 2010 which will allow us to undertake some of our major long-term projects in 2011. The quality of instruction was uniformly excellent, and included two Beginners' Bush Schools, four Beginners' Snow Schools, an Advanced Snow School, and a transceiver practise and ice-climbing techniques course (courtesy of Owen). Amongst the things of which I am most proud this year has been the large number of skilled, enthusiastic new members that we have managed to attract and retain – for which the quality of our instructional courses is in no small part responsible. Furthermore, my spies inform me that membership numbers this year were approaching 400, so we must be doing something right. Of course there's been bugger-all work on the hut, but I'm happy to say that it's no longer my problem!

Some of the year's highlights for me, in no particular order: catching what seemed like the only four hours of fine weather all winter for a spectacular moonlight crossing; proving ourselves absolutely contemptible lightweights with a cask of wine in the woodshed of Waitawheta hut; swimming in the glacier lake at Park Pass; chilled ginger beer in Lake Crucible; ingesting obscene quantities of ice cream and chocolate sauce in a children's playground following the Piha trip; making it down Rabbit Pass alive; creating a model of O'nuku out of gingerbread; caving at Cathawoods;



standing on the summit of Paretetaitonga in the blazing sunshine with eight beginners who'd never been in the snow before; one of the best and most raucous May Camps in recent history; introducing a whole new generation to stream bashing at Orientation; trapping myself in the longdrop at Waihohonu; conducting a Search and Rescue dressed as Harry Potter characters; and the unforgettable mass absurdity of Summit Lunch. Cheers, y'all. It's been a blast.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my 2010 committee – for their dedication, their wisdom, their irascibility, their endless arguments, their support, and their good humour. I have thoroughly enjoyed my year as Captain, and for this, I have them to thank.

A few final words of wisdom, before I hang up my boots:

“Caminante, no hay camino; se hace camino al andar.”

“Traveller, there is no path; paths are made by walking.”
-Antonio Machado.

So long, and thanks for all the fish.

-Captain Kat.

Editorial.

Footprints is almost finished. While some have likened editing Footprints to the Waitaks Death March, it's really not so bad. Somehow my non-busy Footprints editing time ended up being probably the most busy I've been all year. You would think that this means that when I work on it I work smart and I work hard. Strangely enough this is not the case. What ended up happening was *Chronic Procrastination*. Yup I learnt one heck of a lot while editing Footprints. I was 100% up to date on current affairs, I learnt all about Forex Trading, I thoroughly researched global population growth. And oh, I became obsessed with a new mass market electric car - the Nissan Leaf. *Chronic Infatuation*.

It is true that I learnt a lot through the design aspect of editing Footprints as well. My design philosophy somewhat evolved as I was putting together the magazine and I'm sure you may notice this. I used Adobe InDesign to make this magazine - to anyone thinking of making a magazine, Adobe InDesign is an awesome program. Just watch some Youtube tutorials to get yourself started.

Perhaps what is most memorable is the adventures I read about in the articles you sent in. Sure, I've done a bit of tramping in my time. I've climbed some peaks, I've been above the clouds, but you guys did some incredible things and had some amazing times. So a big thank you to everyone who sent in material for Footprints. Also I would like to thank Kat and Andy for their much appreciated help with editing Footprints 2010. All the best for 2011 everybody.

Jake



A Letter to the Editor.

Dear Sir,

In recent years, a person, or persons unknown have seen fit to besmirch the honour of certain members of the Auckland University Tramping Club in a fashion which veers from the outrageous to the absurd. The culprit, masquerading under the name of 'AUTC Truth' has cast aspersions against the character of our two former beloved dictators, and made allegations regarding acts of romance by members of the AUTC Committee, who of course are known to conduct themselves with the utmost professionalism at all times.

I was disgusted to read on the AUTC website a series of articles by the so-called 'AUTC Truth', which promoted the unfounded accusations and bigoted views of the said individual(s) as though they were fact. The articles are sensationalist in nature, and call into disrepute the glorious reputation of our most illustrious leaders.

I would like to point out that the writer 'AUTC Truth' is a sad little individual with nothing better to do with his time, and who has resorted to slander simply in order to gain a little of the attention he craves. By posting his articles on the website, you are merely encouraging him. I trust our beloved dictators implicitly, and refuse to believe these disgusting accusations. Nor can I believe the cruel aspersions cast upon the sexuality of Whino, that glorious emblem of all that is virile.

Yours outragedly,

-Truth Will Out.

The Six Passes

(with apologies to A. A. Milne)*

January

Kathleen Collier

Craigy was a tramper, and a great big fellow,
Kathleen was a small one with a great big pack,
Eric was a Frenchman, and his beard was yellow,
And Lois could follow the track.

Lois hitched a lift with a boat across the Beansburn,
Eric lived off couscous, and wore seven socks
Kat poured the water from her boots at every new turn,
And Craig pranced around in his jocks.

Kat climbed the Sugarloaf, collapsed in the sunshine,
Lois climbed Fohn Saddle, and was ready to drop,
Craig climbed Fiery Col, and thought that the view was fine
And Eric was always waiting at the top

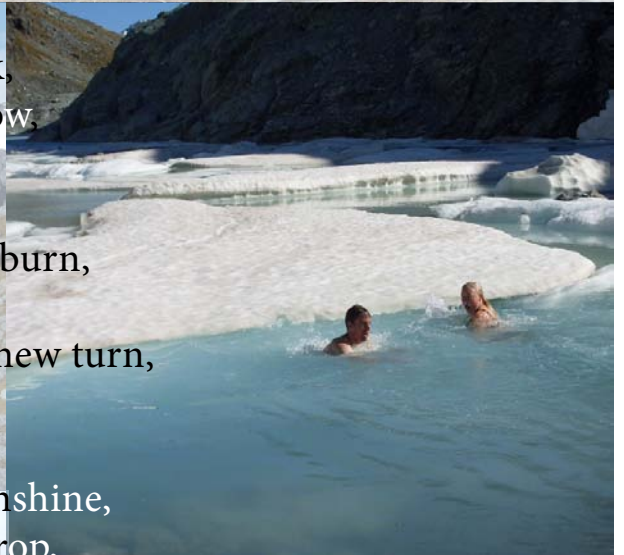
Lois had an ice-axe, and a great big strong one,
Craigy had a cooker, and he singed their tea,
Eric had two trouser legs, but only ever wore one
And Kathleen was in fact me.

Craig climbed Cow Saddle, and thought it was the best of them
Kat climbed Park Pass with him and shivered in the lake
Eric climbed the North Col, and waited for the rest of them
And Lois started dreaming about cake.

Eric washed his hair with lotion inadvertently,
Kat tripped on a rock and sprained her knee,
Lois was abashed by the innuendo certainly,
And once again, Craigy burnt the tea!

Craigy was a tramper, a great big fellow,
Kathleen was a small one, with a much-reduced pack,
Eric was a Frenchman, and his beard was yellow,
And Lois found the end of the track!

*N.B. Details almost certainly fictitious.



Beginners' Snowschool #2

12th July - 15th July

Alastair McDowell



rescue practice - they were all in store! We were in good hands too, Craig Smith and Kat Collier were our instructors, bringing with them years of alpine and tramping experience.

Just so that we could fully immerse ourselves in the sub-zero temperatures we would soon face on the mountain, we spent the first night tenting at a DOC campsite near Whakapapa, after arriving near midnight. It was COLD. Enough said. From the crack of dawn we readied ourselves for the steep three hour climb up the ski-field to our home for the next three days at the NZ Alpine Club hut. Luxury was an understatement – microwaves and kettles were a far cry from the bare sinks and open fires of the traditional tramping hut. We didn't complain!

Students: Matthew Lillis, Alastair McDowell, Manasvi Narula, Eleanor Riddick, Nico Thorburn, Stephen Waite, Hayley Ware, Will.

Instructors: Craig Smith, Kathleen Collier.

WHEN the winter chill comes blowing in around this time, it can only mean several things: mochaccinos, thermals, and SNOW. Our group of ten trampers and climbers (or both) headed down to the mountains on a chilly Monday night for Round Two of this year's AUTC & AURAC Beginner's Snowschool. The majority of the group had little experience with alpine climbing, so this was the best place to learn the basics of mountaineering – ice axe and crampons techniques, ice climbing, self arrests, a trip to the summit, and avalanche

First up we learnt the technique of self-arresting using ice axes. We simulated falling down a steep slope in every possible position – feet first, head first, backwards... and those without gaiters quickly learned why they were useful! The idea was to roll onto one's stomach from whatever position one was sliding in, head pointing up the slope. That way weight could be exerted from the shoulder onto the ice axe head, digging hard into the snow. Provided the snow wasn't overly icy, you would slow down very quickly. The uncontrolled toboggan with eight of us linked together sliding down the slope was particularly exhilarating!

Later in the day we all had a crack at ice climbing. The key was to trust your equipment – the snow anchor we used for top-roping could theoretically hang a snow plough! Most of the techniques from rock climbing carried over - three points of contact at all times, but instead of foot and hand holds we had two slightly smaller ice picks and crampons to help us scale the ice-laden cliff face.





Igloo builders
extraordinaire

This first experience in ice-climbing gave us a tantalising taste of a large part of what mountaineering was about.

The weather was amazing throughout the whole trip, and we were rewarded for our efforts that evening with an incredible sunset beyond Mt Taranaki, which stood crystal clear all of 130km away in the distance.

The next day was reserved for climbing to the summit of Mt Ruapehu - the wind had picked up, but a thermal layer, t-shirt, and jacket was sufficient for the climb. Kat taught us en route about how to test a snow profile for the risks of an avalanche - luckily we were treading on secure terrain! It was a moderate three hour climb to the plateau, but the last section of ascent to the one of the three major peaks, Paretetaitonga was exceptionally steep. Secure front pointing with the crampons and using ice axes kept us safe to the summit, and we stood at 2751 metres eating the most satisfying block of chocolate there was! Views were out-of-this-world, stretching out to Mt Taranaki. Closer down the mountain was Turoa and Whakapapa, and Mt Ngauruhoe & Mt Tongariro were remarkable from this height, everything perfect-



Trains!

ly clear. Unreal.

The descent from the summit was easily twice as tricky, climbing down backwards made the foot placements harder to see, but nothing a little teamwork couldn't fix!

Our evening talk that night covered the basics of avalanches, one of the major hazards of mountaineering in certain alpine areas. Temperature, snow sensitivity, and the aspect of the slope are all factors contributing to avalanche risk. Talk turned towards snow shelters - ice caves, snow mounds, snow trenches, and igloos. A couple of us were very interested in how they were made, and as it turned out, night-time or pre-dawn are the best times to make them. Matt Lillis was the most enthusiastic of us to make one, and before long Stephen and I were compelled to join him. We trudged into the darkness and the cold with five layers of thermals each. Brave, yes. Crazy... most likely. Hayley didn't quite share our motivation to head out of the toasty hut at 9pm..."It's just that it's so...outside!"

We discovered the snow conditions were almost perfect for cutting out blocks of snow, they held together brilliantly without crumbling. So after nearly three hours of back-breaking shoveling, cutting, carrying, tripping... we had completed our very own igloo! Craig channeled our efforts as chief architect, but he was soon trapped within the cocoon of snow, as he wedged the blocks together higher and higher. To keep our shelter windproof we dug out a small tunnel through which to dive underneath the wall, leaving the roof unfinished till morning. Matt wasn't satisfied there however, and though Stephen & I were reluctant at first, we eventually decided it was worse to leave any regrets on the mountain... so we joined him to spend the night in our brand new home! The open roof even made for a great star-dome! It was an amazing experience for us three - waking up at 7am after over six hours of sleep felt completely triumphant. Only one problem...how to wrench those frozen boots on...

We rejoined the team at the hut for porridge and carried on with the day's activities; prac-

Heading back down Pare...



We all got up to third highest summit of Mt Ruapehu - Paretetaitonga! 2751m!

tising using the avalanche rescue transceivers. For the engineers in the group this was an interesting application, using the radio devices to locate another buried transceiver by narrowing down the distance from the victim that flashed on the screen. Once we had the buried beacon located to a grid square of about 30cm x 30cm we used avalanche probes (like long tent poles) to work out their depth, and finally shoveled out the transceiver to safety!

Evaluating the course (inside our completed igloo of course), it seemed everyone had found the three days thoroughly useful and it had definitely inspired a new wave of mountaineers. Beginner's school was an awesome trip, and I'm sure we'll now all be itching to get more exposure in our new snowy playground and before long take on the Advanced Snowschool next year! •

The gang on top of Dome!



Q: What did the girl mushroom say to the boy mushroom?

Oxfam Trailwalker - Taupo

10th - 11th April

Kylie Brewer

Walkers: Thomas Goodman, Jenny Long, Nico Thorburn, Sarah Wyse.

Crew: Kylie Brewer, Alison Alvares, Brendan Feather, Nicola Hanna, Grant Ridings.

Walking 36 kilometres in fewer than 36 hours, that's impossible right? Wrong! Over the weekend of the 10th – 11th April, 350 teams with 1500 participants ran or walked as part of a team of four with the common goal of finishing 100km in fewer than 36 hours. So by now you're all wondering what I'm talking about. Well I'm talking about Oxfam Trailwalker, the world's greatest team challenge, which was held in Taupo.

Not only are teams challenged to cross the finish line together after conquering 100kms of terrain, but they are also asked to raise at least \$2000 to help overcome poverty and injustice in some of the world's poorest communities. This year money raised went to support the recovery efforts in Haiti.

Trailwalker began in 1981 as a military exercise for the elite Queen's Gurkha Signals Regiment in Hong Kong, and has since grown into one of the world's leading sporting challenges.

Any team who enters Trailwalker spends at least four to six months training, starting off with short tramps of a couple of hours, and leading up to whole day tramps, often into the night, to practice night walking. There's also lots of fundraising to do! The minimum goal for each team is \$2000. This is quite a substantial amount so in the months leading up to the event you really do eat, sleep and breathe Trailwalker.

So what's it like to participate in this fantastic event? It's exciting, it's fun, it's tiring, it's long and strangely enough, it's



addictive! You do it once and many teams return to do it again! No one knows just why it's so addictive, it could be the sense of achievement, the stunning scenery or the people you meet that make it such an experience.

This year I was in charge of the support crew for team "Faster than your average Kiwi" made up of AUTC members. Being support crew is fun, hard work and incredibly rewarding, yet strangely delusional as you don't get as much down-time as you think you will! As crew, your role is to greet your team at every checkpoint with pre-prepared hot meals, refill drink bottles, and provide lots of encouragement and support and a few surprises along the way.

Here's the Trailwalker adventure from a support crew member's perspective....

After a rushed start we finally managed to get the walkers and most of our crew out of Auckland by mid afternoon, picking up Grant along the way. Getting to the 5pm briefing was always going to be a mission and we didn't quite make it, instead having to wait for the 6.30pm briefing. After dropping the walkers off at the Taupo Events Centre so they could register and get their team pack I did a quick dash to Pak 'n' Save to buy supplies for dinner before meeting the crew for the briefing. At the briefing they give a run down of how the event works, safety guidelines and a few facts about the event. It turns out I knew the girl in charge, as she was in my year at school. I had a quick chat to her after the briefing, misplacing my team in the process but eventually managing to find them again in the crowd. We'd rented a house for the weekend in Acacia Bay and this was to be our base for the weekend. It was fantastic! A very large four bedroom home with a decent sized living area and views of the lake and the mountains - absolutely stunning, and very close to town and to the various checkpoints. After unpacking the mountain of gear we'd brought, the walkers set about sorting their gear and finalising their menu whilst I cooked dinner. After what seemed like ages we were finally able to sit down to dinner and dessert. After dinner I headed off to the supermarket with the task of buying for two separate menus for the weekend, one for walkers and one for crew. The others stayed back at the house doing last minute preparation before having an early night.

The big day dawned around 5am with walkers and crew up and getting ready for the big day - or should I say challenging day ahead. Soon after 6am we bundled all the gear into the cars and headed off to the Taupo domain, the start of Trailwalker. The domain was buzzing in the early morning fog. After a few happy smiling (before) group photos



it was time for our team to join the masses in the starting chute. *Good luck guys, you can do it!* We watched the team start, then as they disappeared over the hill and out of sight we headed back to the house. We were twiddling our thumbs for a while not really sure of what to do with ourselves after we'd had breakfast. It was only 8am. We hadn't quite figured out how long it would take the team to walk the distance to checkpoint one, so being extremely organised (perhaps a little too organised) we loaded the car and headed off to checkpoint one. Well, it turned out our team were still quite a way away, so we got back in the car and headed home again, and waited for the text to say they were only a kilometre away. Finally that text came. We jumped into the car and went to meet them. In fine spirits they entered checkpoint one. After a quick fill of the water bottles and loading them up with snacks the team were on their way again. For the crew it was off to town to gather a few more supplies and then back to the house to enjoy the sunshine.



Mid-afternoon it was back in the car again to head off to the Girl Guide camp at Whakaipo Bay, a gorgeous little bay on the lakeshore. Having taken the wrong road we arrived a little later than anticipated to meet the team. However we did arrive with rice risotto and more snacks. After a quick lunch the team was off on the trail again this time heading to Kinloch where we met them later in the afternoon at checkpoint three with ice creams. One

A: You're a fun guy!

of the surprises we made for the team to give them an extra burst of energy was the banner Grant created, drawing caricatures of our team, which we took to checkpoint four. It really made their day - especially with us all dressed up in Hawaiian costumes as well! We did attract a fair bit of attention and a few comments from the other support crews!

The night stages are some of the hardest, as it's cold and incredibly dark. Your energy is waning and by these stages you've already walked some 60-70kms and are ready for bed. Warm food and lots of energy, enthusiasm and positive encouragement are important so at checkpoint six, around 2am in the morning we turned up with warm apple crumble and custard – yum! The team were so grateful.

Our team completed the walk in 26 hours 49 minutes - a fantastic effort! It was a shame our support crew missed them crossing the finish line as we'd been asleep back at the house, but we did get there a few minutes later just in time to see them being presented with their medals.

For anyone who's looking for a challenge I encourage you to push your boundaries and participate in 2011, it's an incredible experience!! •



She Speaks

Andrew Thompson

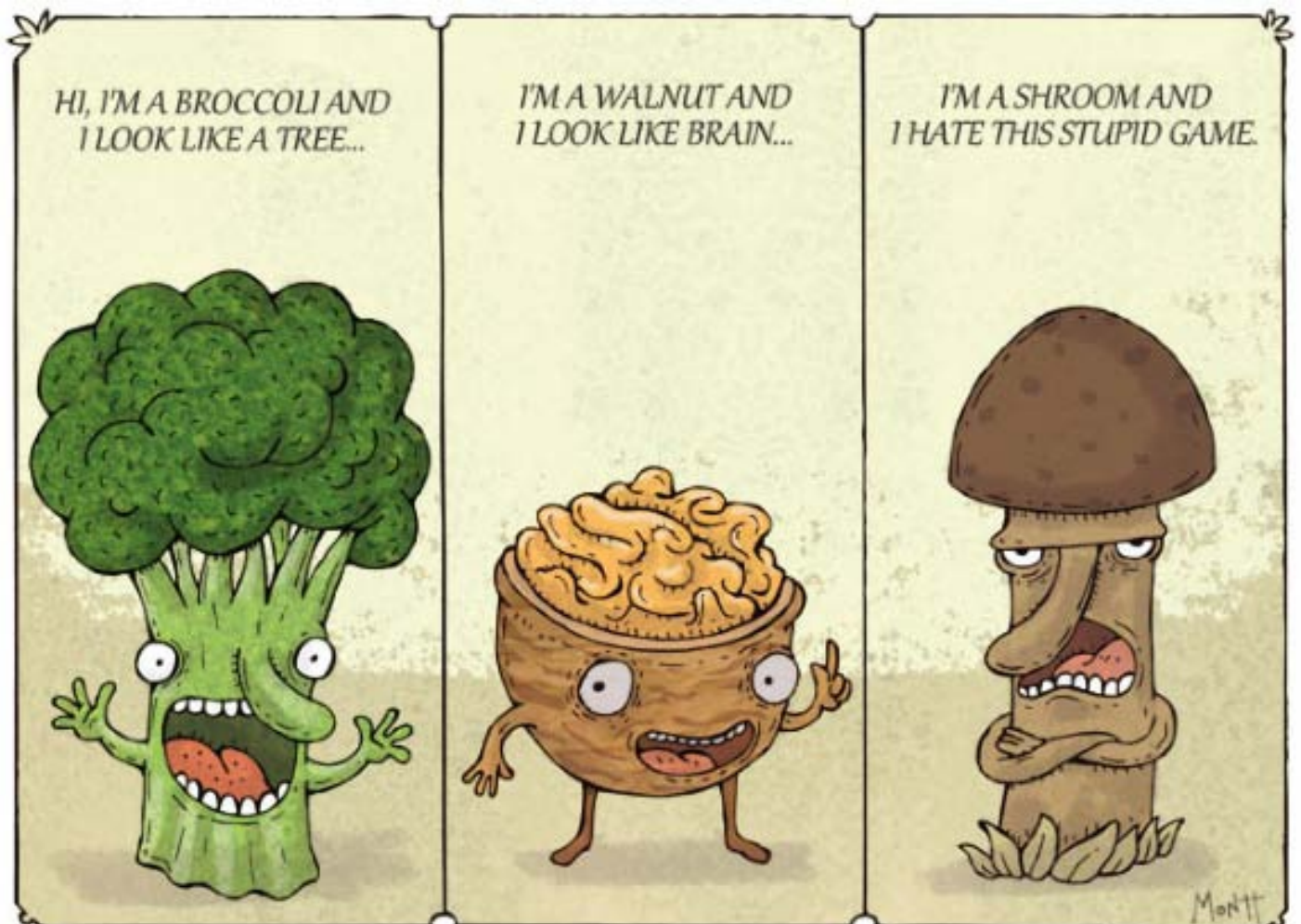
As a background to this piece below – the author was crafting this masterpiece whilst relaxing naked in a shallow pool in the middle of the grand Hopkins river valley, surrounded by vast grassy flats and high snowy peaks. Significantly, it was discovered later that meanwhile, the author's partner Rion had fallen off a mountain, and was approximately three hours into an agonising eight hour crawl from the Dasler pinacles back down to the valley floor and along to the hut - all the while screaming obscenities fruitlessly into the wind, with multiple huge gashes ripped through his thigh and his own meat flapping in the breeze. Rion did successfully summit the pinnacles.

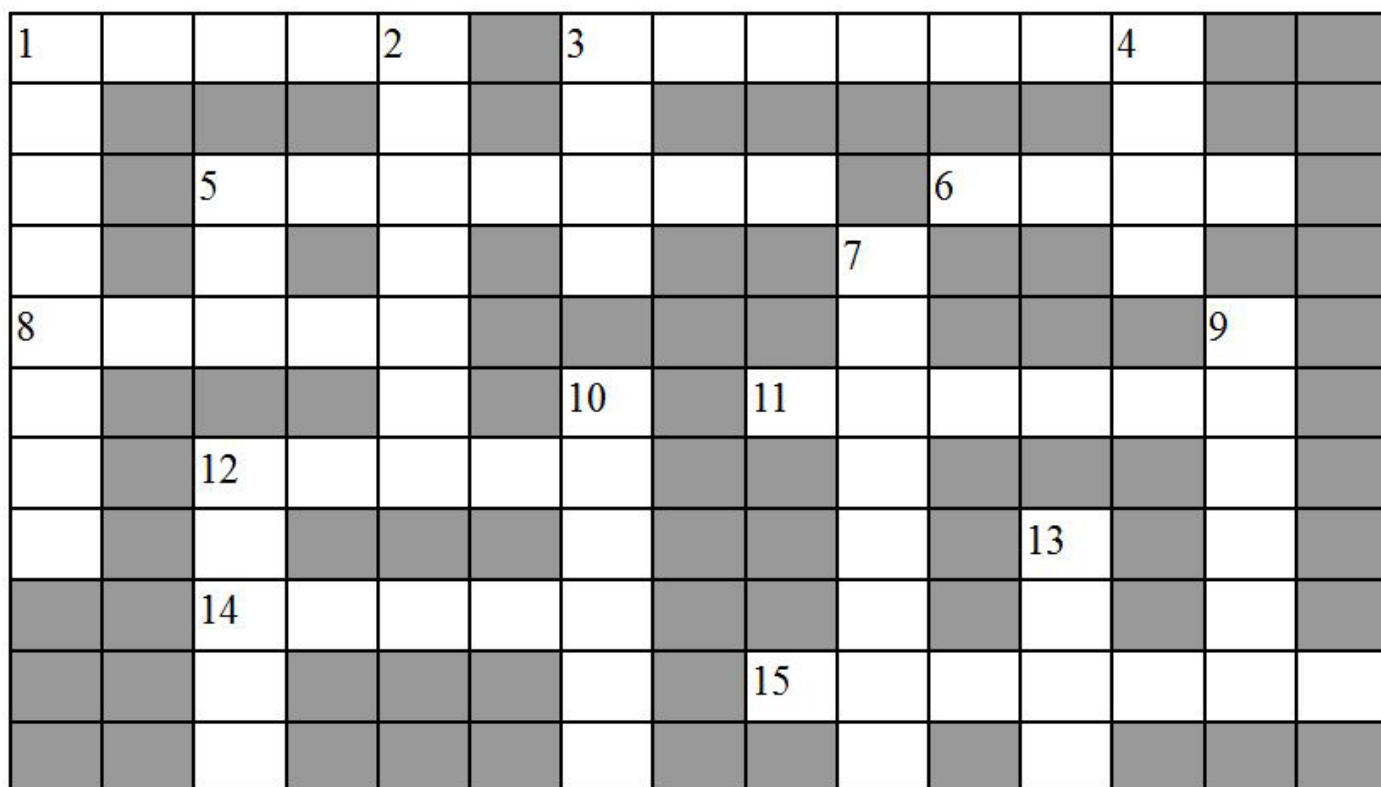
The rose bud may wilt, oh
But for an audience.
The lilly firms proud and brilliant:
The white rose of my mind

Through this peace I trace
With discovering fingers
The arteries of youthful beauty,
Weary of wrinkles of wisdom.

Raging torrents: tears? No
greater mistake but
Respectful announcement of POWER;
To river flats and tranquil trickles
Silent, clear and inviting.

'She welcomes us brother,
Eat your beef, then come hither
and we'll both of us outstretch our palm
Her arm be not callous,
But tender and jealous;
This union speaks joyous and calm. •





ACROSS

1. Sustainable form of energy
3. Our third island
5. Author of the Five Hobbits (Footprints 2009)
6. Indian bread
8. Club captains, 2009 and 2011
11. South African deluxe tour
12. Normal track condition
14. What to do with 1 down
15. Popular West Coast beach

DOWN

1. Vital sustenance
2. Passed the baton
3. Habitual tramping weather
4. Best club in the country (abbrev.)
5. Two passes, two saddles, and a ____
7. Site of Purity Hut
9. Tramping
10. Fortunately not found in Aotearoa
12. More deadly even than 10 down
13. Medicine for tired trampers at end of trip.

Oliver Hoffmann

Footprints, 1952

Lighting the Primus

'You take a bottle of meths, and pour a little into the round cup thing on the stem. You'll probably pour far too much and it will spill all over the primus and the table. But fear not. Put a match to it, and admire the display of blue flames licking all over the place. You can do this because the meths burns with a cool flame. Just test this queer fact by putting your finger in the flame. The blisters it raises are much smaller than in a wood flame...'

Moonlight Crossing, Take One

28th-29th August

Andy Baddeley

Led by Kat "I got rice down my bra" Collier.

Others present, at least in body: Craig "Ginger Slice" Smith, Matt "I didn't understand it, but it was awesome" Lillis, Christina "I think I spoke too soon when I said it hadn't gone to my head" Fullerton, Tom "I don't think I'm capable of operating any heavy machinery other than a toothbrush" Goodman, Nick "it ain't easy being Tom" Vignati, Anna (she's tougher than she looks.., and probably than the rest of us) Luo, Andy "give her some more wine, she's not sober yet" Baddeley.

We departed Auckland at the respectable time of 10am, and made for McDonald's Greenlane, as Matt had been for a wee wander to O'nuku the previous night, and was hungry. It was about this time that our geographical skills were called into question. Having travelled straight past Manakau, the next McDonald's to be found was perched upon the top of a hill alongside a bakery... The bakery was of limited usefulness, overpriced and rejected for this reason. However, Matt saw fit to purchase a breakfast muffin, and although I tried valiantly, I failed to rescue him from its evil powers.

No trip is complete without a visit to the singing toilets of Huntly, so another bakery and a visit to McDonald's later we continued on our trip south. Morinsville's south right? Disappointingly, we bypassed Morinsville and its McDonald's, and ended up in Te Aroha, a sleepy little town with toilets that don't sing, but a bakery that makes fine custard slice.

Our trip continued southward... for about 3km, until we found ourselves at the end of a gravel road. Since our destination was the Tongariro crossing, we assumed this must be either Mangatepopo or Ketetahi. The bush was too tall for Mangatepopo so Ketetahi it



Awwww.....

was. Provisions were divided up between packs and 8 enthusiastic alpinists set out in drizzly weather to make the crossing by the light of the moon. The start of the track seemed a little flatter than expected, and following a short walk through some form of man-made tunnel, and a crawl across a log, we began the steep climb. Those who had previously been on the Tongariro Crossing didn't remember the climbing being so steep, or the track quality so rugged. Not wishing to admit our softness, we continued. We climbed through thick scrub and much alpine gorse, and it wasn't until we'd been climbing for a couple of hours that we realised that there was no sign of Ketetahi hut, and it appeared that we were experiencing a



Dinner.. or not



It was a fairly cute goat



Multiple methods of stream crossing were attempted



Trampers preparing for their epic mission in the hills

very warm winter as there was no snow to be seen (probably just as well, as someone had forgotten to pack the ice axes). As the track became less obvious, and it became apparent that “it’s not easy being Tom”, as the drizzle grew heavier, and the sun lower in the sky, so too did our leadership become less obvious, our packs heavier, and some people’s spirits lower. At about the time the sun set, we suddenly became aware that we had found our way to the old North-South track in the Kaimais, not the Tongariro Crossing. Three hours of searching for trail markers, and walking between them found us at the top of a nice steep muddy track, which would eventually lead us to Waitawheta hut, its local possum hunting P.O.M.E.s, a more pork sitting patiently in a tree, and a brilliantly cosy woodshed (with a 10:30pm arrival we didn’t want to wake those already sleeping in the hut). Before dinner was cooked we were, for the most part, toasted. A cask of wine combined with tired, sleepy, thirsty, trampers renders interesting results. And interesting quotes.

The Trip out was considerably less eventful... A leisurely wander out, crossing over the range in daylight on well maintained tracks. A tiny kid goat appeared at the side of the track, was caught, posed with, and its future was debated at great length... Finally the “set it free” option was chosen, but as I type this, I am wondering what a six month old goat would taste like for Christmas dinner. •



Contemplation

The Wandering of the Fellowship- Round the Mountain Track

November 13-18

Anna Luo

The Fellowship: Nick Vignati (Gandalf the definitely grey), Andrew Luey (Aragorn), Anna Luo (Legolas), Nico Thorburn (Mr Frodo), Tom Goodman (Sam)- trip leader, Georgia Yarrow (Merry), Krystal Hawkins (Pippin), Barry Ching (Boromir), Ines Weber (Gimli)



I shall begin. The first day started with forgettin' me boots. Don't stare at me so incredulously! As I recall, a couple of people also forgot to bring food. I'll let ye decide what's more important on a six day tramp. Needless to say, much rushing back and forth marked the start of our journey.

But yes, we did eventually reach the far-flung shores of National Park, at a bright and early time of 'round two in the afternoon. The distant mountains were cushioned in mist, great big bucketfuls of it. Fog settled in around us too, with mystery and adventure beckoning beyond each shifting shadow. We set out; along boardwalks we went, across the desolate landscape. Sometimes we met other travellers, most ill-prepared for the challenges of the open seas.

After a soda spring break by the twin isles of Latrine, the skies opened above us and began to pour down their icy fury: little pellets of icy water whipped into face-targeting projectiles by the wind. Thus warned and welcomed, we left the barren flatlands behind and began the ascent of the Devil's Staircase.

At the peak of this rocky uphill, a patch of snow gleamed. Snowballs were harvested fresh from these fields, to be hurled with little accuracy at the travellers still exposed on the staircase.

Further sailing in the dim and stormy light led us to the brilliant Emerald Lakes. Roughly skating down scree brought us to their very brim... however, due to the lack of cats to sizzle, we passed them by without too much ceremony. Onwards we went, all the while descending, for our climb for the day was over.

'Unfortunately, the outgoing tides compelled us to depart this haven soon after arrival, driving us once again out into the heaving sea. This hut was not our destination.'

Three of the travellers scouted ahead. Reaching a wide, flat plateau filled with craggy rocks, they turned and looked behind them. The needling rain had diminished to less than a drizzle, but the others still appeared as mere pixels on the rock face behind them. Shrugging and feeding on bacon Shapes™, they continued onwards to the hut.

The first evening proved fairly uneventful, save for the people of in the largest tent who decided to take a night-time wallow in the water coming down, yet again, from the sky.

On the second day, we left port at a relaxed time of late-in-the-morning, smoothly cruising over the first undulating wave crests. The seas would become wilder as the day continued. But for the early hours, jabbering, sea shanties and shirtless sunbathing were the order.

We walked over most every terrain imaginable that day, an ever-changing landscape of tussock, scoria, sand, stone, rivers, grass and bush -not to mention walking many planks.

Over gaping chasms and roaring waters we leapt, hopping from rock to protruding rock.

Lunch took place at a bushman's equivalent to a luxury resort: excessively ginormous and highly decked Waihothonu hut. Unfortunately, the outgoing tides compelled us to depart this haven soon after arrival, driving us once again out into the heaving sea. This hut was not our destination.

As the day grew on, we passed tempting water-courses, glittering blue and clear and cool. Hoping for excitement, we did take a detour up to a spring. Or so we thought. What false, wicked treachery.

Later that day, as night fell, two interesting features were reached. The first: an acme top-quality sheer rock face, studded with the finest volcanic boulders, custom-designed with organic sand for extra slipperiness! This hill, modelled by the very forces of nature, is a bargain you will not (want to) see again! With a radio hut and vehicle road at its summit, what are you waiting for? Buy now!

But wait! There's more! Ring within the next 5 minutes and you will receive a lahar valley crossing, COMPLETE with complementary rope bridges and loose scoria, absolutely free! That's right! Ring now and you will receive these 80 minutes of pure physical torture for the price of none! This is an extraordinary opportunity not to be missed! Just pick up your phone, pretend there is reception, and dial 0800 KILLMENOW, that's 0800 KILLMENOW!

Emergency services not included. Not suitable for children under the age of 10, for people with a high risk of CVD or nervous breakdown. Excess consumption may result in pain, injury or severe decapitation. Use at buyers' own risk.

"Wait! Wait- what's that at the bottom of the murderousevil slope? That looks like the group! They're stopping, and getting out cookies! I can't believe it!" D=

Much of the rest of day two was spent in a coma.

Maybe due to grogginess, the travellers hardly noticed as day



three ran by, flashing its toothy grin. Before they quite knew what was happening, they had reached the roof of the next hut, and set dinner bubbling below deck. They jiggled and romanced in the dying sunlight, bathed in its bloody glow. The mafia prowled the night.

*Day four proved to be
One with lots of things to see
A quick Blythe Hut detour
While the others on the shore
Of the river down below
Had lunch and watched a show
Of crushing cans on rocks
Or between a butt and blocks*

*Waterfalls and wonders behold!
Walking up the winding road
In the hot and burning sun
But 'twas worth it, lots of fun*

*Then down and down we went
Most energy was spent
But enough was left to grope
Our long way down the slope
Of a white river rushing fast
As we clambered carefully past*

*Then finally we saw
Our hut across the moor
A stream outside the door
Was perfectly used for
CHEESECAKE!*

The scenery, although wonderfully rugged and dynamic, was by day five almost becoming mediocre. The walk was soothing and pleasant, but the sun had intensified and people started to tomato. Apart from a few lovely hills, the day was uneventful. Really, the highlight of the day was the games that night...

Commentator: Greetings, and welcome to the Day Five Games! Make yourselves comfortable, wait for the stragglers in your group to catch up, then commence the action!

To start our contestants off is a beginners' round ooooooff... ANIMAL! Today, our players include cat, platypus, otter, springbok- and even a most adorable worm!

As the game begins, it is clear Leopard is at a



DAY SIX CHECKLIST

Did you learn to chop wood?
Did you help to cook food?
Did you draw the AUTC fern?
Did you even get a turn?
Did you kill an orc that night?
Did you get into a fight?
Did you play 20 questions?
Did you receive violent suggestions?
Did you boil up mac'n'cheese?
Did you eat ice cream and freeze?
Did you put on any weight?
Do you think 'twas the food you ate?
Did you overheat in the sun?
Did you smell my scent and run?
Did you pose for an epic photo?
Did you try to protect Frodo?
Did you see the cars and die?
Did you listen to Bieber and cry?
Did you suffer lots of pain?
Will you ever come back again? •

disadvantage as the bright light blinds her.

In the other corner- hey Parrot! Break it up! Stop picking on Worm!

*intermission for chocolate pudding *

Ahem, welcome back, Ladles and Jellyspoons! Apologies for the delay. Maybe we should proceed onto the next part of our exciting tournament: with murders most extreme! Who is behind the diabolical act of shoving people down the long drop? The mafia is suspected...

‘That’s right! Ring now and you will receive these 80 minutes of pure physical torture for the price of none!’

Waimakariri Col

(where Tom and David gain a new appreciation for Arnott's gingernuts)

December

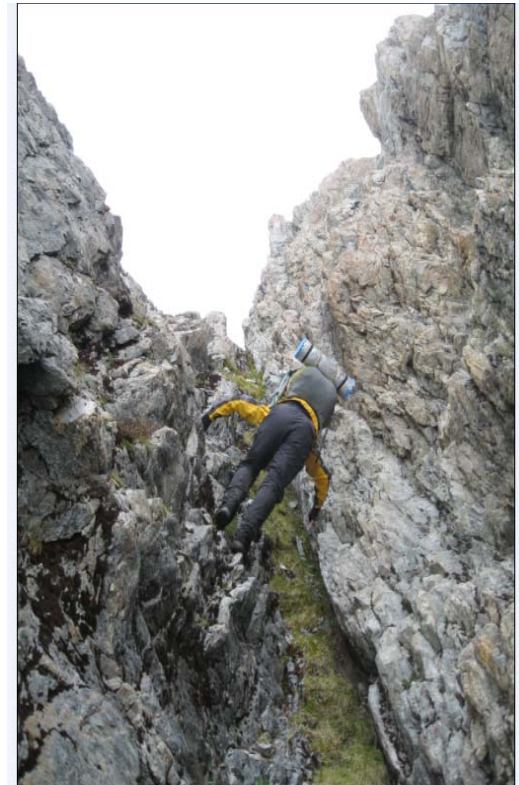
Tom Goodman

Trampers: Tom Goodman, David Kugler

A random invite to the pub to listen in on David and Nico planning their South Island roadtrip, and there I was: 3:30am, bleary-eyed and meeting David on the streets in central Christchurch. And so, with only the vaguest of ideas where we were actually going, we set off for the wilderness of Arthur's Pass.

Our first challenge was navigating our way out of Christchurch. A maze of one way streets and some roads remaining closed from earthquake damage created a merry dance through the central city. Eventually we found ourselves escaping the city's clutches, and speeding (only figuratively, ok guys?) our way towards Arthur's Pass. A quick (ok, slow and methodical) unpack and repack of the boot, and we were on our way.

After a two hour walk along the river valley in the fading light we reached the hut, to all appearances as we approached, deserted. A solitary walking pole left at the entrance, and a solitary figure visible at the far end of the hut, inspired a silent unpack outside. Poking my nose through the second time, I noticed in fact all six bunks were occupied, the one closest the door with a child of about ten years old. Backing out quickly, I passed the bad news to David, and we proceeded to pitch our tent, before indulging in a delightful stir-fry. A peaceful night in the tent followed.



As I said, the descent was somewhat dodgy at times...

The next morning, in the spirit of the outdoors, we got talking to our fellow hut-mates. The first was a family of four, dad, mum, two girls aged ten and 12. Initially I assumed this was a group heading up the valley for a relaxing family holiday, however they casually informed me of their plans to take a seven day trip over Harman Pass and down into the Taipo Valley, and cheerfully set off, leaving David and I in some awe. The solitary figure and owner of the walking pole was Bill, a (so I thought) gent in his early-to-mid 50's, coming out from Carrington Hut. He turned out to be 72 years old, and recounted his stories of previous climbing trips, including one he did with Sir Ed and Heinrich Harrer, best known for being a member of the first party to climb the famous north wall of the Eiger. David and



Waimakariri River

I were starting to feel our own inadequacies. Finally we met a party of three returning from Carrington Hut. "Where have you been?", we asked them. Oh, just up to the hut yesterday, back out today. At last we thought, our trip is more epic than THAT! They then casually informed us that the third member of their party had been tramping for 70 days. It was definitely time for us to go.

We continued to make our way up the Waimakariri Valley, crossing and recrossing the river when we found it necessary. Well, one member of the party anyway. The other stated an aim of keeping his right foot dry for the entire day, and promptly took all possible means to ensure he lived up to this promise. Lengthy detours ensued.

After a break for lunch at Carrington Hut, we decided to take the one hour detour to the cableway over the river, a first experience for me. The cart took forever to get across the river, some thought was given to giving up on the novelty and on dry feet, but in the end unnecessary effort was the winner on the day. Finding ourselves on the other side of the river, we scrambled out of the bush and towards the track that would lead to that night's accommodation. Soon after, we realised first that I had left the route description behind, and second that we had lost the map. This inspired a period of some frantic searching.

We continued along the Waimak in the fading light, with the mountains rising above us



Waimakariri Valley, approaching the col

on all sides. Having talked of having a swim all day, David finally decided it was time to take the plunge at around 6pm, the sun by now long since having gone down behind the hills. A test of the water with one foot convinced me that a swim was not going to be a pleasurable experience, an opinion reinforced by the speed with which David made his way to the exit. I was right, and a second equally speedy return to shore followed.

We were then chugging along at about 300m above sea level, with the col at 1750m, so we knew we were overdue some climbing. And so it proved - a final two hour grunt took us through the gorge, past two waterfalls, until we found ourselves standing at Waimakariri Falls Hut (1150m), situated in the middle of an alpine valley, snow on the hills around us. A tasty dinner was washed down with chocolate mousse that temporarily attracted a curious kea, and thereafter half a pack of ingernuts while lying in bed, good stuff.

The next morning we made our way up the valley towards the beckoning snow. Having lost the route guide it was any man's guess which approach was the correct one. In the end gradual and long won out over steep and direct. Picking our way through the icefields we disturbed a large number of alpine crickets. One member of the party (I will leave it to the reader's imagination as to who this was) took it upon himself to rescue those crickets unfortunate enough to jump into the ice, where they quickly began to freeze. He was shortly thereafter wracked with guilt over his interference with natural selection.

A couple of hours ascending the ice fields had us standing at the top of the col. Before us the stunning Rolleston Valley, 100m directly below us in fact. Lunch was eaten to allow courage to be worked up for the descent. After some discussion, it was determined that a zig-zag route across the face of

the col would take us safety to the valley below, and so we picked our way slowly through first snow and thereafter rock (upon returning to Arthur's Pass, a check of the route guide showed that this was NOT where we were supposed to be!!). An hour of careful effort brought us to the bottom, where one final patch of snow lay before us. "How about a bum-slide?", David asked. I made some dubious response and clambered off the rock onto the waiting snow. Whoosh! Immediately I found myself hooshing down the snow in an uncontrollable bum-slide. While this was an enjoyable experience, the sense of relief when I came to a halt was great, and I lay there cursing my stupidity. I had left my ice axe strapped to the side of my pack when I made my way onto the snow, and it was only good fortune that I had happened upon an area with a clear run-out.

Descending quickly down the snow, we found ourselves in the valley. Ahead of us, the Rolleston River carved its way through a narrow gorge. To the left and right of the gorge were steep scree slopes with the occasional patch of tussock and alpine scrub. We sidled our way along the left-hand side of the valley, but hadn't gone far when the weather, threatening all day, closed in, the low clouds restricting visibility and bringing a light drizzle. Fortunately this didn't last, and the weather cleared enough to see a way before us.

Following a torturous period of navigating steep scree slopes, mini rock slides with every footstep, we decided it was worth descending into the gorge, and trying to make our way along this to the track. Initially this seemed to have worked, however a mere hundred metres from the end of the gorge, we were met by a waterfall with no clear line of descent. While unwilling to have to admit defeat, prudence and the knowledge that even if we got down, we may not have been able to get back up, prevailed. Shortly thereafter we find ourselves back on the

valley walls, alternately navigating scree and bashing through alpine scrub. A friendly kea that came to investigate proved a welcome distraction.

At last we were able to make our way down the scree and to the valley below, where we found ourselves again on a marked track. While we made good progress along this section, we were in a race against the sun, and before we reached our intended campsite it was utterly dark. No obvious campsite suggested itself, and the hard decision was made to cross the river, and attempt to make our way downstream to a flat area. Clambering along rocks in the dark with rapids all around is not an activity to be generally recommended. Close to 11pm we found a small patch of flat ground right next to the river. While rocky on top, brushing these aside revealed a sandy base, and the decision was made to call it a day. While dinner was being cooked, the clouds finally cleared to reveal a sky full of stars, a great sight for weary travellers.

On the final morning, the clouds again descended into the valley, with a howling wind and the occasional spit of rain accompanying. Three hours of scrambling over rocks, river crossing and other such things and suddenly we could see the signs of civilisation. It was here that David decided to destroy half of a cliff face, which gained its revenge by taking him down with it. A quick dip into the first aid kit for the iodine was called for.

A quick last walk to state highway 73, and we were ready to put into action part B of our plan - getting back to the car, 30km down the road. Here we discovered that most people don't want to pick up two slightly unkempt looking trampers with two large packs. After half an hour of no joy, I became impatient and having supplied myself with vast quantities of chocolate, started the long walk towards the car. Only five hours, I reasoned. After 20 minutes of walking, I was already regretting my strong-headedness. Just then a toot sounded - David had secured a lift to the car, and would be back shortly for me. An hour later we were heading out of Arthur's Pass, ready for our next adventure. •



Our campsite by the Rolleston River

Nowhere and Back Again... a Journey into the Kaweka Ranges

Mid-Semester Break

Kathleen Collier, Nadia Wollkopf, David Kugler, and Tom Goodman

Adventurers: Tom Goodman (leader), Kathleen Collier, Nadia Wollkopf, David Kugler

Seven has traditionally been seen as an auspicious number. Many things work well in sevens: the seven samurai, the seven deadly sins, the seven orders of heaven, the seven dwarves... seven crampons between four people, possibly less so. Fortunately for us, it wasn't long before David lost a leg to frostbite.

The weather forecast was eloquent in its predictions of doom- *"Increasing rain and thunderstorms north-east of the Ruahines. Gale force winds..."* A belated look at the map was enough to confirm that yes that was indeed where we were headed. Bold leader Tom was not deterred, if sadly delusional.

Night One: Company very much enlivened by discovery of first hut approximately two minutes from the carpark. Here gallant leader attempted to make fire.. Gallant leader, it transpired, had forgotten lighter. The moral of the story: man makes fire, Tom doesn't.



Home away from Home: Makahu Saddle Hut

Day One: Pleasant stroll up Makuhu Spur made invigorating by excessive quantities of snow, sleet, rain, mud, gale force winds... Some slight navigational difficulties caused by the tendency of the lighter members of the expedition to be very inconsiderately blown off ridges. David lost all fingers to frostbite due to foolish fondness for half-gloves. Fortunately, as also lost a leg, lack of crampon no longer an issue.

Reached the summit of Kaweka J. Walked north, encountered much resistance. Walked south, encountered memorial cairn, which was rejected as a suitable site for morning tea as we were no longer certain it was in fact morning. Walked west, encountered nothing.... Except snow, marker poles conspicuous by their absence. Brief conference, following which valorous leader expounded on noble and gallant nature of defeat against insurmountable odds. Company beat a brave retreat to Domine Biv, followed by a slightly less brave retreat back to Makahu Saddle Hut. Much debate on whether retreat to Napier to watch movies and dry clothes counted as an "epic alpine trip". Eventually decided against, as none of us were quite desperate enough to endure a screening of Twilight.

Night Two: Absolutely nothing happened. Much discussion of inter-club incest, coupled with Tom's attempts to crawl into other people's beds.

Day Two: Predicted rain materialised with vengeance. Opening door revealed presence of small waterfall flowing from long-drop to drinking-water supply. Fearless venturers would not be daunted. Kat and Nadia extri-

cated selves from sleeping bags around 10am and made epic trip to the car, where they were joined by boys approximately lunchtime.

Set off bravely in quest of hot pools, while gallant leader continued to make plans for daring traverse of ranges. Gallant leader ignored by everyone else. Halfway along road to hot-pools, Kat remembered presence of ford. Found ford- *“Do not attempt crossing if water is above the red line”*. Could not identify red line, or in fact, marker pole... Nadia tragically drowned in ford attempting to escape deadly shark attack. Encountered concerned local: “Glad you didn’t try to cross that.. come back when it’s not raining... Is that a severed limb floating downstream? No... over there, being munched by that shark....”

Third valorous retreat in two days. Movies in Napier now given serious consideration. Makahu Hut now starting to feel uncomfortably like home. David discovered novel method of drying items of clothing by wearing them in turn. Minor side effects included blue lips and uncontrollable shivering. Rest of group given regular updates as to state of long-johns. Rest of group viewed effectiveness of method with a certain degree of scepticism. Gallant leader instead resorted to drying toilet paper by stuffing it in his sleeping bag.

Night Three: Attempts to kill time in hut by reading incomprehensible Maurice Gee novel, singing Andrew Lloyd Webber songs, playing cards, and eating excessive quantities of chocolate. Kat expressed a need for some other form of entertainment, and was last seen attempting to climb Kaweka J in her underpants, and provisioned with only a small packet of peanuts.

Day Three: Males in the party displaying even more reluc-



“Well, we did manage to cross that coming the other way...”

tance to leaving sleeping bags. Started on plan number 3685: conquest of Middle Hill Hut. Terrain “undulating” (read vertical zig-zags). Large quantities of water falling from the sky caused Tom to have a Chicken Licken moment. Track resembled river. Then encountered river proper...Waist height. With rapids. Determined not to be defeated, we crossed in style and with only a couple of anxious moments (just no one show the photos to the Safety Officer...). Discovered Kaweka Flats Bivy in time for a lunch break. Lunch, however, had to be abandoned when combination of shedding raincoats and draining boots threatened to flood bivy.

Terrain remained undulating. Contemplated whether it would be quicker to descend 200m hill and ascend the other side, or to set about constructing a bridge. Cursed lack of pocket flying-fox. Tom’s legs objected strongly to perambulation. Discovery of second river. Crossing method also probably not MSC River School-approved. Three hours from Kaweka Flats, encountered sign that cheerfully informed us that the route back the way we had come should take approximately one hour.

Stumbled upon wondrous five-star hotel by name of Middle Hill Hut. Luxuries of balcony, running water, and dry firewood! Distance to long-drop, however, something approaching Scott’s journey to the South Pole. Once again, conclusively proved Man’s ineptitude at fire lighting. And Woman’s. Following lengthy struggle by all four members of party, succeeded in turning hut into something resembling the inside of a smoker’s lung.

Kat expressed overwhelming desire for sleep, whereupon others all clambered on top of her and endeavoured to do their best to break the bunk. Two hours later, ‘annoy Kat’ game had devolved into a cosy snuggle-fest, and Kat and Tom were attempting to work their way through the entirety of *Les Misérables*, with only the most minimal grasp of tune.

Day Four: View of nearby hills in the morning prompted second attempt to ascend main range, despite very large hill and Kat’s dire



prediction that it would be “bloody windy and cold”. Two hours later we were still climbing promised gentle slope, and view of hills long since obscured by veil of impenetrable cloud. Slight rethink prompted by realisation that gentle raindrops were in fact snowflakes, and that Nadia’s twelve layers of polypro, merino top, fleece and raincoat were not up to the challenge. End result: two hour ascent followed by 45 minute descent to lunch spot half an hour from the morning’s point of departure.

Here followed day much like the one before, only in reverse; with less moisture but more resemblance to a holiday in Siberia. Whole party very much relieved to stumble back into Makahu Saddle Hut shortly before it got dark, whereupon Tom celebrated by cooking two days’ worth of food in a single pot. Efforts to drag bodies to table sapped remains of strength, and collapse into bed soon followed.

Night Five: Largely uneventful for all except Kat, who cunningly managed to eavesdrop on Tom and Nadia’s conversation by pretending to be asleep. Kat’s eventful night continued when she was awoken screaming by Tom falling (or was he pushed?) out of someone else’s bed in the early hours of the morning.

Day Five: Party displaying distinct lack of enthusiasm for leaving hut, following breakfast of chocolate pudding. Trek to car just long enough for Nadia to discover her slippers weren’t waterproof; David, that if one is losing feeling in one’s fingers inside the hut, it’s probably going to get worse outside; and Tom, that a single layer of polypro is insufficient for keeping one’s man-bits insulated. Kat even considered abandoning bare-foot fetish in light of sub-zero temperatures. Upon returning to carpark, discovered our first view of the top of the range. No thought required to de-

termine it was time to put our tails between our legs and put our faith in the temperature- controlled environment of Nadia’s car.

Summary stats:

- Number of kiwi heard: 2
- Number of blocks of chocolate consumed: 5 ½
- Number of cameras destroyed: 2
- Number of unlikely deaths: 4 ½
- Number of generally considered essential items forgotten by trip leader: 3
- Number of failed attempts to go somewhere, anywhere! 6
- Number of times Kat resorted to forcibly ejecting Tom from sleeping-bag: 5
- Number of items of clothing used by Nadia (often all at once): 17 polypro, 42 socks, 1 merino top, 1 down jacket, 1 raincoat, 6 gloves, 5 beanies and one pair of trackpants
- Number of sentences in this report bearing slight resemblance to truth: none whatsoever... •*

Pinnacles Cook-Off!!

Christina Fullerton

They say trampers should never walk on an empty stomach....and there was definitely no shortage of food this weekend! On Saturday morning a large group of keen trampers waited eagerly in the rain with their packs filled with all the goodies they were going to drag up to the Pinnacles hut. We had selected teams of two or three and each team was to come up with a novel menu for two of the meals: dinner, dessert or breakfast. Being a cook-off, each team was very secretive about their proposed meals. We all walked up there carrying items including a large metal gas cooker and full gas canister, fondue sets, kilograms of chocolate, even a frozen raw chicken. That evening everyone was hard at work to create the ultimate dish and take out the prizes! Dinner creations included Nico, Brendan and Grant's chicken fondue, Rosanna and Craig's deep fried ravioli, couscous stuffed capsicums and Rosanna's amazing chicken soup spontaneously whipped up using the leftover carcass of Nico's chicken. Dessert was an interesting mix of cinnamon stuffed apples, trifle, traditional kiwi pavalova, chocolate mousse cocktails (created by Lois, David and Chris), chocolate cake, and chocolate fondue (all melted by Peter and Luke). Our team (consisting of me, Nadia and Tom) decided we'd take the creative route and put together a beach scene with a custard sea, kiwifruit palm trees, pineapple rubber rings and gummy bear people. While it looked... well...impressive... the custard had a strong aftertaste of carbon, cutting us out of the running for Masterchef.

The next morning an enthusiastic bunch of us braved the crisp morning air and climbed to the top of the

The dining tables were constantly surrounded by hungry trampers



pinnacles to watch the sunrise, and to work up our appetites for the next course, breakfast! Once again, the cooks did not fail to impress with a range of blueberry pancakes, kumara patties, salsa tarts, freshly squeezed orange juice and our very own pancake volcano. However, at the end of the day only a few aspiring chefs could take out the prizes. Craig and Rosanna's deepfried ravioli took out most amazing dinner, Keri, Alison, Anna L and Hannah's stuffed cinnamon apples won best dessert and Rosanna and Anna T's delicious salsa tarts stole the breakfast prize! Most ridiculous ingredient went to Peter and Luke for carrying up 6kg of oranges for their freshly squeezed juice, while most ridiculous cookware went Nico, Brendan and Grant for their traditional German fondue set. All in all, it was a thoroughly enjoyable weekend. •

Team Beach Scene & Volcano



Kahurangi National Park – Mt Arthur and Mr Owen

Michael Hoksbergen

The day started out clear and crisp, a nice reward for getting up early, and a huge contrast to what was to come. We were soon cruising out of Nelson on the highway to Motueka. A left turn just before Rabbit Island led to the “Short-Cut” through rolling farmland. The road turned to gravel and I quickly became acquainted with what Peter calls driving. By pure chance (I’ll claim it was my directions) we met up with the main road at an even better place than we intended. Next, we drove past the most random farmers’ market possible - there were no towns for miles. Betty handled the steep ascent through the mist to the carpark very well. Betty is a Suzuki, by the way.

So now we get to the actual tramping. I packed way too much for an overnight trip, as is my habit, and regretted it for most of the hour up to Mt Arthur hut. Mt Arthur hut is a serviced hut that sleeps eight, with lots of character. A cup of tea later, and we decided to dump what we didn’t need and race up Mt Arthur before the heavy rain that was due later that afternoon. I can’t tell you too much about the scenery, as I couldn’t see much because we were in the cloud almost all the way up. The few breaks in the cloud that did come revealed a snow, tussock and limestone covered landscape that made it seem like we had been walking for days rather than only a couple of hours. The route up is pretty clearly marked with cairns. The rain was only light most of the way up but the wind was fierce when the angle was wrong. An hour and a half and some scrambling over limestone and scree later, and we were at the top, and it was tiny teddy time. Tiny teddy packets are not made for freezing cold hands inside gloves. The weather looked like it was getting worse so we headed down, and met a pair of people as crazy as us when we were nearly back at the hut. My hands didn’t warm up till about half an hour down the mountain.

So, we were chilling out back at the hut, with the rain pouring down outside and the heat on full when a German couple and their daughter arrived. Peter started chatting away in German and it turned out he was a senior engineer for Audi. Five minutes later he offered Pete an intern job in Germany! Damn arts degrees, maybe they are useful. We had few more visitors throughout the afternoon but ended up with the hut to ourselves. Well, not completely to ourselves. We found out in the morning that we were sharing it with rats. They had

climbed into Pete’s pack, eaten through his pack liner and got into his scroggin bag. On a side note, it was what he calls a scroggin bag, but in reality it is more a big lolly bag with a few nuts mixed in.

Ok, back to the trip. We raced back to the car and drove to Courthouse Flat where we prepared to head off to Granity Pass Hut. We crossed the river and headed up the valley past some relics from the gold mining era. Soon the track cut up the hillside and got somewhat slippery with all the recent rain. As usual the rain was controlled by Murphy’s Law. As soon as we put jackets on it stopped and as soon as we took them off it started. Sigh. On the ridge, the beech forest abated as we reached the saddle and descended “The Staircase” into a picturesque valley. The track wound up the valley, generally staying pretty close to the creek. The vegetation slowly descends until it turns to tussock just before you reach the hut. Doc gives the time to the hut as six hours, and it took us close to four, without having to push it. Granity Pass Hut has been recently rebuilt to sleep 12. The lack of a heater was a shame after the cosy Mt Arthur Hut, but at least there were no rats.

The next day we headed up the cairned route to Mt Owen. The weather had finally come right; we got amazing views over the whole Mt Arthur Range. The route started off through tussock as we gently ascended to the base of Mt Owen. Mt Owen is limestone, with the associated crevasses and bluffs and other interesting rock formations. The route is not that obvious in some places and if the visibility had been worse or it was anything other than the height of summer it would have taken a lot longer and been a lot more... challenging. We ascended well under the three and a half hour DoC time to enable a leisurely descent. Summit food this time was chocolate mousse. Pete got a great photo if they ever want to do an interesting advertising campaign. Speaking of photos, got some great ones of kea, me jumping a canyon and Pete doing a shirtless meditating monk. Back in the tussock we still had plenty of time in the day so Pete went for a swim in a mountain tarn. On the way back to the hut we went wandering a little. Found one of the most entertaining pieces of graffiti ever. “Calvin & Hobbs” written in two metre high letters of white stones on the side of one of the hills! Next, was a quick nap in the sun before ascending another hill in search of yet more views. When descending this hill Pete decided to go frolicking in a meadow. I don’t know how he did it, the meadow was all lumpy. Good day.

The next day we retraced our steps back to Courthouse Flat. The weather was good, the scenery amazing. What else can I say?

Overall, I’d say Mt Arthur is a good day walk, although I would try to do it with a little visibility next time. I much prefer Mt Owen. The scenery is just more impressive, you are constantly surrounded by mountains, and being limestone country, each of them is unique. The Mt Owen trip also felt much more substantial, just because it was three days. This enables you to really ‘get away’ which is half the fun of tramping. I rate both tramps as moderate. To use a cliché, the Kahurangi National Park really is like another world. •

The four essential features of tramping alcohol are:

- *Bang For Your Buck* (BFYB - Price)
- *Drunkenness Per Kilo* (DPK - Weight)
- *Taste Factor* (TF - subjective)
- *Invincibility Rating* (IR - how awesome it makes you feel)

Of course, these features are not always present in every beverage type, so I have prepared this scoring sheet to give you some guidelines. This is knowledge I am sharing with you that is gained from bitter experience, take it and go forth into the world of drunken tramping! (Just don't get killed/hurt doing it)

RTDs

Pretty much the worst possible tramping alcohol - don't even bother

BFYB - 3
DPK - 1
TF - 2
IR - 0
Total - 6

Beer - bottles

An improvement on taste but still pretty crap

BFYB - 3
DPK - 1
TF - 7
IR - 6
Total - 17

Beer - cans

Lighter and cheaper - therefore better

BFYB - 4
DPK - 3
TF - 6
IR - 6
Total - 19

Red Cask Wine

Hardly any packaging weight, more alcoholic than beer, gets more delicious as you drink more. Can be mulled in alpine situations for an increase in TF, but this may reduce BFYB, and DPK. However, this reduction is balanced by the ability to get people tipsy by simply inhaling the air above the pot.

Advantages - You can be funny by calling it 'Chateau Cardboard' and using the bladder as a pillow once you're done.

BFYB - 5
DPK - 7

TF - 5
IR - 3
Total - 20

Beer - Mini-Keg

Hardly any packaging weight, wonderful showpiece, especially in photography.

Look out for Heineken - they have the best pouring set-up

BFYB - 2
DPK - 6
TF - 7
IR - 6
Total - 21

Random Spirits

Gets you drunk as anything for very little weight and price (mix with coke for some giardia killing action)

BFYB - 6
DPK - 9
TF - 0
IR - 6
Total - 21

Stone's Green Ginger Wine

Deliciousness is the number one attraction here, as well as a decrease in packaging and an increase in % alc.vol.

BFYB - 4
DPK - 5
TF - 9
IR - 4
Total - 22

Whisky

Like 'Random Spirits' but tastes better and makes you feel like a real man

Advantages: You can say in a southern accent 'That's fiiiire water!'

BFYB - 5
DPK - 9
TF - 8
IR - 7
Total - 29

Andrew's Moonshine

Tastes awful, costs nothing, gets you so drunk you'll think you're walking on the ceiling

BFYB - 10
DPK - 10
TF - 0
IR - 10 (you have to be invincible to drink it)
Total - 30

Cliff-Scaling Rabbits

(A Hunter's Guide)

February

Kathleen Collier

Trampers: Craig Smith, Kathleen Collier

There is a pass in the region of the Matukituki known as Rabbit Pass. It is not a pass for the fainthearted. It is not a pass for anyone with less than stellar balance. It is a pass, I think, which remains to this day unconquered by rabbit-kind, though it is one from which people (or various portions thereof) get chopped out with semi-regularity.

Craig and I set forth from Top Forks hut one misty morning in February, not without the teensiest bit of trepidation. We had heard stories.

We were both feeling pretty energetic after having spent the last week or so cruising up the Wilkin, and after a solid three weeks in his company, I was almost managing to keep up with Craig. After a solid three weeks in my company, Craig had become uncommonly giggly, and inclined to foam at the mouth while brushing his teeth (though apparently this is a regular occurrence).

The wander up to Waterfall Face was pretty steep, and I lost track of Craig once or twice, but the scenery was suitably imposing to make up for this. Sheer rock walls plunging down into a narrow chasm choked with boulders, which disgorged a foaming river into the bush-clad slopes below. Most definitely worthy of further exploration. The approach to the head of the valley involved multiple crossings of small, swift, and very cold streams, so we removed our boots and strolled barefoot to the head of the valley. The dominant features of the landscape here, are of course, the two waterfalls – the left one at around 90m in height, the right one coming straight off the Mt. Taurus snowfield at around 400m. When I finally caught up to Craig, he was seated beside the last visible marker pole, and wearing a somewhat apprehensive expression.



Rabbit Pass

Craig and Rabbit Pass



Kat looking down from the top of the pass into the Matukituki



All tuckered out!

"The track goes up there," he said, pointing at the sheer cliff beside the waterfall.

"Bloody hell. Are you sure?"

"Yeah."

"That's one hell of a climb. Slippery too."

"Yeah."

"Craig?"

"Mmmm?"

"If that's the track, how come there are marker poles way over there, up that friendly looking green slope?"

"Oh. . . Well that's a relief."

Having ascertained that the route did not, in fact, lead straight up a vertical wall, we wandered over to the base of the climb and had a look at the terrain. It was still steep, certainly, but compared to the climb we'd been envisaging, it was reminiscent of nothing much more than a sheep paddock. Even so, there were a few places at the top where bouldering techniques and a bit of fancy footwork had to be employed, and which would have made for quite an unpleasant fall.

The saddle was reached without mishap, and we cruised along in the sunshine for awhile. The slopes were still snow covered, but the valley itself was lush with snowgrass and tussock, dotted with little alpine flowers, and the sky was a cerulean blue, streaked with wisps of cloud. There was a strange sense of remoteness up there, seemingly much further removed from the world at large than is really the case. Possibly one of the most beautiful and secluded places I've seen. We strolled in silence for awhile, following the course of a little, trickling stream.

"Craig. . ."

"Yes, Kat?"

"I think I put my undies on backwards this morning."

"."

We lunched on top of Pearson Saddle, looking down into the Matukituki, and watching the waterfall crashing down the rocks below us. It was beginning to occur to us that getting down might not be quite so simple as getting up. The track continued along up an increasingly jagged ridgeline, then plunged off sideways into a concealed cutting. I paused at the



Running out of photo pose ideas above Bledisloe Gorge - looking down into the Kitchener



Craig at Waterfall Face

top to wait for Craig, and together, we made our analysis of the route down.

“Shit.”

“Yes.”

“Bugger.”

“Quite.”

The majority of the poles marking the route appeared to have been the victims of some savage massacre. They lay scattered at intervals down the cliff-face, brutally snapped and twisted from their bases. We stood and debated for a bit about the best looking route. I tried a reconnaissance down a steep chute to the left. Then backtracked. We tried a sidle along to the right, tucked as closely into the cliff face as we could manage. The rock crumbled and cracked under our hands, and slithered out from beneath our feet. We found ourselves sliding and stumbling, grabbing at whatever we could find, whilst the flakes of rock that we dislodged skidded and bounced merrily over the hundred metre drop below us. I was reminded of Rob Frost’s 2002 report on the same trip “Oh, that’s a good hold. I’ll just put it in my pocket and save it for later”.

As we got lower, the wind got stronger, and we decided to toss our packs down on to the snowfield to help us balance a bit more easily. This done, we found the bottom of the infamous Rabbit Pass schist without too much difficulty. Most regrettably, the tossing of packs had involved the involuntary sacrifice of any unsecured items, including a bag of scroggin of more than

Kat climbing Waterfall Face



usual deliciousness (it had jet planes).

Exhausted by our efforts, we pitched camp down on the river flats at about 4.00 in the afternoon, consumed nearly half a kilo of pasta between the two of us, and cosied down in our tent for another evening gossip session (“You know, I think Andy likes you...”). We were woken by the first day’s rain in a month of sunshine, and having no desire to be flooded down Bledisloe gorge, we got out of there tuit sweet. There had been some plans to climb up French Ridge, but we were worried about having abandoned Charis (as it turns out, we needn’t have bothered – she’d gone off east with Rob), so instead we headed down through farmland (sharing our final campsite with a herd of cows and a bunch of girl guides was a slightly surreal experience), caught a lift across the river to Raspberry Flat in a tractor which had been commandeered by a bunch of old AUTC members, and hitch-hiked back to Queenstown. AUTC, 1: Rabbits, 0. •

“You know, I think I put my underpants on backwards this morning.” – *Kat, halfway through Rabbit Pass*

The Dirty Dozen Take Down Tongariro

August 27th-29th

Kathleen Collier

The dirty dozen were: Kathleen Collier (leader), Andy Baddeley, Craig Smith, Matt Lillis, Peter Luk, Richard Greatrex, Jen Waite, Helge Dorheim, Michael Hoksbergen, Tom Goodman, Scott Thorp, and David Kugler.

The Tongariro Crossing enjoys a peculiar reputation for being one of the greatest day trips in New Zealand. This reputation, it must be said, is somewhat undeserved, given that for three quarters of any given year, the crossing consists of a tedious four hours' worth of stumbling over rocks whilst traversing a featureless expanse of rather boring hillsides. The only way worth doing it, in fact, is by moonlight in the snow.

“Everyone else better be as turned on as I am right now.” - *Matt, watching the moonrise over Tongariro*

‘Twas a grim and dismal Thursday when the dirty dozen set off from Auckland without particularly high hopes of a break in the weather. However, a spirit of recklessness and mild stupidity had infected us all, and we had determined to bloody well suck it up and do it, no matter what. The trip down was uneventful, unless you count Matt’s aspiration to ransack every McDonalds between Auckland and National Park, and Andy’s forcible attempts to steal the resulting greasies by repeated assault.

Waking on Friday morning, we were treated to a view of the stunning Tongariro scenery, which extended all of three feet from the hut in a given direction, if the wind was right. A large and artery-clogging breakfast was cooked with much ceremony, and Matt was responsible for attempting to steal Tom’s bacon, and was then pursued around the hut by Andy with cries of “I just want to take your meat in my mouth”. Matt, Andy and I went for an early morning run out to the road end in order to drop the car off at Ketetahi, and found ourselves rescuing a stranded and sodden member of a certain canoe club who had had a minor altercation with a rock. In the afternoon, feeling adventurous, we cruised up a ridge to take a look at the fog. David posed fetchingly atop a pile of rocks, Andy dry-tooled up a dodgy face (“There’s nothing worse than a dry tool”), and Craig skulked around the hut reading a book designed for illiterate ten year olds.

After a wee nap in the middle of the afternoon, we woke to an enormous dinner of stir-fry and a large billy full of mulled wine, which ensured that we were all appropriately light-headed as we started out into the night (minus Jen, who was feeling poorly, so stayed at Mangatepopo in anticipation of a decent night’s sleep). Miraculously, there were even some bits of sky to be glimpsed amidst the cloud! The full moon, rising over the eastern

rim of the mountains, bathed the snowfield with a faint, silvery light, and cast long shadows away behind us. “I am so turned on right



**“Just let me take your meat in my mouth.” -
*Andy attempting to steal Tom’s bacon from Matt***

now”, Matt proclaimed.

Cruising up the new Devil’s staircase, we paused for many poor attempts at moonlit photography and much posing. Just as we reached the top, we ran into Peter Jenkins and a mate on their way down from a wander to red crater, and got given the low down on the conditions. A wee bit of argument was had over whether or not to summit Ngaruhoe. Craig wanted to. The rest of us pointed out the excessive wind conditions. Craig still wanted to. We pointed out the excessive ice conditions. Craig still wanted to. We pointed out the excessive likelihood that the weather would break within the next few hours. And the amount of snow loading on poorly consolidated slopes. And the gale currently blowing through the top of the saddle... In the end, we gave up on reasoned argument and started walking, assuming that he would catch us up eventually.

The trip over the top was scenic, but rather chilly, so we didn’t hang about. Coming up the out of red crater, the wind was threatening to bowl us sideways off the ridge, and Craig was heard to mutter something along the lines of “Yeah, I think Ngaruhoe could be pretty nasty”. All of the marker poles were covered in huge formations of artfully sculpted ice, easily strong enough to support Peter’s weight when he started clambering over them pretending to be a cowboy.

On the way back down, we dicked around on the frozen Emerald Lakes, attempting to ascertain just how much force would be needed to push someone through. There was some minor confusion over the exact bearing necessary to strike Ketetahi with the minimum of effort, which resulted in Richard standing in the middle of blue crater giving map reading lessons to a bemused Helge and David at around 15° below zero.

“It’s 3.00 am Richard...”

“There’s always time for training.”

“The hut’s just over the next hill Richard.”

“Yes, I know it’s just over the next hill, but that’s not the point!”

After a sidle round a slightly dodgy slope, and a minor slip by Tom (“I’m okay, I’m okay...”), we found ourselves ploughing down towards Ketetahi through drifts of thigh-deep snow beneath turbulent and rather ominous-looking cloud formations. We arrived on deck at 3.30am, just as the weather started to close in again, and were soon snugly cosseted in our sleeping bags, marvelling at our good luck in picking what seemed like the only four clear hours in the past three weeks.

We woke at the lazy hour of 10.00am to a complete white-

“There’s nothing worse than a dry tool.” – *Andy*



out, a foot of snow on the deck, and the scent of frying butter as Andy cooked pancakes. There followed a breakfast during which vast quantities of chocolate bars were sautéed, melted, or otherwise consumed, and several eyebrows were very nearly incinerated. The drivers ran off ahead down the track to pick up Jen and the cars, while the rest of us cleaned up their mess, and had a furious snowball fight on the deck (Peter was unequivocally victorious, at least until the rest of us ganged up on him).

Back in the car park, it emerged that Jen had not had quite the restful night which she’d anticipated, having been woken a few hours after we’d left by the insurgence of a bunch of guys who were either boozed or doped, or both. A bit of my memory tells me that Andy, Matt, Peter and I stopped off at Spa Park on the way home and had an enjoyable wallow, but that might have been a different trip entirely. At any rate, awesome food, wicked company, gorgeous scenery, and a suitable degree of epic-ness. In short, good times had by all.

“There’s always time for training.” –
Richard, giving map reading lessons at c. 15° below zero




Morning dip in Lake Mckerrow, Hollyford Track. The water was still as glass. Cold, cold glass.



My Fire!!!!




Nico having far too much fun at the Pinnacles Cook-Off.

A photograph showing a man lying on his back on a red-painted floor. He is wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt and dark pants. His head is near a large, perforated metal grate. The background shows wooden walls and a wooden bench.

On Moonlight Crossing, a bit of melted chocolate fell off Matt's .. whatever he was eating, and onto the floor. We persuaded him that it would be a crime to let it go to waste, and he obliged us with this..

"Any respect I had for you is now gone."
- Richard, watching Matt lick chocolate off the floor of Mangatepopo hut

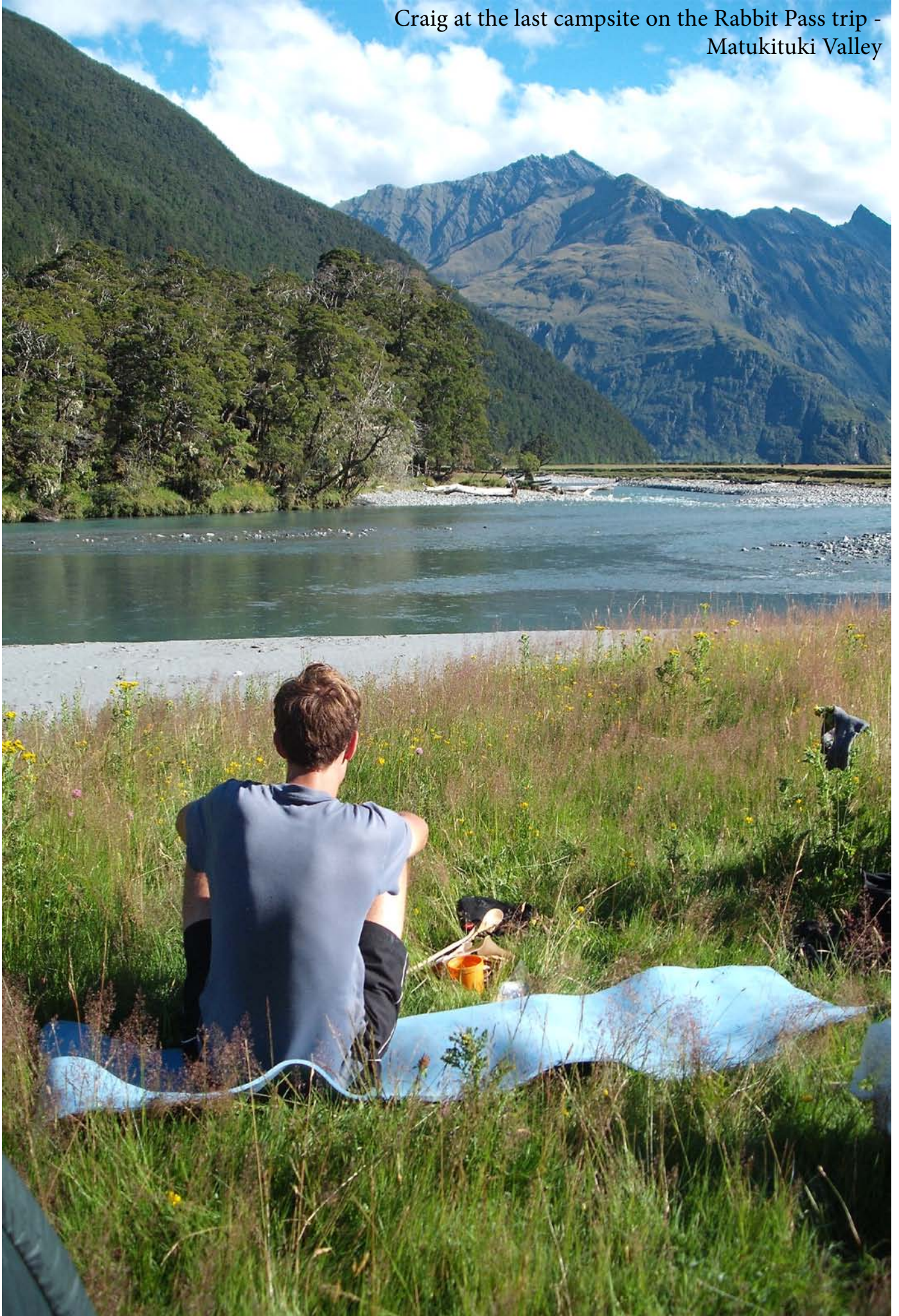
A photograph of a mountain landscape. In the foreground, there is a field of tall, dry grass. In the middle ground, there are dark green bushes and a wooden trail sign. The sign has two lines of text: "Makahu Saddle < 1.5 hr" and "Middle Hill Hut > 2.5 - 3 hr". In the background, there are large, rugged mountains under a clear blue sky.

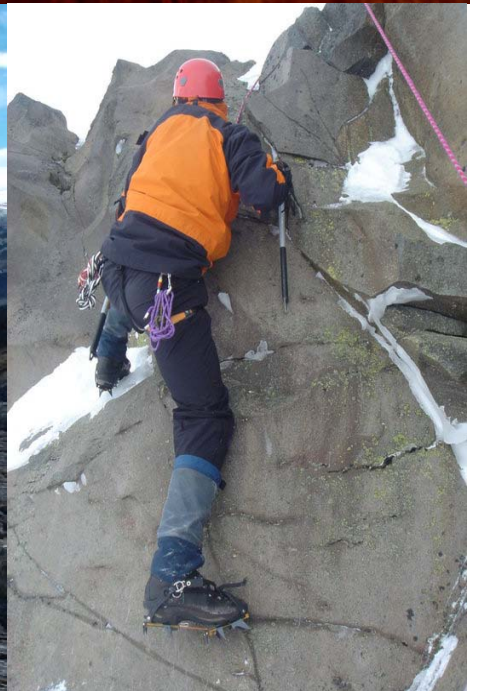
Kaweka Flats bivi in the morning



Head of Bettison Valley

Craig at the last campsite on the Rabbit Pass trip -
Matukituki Valley







Odd one out?

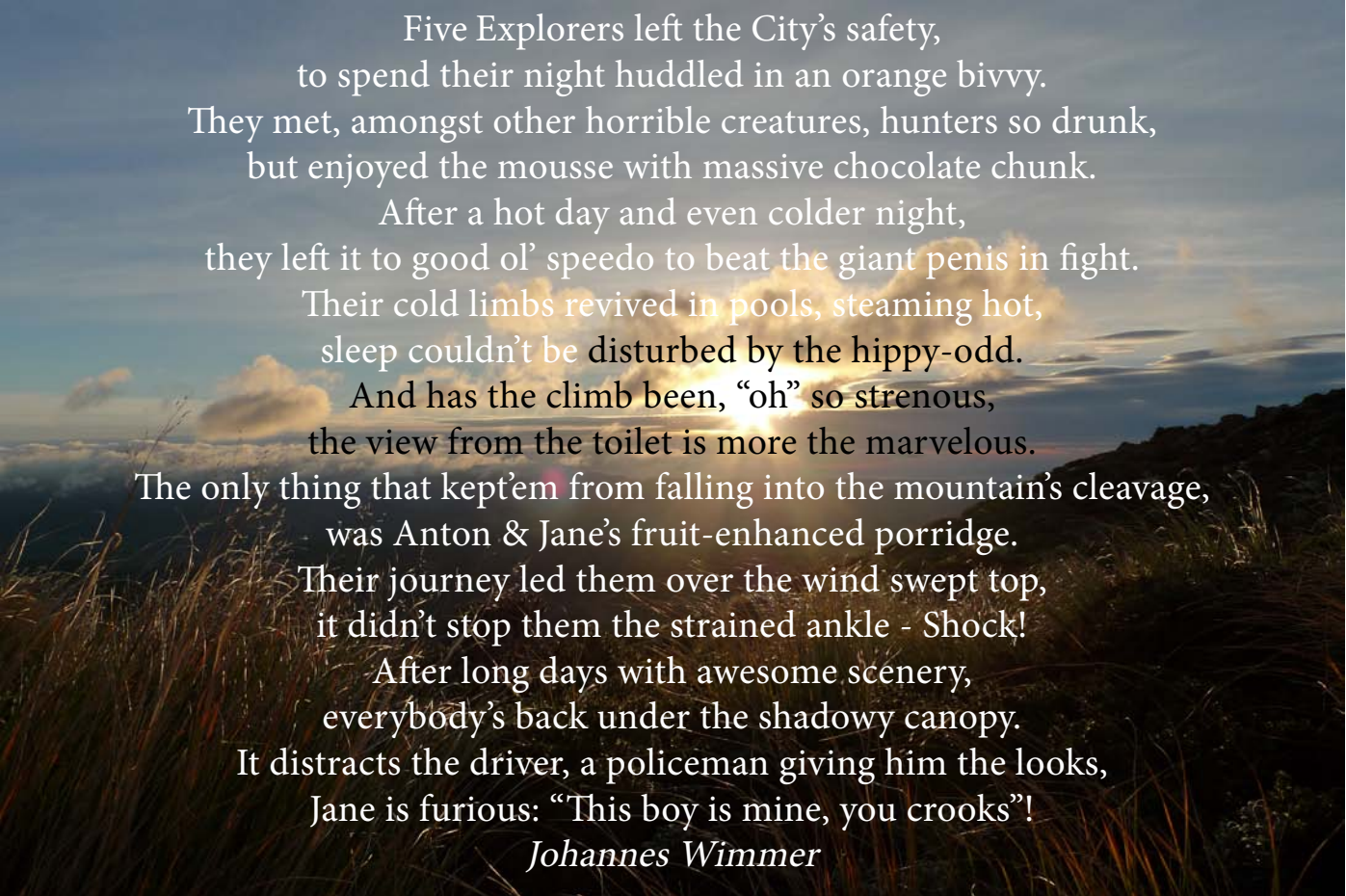


Cooking



Wild Wildebeest





Five Explorers left the City's safety,
to spend their night huddled in an orange bivvy.
They met, amongst other horrible creatures, hunters so drunk,
but enjoyed the mousse with massive chocolate chunk.
After a hot day and even colder night,
they left it to good ol' speedo to beat the giant penis in fight.
Their cold limbs revived in pools, steaming hot,
sleep couldn't be disturbed by the hippy-odd.
And has the climb been, "oh" so strenuous,
the view from the toilet is more the marvelous.
The only thing that kept'em from falling into the mountain's cleavage,
was Anton & Jane's fruit-enhanced porridge.
Their journey led them over the wind swept top,
it didn't stop them the strained ankle - Shock!
After long days with awesome scenery,
everybody's back under the shadowy canopy.
It distracts the driver, a policeman giving him the looks,
Jane is furious: "This boy is mine, you crooks!"
Johannes Wimmer



We'll Be Coming Round the Mountain When We Come

Easter Break Melanie Concordia

Trampers: Andy Baddeley (leader), Kathleen Collier, Craig Smith, Joe Nelson, Eleanor Cooper, Melanie Concordia.

During the first week of mid-semester break I completed the Round the Mountain Track with five other people from the Tramping Club: Andy (who organised the trip), Kat, Craig, Joe, and Eleanor. The track is a circuit around Mt. Ruapehu, one of the filming sites for Mt. Doom/Mordor ("Ooooooh, ahhhh-hh!"), and I decided to join last minute when I attended an AUTC meeting and talked to some other club members who had done the track and convinced me it was some of the best tramping in New Zealand. I was not disappointed.

Craig picked me and Eleanor up from uni at 7am on Sunday April 4th (Easter Sunday), and we drove five hours south to Whakapapa Village, the start of the track, where we met the others. Andy made the executive decision to reverse the direction we'd be hiking in, since it was Easter weekend and he expected the original first hut (a great walk hut) to be crowded. So our first day was only two and a half hours of medium tramping to Whakapapa hut. I was initially very nervous to go tramping with five strangers, but I became comfortable with my new mates very quickly. Andy's sense of humor definitely helped, as he thought a nice ice breaker would be, "Let's play: guess who the American is!" And Craig replied, "Oh, could it be, the person with the Nalgens and carabiners?" I also brought hiking poles, which Andy promised I wouldn't be using by the end of our trip. Clearly I was the odd one out!

The next day was our longest. We left around 7:30am and paced ourselves for what would be ten and a half hours of walking. The track on this day was incredibly diverse and beau-



tiful. The first half of the day was spent going up and down hills covered in brush and grasses with many stream crossings. During the day we sang songs to pass the time, many of which were (to my surprise) American folk songs, including the very appropriate "She'll Be Coming 'Round the Mountain".

We eventually reached a waterfall, climbed up and over it, followed the ridge line, and descended down many stairs to Mangaturuturu hut, six hours in. We ate lunch there and continued our trek, climbing over dark lava rocks and sandy ash until we reached a road—or more appropriately—THE road. We followed the road for 3k downhill (relief!), and the track picked up again. We now had one and half hours until we reached our destination—Blyth hut—and this was the longest one and a half hours of my life! We were below the tree line now, and followed the trail as it wound through the woods, across streams, and ended with a 30 minute climb off the main track to the hut. Joe was nice and hung back with me while the others went ahead. About ten minutes before Blyth Hut there is a private hut along the track, and I was so disappointed to see a hut that was NOT the right one, that I let out a loud shout of exasperation. To my surprise, Andy returned a scream from Blyth, and I felt renewed motivation to keep trudging the rest of the way. It was well worth it since I arrived just in time to see the sun set over the horizon, and we had the hut to ourselves for the night. We also made a delicious dinner of sausages & 50 servings (yes, that's right



five-zero) of mashed potatoes with peas, drank some hot cocoa, and went to bed.

The next day we had about seven hours of tramping to do, and there were some ominous looking clouds in the sky. Of course, right when we were about to leave, it started raining, and it rained, and rained, and rained...all day. Let's just say April 6th was not a fun day for me. We walked for two hours through the forest to get to Mangaehuehu hut where we had an hour long morning tea. (We were all secretly hoping the rain would stop—we were wrong). We set out for five hours of trekking through the desert in the pouring rain. I was pretty miserable, cold and uncomfortable, but it had to be done! We went up and down dunes, crossed streams and valleys, and didn't really stop too much in the foggy rain. I didn't want to stop for food, for water, or to take a break. I just wanted to get there! We finally arrived at the hut around 5:30 pm to find it overflowing with people. The six of us managed to grab the last four beds, which we shared, and the few people who arrived after us slept on the floor. We made hot cocoa, ate a great dinner, and I was fast asleep by 8 pm.

In the morning I was in much better spirits and looking forward to an easy six hour day (ha ha I have to laugh here: I would not have considered this an easy day but compared to the past two days, it was!) We took our time on this day and the track started with the same up-and-down through the desert, until we dropped down to open flatlands before crossing more vegetated areas of black sandy lava. My favorite part was when we passed through the 400m "no stop zone" where there was danger of a lahar, especially if you hear a rumbling sound. The signs seemed very strict to me, and I was prepared to continue walking at a quick pace, but naturally, everyone decided to pose for a picture. After the photo op, the climbers in our group noticed some very enticing boulders exactly in the mid-

dle of the "no stop zone". Andy, Kat, Joe, & Craig dropped their packs & bouldered for a bit, while Eleanor and I explored the rest of the area.

Another highlight of the day came later, when I noticed a very steep, almost vertical, 7m high sandy-mud wall along the path. I turned to my Kiwi companions and said, "I'll give the rest of my Gingernuts to whoever makes it to the top of that first!" They all dropped their packs and sprinted to the wall, and I almost fell over laughing; I have never seen anyone run that fast for cookies in my life! Kat & Eleanor had a bit of a head start, Craig unfortunately was the last to hear so he was too far behind to catch up, and Andy was the triumphant winner! By the time they all made it back down, the once-pristine slope was a huge mess of slips & slides, and my friends had mud all over their arms and legs to prove it. As a joke, we moved one of the track marker poles to the top of the slope to see if an unknowing tramper would think the track actually went up there, and try to climb it. I wonder if anyone fell for it...

The next hut was the great walk hut (part of the Tongariro Northern Circuit), and we expected it to be crowded. To our surprise it wasn't, and we enjoyed the comforts of a great walk hut (gas stoves, heater, and and TWO toilets). Also the ranger was there. She gave a safety talk and then took some people out to set possum traps. They were baited with an apple and cinnamon inside a yellow box with a spring loaded trap, designed to kill possums instantly. To set it, you just pull a string at the bottom with the box upside down on the ground. It was cool, but I only watched her set one, and didn't go back the



next morning to see if she caught anything. Instead, in the morning we waited until everyone had left and we had the hut alone to ourselves, and Andy demonstrated what I will forever know as the “AUTC fire trick”. I could tell you how to do it, but it will be more fun if you just ask Andy to show you himself.

The final day was even easier than the last. It involved a little up and down, then some flat and downhill, and only four hours of walking. With a side trip to the lower Tama Lake, and plenty of long breaks, it took us five and a half hours to complete. We ate a great final lunch at the top of a waterfall, then walked out and soaked in some hot thermal pools (a tramping club tradition). On the drive back to Auckland, Craig, Eleanor & I stopped for fish & chips, a nice treat—though I will say, eating with the tramping club has redefined what I consider “tramping food”. Long gone are the days when I survive off peanut butter & jelly, muesli, & packages of soup noodles! When I first arrived in New Zealand and went tramping with my brother, people gave us pitying looks when they saw our meals; When I ate meals prepared by Kat & Andy I was now pitying those other people eating \$16 Back Country Cuisine dehydrated mush!

Thank you Andy, Kat, Craig, Joe, & Eleanor for an amazing trip around Mt. Ruapehu. I would never have completed it without you, and I most certainly will never forget it! •



Ravaged by the Rugged Ruahines

Anton Gulley

Just Rowan



Trampers: Rowan Brooks, Anton Gulley, Gemma Augustin, Jane Dudley.

There was little to suggest after the three hour ascent up to Purity hut on the first day of the trip that I would spend three days recovering from the tramp to come. Gemma, Rowan and I had planned a relatively easy loop tramp doing about three to five hours a day through the rugged Ruahine ranges. Jane was doing the first day and half with us on her way down to Wellington.

Our first set-back occurred the next day. The day's plan was to follow the ridge east and then south before dropping steeply to Waterfall hut, about a five hour walk, we thought. After leaving on time we found ourselves heading up on to the tops. I was happy. No more studies to worry about, no more civilisation, just me, my friends and some very impressive hills. Nevermind the fact that I could not see those hills because of limited visibility (I just had a vibe that they were impressive). Also nevermind the gusting wind that bit at that exposed skin on my face, nor the occasional hail that added fangs to that bite (luckily it did not draw blood so I did not turn into a weather vampire).

‘We retreated with our hands covering our faces like rock climbers from a sun shower.’

Mt Mangaweka we decided was a necessary one hour side trip - who could resist the highest peak in the Ruahines? So after stopping at a place named Iron Peg (I never actually saw an iron peg, I don't think there was one there) to put warmer clothes on and have some scroggin, we headed for the saddle. This saddle, as we soon discovered was like all good saddles, a good place for air to go through. The wind galloped and reared through that saddle as though it was ridden by a jockey with a jagged ice whip. It also spat

giant balls of ice at us which stung through our layers of clothes. We retreated with our hands covering our faces like rock climbers from a sun shower. At the nearest shelter point we put more clothes on and decided today was no day for ridge travel. We bid farewell to Jane at a junction not far from her hut and decided to head off the tops to Kelly Knight hut. About an hour later, on the way down, the weather cleared.

On Thursday, the sun had come out to play. We headed up the Pourangaki river safe in the knowledge of a short flat trip to Pourangaki hut. The river was exceptionally gorgeous. There were pools of tranquil green with rays of light spearing through them that out-matched some of the best rivers I have seen in the south island. Occasionally the river was also gorgeous and we got to satisfy our thirst for adventure by climbing around deep pools on the neighbouring rock. I was pleased we had taken the



Bashing down the river

river as opposed to the route up on the tops. Within minutes of arriving at the hut we had decided to take a track to the south west up on to the tops for a look. So after a quick stop for food and taking with us only the necessary items for survival (Gemma decided that she was not necessary for our survival so stayed at the hut), with light packs we dashed up 800m to watch the sunset and the weather deteriorate, and then dashed back down, arriving just after we took our torches out.

We had the option of a rest day the next day and decided to take it. Rowan and I were on a high from the previous day's travel and set an ambitious route for a day walk, we noted that our proposed route had many ridges and valleys

that would drop nicely down to the Pourangaki river if a short cut was necessary. Again taking the necessary items for survival, Rowan and I headed back on to the tops via the route we had taken the night before. The weather was now snowing on and off, it was a little bit windy and visibility ranged between 2km and 10m. On our way south east along the ridge we climbed Mt Maungamahue and at around 2.30pm we wearily achieved our goal of Te Hekenga. We decided on a stream to come down just south of the peak and navigated our way back there in the now thick pea soup. While rather steep, the upper sections of the stream were covered in a river of snow which made travel rather quick. Eventually the garden path died away and we were left with a rugged little stream, full of melt water and banked with snow. This was now a fun, but daunting stream bash. We clambered, climbed and jumped down waterfalls, doing our best to stay dry (and hence warm). We sidled round pools and slid down fallen logs. While we were having fun and we were not far from the main river, we were conscious of the time. There were enough features to locate ourselves, and at one point we estimated ourselves to be a few hundred metres from the main stream. Good, we thought, looking up at the sinking sun, not far to go now. Just around the corner however we found our worst nightmare. A 15m cliff with the stream funnelled over the edge.



Snuggling in bed



A short peek at the upper Pourangaki

thanked the fact that I had my dad's extra large sleeping bag and that Rowan had brushed his teeth that morning so his breath did not smell too bad.

We wrestled all night for our share of the mat and sleeping bag and finally after a long night of staring at my eyelids we decided that 4.30am was a good time to have another four cabin bread for breakfast and make a move. We found ourselves bashing up a steep sided ridge just before dawn. With no clear ridge to follow the 300m ascent was rather slow. Giant vines of bush lawyer were out to get us. The fallen trees were strategically placed in front of us so as to block our progress and with every movement we knocked trees that sent piles of snow from their branches on to our heads and

'Rowan had brushed his teeth that morning so his breath did not smell too bad'

We weighed up our options with a handful of scroggin and decided that a tent guy rope and some cord wasn't the best belay rope, so we took the option of bush bashing up to the left of the stream to find a better way down. After a long hour we had crossed two spurs, climbed over countless fallen trees, sworn at numerous vines and given our blessings to a very helpful landslide that took us down to just below the waterfall and the main river. We disappeared down the flat stream with renewed enthusiasm, that was, until about one km from the hut we hit a gorge and a rather deep pool.

"We're not far from the hut now."

"Should we take the plunge?"

"The sun is setting, we're not sure what's around the corner."

"Should we go back up to that flat spot for the night? Getting cold now is probably not a good idea."

Within minutes we were up-stream on the debris of an ancient land slide that had created one of the few flat spots we had seen. We ripped out dead grass from the surrounding cliffs and laid a thick pile as insulation for our tent. When I say we had the bare minimum for survival that is exactly what we had. We had one sleeping bag and one sleeping mat between us. Exhausted we lay down in the tent with a meal of four cabin bread with Marmite™ and peanut butter each. As I lay down to sleep I

down our necks. At one point, as I was trying to haul myself up through a fallen beech tree on the side of a small bluff, I noticed Rowan was not behind me. I yelled, and then yelled again. He answered after an age and finally caught up. Rowan looked like he had snuck back to the hut for that whisky we had left there. We sat down for some scroggin and I discovered that he had made a slight error and that it took him some time to realise that my footprints were somewhat larger than the possum footprints he was following. When the ridge top finally came it offered no view and no clue as to the best assault plan from there. We both had perked up a little by now and we decided on a northwest spur from the map and haphazardly followed



Anton sidling around a point on the ridge and the sheer drop

it down, occasionally sidling to avoid bluffs. When we were almost down, we looked out over the stream we were heading to and discovered it was in a steep gorge surrounded by cliffs. "I am not a big fan of bluffs" I notified Rowan.

We sidled west and eventually came across another marvellous landslide that we followed to the stream. I looked upstream and saw a 2m waterfall.

"I'm not a big fan of waterfalls at the moment either".

There was a marked track up on the ridge to our north but we had had enough of bush bashing up hill and tried our luck on the stream. There was huge relief 20 minutes later as we hit a swing bridge. 25 minutes later, there was Gemma, standing on the deck of the hut giving us the biggest wave I had ever seen. It was 10am in the morning and our day had really only just begun.

By 12.30 we were on the road again. This time on a marked track east up on to the Hikurangi range. Eventually we reached the main ridge line and gazed out over the mountains basking in sunshine. The sign at the top said "Iron Peg, 1hr". As we gazed north to Iron Peg we decided that sign would go well with a Tui™ ad. The ridge was razor sharp and very jagged. We got going and soon discovered that soft melting snow on top of a layer of ice was very hard to walk in, and especially annoying if you want to sidle around an impassable rock climb on the ridge. At the turn off to Waterfall hut (300m along the ridge) the sun started going down. Looking back now, I wish I had spent more time enjoying it, as views like that don't come around very often. As expected, the falling sun caused the wind to pick up and after an hour or two we had crampons on. Gemma, who was reluctant to use the crampons, suddenly developed a love affair with them.



Rowan making his way back on to the ridge

"I'm not taking these off until I get to the hut."
"These things are great!"

We decided that because it was that much easier to walk with the crampons that it was a reasonable love affair and that she was not going mad. It was a case of one foot in front of the other until we reached Iron Peg. For the second time that day, I was very, very, very relieved to be somewhere I had been before. If there had actually been an iron peg, I might have kissed it. Instead I gave the signpost a pat. Gemma suddenly snapped out of being miserable and started telling us everything and anything that we could fit in our ears. Rowan suddenly became a box of birds too and began chatting about trips to the South Island and

whatever else. It was a relatively comfortable trip back to the hut (unfortunately for Gemma's love affair, we had to take our crampons off at one point). We got to the hut (which had the most wonderful fire going and hot water provided by two hunters) at 10.30pm.

The next morning was a beautiful day. After fantastic views of Mt Ruapehu and Taranaki on the way down and three loud bangs as one of the hunters killed a deer, we met Jane at the car park for the journey home. •



Anton on the ridge just north of mount Maungamahue

Socials Report 2010

(How to Let Your Hair Down - Tramping Style!)

Rosanna Walton and Tom Goodman.



Orientation Party *6th - 7th March*

As with every year, 2010 started with a bang, with our annual Orientation Party held at our beloved O'nuku Hut over the weekend of March 6th-7th. A quick trip out to the Cascades, and we were into the Waitakere Ranges on trips of various duration into the hut. The hut had been elegantly decorated with fairy lights, spotlights and our famous disco ball (thank heaven for engineers!) - an inspiring sight for all of our exchange students! A truly fabulous meal was prepared by Claire Oliver, after which the usual O-Camp festivities began - the phonebook game was again a popular favourite. Adding to the fun was the presence of four colourful piñatas. The usual beating with sticks was declared too easy, so a variety of other techniques for busting these open was employed, to the hilarity of those watching! The party carried on into the night, mostly courtesy of Andy Bad.

The following morning, the entire party made their way down towards Piha beach, where those who were feeling keen enjoyed the waves, while the less keen took advantage of the last of the summer sun. All too soon it was time to return to the real world. Big thanks to everyone who helped with the weekend, 80+ people at O'Nuku is no mean feat and we couldn't manage without you!

Wine & Cheese Evening *11th March*

After a beautiful summer we were all prepared for another lovely evening spent eating and drinking on top of Mt Eden at Wine and Cheese evening. But as a taste of things to come, no sooner had the day arrived than the heavens opened with a vengeance. Refusing to be deterred, several hardy souls braved the weather and huddled together under the band rotunda in the domain, and by all accounts had a splendid time despite Auckland not really coming to the party. Meanwhile, one of your social officers (who shall remain nameless) had taken himself off to the cricket, where he found neither the weather and the scoreboard were entirely to his satisfaction...

Cave Party *17th - 18th April*

Cave Party this year turned out to be one of our most memorable events, held as always at Whatipu Caves on the 17th-18th of April. The theme for the event was 'Harry Potter', and perhaps it was this that was to blame, for when your (again, nameless) social officer arrived at the caves at 8pm, he discovered that 18 party goers had disappeared and taken the party to a handy cliff ledge somewhere in the Waitakere Ranges. Those of us who were left donned our costumes, ate a meal, and proceeded to gate-crash the ARC ranger's wedding anniversary.

Pizza and MovieNight *7th May*

After the 'excitement' of Cave Party, it was decided that the next event should be held somewhere a bit more comfortable, and so Pizza and Movie Night was born. Thanks to Nico we found ourselves setting down on the couches in i-space, where we enjoyed a tasty pizza meal and the acting talents of Matthew Broderick in the classic 'Ferris Bueller's Day Off'.



Hut Birthday

Hut Birthday this year happened to be organised for a weekend that Rosanna couldn't make. No problem, thought Tom, Trip out to the hut - easy as. Cue waking up on Friday morning sick as a dog. After some frantic emailing, Matt Lillis was able to step in and lead 12 intrepid trampers out to the hut. By all accounts it was a great weekend of over-eating and copious amounts of Waitakeres mud!

May Camp

24th - 26th July

Mid way through the year, and it was the big one- our annual May Camp. This year it was held at Waharau Regional Park in the Hunua Ranges. Upon arrival, the group was entertained by a series of get-to-know-each-other games put together by Anton Gulley, which quickly got everyone talking and laughing and set for a great weekend. "Aladdin" was fired up on the most convenient wall, while games of mafia provided a distraction for the more blood-thirsty among us. The following day it was off for a trip (or in some cases two)



around the Hunuas, before a fantastic three course meal prepared by Craig and Andy, the famous AUTC Burma Trail, and an evening of music and dancing. The next morning it was time for a relaxing dip in the Miranda hot springs and a visit to THAT icecream place in Pokeno. A fine end to another great weekend.

Desert Night

29th July

Following on from last year, we decided once again that our winter evenings would be made greatly more enjoyable by the consumption of copious amounts of sugar, and thus Dessert Night was born. Lemon tarts, chocolate cakes, fruit platters, fudge pudding and caramel sauce - everyone loosened their belts and dug in. Great work everyone for preparing such delicious desserts!



Outdoor Clubs' Ball

8th October

Outdoor Clubs Ball was this year again organised with the help of AURAC, AUCC and AUSC. This year the theme was 'Arabian Nights', which saw a crowd of genies, shepherds and several wise men descend on the Winchester Bar in Newton. After a few nervous moments, the DJ arrived, and was shortly followed by pizza, which was quickly devoured. Dancing continued until the wee hours in the morning - it was a great

Posh Dins

15th November

This year we headed Marsala Indian Restaurant in Mission Bay in our ball gowns and evening suits, to take advantage of their \$10 Monday! Just as well we took it indoors, for the weather

night! was less than perfect (i.e it rained). The food was great, the company was better. After dinner the party wandered down Mission Bay in search of dessert. The very posh stopped at Movenpick, the slightly less so grabbed gelato, while those of us who remained (in the true spirit of the event) made our way to BK and grabbed a \$0.50 soft serve.

Christmas Party 12th December

A small group made our way to the beach and had a kiwi Christmas shared bbq by the water. We exchanged our secret santa gifts and proceeded to go for a swim on the beach! An enjoyable day.

We hope everyone has enjoyed the social events as much as we have!



Thomas Goodman and Rosanna Walton •



Footprints, 1991 How To Write A Trip Report

Step 3 – What did you eat on the way and other details. Nobody really cares about what you ate. They want to hear about the wild sex, drugs and other juicy bits. (What do you mean “don’t do drugs” ...virgin!) So don’t even think about writing:

“On Wednesday night we had a macaroni cheese which was quite nice except it didn’t have any cheese...or bacon...or flavour. Then we sang songs around the campfire. Then we went to bed.”

Yuk! Personally, I would advise something like:

“The caviar and Champagne had left both Sharon and I feeling quite good so we blew a joint, then a look came into her eyes and I knew, so we disappeared into the Fairydown Dragonfly for a bit of extracurricular activity.”

So, now you know how to write a decent trip report – do it or I’ll kick your head in.

New Year's 2010 - Taupo Bay, Northland

28th December 2009 – 3rd January 2010

Kylie Brewer



28th December 2009

Welcome to the chaos! Everyone descends on my house early in the morning ready to get on the road to head off to our beach camping holiday. As per usual I have things piled up in the garage ready to be loaded on the trailer. Where is the person who is going to tow the trailer? We want to start loading it. Have we got the meat out of the freezer? Argh! 101 things to do and everyone's asking if they can help. Finally we manage to sort out the chaos, get the trailer loaded and attached to Phil's Land Rover and finally, finally hit the road to head north. Leaving Auckland, it's overcast - where is the sun? We stop in Whangarei for lunch and then it's on the road again. The further we get north, the better the weather gets - awesome! We arrive at Taupo Bay mid afternoon and set about putting up tents and organising our campsite. Once everything is in order it's time to sit down and chill out before finally getting started on BBQing the hamburgers for dinner.

29th December 2009

A brilliant Northland day dawns, and the decision is made to take the Land Rovers and go on a day trip up to Cape Reinga, via 90 Mile Beach. We leave the camp ground straight after breakfast and head to Waipapakauri, where we start the

long drive up the beach. We stop half way up the beach to admire the views and to help a somewhat stupid driver pull her car out of the sand. We continue on up the beach and the Te Paki sand dunes. We head through the sand dunes and decide to do a bit of off-roading, but this is short-lived, as the locals decide they don't want us doing that and try to chase us away. From the dunes it's a short drive up to Cape Reinga, where the lonely lighthouse looks out over the meeting place of the Tasman Sea and the Pacific Ocean. Sure, to some it would seem that it's just ocean, but you can see where the oceans meet, and it's an incredible place. For Maori spirits it is the start of the ancestral journey back to the homeland of Hawaiiki. After a few photos we head back in order to beat the tides. Back at the sand dunes, a Land Rover rescue is performed (due to its owner deciding to take it into a swamp!) Back on the beach we stop to gather toheroa, digging with our hands and trying not to get too



wet from the waves. Unfortunately some of us do get a little wet! On the way home we stop for a few supplies, and back at the campground Andrew sets to work preparing a sumptuous fish chowder that is enjoyed by many.



with tyres, and complete with a Christmas tree perched on top. We deem it a job well done. We've quickly become the talk of the campsite, and quite a crowd of onlookers has gathered to watch the proceedings. There are now two identically wrapped vehicles sitting opposite each other! Our other neighbours even supply us with a vivid marker and encourage us to write messages on it.

With the hard work complete, the girls depart for our girls' day out in Kerikeri, leaving the boys to do whatever they please. By the time we arrive in Kerikeri, the sun is out, and it turns out to be another stunning North-land day.

We have an enjoyable lunch in Kerikeri before returning to camp to await the afternoon's entertainment. While we've been gone, the Land Rover has become a message board, with several messages and drawings now adorning its wrapping. Jeff has also arrived at camp, and when asking for directions to our site was told to look for the wrapped up vehicles. We eagerly await Andrew's arrival back at camp.

31st December

New Year's Eve, and everyone's buzzing with excitement. We eat breakfast, then sit casually awaiting Andrew's return. Soon enough he's back at camp. Everyone's 'acting normal' as he saunters back to the campsite. He's more concerned with whether there is leftover bacon from breakfast, so at first glance he doesn't notice the new protective covering his Land Rover is now sporting! Eventually he turns to it and sees it, with a realisation that that's not how he left it yesterday.... He does comment on a job well done! A couple of us have to head into Kerikeri for a friend's special brunch, and there's no time to remove its protective coating - we'll just have to take another car. So it's off to Kerikeri we go to enjoy a leisurely brunch in the sun.

Arriving back at camp later that afternoon, it's time to get the party started. It's New Year's Eve, after all! A BBQ dinner, then the evening kicks off. We party with our neighbours, watch fireworks on the beach, toast the new year in, and the rest, as they say, is history!



30th December 2009

This morning we awake to misty rain - rain what it's not supposed to rain on holiday! Deciding that it's most likely going to be a miserable morning, a group of us girls decide to head into Kerikeri for a coffee and a girls' day out. Why sit in a wet tent when you can sit in a dry café? During breakfast we have the pleasure of watching our mischievous neighbours wrap the van of one of their group in silage wrap. Deciding this looks like fun, we ask if they would like to wrap Andrew's Land Rover up too, as Andrew has gone boating for the day. They won't do it for us, but gladly give us the silage wrap to do it ourselves. Silage wrap, for those who don't know, is very similar to a very large roll of glad wrap, and just as 'clingy'. Jaimee, Phil and I set to work wrapping the Land Rover up like a giant Christmas present. It's not an easy task, but worth it in the end to see it, looking like a giant silage bale

1st January

New Year's Day is a very relaxed and chilled out day. We enjoy a cooked breakfast, then everyone heads off to the beach, or relaxes in their tents. As the afternoon gets hotter, we become even more sloth-like, and have to buy ice creams from the camp shop in an attempt to cool off. That evening we let off our fireworks on the beach.



2nd January

This morning we say goodbye to some of our group, as they're heading off on South Island trips. Soon after their departure, the decision is made to have a day out boating on Whangaroa Harbour. We load up the cars, and off we go! We set out in the boats and find a lovely secluded beach where we chill out for the day. Jeremy teaches a few people how to water-ski. However, mid afternoon our seclusion is shattered. Of all the secluded beaches in the harbour, a family has to decide to come and land on ours! In a bid to try to move them on, some interesting sandcastles are created. Eventually it's time to head off -but not without a trip to Kingfish Lodge (only accessibly by water) for a late afternoon beverage. We arrive back at camp around dinner time, then enjoy a lazy summer evening.

3rd January

Our last day of camping, had to believe the week has just flown by! After an early breakfast half of our group decided to go on a day tramp in nearby Puketi forest. The rest of us enjoyed a leisurely pancake breakfast whilst watching our neighbours pack up their site. Soon after they'd departed we went and chilled out under the trees enjoying a very lazy Sunday. Later that

afternoon we went for a drive to Maunganui and Cooper's Beach for an ice cream. Not long after we returned to camp the trampers arrived. They'd had a fun day out exploring the local bush. Whilst waiting for dinner to cook we were sitting around enjoying pre-dinner nibbles when we were visited by our new neighbours who asked us to play some more mellow Sunday evening music. This did come as a surprise to us as no-one had had a problem with our music up until now. We didn't exactly succumb to their requests figuring we'd be leaving tomorrow anyway. After dinner it was time to pack up as much of our gear as possible as it was threatening to rain, this would also make for a speedy getaway the next day.

4th January

We wake up to the sound of rain hitting the tent, great just what we need, wet tents! Thankfully there's not much to do as we did most of the packing the night before. After breakfast it's all hands on deck to load cars and try and keep everything as dry as possible. By mid morning the campsite is packed up and it's time to hit the road back to Auckland. A fantastic camping trip is now at an end. •



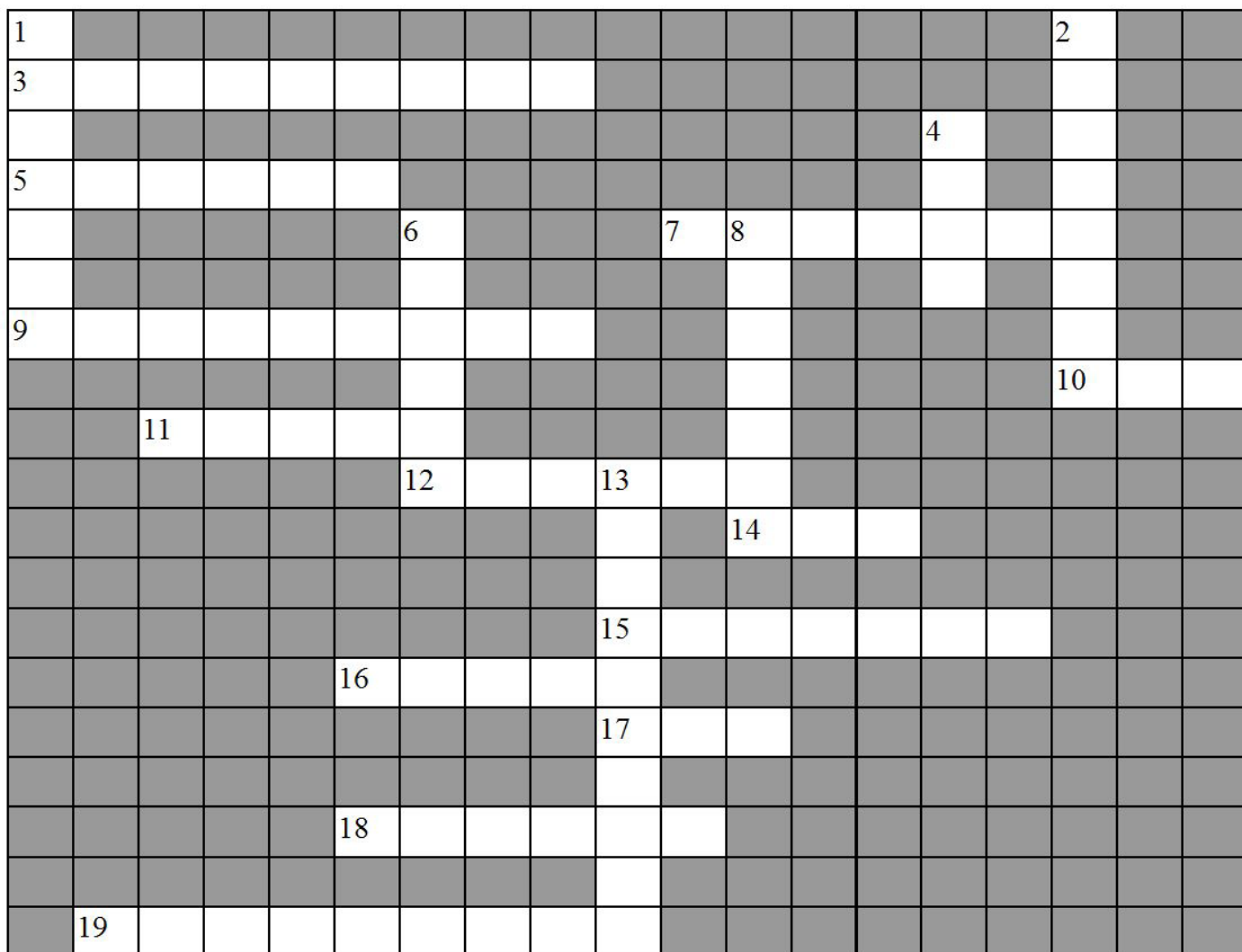
NEWS FLASH!!

Your exclusive Footprints correspondent has just discovered that Rob and Rebecca are now engaged!

As such, they are doing their bit to uphold the by now notorious set of statistics which claimed that 30% of AUTC members will end up married to one another!

Our heartfelt congratulations to the adorable couple!





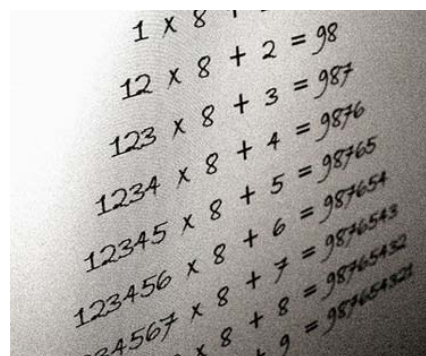
ACROSS

3. A shield volcano that last erupted 700 years ago
5. The longest of the Great Walks, at over 70km
9. Why my legs are covered in red spots after trekking in Fjordland
10. If you're heading above the bush-line in winter don't forget your _ _ _ axe!
11. Light, full of carbs, and ideal for a scrumptious meal when tramping
12. Amazing views of lake Te Anua & Manapouri can be seen when tramping this 60km circuit
14. National body that protects our outdoor playground
15. Author of 'Nothing Venture, Nothing Win'
16. NZ has the most of this in the world, despite our relatively small size.
17. The most important man-made construction in every mountain, forest of bush
18. A type of gas cooker, ideal for use in the alpine
19. A dangerous winter phenomenon in the mountains

DOWN

1. A famous pass in the southern alps, between Christchurch and Greymouth
2. A cone shaped volcano to the west of Mt Ruapehu
4. A synonym for the summit
6. Nickname of the river that is paddled in the Coast to Coast race
8. A coastal suburb of the North Shore, as well as an iconic NZ Great Walk
13. A tall beacon at NZ's northern-most point.

Alastair McDowell



We're on a hunt for a plane crash

2nd April - 5th April

Annie Cao

*Trampers: Peter Luk, Luke Kristensen, Anne Goralzik,
Henrik Habenicht, Neil Stanley D'Cruz, Annie Cao*

On July 3rd 1963, The National Airways Dakota DC-3 crashed into the Kaimai Ranges killing all 23 passengers and crew. In what is still the worst internal aviation accident in New Zealand, the plane crashed mere minutes after the pilot requested permission to descend into Tauranga airport. Unpredicted bad weather caused the plane to crash into a ridge on Mt Ngatamahinerua. The next day, search and rescue were able to reach the site. Among this team was past president of AUTC, David Gauld, who gave us instructions on how to find the crash site.

Day One:

It was Good Friday, and we left Uni exhausted from various 'start of study break' celebrations the previous night. Three or so hours later, we set off from Te Aroha towards Motutapere hut. Luke announced ominously that we'd be playing a game on this trip where points are gained when you inadvertently fall over. More points awarded for spectacular forward/backward rolls. Five hours later we arrived at the hut after an endless number of hills, multiple points awarded, a couple of ladders and painful encounters with stinging nettle. Exhausted and hungry, we'd never appreciated more how long brown rice takes to cook.

Day Two:

After a lazy morning filled with delicious porridge with chocolate, we set off towards our campsite for the next two nights. What's the advantage of walking at the front of the pack? If you enrage a nest of wasps, it's the people at the back who get stung (but Luke and Henrick acted heroically and carried on almost as if nothing had happened). Since it

was only a three hour walk to the campsite, we decided to take a detour down to Eliza mine. The climb back up from the old gold mine was definitely tough but well worth the trip.

Day Three:

We woke up bright and early at 7am and knew that it was plane hunt day!!! The predicted rain came a day early which dampened our spirits slightly. After an hour of walking, we went off trail following David's instructions. As it was first time bush-bashing for many of us, the experience was exciting but it was times like these that one wished for long pants to prevent getting a million scratches. We soon came across a landslide that resembled the descriptions but after a lengthy debate, it was decided that this couldn't be the right landslide as it was so close to the main track. Persevering on for a couple more hours, following deer tracks and speculating, "Did Peter actually see that human footprint or was it imagined?" we were on the verge of going no further. After debating our options, we decided to walk to nearby Kauritahi hut to have lunch and take a squiz at the directions to the plane crash that they have in the visitors' book. Luke also earned himself two points with an impressive backward flip as he lost his balance walking on a fallen tree trunk. By now, the game was tight, with three of us losing at around eight points. After reading that the first landslide was where we were supposed to be, it was...

Hunt for a plane crash take two!

Now the real adventure began. We walked back to the landslide and were guided down by sporadic coloured markers. After a bit more bush bashing, the crash site was within sight. There was only a five metre cliff that we needed to abseil down. (Don't worry, there's no need to bring your own rope). With the admirable patience and support of our leaders, the rest of us made it down with relative ease. At last, the remains of the crash were before us. With most of the wreckage buried, only some landing gear and half a wing remain, penetrated by tree trunks. A plaque was put up in remembrance in 2003 to mark the site where so many died. It was a sobering sight.

**"Did Peter actually see that
human footprint or was it
imagined?"**

Day Four:

Unwilling to admit that it was the last day, Anne, Peter and I walked back up a section of yesterday's track to admire the view that we were previously denied due to the rain. The others set off down the Thompson's 4WD track. Three hours later we drove back to Te Aroha. Funnily, I had a suspicion that with my clumsiness I would lose the game, and sure enough, I did lose by half a point! It's tradition that the loser treats the rest of the team to a tub of ice cream - a welcomed treat. We sat in Te Aroha park and I thought about how rewarding it was to leave the Kaimais with a greater appreciation of a snippet of New Zealand history. •



Riddle

A man awakens at midnight to get a drink.
He turns off the light and goes back to bed.
He wakes again at 8:00am.
He looks out the window and sees dead bodies on the ground.
He is so distraught he commits suicide.

What has happened here and why?

Things to think about

Who are the dead people?
Does he know them?
What is their cause of death?
What is this man's occupation?
Why does he commit suicide?

Girls' Night Out - Wagamama Restaurant

24th March

Kylie Brewer

This was an initiative that I started last year as an opportunity for all the girls who are new to the tramping club and the experienced trampers to come together and meet up for a fun night out. We all met at Wagamama in High Street and enjoyed a sumptuous Japanese meal, followed by cocktails and more socialising at Honey Bar in High Street. It's a great chance to mix and mingle and meet fellow trampers before heading out on trips in the holidays, and is an event which is proving to be extremely popular. •

Progressive Dinner

15th May 2010
Kylie Brewer



Progressive dinner returned in 2010 better than ever! A group of hungry trampers assembled at the general library one Saturday evening in May in an assortment of mystical costumes (the theme was 'Dragons, Demons and Fairytales'), before heading off to a selection of fine food at mystery venues around the city.

They piled into cars and were taken to Anna's house, where they sampled kumara fritters, salmon crostini and ravioli. Before long it was time to head off to Tom's house for the main affair. King Tom and his royal team of



helpers had done a fine job on the Paella, roasted vegetables and salad. For dessert they headed over the bridge to Kylie's house for berry cheese cakes, pineapple pie and ambrosia. Yum! Prizes were awarded to Lois Allison-Cooper (as the pied piper), Chris Chong (as a demon), and Claas Damken (as Princess Fiona) for the best and most creative costumes of the evening. •



Back Country Bush Bash

Anton Gulley

Trampers: Anton Gulley (leader), Peter Luk, David Kugler, David Gonzales, Johannes Wimmer, Eugene.

As Mum's trusty car pulled in to Peter's driveway on Sunday morning, Peter gave me his usual grin that says, "It's morning, I just got out of bed, I am not normally out of bed at this time so please don't say or do too much to me because I can't think properly and I am completely helpless". He shoved down some toast, threw his pack in the car and we were off. A text came through from the other car saying they were almost ready to leave as well.

"We have two David's, We will have to give them nick names so that it does not get too confusing."

"So David Kugler can be Balla, as Kugel and K gler somewhat seems to sound like baller in German"

"David Gonzalez can be called speedy (Gonzales)".

Eventually we had names for everyone else; Jo Jo (Johannes Wimmer), Geney (Eugene), Pedy (Peter) and Tampon (Anton).

We pulled on to Thompson's Track in pure sunshine, eating ice creams, but within 20 minutes, in good Kaimais fashion, the rain sleeted down. Then the hail came, thundering so loud against the roof of the car that I thought it would be leaving huge dents. The other car come and parked next to us and we sat there and stared at each other, exchanging the occasional text about god forgetting to put the plug in. Balla soon abandoned his car and jumped into ours with a curse: "It has not been a good day, I slept in late and I just got stopped by a cop for 126km/h". We were left with only one option; his nickname had to be changed to Speedy as well.

The sun came, we dropped one car off at Te Tuia track further south, and soon enough we were on our way up Thompson's Track. I thought back to the first time I walked up Thompson's Track, I recalled huge muddy bog holes and endless off-road vehicles driving past us, splashing us with mud and polluting our air. Eight or so years ago, I had prom-

'Balla soon abandoned his car and jumped in to ours with a curse "it has not been a good day, I slept in late and I just got stopped by a cop for 126km/h." We were left with only one option; his nick name had to be changed to Speedy as well.'

ised myself that I was never coming back. Since then I have walked up the track in excess of 30 times. Here I was again having the same "I hate this place thoughts". It was muddier than usual, and the vehicles were just the same. Noisy dirty and smelly. After an age (a couple of hours), we were on the new North-South track, and soon enough the old North-South track up to Kauritatahi hut. We climbed up the steep slope and the fog continued to engulf us. As we rose, we found pools of hail on the track, some up to 10cm deep. In a couple of hours, a handmade sign pointed us to Kauritatahi hut, and there it was, perched amongst a swamp, peaceful and happy. Dinner contained steak and steamed pudding cooked over the fire, and was washed down with Pedy's cider. As we went to bed, the stars beamed down to us, and the lights from Tauranga beamed up to us. Geney went to bed dreaming of a beautiful sunrise.

The morning greeted us with fog and wind as we headed of into the bog. The place had an air of Fangorn forest about it, old and damp, full of lush green moss and smelling of rich decaying plants. There was little melting overnight, and the pockets of hail stones where just as thick. We bashed and crashed our way through the undergrowth, peered around fallen logs and under moss for old track markers, squelched our way through mud and generally had a good time. After losing the track markers a few times it was getting rather late, and I was rather relieved to come out in to a clearing to see a washing line. "Wahoo!"

"Wait... there's washing on it..." All six of us lined up side by side at the start of the clearing, and Glenn stood there by his wash-

“We have a fly” I muttered.

ing line on the other side! We stared at Glenn as though he was an alien, and he stared back. We were in the remote southern part of the Kai-mais, and neither the track nor the hut were on the map. What’s more, it was Monday night. My mind raced. I’d been told that the hut slept three, but one of the beds was not so good.

“We have a fly” I muttered.

Speedy and Jo Jo agreed to sleep under the fly, and Speedy slept in his hammock. As it turned out we all got on rather well in the cosy little hut. Glenn was an American immigrant who was trying to start a new life in new Zealand. He ran a seven days a week vehicle rental business on Waiheke island. This was his first holiday in six months and, as he explained to us, the one thing he was after on this trip was solitude...

It poured and blew overnight, and Speedy and Jo Jo came inside looking and feeling rather wet the next morning. Jo Jo claimed that it was not too bad, except for the Chinese water torture “drip... drip... drip...”. The seven of us in the small hut packing was rather amusing, but none of us were as amusing as Glenn, who proceeded to lose everything he owned somewhere in the hut (did I mention the hut was small?). Eventually we got going, and followed the better track down to the main North-South track. The sun was out, the track was easy, and we chatted our way south with a few fantails popping by to whistle a tune every now and again. The next hut was apparently off track somewhere up some stream then over a swamp, or something like that, so we opted not to risk being caught out after dark. We instead sat around a camp fire drinking Irish cream, whisky and coke, and scoffing pancakes at the Namawa-heni shelter. Pedy and I were last to bed, and we discovered we had overestimated the size of the shelter. Geney looked at us, rolled over and squeaked “I will now make myself thin” before squashing himself up against a punga log.

Day Four was just a gentle walk back down to Te Tuia road and the car, with the basking sun above us. You learn something new every day, and I learnt from a car driving past whilst we were walking up the main street in Te Aroha looking for Fish and Chips that we were “faggots”. •

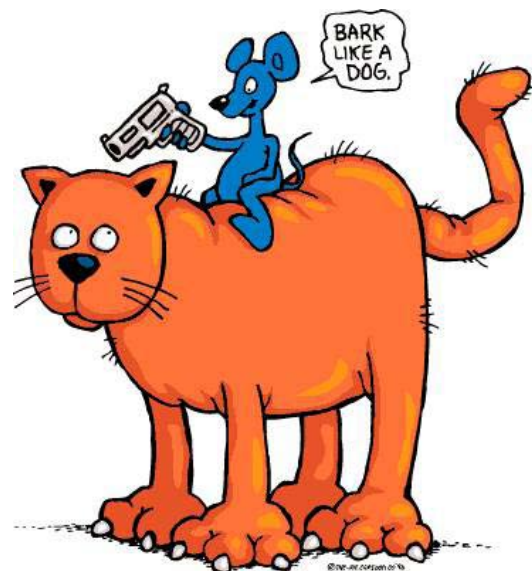
Tawharanui Regional Park Day Trip

28th November

Kylie Brewer

Trampers: Kylie Brewer, Jason Horrocks, Brendan Feather, Jaimee Wieland, Nicola Hanna, Jeremy Chirnside, Barry Ching, Marie Le Moal, Sarah, Anna, Scout,

What better way to end exams than with a day at the beach? Sunday morning started out a little overcast but by the time we arrived at Tawharanui the clouds had disappeared and it was a stunning day. We found a spot on the beach and set up our stuff. Here’s to doing nothing! The remainder of the morning was spent lazing around and swimming. For lunch we enjoyed a group picnic with a selection of some yummy home cooked food. Quiches, lemon meringue pie, and an amazing marble cake made by Anna and Scout, complete with dinosaurs and trees on the top - it was quite something! The afternoon was spent playing Frisbee, walking along the beach, exploring the rock pools, and lazing around some more, before finally it was time to pack up to go home. We all met up again for a relaxed dinner in Matakana at the Rusty Pelican, enjoying a selection of pizzas and wedges. What a relaxed end to a fabulous day. •



The Waitakeres Beach Trip and Death March

17th - 18th November

Matthew Lillis

*Trampers: Richard Bowles, Tom Goodman, Roman Savko,
Matthew Lillis(leader)*

Trampers, this tale is one of woe and joy. A tale of successes and failures. A tale about a band of AUTC's finest, united by a passion for pushing the limits of what is considered possible.

However, more than anything else, this is a story about one time when we went to the beach.

In the three days between my final exam and beginning work, I had wanted to go on several tramping trips. However I quickly worked out that most six or seven day tramps that were going out would simply not fit into a three day timeslot, no matter how many times I worked the numbers. Never mind, I said to myself. The main obstacle to getting in the amount of tramping I wanted was an unfortunate human need to sleep. If sleep could be avoided, the possibilities quickly opened up. Thus the Waitakeres 24 hour tramp was born.

Our four trampers turned up bright and early at Britomart station, and bragged about how little sleep they had had the night before. Tom won, at a little under four hours. From there, it was onto the Western Bound train, which only broke down once on the way to the Waitakeres, setting a new record for the Auckland train network. At 0820 on the morning of the 17th of November, the 24 hours began. The initial march to the tramping club hut was the most uneventful five hours of the trip, taking a slightly less travelled route east of the Waitakeres reservoir, via the spectacular Fairy Falls. Our resident climbers analysed the waterfall for lines of assault, but prudent decision making had us use the stairs instead. At the hut, our heroes ditched some of their unnecessary gear for the walk to the legendary Piha beach. A few hours of walking downhill through beautiful forest beside the bubbly Piha stream put us into a good mood. So did the icecreams we bought at the store in Piha. Some epic tramp this was turning out to be! We spent a good 20 minutes enjoying the breeze and views from Lion Rock, before getting back on our way back to O'nuku. At 12 hours, we returned to the hut

for a delicious (if I do say so myself) dinner of bacon, mince, and refried beans in burritos, with carrot and burrito seasoning. Our obligatory Russian, Roman Savko, was finding himself to be a little undertrained for the walk, so we allowed him a few hours R&R at the hut while we set off in pursuit of the second beach in our journey, the Bethels sand dunes. Night had now fallen, so it was headlamps out. A bit of night-time bush crashing saved us the need to repeat large parts of the track down to Bethels. It also put us on a road that was marked on the map, but divided into many, many more roads that most certainly weren't! Some creative navigation put us just behind the Bethels settlement, and by following the tree line around, we quickly found ourselves on the dunes. From here, it was barefoot, moonlit, desert tramping, capturing the very essence of epic.

Until this point we had been feeling pretty good, but that started to change around the 18 hour mark. From Bethels, we made our way down to Lake Wainamu, and began the ascent from the lake back into the bush. This ascent is a bit of a killer, and we were all thoroughly exhausted at the top. Richard made the sensible decision to pop a couple of anti-inflammatorys at the top. I foolishly didn't, preferring the man-up approach that was going to cost me dearly in the coming hours. The walk back to the hut was still quick, but we were all beginning to feel the combined effects of sleep deprivation and physical exhaustion. At the hut, a wide awake Roman greeted us, and we picked up the remaining

(remember kids,
Cadbury kills)

gear and emergency food, and admired the work of the large spiders living at the hut.

Four hours remained of our journey, usually enough time to make it back to the train station with an hour to spare. As we walked towards the Waitakere dam, the sun rose to find four zombie like figures walking along the shore of the reservoir. At this point sleep deprivation was becoming a real killer, feet were blistered and the fatigue in our legs was passing the painful into the physically debilitating. The overnight packs, complete with sleeping bags, and some rudimentary shelter which I had demanded everyone bring were becoming heavy on our backs. Still, our pace was reasonable and I expected to be back well within our timeframe. The trouble was that at this point every time we stopped, starting again was pure agony, and my legs would not function at more than a slow hobble until they had warmed up again. This became exponentially worse as the hours wore on. At 22 hours, I had become the slowest person, a rather humbling surprise for me, since I had thought myself the fittest going into the trip. Tom's trail walker experience was paying off, and he seemed remarkably unaffected by the long march. Our long hobble continued back towards the station. Every step had become an agony for me.

While the others took breaks, I kept walking, knowing my legs would seize up if I stopped. We were on

Christian Road, about 4k's from the station when we hit 24 hours. A celebratory nap and some Whitakers' chocolate (remember kids, Cadbury kills) courtesy of Richard were in order. Somehow we managed to not fall asleep, and after some 15 minutes resumed the march. Another 40 minutes in and we had covered 2k's. At this point I resolved to flag down the next car that came past. A rather shocked-looking woman with a couple of kids in tow listened to our story and offered to drive one of us back to the station with all of our packs in the back. Richard suggested I go, since I was by far the most broken tramper of the party. I needed little persuading. Our kind saviour (Anne was her name) then offered to return for the rest of the party, which she did in a total of two more trips. Some people are just good people, and she saved us from another 2k's of hell. 24 hours through the Waitaks was the hardest 24 hours I've ever done. Hand in hand with that are some really valuable learning experiences, and I look forward to equally (and more) epic trips in the future!

Tom had a day and a half of rest after this trip, and as I write, is leading a six day trip around Ruapehu. Some men are just mad. •

Controversial New Committee Appointment

Members of the Auckland University Tramping Club present at the A.G.M. in September voted unanimously to appoint Harry R. M. Aitken to be the 2011 Officer of Club Eye-Candy, a post which he takes on in addition to his role as Hut Officer. It is thought to be the first time that the tramping club committee has ever included such an portfolio, though the committee has previously included a Morals Officer, whose job, presumably, was to prevent the kinds of activities which Mr. Aitken will now be encouraging.

"We thought it was time for A.U.T.C. to become really progressive" claimed a member who did not wish to be named. "Harry brings a much needed touch of class and sex appeal to a tired old institution".

Mr. Aitken was unavailable for comment as Footprints went to press, but his proposed goals for 2011 are rumoured to include the publication of an A.U.T.C. fundraising calendar, and getting trampers out of their polypro and "into something funky".



Advanced Snow School

4th-9th July

Peter Luk

It was windy as fuck
We mostly stayed in the hut
Anton had already been there for six days, and smelled like pig guts.

Quotable Quotes

“To make babies, you need somebody of the opposite sex” - Jan’s brother Oliver, Snowschool #2.

“I swear, there were three Americans for every person” - Matt, Quad Lunch.

“Wow... very deep... I don’t like deep” - Tom, via facebook.

“I think we should be a tramping club, not an email club” - Jane, Committee Meeting.

“It’s important to sacrifice dignity for victory” - Matt, of Kat’s ability to splatter molten chocolate all over herself whilst attempting chocolate orgasms, Snowschool #2.

“It’s rather addictive, even though it’s kinda disgusting” - Hayley, of Jan’s “Milk Rice”, Snowschool #2.

“Oh hey! It’s just like chips!” - Stephen, of a bowl of lettuce, Snowschool #2.

“There’d better not be any border infringements tonight” - Oliver, Snowschool #2.

“I don’t remember any eighties dance moves” - John is a dastardly liar, May Camp

“So why did you elect him?” - Kaisui, of John, May Camp.

“I don’t care what the theme is. I’m coming as a Russian” - Matt, of Summit Lunch.



Congratulations to all the members of our club who graduated this year! For almost the first time in living memory, the scientists appear to have out-numbered the engineers! Jolly good show!



Waiatoto and Rabbit Pass

December - January 2010

David Hodges

While Auckland enjoyed a week of hot sunny weather, Rowan and I chose to spend our holidays in the rainiest part of New Zealand and had two days of sun out of nine.

Three years earlier, doing the Rabbit Pass trip with James and Jane, we had climbed up to Pearson Saddle and looked over into the wild Waitoto Valley - the great untracked (well, officially untracked), rarely visited unknown. James mentioned that a couple of other AUTC members had just done a trip up that valley. "Mad buggers!" I thought. "Why would they do that? I'll never do that!" Now here we were, following in their footsteps.

On the Rabbit Pass and Five Passes trips I had fallen madly in love with Mt. Aspiring National Park, one of the most beautiful parts of New Zealand, and found myself unable to resist returning for more - the fact that I'd already explored all the main maintained trails and the remainder of the park was largely untracked wilderness full of nettles, bush lawyer and impenetrable scrub was but a minor obstacle, especially when this trip promised to take me closer than any of the previous ones to the jewel in the crown - Mt. Aspiring itself, with close up views of the mountain's spectacular northwest face.

As our jetboat wasn't until 1pm, Rowan and I decided to try to hitchhike to Hannah's Clearing to save paying \$20 each to be picked up. There's no post office in Haast, so we walked the 6km to Haast Beach so I could post a few things home to save carrying them. We then sat outside the gas station for the next hour and a half, or more accurately I sat, while Rowan stood with his thumb out, and failed miserably to get a lift - fewer than 20 cars went past during that time, so eventually I rang up and requested a lift.

The Waiatoto was an opaque grey, wide and looked quite deep. Our driver Catherine told us it was deeper than usual due to increased snowmelt. The lower part of the valley is privately owned and used to graze a handful of cattle. Catherine dropped us off at Long Beach, where the track crosses the river, before taking her friends visiting from England for a spin. We soon picked up a wide cattle track, which we followed fairly uneventfully up to the Te Naihi River, crossing a few minor streams and passing the large and well-appointed (but locked) private Casey's Flat Hut along the way. I startled a deer fewer than 10 metres away at one point, when

we climbed up a small river bank to find the deer at the top.

A bit later I noticed that one of the side streams we crossed was the same grey as the main river, failing to realise until a few minutes later that it was the main river, or at least a very small part of it, and we had wandered onto an island. Rather than walk all the way back, we walked to the end of the island and waded across waist-deep pools (no current) to get off it - my walking poles came in very handy here for determining the depth.

We also saw another deer on the opposite bank, as well as several small herds of cattle. The Te Naihi is the first tributary of any size on the true right of the Waiatoto but was quite wide, so only knee deep and quite clear - we could easily see the bottom. However, no sooner did we cross than we encountered a scungy muddy-bottomed waist-deep side stream that flowed into the Te Naihi just above the Waiatoto. Fortunately there was a bank built up at the intersection of the two streams where it was knee deep and easily crossable.

We crossed just on time to unwind the aerial - a ten minute job - for the 7:30 mountain radio weather forecast and to call in our location, before continuing another kilometre or so to where the map showed the track crossing the stream. On our side it degenerated into a zillion deer trails, however the river still looked too deep and swift to cross, so we ended up pitching the tent in a flat spot just big enough for it in the bush.

The next day, cut off from the rest of the track by an impassable moat, we made our own way up to Drake Flats, pushing through thick scrub, bush lawyer (a vine related to blackberry and just as thorny) and taking all day to travel just 6km, which would have only taken three or four hours (according to

our guidebook) if we'd managed to cross the river. At least the river widened and split into two or three channels so that crossing looked feasible, however the travel upstream from here to Bonar Flats is about equally easy on either side of the river, so I decided to postpone crossing to Bonar Flats. The next day the way was no longer choked with thick scrub and bush lawyer, but instead followed easy deer trails through the bush so we soon reached Bonar Flats, where crossing was not quite so straightforward. We picked a spot where the river was split into three channels, but the last and largest was quite swift, if only about five metres wide. At its deepest point, near the far bank, it was waist deep but we quickly made it across, beaming triumphantly - we had conquered the mighty Waiatoto at last!

A few more hours along the opposite bank took us to slightly below the confluence with the Bettne, where we camped on a sandy flat area not far from the river. It had been drizzling, and the forecast was for more of the same, so I noted the river level before we went to bed. In the morning, it had risen 10-20cm, so crossing back down at Bonar Flats would be challenging and up here, where the river was a single channel raging torrent cascading steeply down between boulders, it was impossible - so we took our packs with us, hoping to be able to cross near the head of the river, where it flows out of a large lake at the base of Mt. Aspiring. According to our guidebook, it should take about five to six hours each way, however we only had good travel through the bush for the first couple of hours up to Astrologer Stream. From here, the river is very gorgy, so it instructed us to climb up the stream an hour or so to about 600m altitude, then cross over to the next stream, The Splasher. Getting up the stream involved a bit of fairly challenging rock climbing at one point, where the driest route (i.e. the only one without a sizeable part of the stream flowing down it to soak us) involved wedging ourselves into a 60cm wide crack and using any and all available body parts to gain and maintain purchase and make progress - I found that sliding on my belly like a snake worked best at one point.

We had barely passed that obstacle when Rowan chose a bad spot to pause for a rest and fell backwards, injuring his knee. He had already twisted his other knee a bit further down the stream, so now had two duff knees. He borrowed one of my walking poles for a while for support.

At around 600m, according to the altimeter on my watch, we found nothing but thick scrub. It was pretty cloudy so we couldn't see far but it didn't look any better further down. We continued another 100 metres or so up the stream, hoping to get above the scrub, but to no avail - the scrub continued up to the steep slopes high above - trying to travel above it would be difficult. So we bit the bullet and dove in. After a few hours battling with the scrub, we eventually emerged at

The Splasher, barely 1km away, where we repeated the process - head up the stream, then bash through the scrub. I suggested to Rowan that we continue up the stream to the top of a scree slope, which would take us straight down to the lake, with no scrub bashing - it seemed infinitely easier, however as this wasn't the route the guidebook recommended, Rowan suggested that the scree slope might be too steep. Rather than continuing another 15 minutes up to the top, where we could have confirmed or disproved this theory (and then taken only another 10 minutes to get back down again if the route proved unviable) we foolishly chose to go the scrub route again. After another two hours of battling scrub and getting horribly scratched as well as cold and exhausted (it had been drizzling pretty much all day), we finally emerged on a grassy bank just above the river. I hadn't put my gloves on, as I wanted to keep them dry for the crossing of Pearson Saddle a couple of days later, when we'd be at maximum altitude, so my fingers were pretty shredded and sore for the rest of the trip. It felt like I had chillblains initially. The chillblains never developed, but instead I got fairly severe eczema in my fingers at the end of the trip, which took a couple of weeks to clear up - not good for a massage therapist, but I only did two massages during that time, both on friends, so it wasn't fatal. Walking down to the river we found that the scree slope was in fact not particularly steep and would have saved a great deal of time and effort! The river crossing was not as deep or swift as at Bonar Flats and we emerged shivering on the other side and stumbled along the far bank to what Rowan thought would be a relatively sheltered spot (it was a little windy) where we rushed to get the tent up and get inside it as quickly as possible, before the grim reaper of hypothermia claimed us.

The next day dawned fine and sunny, and after our exhausting 12 hour ordeal we were both keen for a rest. We spent the morning drying clothes before wandering up to the lake to take photos and finally setting off around 2pm. A little over an hour later, we reached a serious obstacle - the Graham River. It wasn't safe to cross at the confluence, so we headed about 10 minutes up the stream before we found somewhere we felt confident in cross-

ing. From here, there was no point heading back down to the Waiatato - I figured it would be quicker to just go through the bush. Rowan took the lead, and seemed to be on a roll - with the exception of a few nettle beds and thickets of bush lawyer, the way mysteriously opened before him, as if he had magical powers. We reached Finnis Stream - a tributary of the Bettne - around 9pm, where I noticed a flat dry spot just big enough for the tent a few metres from the stream. With only an hour before dark, and with the stream quite large and difficult to cross, I suggested that we camp here rather than at our planned destination on the shore of the Bettne just below some huge waterfalls.

It rained during the night and Rowan had forgotten to put one of the pegs in to anchor the fly so it touched the tent, compromising its waterproofness and wetting the foot of Rowan's sleeping bag. The stream was considerably larger and more difficult to cross in the morning but fortunately, about 15 minutes further up there was an island where trees had fallen to create log bridges to both sides of the stream. Rowan and I were 95% sure we could walk across both bridges without slipping, but as the prospect of falling into the raging torrent didn't appeal, we both chose not to take the risk and straddled each log and slid across. Despite easy travel, it took much longer than expected to reach the Bettne - about three or four hours. We arrived bang on target, about 200 metres downstream from the falls, only to find the river decidedly deep, swift and dangerous to cross. After bashing 150 metres (15 minutes) through uncooperative scrub to where the stream was easiest to cross, we decided it was still too hard and we'd wait until the next morning for the stream to go down - despite all our delays, we still had plenty of time. It was a truly spectacular setting - a cirque 100 metres high with half a dozen large waterfalls cascading over - however as it was raining and I didn't want to get my camera wet I didn't take any photos.

After wandering in the sodden bush for a while, we selected a relatively dry spot that merely required the removal of a couple of dozen small beech seedlings. After removing the trees and pitching the tent, we dug drainage ditches on the uphill side of the tent just to make sure, then retired to bed and spent a lazy afternoon reading. It stopped raining around 4pm and by the time I checked the river at 9pm it had gone down considerably and looked reasonable to cross. We decided I'd left it a bit late, however - we'd be pushing it to pack up and get across before dark, so although the forecast was for more rain and it did indeed rain some more during the night, we waited until morning. Fortunately the river hadn't risen noticeably and although it was still challenging, requiring careful route selection, we got across. The waterfalls were not quite as large and numerous as the previous day but still spectacular. It was still raining however, so no photo.

We had nearly half an hour of scrub bashing followed by half an hour sidling very steep bush slopes, climbing over, under and through fallen trees before reaching the easy travel mentioned in the guide book. After another hour or so we emerged from the bush into the tussock. It drizzled for a while - just long enough to get the tussock a bit wet and slippery. The tops of the peaks were obscured by clouds but we could see everywhere we'd been for the last four days - up the Waiatoto all the way to the lake at the head and down to about Drake Flats. A dozen or so large waterfalls cascaded hundreds of metres down the cliffs on the opposite side of the valley.

Pretty soon the first two keas appeared, joined a few minutes later by another, then every few minutes another kea arrived until eventually we were mobbed by nine of them. After half an hour or so, the keas got bored of us and flew off.

The recommended route was a long sidle across steep slopes with a nasty drop below - I wasn't comfortable with it and pointed out that it looked a lot less steep 100 metres higher up and I'd much rather try that. So we climbed for half an hour, clinging on to rocks and bits of tussock for dear life and eventually reached the safety of the gentle slopes above, where we could walk easily and comfortably without fear of falling. Rowan was slightly ahead of me most of the way and said he startled a thar (Himalayan mountain goat), which quickly bounded down the slope and disappeared before I got there. Eventually we got to a corner which we couldn't easily see round or get around but the way ahead looked difficult and it was getting late. Not knowing how long it would take to get to Pearson Saddle, and not knowing whether we'd find anywhere flat to camp between here and there, I was reluctant to continue. We could either camp at the nice large flat spot a couple of minutes back, where there was no water and it was quite exposed to the weather if the wind picked up, or drop down into the Pearson valley about 500 metres below. It looked like an easy descent - we could see 90% of the way and doubted the last 10% would be difficult - and as the route guide seemed to suggest dropping down and climbing back up, we chose that option.

The valley was quite broad and fairly flat so there were a number of sites to choose from. After we agreed on what looked like a good one (but which turned out to have a large lump under my bed, which I put up with) I put up the tent and started cooking while Rowan went to check out possible routes for tomorrow. The most direct route would be up one of about three spurs leading up to just east of the saddle, however they all looked about equally horrible - very steep, with a strong possibility of falling all the way hundreds of metres to the bottom if you slipped at any point. The alternative was to climb back up to just below where we'd come from, then traverse the shelf just below the Purity Glacier. In previous years that may have involved a glacier crossing, but with global warming it looked quite feasible to skirt below it. I took photos of the entire route with my camera on maximum zoom in case it was cloudy tomorrow and we couldn't see where we were going.

Rowan reported on his return that one of the spurs was not as horrendous as it looked from here and he would be comfortable going that way. As we still had plenty of time, I said I'd prefer to take the longer non-scary route. I was ready well before Rowan the next morning and set off ahead of him, as he was considerably fitter and faster than me and would soon catch up. He caught up just as I was passing an optional short-cut, which he suggested, however I had already spent some time looking at and considering it and although it would probably have saved about half an hour, I had ruled it out as it involved crossing about 50 metres of fairly steep slopes with a 20 metre cliff below. Rowan pointed out that it was no worse than what we had done the day before and I replied that if I had the option of taking a longer but safer route the day before, then I would have done that then also. So we continued along the planned route, which was straightforward and scenic, taking us quite close to the bottom of the glacier at one point, and eventually after about four hours we reached Pearson Saddle, where we stopped for lunch. I'd run out of most things by now but Rowan still had a large surplus of cabin bread (a sort of large, thick bland cracker) which he was happy to share. After a very short drop down into the infant Wilkin river and an hour stroll up to the top of it, we reached the notorious Rabbit Pass, a challenging steep descent on rotten rock. It started raining slightly just as we got there and I said to Rowan "I didn't want to come this way, but all the alternatives were worse". I let Rowan go first and he promptly ignored one of the marker poles and headed off down a different route, which unsurprisingly turned out to be a dead end so he had to come back up while I sat and waited.

I asked Rowan whether he was into rock-climbing and he replied that he was, but only up, not down! After a bit of wailing and gnashing of teeth Rowan reached safety and with the

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benefit of Rowan below me to see where I was going, I chose a slightly higher route than he did, which was fairly straightforward, not as difficult as I remembered from last time, when I led the way and so had to guess the easiest route.

After a couple of hours easy descent we reached the Matukituki, which was not surprisingly significantly higher than my last visit, towards the end of a long hot summer, when it had been hot, dry and sunny for the two weeks previous. The upper part of the valley is mostly wide open flats and as it had been cold all day and raining the last couple of hours, I was quite cold by now so voted to stop at the first good campsite - a nice large sandpit a couple of feet above the river. The sand was nice and soft and comfortable and very easy to push the tent pegs into, but of course that meant they could also come out easily. There was not really any wind when I pitched the tent so I didn't think to put rocks on top of the pegs to stop them coming out. By the time we went to sleep the wind had come up but neither of us thought to secure the tent better and when I woke in the morning Rowan reported the tent peg on his side had come out, his sleeping bag had gotten soaked and he had spent much or most of the night cold and awake. Oops! There were plenty of rocks only a few metres from the tent so it would only have taken a few minutes to prevent that.

He was keen to get to a hut to dry out his gear and looking at the map found one at Raspberry Creek - at the end of the road, about 3km from where we would come out. Rowan seemed certain that it was a public hut so I didn't think to question him but I said I was sure it was a bit too far to get out in one day so we'd have to camp at Junction Flats, about two hours from the road normally, and three hours in our case, since the river would be flooded and we'd have to walk another hour to get to the bridge. So with it still blowing and raining I was in no hurry to leave the comfort of my warm dry sleeping bag and we didn't set off until 10.30.

It only took an hour, instead of the two to three hours I expected to reach Ruth Flat (where the spectacular Ruth Falls has the

even more spectacular concave Fastness Peak for a backdrop, like a mile high replica of the Sydney Opera House) so we decided maybe if we rushed we could get out in a day after all. The cold, sleepless night had slowed Rowan down, so I had to wait for him a few times. Below Ruth Flat, the track climbs hundreds of metres above the river to avoid Bledisloe (aka 'Bloody slow') Gorge for about five hours before dropping back down at Junction Flat, where the swingbridge was most welcome - fording the river in its current flooded state didn't appeal. Several small streams crossing the farm at the end of the track had all flooded, so although none was more than a foot deep, some of them were quite wide. We eventually reached the foot bridge crossing the West Matutikituki about 10pm, well after dark. Then it was another 45 minutes of splashing along the road, which was submerged in many places - all the small streams crossing the road had flooded also. My torch was a bit dim as the batteries were flat and I hadn't brought enough spares, so I relied on Rowan. Casting his light this way and that, I thought he was looking for the information sign at the road end and as he didn't stop I thought he'd failed to find it. In fact he had found it but the cold and exhaustion had evidently affected his normally excellent judgement and he'd decided to 'save time' by not reading it and heading straight for where he thought the hut would be. Unsurprisingly he couldn't find it in the dark and

when he eventually gave up and returned to read the sign he found that the hut was private - which I could have told him that morning if I'd dug out my other map and checked it, but I'd assumed he knew it was public since he seemed so sure it was.

So Rowan opted to spend the night in the toilet block - a bit smelly but he said there was no wind, whereas the tent lets a draft in under the fly, which doesn't quite reach to the ground - and I spent a late but very comfortable night with the whole tent to myself. In the morning we radioed for the shuttle to pick us up from Wanaka, which it turned out was coming up that morning anyway to pick up a couple of Australian mountaineers who'd attempted Mt. Aspiring - it seems to attract a lot of international visitors.

As Rowan said, the trip was pretty successful, despite minor mishaps - all our calls turned out to be good ones (apart from not anchoring the tent pegs), even if that was largely a matter of good luck in several cases. •

The Great Mount Pirongia Epic Odyssey.

(A trail of Mystery, Hardship, and Loyalty in the Face of Adversity)

Alastair Mcdowell.

Le Tramping – Je t'aime.

Trampers: Matt Lillis (leader), Kaisui Thay, Roman Savko, Alastair Mcdowell, Andrew Luey, Katie, Mo, Ben.

Day One - We quickly adjusted our clocks to tramping time, and in classic tramping fashion we headed out of Auckland one and a half hours late. But we did so in remarkable style - we drove closely in convoy (and sometimes a bit too closely [Ben]), while polluting the airwaves with the classic psychedelic trance of nostalgic musical porn, reminiscent of Indian farm parties; the sound that we all like to call ROMAN FM.

Hilarious moment: Ben's up close mooning of Matt's face at BP. That'll teach them to mess with Ben's Corolla. Then

again maybe he was just signaling that he was down for rape.

I got it off on a great note with one of our group when, discussing engineering and the like, I had to jest..."Why on earth would anyone want to do a Maths degree?! ...ohh wait (turns around to back seat). Mo, don't you do a Maths degree...?" - Alastair *awkward turtle*.

Ngaruawahia - it was all happening there. Moving on swiftly.

We all took our time at the Kaniwhaniwha car park deciding what to leave behind. Several very difficult decisions had to be made. "Hmm, nah, I won't take any spirits, I'll just take my machete and axe." (Reminder to self: Do not pick fight with Roman...but then again he was carrying around a bag of tampons for the whole trip).

We warmed into the hike with an idyllic stroll along a meandering river, surrounded by peaceful farmland. This seemed to bring out the hippy side in a certain few... the award for Smoothest Operator goes to: Roman, for this stunning dialogue.

Roman: "My star-sign is Aries. What's yours?"

Katie: "Sagittarius. What does that mean?"

Roman: "It means that you're a fire sign, and you're compatible with the other fire signs."

Katie: "What're the other fire signs?"

Roman: "Aries."

Nice try mate.

Further along the trail we stopped for a scroggin break to admire one of the incredible feats of engineering in the park. While unsuccessfully attempting to top Roman's act of balance on the wire cables of the swing-bridge, Ben earned the Epic-Bail Award when he bashed his balls on a rock. Hope he didn't want babies.

From the swing-bridge we took a ten minute detour to eye up NZ's tallest native tree. Ben took an abstract view on the 66.5m Kahikatea tree... "Looks like Luey's twin brother lying down on the ground hard". Matt decided that he had seen the tree more than enough times so decided to stay on the route, but we all knew that secretly he just wanted time to admire the aesthetics of the bridge, typical engineer.

Now heading into real wilderness territory, some of you may think we could be at risk in case something went wrong. "What's your back-up plan in case of emergency?" you ask, with a series of wrinkles carved into your forehead resembling the contour lines of a steep cliff. Not only is our tramp leader, Matt, a member of the military, and his amigo Roman armed with several sharpened objects, but we also have AUTC Alpine Officer Craig Smith on call. After all, "Craig doesn't drop in SAS style, the SAS drops in Craig style".

With every great adventure, there are some obstacles. Ours came in the form of a hill - and not just any hill, the mother of all hills. Everyone moaned... and not in a good way. And for some, the downhill companion to this ascent was even more of a struggle. Alastair: "Just lean forward and let yourself glide down the hill effortlessly... See, just like that" Ka-

tie: "Okay, watch my effortless glii-iiii-iiide!" *BOOM*.

Nearing the end of the day we discussed what other tramps we'd done with good old AUTC. It seemed only one thing was holding Katie back from getting out and doing more... "I felt out of place at the AUTC trips launch meeting in a floral skirt, pink shoes, turtle neck sweater and indie glasses...why didn't I just wear polyprops?!" Katie confessed, obviously the only fashionable tramper. Roman was the polar opposite: "I'm too stylish to attend tramping meetings".

Despite our fooling around, we still managed to out-tramp the darkness, making it to the campsite before sunset. Ironically, this gave us just enough light to see what a blunder we'd made back at the car park...

Least memorable moment: forgetting to bring enough tents. Luckily three people could sleep in the structural masterpiece that is Roman's Bivouac, and the remaining five got cosy in the single tent. You can always trust Roman to have a man-sized tarp.

Moroccan Lamb curry with chickpeas smothered (amazingly not soggy) rice for a satisfying dinner. Finally, the crucial course of the day: Dessert - "How much chocolate do we have?" Reply: "one block", "four blocks", "three blocks"... "I have nuts?" - Roman, the nutty Russian.

Our close proximity in the tent allowed everyone to get to know each other better that night, and Andrew kicked it off with a startling observation about Roman's ninja like appearance... "There's something surreal about your eyes, Roman... they are quietly psychopathical." Complement? You decide. We also got well acquainted with another side of Ben, that is, his insides... The award for Farting and Looking Guilty goes to: We slept in until 9:30am, that's twelve hours of beauty slumber. And boy, did we all look beautiful afterwards! Well, all except one... Kaisui somehow got the short end of the straw and ended up on the downhill side of the tent. Anyone with a clue about condensation can fill in the gaps. So...



To make things a little more exciting, Roman decided that Kaisui would make it up the hill faster if he relieved her of her pack. Rambo-style, he heaved the extra pack over his shoulder just like an injured child, while clambering up the steep slopes. At times when both hands were needed he would toss the pack ahead (probably not just like an injured child), before picking it up again. This was no mean feat when considering Roman's set of snack-foods.

The Wettest Night's Sleep Award goes to: Kaisui, for sleeping the first night against the tent wall and soaking the down sleeping bag she borrowed from Craig. Good one Kai. Ben's damage report was fairly accurate: "It's somewhere between reasonably saturated and a fair bit damp". Matt, being the sacrificing, generous type, bit the bullet and swapped bags with poor Kaisui for the following night.

Lillis = Legend. Matt created an orgasmic breakfast of freshly baked sleep-deprived bread, fried eggs, topped with creamy hollandaise sauce. Matt, we love you. By the way, we expect one better next tramp.

Although the day started off well, the heavens soon started to break as we began the assault to the highest peaks of the park. Everyone was quick to don the rain jackets as we cooled down, except one... The award for the Longest Time Enduring the Conditions in a Singlet goes to: Andrew. "Yeah I don't really do rain jackets eh"...and it's true, he doesn't. But it was all for a good cause, as Andrew also gains the Most Likely to Beat Nature at its Own Game award: for always having an edge in the ongoing duel, Luey vs. Wild. A worthy fight, may the best man win.

As the ascent up to The Cone (953m) got serious, we were forced to fend off everything it threw at us – loose and slippery rocks, steep drop-offs of no return, and most of all, MUD, and lots of it. Even Matt "The Calm" Lillis raised a temper, "F*ck, there's mud!" The award for the Muddiest Mud Bath goes to: Katie for the full knee high dunking. Good thing it wasn't Mo. I also got tricked by the deep muddy bogs, when my revenge on Ben backfired... Least Successful mud splash Award goes to: Alastair for the attempted mud splashing of Ben. He concluded that one should "always check the depth before you jump" when he almost broke both his ankles on a hidden log floating near the surface.

"Roman, what food did you bring?", "Oh, just a couple can of peaches, can of creamed rice, canned tuna, canned corned beef, canned mutton..." I think you would agree Roman earns the award for the Heaviest Possible Pack.

Seven long hours after starting that morning (if you call an 11:45am start 'morning'), we made the victorious cry of "I SEE HUT!" Now Matt really started to show off, with a meal he calls 'Penne Mediterranean'. Recipe: Fry red onions, capsicum and bacon, cook enough Penne pasta to feed an army, and glue together with enough feta cheese until gooey, greasy, and delicious. Respect.

The next morning was a beauty! A short jog took us to the summit, Mt Pirongia, the highest point all around, a mind blowing 958m – not bad for the Ben...enough said. Ben was reminded of his place with a series of attacks... "You're a total POM, a prisoner of Mother England!" hollered Roman.

Waikato! Ben spoke his mind, showing utter disrespect for Matt and Ashleigh's home town, "If I had a camera and Facebook I'd take a photo of that [Hamilton] and call it a

hole from a distance". Yet to see this tag, Ben? Mt Ruapehu and Mt Taranaki also stood proudly in the distance.

The rest we might say was smooth sailing, gravity did his part and we got the footing right. We daydreamed about paragliding off ledges, running down steep, rooty sections and other ruthless stuff like that. Our first glimpses of humanity again were two gypsy-like characters strolling along the river path homewards. Nice.

All in all, a fantastic tramp – better food than home, great company and most importantly, lots of mud. What tramp would be complete without that?!

'Till we tramp again, thanks for reading – do be sure to enjoy the following hilarious quotes and awards that were so irrelevant that they didn't even fit in the story but still deserve a mention.

From the Pirongia Crew – Adios!

...Other Noteworthy Awards:

Funniest reaction to a fart: Kaisui. *stops mid sentence and simultaneous silence* ... "Ooohh!"

Best banana cake: Alastair...Happy Birthday Matt!

Most optimistic outlook: Matt ("We're going to wake up at 7am")...Yeah right

The most unnecessary swearing: Kaisui ("I could never imagine f*cking a woman" and "It's so f*cking muddy")

Longest hair: Mo for taking that large load of hair up to the top of the cone, what a legend!

Shortest hair: Matt, your army is showing.

Craziest hair: Katie, for the permanent 'just out of bed' look...and it's all natural.

Most minimalistic footwear (though with a really long name): Roman and his Frog-feet-like "Vibram FiveFinger" shoes...we hesitate at even calling them shoes!

Most disgusting quote: Roman's "friend" ("I got hemorrhoids from playing all night...Call of Duty 4 of course...")

Most excessive cotton wardrobe: Kaisui for violating the zero-cotton law of tramping, many, many times. One day, she will learn...we hope.

Best tramping invention: Bottom Bunk Crew for creating the Vibroork. "Who needs a Spork when you have a Vibroork!" - The ultimate lightweight outdoors accessory, do not go on your next tramp without one - one half vibrator, one half Spork - buy one at Kathmandu today! Note: the Vibroork™ must be washed between uses."

Best prepared tramper: Mo, for having the best selection of tramping gear (but probably the least money because of it).

Other Funny Quotes:

"Hello Ben, we've been waiting for you" - Ben's stalker friends

"Ah we're going to Ashleigh's...that's almost as good as McDonalds" - Matt

"Put your hands up if you're a dude with really neat legible handwriting...or just if you're gay" - Ben

"How can you burp that way and suck it back in? Can you please teach me?" - Kai

"I don't usually like facial hair but Roman's beard is intentional and a little bit sexy" - Kai

"Everything that comes out of my mouth is genius" - Alastair the modest

"Keeps my head held up high..." - Matt talking about his pocket snake - Still a boy at heart.

Andrew: "Why did you buy so many peanuts?" Roman: "I was at the supermarket and went nuts."

PS: The Vibroork™ will be hitting your Kathmandu shelves soon, don't miss out! You can find it in the awesomeness section next to the Pirongia soundtrack featuring Holey Moley by Motorcade and that song by Ramstine, you know the one. •

A Piano for Ōngāruankuku

Craig Smith

Participants:

Jeff Small Richard Greatrex, Nico Thorburn, Harry Aitken Anton Gulley, Craig Smith, Kat Collier, Brad Lovett, Ranger Dan.

After hearing many stories over the years about how our splendid AUTC hut Ōngāruankuku, located in the Waitakare Ranges, used to have its very own piano, and even more so about the epic efforts made to carry it out there, I decided it was about time we put another piano in the hut. After several months spent on TradeMe, emailing friends and the list asking if anyone had a piano they didn't want, I managed to get a good deal for one. The next step was to figure out how to get it out there, being a 40 minute walk, it is a decent distance, and you can't just pop it in your car boot either. Many schemes were dreamed up, along the lines of armies of strong young men carrying it on poles like a king would be carried on his royal chair, dragging a car trailer out there (which had been done on a previous occasion), pulling it all apart and taking it in bits, but the idea that kept popping up was getting hold of a quad bike and trailer and using the engine to do the work. Several problems still remained with the weight and high centre of gravity of the piano, but it did seem like the most practical option.

A team was assembled and Brad was convinced to take some time out from his busy toilet building schedule to help us get the piano out to the start of the track on his parents' trailer. We were several hours early, as I

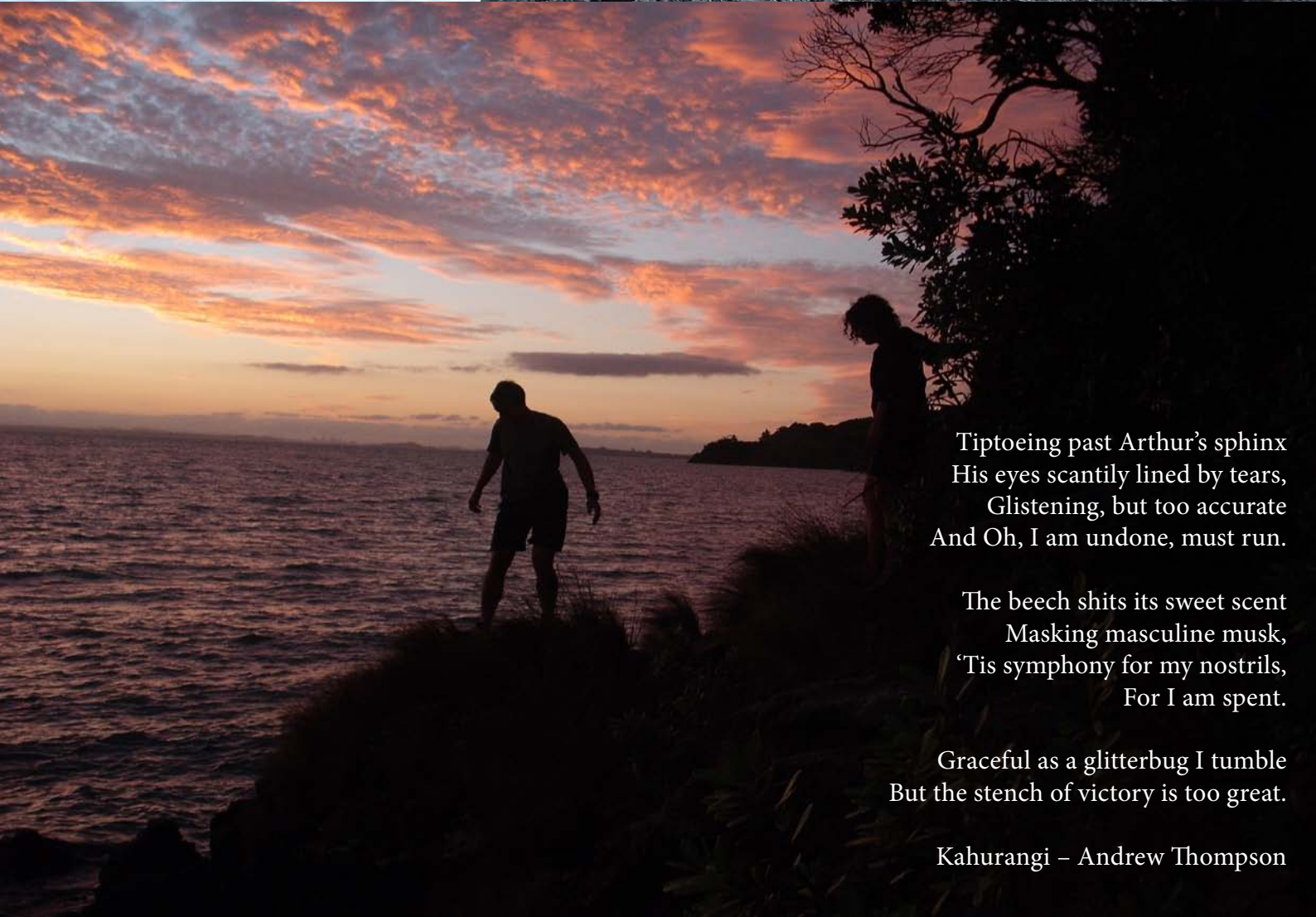


had arranged to meet the ranger (with his quad bike) at a time based on 'trampers time', which is usually several hours later. So we dropped off the piano and popped out to Piha for a bit of impromptu beach wandering.

After getting back we met up with the ranger and a few others who had spent the morning on a stream bash, all ready to muscle this piano down the track. The ranger had brought along not only a quad bike and trailer, but also, just in case, a 'crawler' or 'track machine' - essentially a long wheelbarrow on caterpillar tracks with a motor to power it - that he thought might have a chance to carry the piano. As it turned out, it was perfect! We lifted the piano onto the crawler and strapped it in. We were off! At a sedate pace we wandered along, people on all sides of the crawler occasionally having to return the piano to the vertical position as it veered in and out of holes, and clearing the trail in front.

After about an hour and a half we arrived at the turnoff to our hut, threw some boards across the gap for the crawler and encouraged it up the slope and into the clearing where our hut resides. There were many gasps, ooohs and aaahs from the group of girls staying at the hut for their Duke of Ed trip. We lifted it off the crawler and carried triumphantly it into the hut!•





Tiptoeing past Arthur's sphinx
His eyes scantily lined by tears,
Glistening, but too accurate
And Oh, I am undone, must run.

The beech shifts its sweet scent
Masking masculine musk,
'Tis symphony for my nostrils,
For I am spent.

Graceful as a glitterbug I tumble
But the stench of victory is too great.

Kahurangi – Andrew Thompson