

Taupo Tramping Club

PO Box 650

TAUPO

<http://www.taupotrampers.com>

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TAUPO TRAMPING CLUB INC.

Newsletter and Trip Programme

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Life Members	Steve Poupard <i>RIP June 2007</i>	Audrey Veale <i>RIP Jan 2009</i>	Ben Stent Maurice Veale	Colin McLeod Russell Rountree	
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TRIP INFORMATION

GENERAL:

- Regular programme tramps are run on Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday or Sunday, subject to the weather and enough people to make up a party, plus a weekend (2 day trip) about once a month
- Longer tramps of 3 to 10 days' duration are planned and organised by the Club and individual members
 - The club bus is used when there are 6 or more in the party or equivalent fares paid
 - If private cars are used arrangements are made directly with the car owner

CONFIRMING YOUR PLACE:

For **ALL** trips you must phone the trip leader to confirm your place on the trip.

TRANSPORT:

Departure point, unless previously advised, will be from the car park just north of the Taupo Police Station.

TRIP LEADERS:

- If for any reason a trip leader cannot lead his / her trip the nominated leader must find a replacement leader.
- If you are leading an over-nighter always check the DOC website or telephone DOC to ensure the hut is open.

EDITORIAL POLICY:

As with any publication Taupo Tramping Club cannot and will not publish any anonymous articles in the Newsletter. If you want something published then by all means submit it but the source or author must be declared. On request a pseudonym might be shown in the Newsletter but the author must be known to the committee. Also, the committee reserves the right to over-rule the Editor and stop any article it prefers not to be printed.

CLUB MEMBERS' TRIP RESPONSIBILITIES

A safe trip is a good trip

AS TRIP LEADER

- * **Make sure** you are familiar with the area - check your map or that members on your trip can help.
- * **Ensure** you are happy to lead the tramp in the weather forecast and the conditions prevailing on the day. If concerned talk to a more experienced member and, if necessary, cancel the trip the night before or on the day – or change the trip. If a change is made advise a committee member of the new location in case a search and rescue is required.
- * **Check** vehicle re-location, pick-ups en route and any special transport requirements
- * **Collect** both sets of keys and the **ELB** from the Police
- * **Enter names** of those on trip in 'Trip Book' (kept in glove box) leaving it open on the van dashboard so the names and trip location can be clearly read
- * **Ensure that** drivers are financial club members, over 25 years of age, carry their driver's licence and are personally responsible for any traffic infringement fines. Recommended maximum speed for club vehicles is 90 km per hour.
Ensure drivers know how to set the ventilation and AC to stop misting up
- * **AS TRIP LEADER** you have the right to refuse any member inadequately prepared or physically unfit for the tramp

AS A MEMBER ON THE TRIP

- * **Ensure you have the correct, essential gear:** you should be wearing good boots and adequate clothing for the conditions of the day. You should carry a suitable backpack with a selection of clothing to cover any change in conditions and a possible overnight stay. As a minimum this must include a waterproof jacket, over-trousers, extra warm clothing, hat, gloves, polyprops and socks along with your survival pack containing survival blanket or bag, first aid kit, torch, candle, matches or lighter and possibly a fire-lighter.
WOOL / FIBRE FLEECE WILL SAVE YOU; COTTON WILL KILL YOU
- * **Lunch** - is your personal selection; a hot drink is advisable on cooler days but ensure you have an adequate supply of water and have some emergency food - nuts, bars, sports gels or extra food
- * **It is your responsibility** to ensure you discuss with the trip leader when booking in if you have any concerns about your physical ability for the trip and ensure you have two days' supply of any essential medication

TRIP PROCEDURES

ON THE TRIP

- * **Take cell phones and the ELB**, ensure contact numbers are exchanged if the party splits and to ensure the van mover can be contacted
- * **In the event of an emergency** ensure that any action taken is fully discussed – the **trip leader in conjunction with experienced members** has the final say. If outside help has to be enlisted firstly attempt contact via cell phone and then, when all else fails, use the **ELB** since once activated **YOU ARE THE CENTRE OF A FULLY COORDINATED SEARCH and RESCUE**
- * **Split the bus keys** between yourself and an experienced member of the group.
- * **Do not deviate** from the planned route, unless forced to do so. Do not be afraid to turn back - it is your responsibility, the safest course is the best course
- * **Make sure you have** an experienced person in the rear as **'tail-end-Charlie'**.
- * **Keep an eye on the pace**, keep the group together, do not let large gaps develop between the front and rear group. You can travel only as fast as the slowest person
- * **Have rest stops** with food and drink breaks as needed
- * **Regroup** at river crossings or track junctions
- * **During rest stops discuss** where you are - use a map to indicate position
- * **Take care of new members** and ensure they are keeping up and enjoying the tramp
- * **Once back at the bus** make sure all the group have arrived back safely

AFTER THE TRIP

- * **Refuel** the vehicle if gauge is below 3/4 mark, fill up in Turangi if easier: pass receipt to Treasurer
- * **Complete trip records**
- * **Check all windows** are shut and fastened, doors locked, vehicle swept out and left in a tidy condition. Return keys and ELB to the Police Station

FITNESS / TRIP GRADING

Easy: A tramp on fairly level formed tracks, duration 4+ hours, and where there is usually the option of returning by the same track.

Moderate: A tramp of 4-6 hours, often on less well-formed tracks or on off-track routes; can involve river crossings or short sections of steep terrain.

Fit: can be over 6 hours' duration, tramping on either formed tracks or off-track routes, river crossings, steep terrain, snow conditions or high altitudes.

The following is a guide to estimated times from a topographical map:

- Travel on a benched or formed track with a good surface or easy open tops - four kilometres per hour.
- Travel on an average well-marked bush track - three kilometres per hour
- River travel in open riverbed but with frequent river crossings - two kilometres per hour.
- Add one hour for every 400 metres climbed.
- Add one hour for every 1000 metres descended.

To avoid confusion, the terms 'true left' and 'true right' are used to refer to riverbanks. The 'true left' bank is left bank when facing downstream; 'true right' bank is right bank when facing downstream.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – March 2012

In my last report I said that it was good to see the warmer weather arrive. I would like to retract that statement. It is good to see the hip and knee replacement folk doing well, I have trouble keeping up with the ladies, well done.

The barbecue at Wharewaka was a great success and the weather was better than last year, a big thank you to Jan and her sister for being the chefs. A great turn out.

I would like to wish those going on the South Trip all the best and safe tramping.

The AGM is to be held on Thursday 3 May, 7.30pm. Please note that the venue is as normal at REAP. The dates for the Winter Solstice are 22 - 24 June at the Whakapapa Camp Grounds, great accommodation and plenty of walks to suit everyone.

It is good to see large turnouts for both Wednesday and Thursday tramps. A big thank you to the Committee for their work over the last few months and congratulations to Austin for being made a Life Member of the Taupo Harrier Club. Well done Austin. Hope to see you all at the AGM.

Regards

Colin McLeod *(President)*

CLUB CAPTAIN'S REPORT – March 2012

Hi Fellow Trampers

Summer has been and gone. What summer??!!

Members have been out and about to many interesting places, including the DOC Summer programme which takes you to some great places.

Don't forget to check out the King Country area next season. It's just over the hill.

The seasons are changing quickly so remember to carry the warmer clothing now. You should have it at all times anyway.

This is my last note for the newsletter. I'm sneaking into the background.

See you on a hill somewhere.

Captain Dave *(Captain)*

THANK YOU!

Thank you so much to the people who have written trip reports – and there are many of them this time! You will probably notice that the Trip Planning Meeting is set for **Sunday 24 June** which is the last day of the Winter Solstice. We are sorry about this but as we shall be out of the country until 22 June, we cannot have it before. We still expect to have lots of suggestions before that on the clip-board and others turn up at the meeting. On the other hand feel free to hold a Trip Planning meeting before we return but the typing, etc will be up to somebody else – we have certainly no objections to this!

Editors and Publishers

HAPPY TRAMPING

If, as and when there are any changes or additions to the programme efforts will be made to keep the information on the web page up-to-date.

www.taupotrampers.com

<p>EMERGENCY LOCATOR BEACONS</p> <p>The first ELB will remain with the van keys at the Police Station as usual.</p> <p>The second ELB will be held by the President, Colin McLeod, and can be booked by ringing him on 377 4826. It can be used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on a day tramp if the party will be splitting at some point – this should be used more often! • if the bus is out on an extended trip and own cars are being used • by individual members for their own trips 	<p>Map Converter - from SAR Searchlight</p> <p>Many in LandSAR will be aware of the map co-ordinates converter that can be downloaded from the LINZ website. If you haven't seen the converter then we suggest you may wish to note this url somewhere handy: http://www.linz.govt.nz/geodetic/software-downloads/nzmapconv</p> <p>WEATHER WEBSITE</p> <p>Have a look at the met service website as their new format is very good – www.metservice.co.nz/towns&cities</p> <p>Click on Taupo and you have a very up-to-date forecast that includes localised weather warnings. There is also a Tongariro National Park forecast. This is good advice for trip leaders to follow beforehand.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Peter Drew</p>
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<p>SETTINGS FOR THE VENTILATION and AC in the VAN</p>	
<p>The new van does not have opening windows as you may have noticed but it does have a very efficient AC system. However, if the system is not set as follows then misting-up problems will occur during the winter months and on cold days at any time of the year. Ensure the following is done:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have all the FRESH AIR VENTS on the dashboard <u>open</u> – point them away from driver and front passengers' faces if required – BUT KEEP THEM OPEN 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If it is cold then set AIR DIRECTION DELIVERY to SCREEN and the AC will come on automatically 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set both TEMPERATURE controls to <u>mid-way</u> on the WARM scale: that is the dashboard control and the roof control (for the rear) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the fan blowing moderately strongly on the FRESH-AIR setting NOT recirculation 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is not really necessary to open the rear quarter-lights 	

Waiotahi River (about mid-way between Ohope and Opotiki).

The aim of this trip was to reach Bob's bivvy, a hunters' camp about 11km up the Waiotahi River. Unfortunately, we ran out of time so the bivvy waits another day. But the river trip is extremely pleasant and easy walking when the water level is low. The track starts at the end of the Waiotahi Valley Road, passing through farmland. There are no markers, so it is a case of working your way along the riverbank until a formed track appears and eventually this does have intermittent old permat markers. We criss-crossed the river much of the way, had lunch and returned. Like other Urewera areas, the vegetation is pretty good: nikau palms in abundance, with rimu and tanekaha.

Barbara Morris

MAPS ARE USEFUL! A Derbyshire couple has shown that carrying a map of your hiking route can be vital in more ways than one. The pair got stuck in February on Kinder Scout in the Peak District (site of the famous 1932 mass trespass that highlighted lack of access to areas of open countryside), on a frozen ledge as darkness fell. Mountain Rescue teams and a police helicopter went out to find them - and the couple set fire to their Ordnance Survey map to help attract their attention! It worked and they were rescued.

Wendy Morris

<p>Welcome to new members! Jonette Taylor David Reece 07 878 8879</p>	<p>Welcome back! No one!!!!</p>
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Poronui History - Punchie Wallace RIP

The following is a bit of local history acknowledged as copied from the Poronui Station web site. Poronui would like to credit much of this content to Hans Willems who wrote an article for Rod and Rifle describing his visit with Punchie in 1997. For over 40 years, Punchie Wallace lived on the outskirts of Poronui in a magnificent clearing fringed with giant beeches, along the eastern fringes of the Kaimanawa Forest Park. He died in a nursing home in Whakatane, where he had been in increasingly bad health for some time.

Punchie's home in the bush was a simply constructed hut, with several sheets of plastic over the top of a simple manuka frame. It was divided into two areas: a living / sleeping area and a separate kitchen / storage area. The interior was lined with old curtains and would have been cosy and warm. There were minimal decorations: photos of his sisters (referred to as under-handers because they lived in Australia) and a few innocuous pin-up girls. There were four bunks constructed of local wood, a table and a comfortable armchair covered in deerskins, which also covered the pieces of linoleum on the ground.

In his Hut



The top layer of the roof was a special piece of heavy-duty plastic that Punchie had hoped would withstand the sharp laws of the local possums. He slept with his trusty Savage .243 rifle in a sling next to his bed, and the taped up bullet holes in the roof were testimony to the fact possums didn't have any respect for his new roof. Still it was one way to source the ingredients for his favourite possum and pork stew.

According to Punchie, he started coming out in the mid-fifties when the spot was a bivvy used by hunters. When his wife died he decided to make it his home, and he lived there almost until he died.

Punchie was always a bush man, working as a wood splitter, deer culler and private hunter. He shot over a thousand deer in his time, mostly Sika, and his biggest is still on display at Deer World in Taupo. It is a near perfect symmetrical trophy shot in 1957 on Poronui that scored 203 7/8 Douglas. The head was penalised for over-spread, and would otherwise have been a world record at the time. This trophy also appears in Bruce Banwell's "Great New Zealand Deer Heads, Volume III.

A tough man, Punchie fought in World War II in North Africa and Italy and then turned to boxing, fighting some 20 professional bouts in the late 40s and early 50's. In fact boxing is the source of his nickname 'Punchie'. In 1949 he knocked out Jack O'Leary in Hamilton to claim the New Zealand middleweight championship, but his world domination plans came to a halt in 1950 when he himself was knocked out by famous Australian boxer Clem Sands while challenging for the Australasian championship. That loss made Punchie give up the ring and go back to the bush: "I wasn't as good as I thought I was and I didn't feel like being beaten up and dying before my time."

A tough man



Punchie spent many happy years living on Poronui. He hunted a lot and in winter would usually stay in the sack the whole day, only getting up for food and to 'answer the call of nature'. He did the same in mid-summer, when the bush flies made life unbearable outside. His time was mostly spent listening to the radio, sometimes 18 hours a day, and talk back was his favourite. This enabled him to keep up his general knowledge and extensive vocabulary - useful for a very occasional discussion on politics when he visited the Rangitaiki Tavern to get supplies and have a drink - velluto rosso was a favourite tippie.

In the bush, time is something you are blessed with. Punchie was a long time without a watch and used strategically placed beech trees to tell the time - there was a 'morning tea' tree, and an eleven, twelve and one o'clock tree. His system didn't work so well with the low sun in winter, when there was only a 12 o'clock and four o'clock tree.

His most horrendous experience as a recluse was the time a fierce cyclone struck and huge beech trees surrounding the clearing snapped off like match sticks. Large beeches fell across his access road and these took some months to clear.

Origin of the Name 'Punchie's Clearing' in the Kaimanawa Forest

Recently I called at the Rangitaiki Tavern for a look around and noticed on the wall a 6 page article entitled 'Home Alone' by Bob South. It described a visit he made to see Phillip William Wallace or 'Punchie' as he became known, a recluse who lived in a bush hut in the Kaimanawa Forest for more than 20 years. I had never heard of 'Punchie' but remembered reading on the TTC website Austin's description of a tramp into 'Punchie's Clearing'. This Clearing was the site of the hut where 'Punchie' lived for many years. Some of the older TTC members, particularly those who hunted in the Kaimanawas, knew of 'Punchie' but most of us are not aware of the origins of the name 'Punchie's Clearing', which is about 3-4 km into the Kaimanawa Forest from its boundary with Poronui Station. Phillip Wallace served in World War 2 and had been a heavyweight boxing champion in the late 1940's and early 1950's before he headed to the Kaimanawas to split posts and shoot deer. He is reputed to have shot more than 1000 deer in the Kaimanawas. Occasionally he made his way out to civilisation. 'Punchie' liked his drink and locals still recall the fights that he was involved in at both the Rangitaiki and Tarawera Taverns. Whether you liked or avoided 'Punchie' he definitely was a character and part of the folklore of the area. He died on 25th June 2010 aged 87 years. Austin found an article about 'Punchie' on the Poronui Station website which is printed here. Two other magazine articles 'Home in the Bush' by Hans Willems and 'Home Alone' by Bob South can be accessed through a Google search of: 'Punchie' Wallace and then clicking on the entry titled: *Print – FishnHunt Hunting and Fishing Forum – Print page*. Austin will be leading a tramp into 'Punchie's Clearing' on Wednesday 9 May.

Ross Fletcher

FMC Supports River Forging Research (from FMC newsletter)

FMC supported veteran trapper and climber Brian Wilkins to trial a new method of river forging using modern, lightweight polypropylene ropes. Brian also waded through back-country literature into the vexed matter of forging (see the November 2011 edition of the *FMC Bulletin*). His full report is available as a pdf from the FMC website.

History of Huts

Hut enthusiast Bill Keir has recently been researching historic hut books, and collated his findings into an inventory, available as a pdf document from the FMC website. In the introduction, Bill writes: "Back-country hut log books are valuable historical records. Several New Zealand archives hold significant collections of them, but archiving has been haphazard. Many are missing or lost through casual practices or accidental destruction. Sometimes the set of those of a particular hut is spread around separate archives. This inventory is intended to present the available information in a form that is useful to researchers."

A few South Island Trip Bits

Day	From	To	Time	Km	Ascent	Descent
1	Robert Ridge	Angelus	7:25	12.5		
2	Angelus	Cascade Coldwater	6:00	10.9		
3	Coldwater	Robert Road	3:10	8.5		
		Totals	16:35	32.9	1515	1673
1	St Arnaud	John Tate	8:30	28.7	659	549
2	John Tate	Upper Travers	3:00	7.1	500	250
3	Upper Travers	West Sabine	6:45	8.9	553	1070
4	West Sabine	Sabine	6:00	15.8	335	449
5	Sabine	Speargrass	5:30	12.8	734	223
6	Speargrass	St Arnaud	3:00	7.3	211	373
		Totals	32:45	80.6	2992	2914
		GRAND TOTAL	49:20	113.5	4507	4587

FMC Magazines and Discount Cards

Stamped self-addressed **A5 envelopes (NZ\$1.20 stamp)** are proving very popular for FMC magazine: anyone can drop off 3 or 4 such envelopes to Paul at Keehan's Pharmacy if they wish to reserve their own FMC magazine.

FMC Discount Cards for financial members are available by e-mailing the Secretary, Paul Sanderson on paulsand@xtra.co.nz or can be picked up at Keehan's Pharmacy.

NEW TRIP LEADERS – Simple Guide to Duties

Firstly READ the Information on Pages 17 and 18 of this newsletter

Duties as separate from Responsibilities include:

- Collect and collate names of trampers as they phone in to book
- The VAN is scheduled to carry only 12 trampers – arrange additional cars if necessary
- Advise all trampers in advance if changes are made due to weather or other factors
- On tramp day collect **keys plus ELB** from Taupo Police Station (7:00 – 7:15am)
- Open van, check van, record starting mileage etc
- Check all trampers aboard and drive, or have van driven, to start location
- Lose no-one and check all trampers back in van for transport back to Taupo
- Check fuel, note mileage, sweep van out (with assistance), deposit keys and ELB back with Police

Go home happy after delivering any receipts or monies to Club Treasurer

Taupo Tramping Club Diesel Van Drivers' Information

1. **UNLOCKING:** On key press unlock button twice within 3 sec. This will unlock all the doors. Press once and only front door unlocks.
2. **LOCKING:** On key press lock button twice within 3 sec. Audible locking sounds and blinker lights flash.
3. **TYRES:** Visually check all tyres before each trip.
4. **STARTING:** after switching on, wait until curly glow plug indicator light goes out before starting motor then start immediately (important in cold weather)
5. **STOPPING:** Allow engine to idle for 10secs before turning off if very hot.
6. **STALLING:** Switch off key and start again immediately.
7. **GEARS:** 6 forward and one reverse. Make yourself familiar with reverse gear position (lift gear lever collar to move left and forward)
8. **BONNET:** to open insert key in rubber slot on engine grill. Turn (L) then (R) to release the safety catch while lifting the bonnet. (Page 120 Handbook)
9. **FUEL- DIESEL** only. Top up at BP if fuel gauge shows $\frac{3}{4}$ full or below after trip. Use BP fuel card to purchase. PIN attached to key ring. Receipt to go to treasurer with travel money.
10. **PUNCTURE:** Find:
 - Where the jack and accessories are kept, how it operates and where the jacking points are on the vehicle. Pages 143,144 + 146 Handbook.
 - How to remove the spare wheel. Page 142 Handbook
 - Breaker bar + socket behind driver's seat for removing and tightening wheel nuts.
 - Wheel chocks in back of van.
11. **FIRE:** Identify where the 2 fire extinguishers are and how to use them.
12. **JUMP-STARTING** – Important to follow instructions page 135 in Handbook.

PLEASE COULD MEMBERS WHO BORROW THE CLUB COPIES OF "WILDERNESS" MAGAZINE ENSURE THAT THEY RETURN THEM TO THE CLUB VAN AFTER HAVING READ THEM AS OTHERS WISH TO READ THEM TOO.

TRIP PROGRAMME April to July 2012

If crampons and ice axes are required, these are available at Tokaanu Ski Hire – Tel no 386 7961. These have to be pre-booked ready to pick up on the day of the trip.

Any changes to trip details should be notified by the designated leader to the Secretary, Paul Sanderson, on paulsand@xtra.co.nz or on **378 3478** – he can then notify members by e-mail. **If the designated leader is unable to lead the tramp, it is his/her responsibility to organise an alternative leader.** There are a number of weekends on which there are no tramps planned. If anyone wishes to organise a tramp at short notice on one of these weekends, please inform Isabel Hutcheon on **376 9319** or hutcheon@slingshot.co.nz

TRIP LEADERS ARE REMINDED THAT THE BUS MUST BE SWEEPED OUT AND TOPPED UP WITH DIESEL IF THE LEVEL IS BELOW ¾ MARK – this has not been done on some occasions recently and it is only fair to other trampers that the bus is left ready. Remember the Police are also entitled to use it for Search and Rescue if necessary. LEADERS SHOULD CHECK THE WEATHER FORECAST FOR THEIR TRAMP – www.metservice.co.nz does up-to-date mountain weather. IF THE WEATHER SHOULD PROVE TOO BAD TO DO THE LISTED TRAMP, LEADERS SHOULD HAVE AN ALTERNATIVE TRAMP IN MIND.

NB IT IS THE LEADER'S DECISION.

Day & Date	Time	Place	Map No	Grade
April 2012				
Sun 1		Daylight saving ends: No tramp		
Wed 4	7.30	Waikato River Trail: Waipapa Section Linda Pugh 07 883 6898	BE35 BE36	Mod
Thu 5	8.00	Tramp tba Colin McLeod 377 4826		Easy/ Mod
Sat 7	tba	Sunset tramp to summit of Red Crater (TNP) TNHS - see details elsewhere	BH34 BH35	Mod+
Mon 9		EASTER MONDAY		
Wed 11	7.30	Stanton Memorial (TNP) Ken Sutcliffe 378 6507	BJ34	Mod
Thu 12	8.00	Lower Tama Lake (TNP) Nola Craig 376 7278	BH34 BJ34	Mod
Fri 13 - Sun 15	tba	Karangahake Gorge Ian Campbell 386 0656 BRING TORCHES	BC35	Easy/ Mod
Tues 17	8.30	Maraeroa Cycleway (Pureora FP) Barbara Morris 378 6620 – own cars and bikes See details elsewhere	BF35 BG35	Beginners Intermed
Wed 18	7.30	Tukino Alpine Hut (TNP) Jenny Verschaffel 376 9011	BJ34 BJ35	Mod
Thu 19	8.00	W2K Colin McLeod 377 4826 Van mover required	BG36	Easy/ Mod
Sat 21 Sun 22		No tramp		
Tues 24	8.30	Reserve day for Maraeroa Cycleway (see above)		

Tripping around Te Urewera National Park

Over the summer months I have done a few trips with the Nga Tapuwae O Taneatua tramping club (based in Whakatane/Opotiki area). Below is a sample of places visited:

Brill's Bivvy – The entrance is hard to find, off the Waioeka gorge road, about a kilometre before the historic Tauranga bridge. Those with old 260 series maps might find the Ringbuster track marked on it; the not-so-old 260s should have the bivvy marked. There is a large DoC orange triangle at the start of the track and that's about it. A push through some blackberry and then the track goes up the ridge, steeply as only Urewera ridges can (those who have done Tawhaiau will know). There is the occasional Permolat marker but the track is reasonably clear to the top of point 645m, known as the Ringbuster (a climb of about 545m). Then it is down, the last section being almost vertical on slippery grass, into the valley where the bivvy is located on the banks of the Raetakahia stream. There is an easier (overnight) way via the Tutaetoko stream from Opotiki. The bivvy is a tidy, 4-bunk hut, with a good stove. The area was farmed by the Brill family in the early 1900s. Mrs Brill only ever left the valley to have her six children. She must have been one of the few women of the time who said: Hurrah! I'm pregnant. Now I'll get a trip to town.

Pakihi Valley-Te Waiti Valley circuit (Urutawa onservation area)

A 2-night trip, staying at Pakihi hut and camping at Stag Flat. If you are a super-person you might get to Te Waiti hut for the 2nd night. The Pakihi track starts at the end of Pakihi road, out of Opotiki. It is now part of the national cycleway system. Trampers need to learn to love cyclists – this track had been abandoned by DoC, and was only being kept open through the hard work of Nga Tapuwae club members. Suddenly, it became a cycleway connecting to the Motu road and many dollars were spent clearing the track and installing bridges, including a 35-metre one over the Pakihi river.

We took about 3 hours to the hut, along a nice well-benched track, although with some steep drops to the river. A 6-bunk comfortable hut with verandah. Scratchy camping. The track continues up the hill to the Motu road, but on Day 2 we crossed the Pakihi and headed up a steep ridge, finally emerging about four hours later on top of Hill 605m. The track is overgrown, has many windfalls and is unlikely to get much attention from DoC – unfortunately too steep for a cycleway! But, it is well marked and likely to remain so for a few years yet – so get in there! The vegetation is spectacular. Tawa is the predominant species, but rimu, totara, tanekaha, punga and mamaku are in abundance and on the Te Waiti side groves of nikau palms take your breath away. What goes up must come down; almost vertical, hanging on to vegetation and trees, with the occasional flattish respite, until Stag Flat, some three hours later, on the banks of the Wahaatua River with some reasonable camping space.

Day three: An easy crossing of the Wahaatua and a benched track, until suddenly our leader skidded to a halt – track had disappeared into the river, some 50m below, necessitating a precarious scramble up the bank, with few handholds, a traverse across the gap, taking care not to look down. Another couple of hours and we were crossing the confluence of the Wahaatua and the Te Waiti, and thus to the hut – an odd-looking rectangular flat-roofed building with plastic sheeting enclosing a large verandah. Large grassy camping area. From here the well-benched track continues above the Te Waiti stream, until two hours later Bushaven appears, an accommodation complex on the banks of the stream.

Our shuttle vehicle had been left here. The circuit trip requires a 2nd car which can be left at Bushaven (www.bushhaven.co.nz) for \$10 a night. The roads are narrow, winding, subject to slips, and have a couple of fords. The trips to either hut could be done as a day trip or as an overnigher. Unbridged river crossings, i.e. the Wahaatua and the Te Waiti, are involved if doing the full circuit.

Barbara Morris

ALWYN'S FOLLY OR WET FEET IN THE HOROMANGA VALLEY

On January 25 Alwyn "the unlucky" became Alwyn "the luckiest", because on his third attempt in 12 months he contrived to match brilliant weather on the day, with water levels in the Horomanga River that permitted relatively short personages (whose names shall remain strictly confidential to avoid embarrassment and potential litigation) to trek as far as Midway Hut for lunch without drowning themselves. Now for those who have not attempted this trip, it is unique in as much that it entails between 80 and 90 river crossings in the course of the day! Twelve stout-hearted souls with freshly dubbed boots and Leki sticks galore hit the first crossing within 50 metres of the van – and thereafter averaged one dunking every 6 minutes for the rest of the day. This trip afforded ample scope to display our recently learned "best river crossing practices", although it has to be said that several less than compassionate, camera toting members who crossed in great haste, did stand on the opposite banks praying for that elusive photo of three people struggling for their lives in the turbulent water after slipping on a submerged rock. Felicity and Peter made a particularly romantic "Love Is" partnership in the early stages, but Peter rapidly tired of this linked arms act and callously left Felicity to the vagaries of the tide – and John Pendergrast's strong arm. It is not for me to explain but Isabel is not the tallest tree in the forest neither is she the stoutest!! She is of course not **very** small, although she is definitely not as small as Austin for example (who was "resting up" for his knee op). However one does not realise just how petite she is until you witness a "three person river crossing" with Linda on her left and John Pendergrast on her right! Dick Fraser made a particularly gallant display on one occasion of rescuing his own water bottle when it slipped out of his pack half way up a steep bank, by making a desperate lunge into the icy water below. Why did he bring one? There are squillions of litres of pure H₂O in the Horomanga! Having said that, it needs recording that Dick was invariably on hand in the middle of the deeper, more turbulent crossings to assist ladies who "may have become distressed". In general the crossings all went without a hitch – although anyone who has visited Tanzania and seen wildebeest crossing the Mara River during migration could not help drawing a distinct comparison, Only the crocodiles were missing!

Alwyn will forever remain noted for several significant confessions and statements, amongst which are: "**Oh – about another hour**" (when asked on at least three separate occasions - "How far to the hut?") "**I think it is round the next bend**" (in response to "Are we midway to Midway Hut yet?")

And most significantly "**It is farther than I thought**" when it became abundantly clear he had not the faintest idea where we were when everyone's tummy was crying out for lunch. Barbara made friends with a horse – well, two horses actually! A couple of locals had ridden up to mow the lawns at Midway Hut and generally tidy up, although it had been left in remarkably good nick by recent pig-sticking, deer hunting occupants. It is probable that a photograph exists of Barbara tenderly nuzzling a large brown horse on the Midway Hut front lawn. Several TTC'ers did vainly enquire the cost of a "ride out" and were full of envy at their speed and river crossing technique when the two riders rapidly overtook us on the return trip an hour later. Acrimonious debate over the ACTUAL number of river crossing occurred over lunch, with the result Robbie undertook to count them on the return trip. Being a sheep farmer of course Robbie cannot count higher than 10: but he can count to ten, ten times over – so theoretically he should be able to calculate the correct number of dunks?

Robert on the other hand, with his higher university education, was to employ a much more sophisticated calculation ---- the systematic transfer of foxglove seed-pods from his left pocket to his right. Just goes to prove you don't need a university degree when crossing rivers because Robbie's $4 \times 10 + 5 = 45$ was exactly the same as Robert's 45 fox glove seed- pod pocket transfer!!! It was generally agreed that Alwyn planned an awesome day and he and Dave were superb drivers. Robert Burrow.

Apr 12 Cont'd	Time	Place	Map No	Grade
Wed 25		ANZAC DAY – No tramp		
Thu 26	8.00	Whanganui Bay (Western Bays) Pat Hotter 378 4077	BG36	Easy
Sat 28 Sun 29		No tramp		

May 2012

Day & Date	Time	Place	Map No	Grade
Wed 2	7.30	Kawakawa Bay Robbie Dymock 378 8863	BG35 BG36	Easy/ Mod
Thu 3	8.00	Whirinaki Cycle Track (Whirinaki FP) Pamela Rogers 378 2617	BG38	Easy
	7.30pm	Annual General Meeting – REAP Make a big effort to attend, small plate for supper		
Sun 6	tba	Reserve day for Sunset Tramp to Red Crater See details elsewhere – TNHS	BH34 BH35	Mod+
Wed 9	7.30	Punchy's Bridge (Kaimanawa FP) Austin Hutcheon 376 9319	BH36 B37	Mod
Thu 10	8.00	Gull Colony (TNP) Sue Johnson 386 7567	BH34	Mod
Sat 12 Sun 13	7.30	No tramp		
Tues 15- Wed 16	11.00	Waihohonu Hut/Mt Tama (TNP) Barbara Morris 378 6620 See details elsewhere	BJ34 BJ35	Mod
Thu 17	8.00	Tongariro River Walk Nita Wilde 386 0308	BH35	Easy
Sat 19 Sun 20		No tramp		
Wed 23	7.30	Te Pohue (off Napier Road) Lynne King 374 8418	BH38 /39	Mod
Thu 24	7.30	East Okataina (Rotorua) Val Wilkinson 021 278 0007	BE37/ 38	Mod
Sat 26 Sun 27		No tramp		
Wed 30	7:30	Cascade Hut (Kaimanawa FP) Alwyn Chinn 377 6592	BH36	Mod
Thu 31	8:00	Vern's Clearing (Whirinaki FP) Geraldine Whitton 378 2445	BG38	Mod

June 2012

Day & Date	Time	Place	Map No	Grade
Sat 2 Sun 3		No tramp		
Mon 4		QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY		
Wed 6	7.30	Redwood Forest (Rotorua) Mike Keys 378 4415	BE37	Easy/ Mod
Thu 7	8.00	Three Sisters to Tree Trunk Gorge (Kaimanawa FP) Gill Tate 378 2626 Van mover required	BJ35	Easy
Sat 9 Sun 10		No tramp		
Wed 13	7.30	Maungatautari (Putaruru) Linda Pugh 07 883 6898	BE34	Mod
Thu 14	8.00	Toitoti Track (Pureora FP) Jan Smith 378 6267 Van mover required	BR34 BR35 BG35	Mod
Sat 16 Sun 17		No tramp		
Wed 20	7.30	Rangipo Hut (TNP) Allan Porter 378 3046	BJ34 BJ35	Mod
Thu 21	8.00	Te Waihou Walkway (Putaruru) Pamela Rogers 378 2617 Van mover required	BE34	Easy
Fri 22 - Sun 24	Tba	Winter Solstice - Whakapapa Motor Camp (TNP) Colin McLeod 377 4826	BJ34	
Sun24	2pm	Trip Planning Meeting – 52 Tui Street All welcome to come along, have a free tea/coffee and produce ideas for the NEXT programme. No input from members – no programme. Cannot come?? Send your suggestions		
Wed 27	7.30	Scoria Flat to Wakapapa via Whakapapaiti Hut (TNP) Dave Martin 377 3232 Van mover required	BJ34	Mod
Thur 28	8.00	Rainbow Mt/ Waikite Pools Maureen Hall 377 1137	BF37	Easy
Sat 30 Sun 1		No tramp		
JULY 2012				
Wed 4	tba	Computer Mapping Course using OziExplorer Austin Hutcheon 376 9319 See page 8 Venue to be advised		
Thu 5	8.00	Waikato River Trails Russell Rountree 377 1177	BE35 BF36	Easy/ Mod
Sat 7 Sun 8		No tramp		
Wed 11	7.30	Pinnacle Ridge/ Saddle Cone/Wairere Stream (TNP) Peter Drew 378 0794	BH/ BJ34	Mod+
Thu 12	8.00	Pureora Walkabout (Pureora FP) Peter Smith 378 6267	BF3 BF35	Mod
Sat 14 Sun 15		No tramp		

Overnighter at Bushline Hut

We tramped on an easy track through beech forest with bellbirds singing most of the way. The bush stopped abruptly about a third of the way up and the track zigzagged up a steep hill all the way to the hut. The trees had been accidentally burnt down in 1887. Once burnt the runholders kept burning to maintain grazing for sheep. We met several groups coming down having tramped up the Pinchgut and back down the way we had come. It appears it is a popular track for a day's walk. We arrived at the hut for lunch just before a group of about 12 international tourists on a hiking holiday, arrived with their two guides. The guides had carried all the food and prepared 'dagwood' sandwiches for all. Oh for a sherpa to carry the food! We walked up further on to the Mt Robert range and saw the old Mt Robert ski hut, which is being restored. There were many clumps of snow gentians scattered around the higher ground.

Another group arrived - four students on an adventure tourism course at the Nelson Polytech and ten young people from Sweden doing a similar course in their country. It was part of the NZ students' training to guide these groups. They took them back down and then came all the way back to spend the night at Bushline. The man in the group carried a large cast iron wok to cook tea in! We also had 2 interesting older people from Neudorf, in the Marlborough region, stay the night. They had come from Angelus. According to them the name for the Aarn pockets is 'Dolly Partons!' Hugh went down the Pinchgut the next morning and Lorna and Lesley went down the same way as they had come up. Perfect weather, good company and interesting conversations. Trampers: Lesley, Lorna and Hugh.

Lesley Mckeesick

FINE FOR TAKING A DOG IN TO A NATIONAL PARK (from What's up Doc)

A man has been fined \$1250 for taking a dog to Flora Hut in Kahurangi National Park, putting kiwi and blue duck at risk.

Hayden Michael Gibbes, 26, pleaded guilty to a charge of allowing a dog to be in a national park in breach of the National Parks Act and was sentenced this week (16 January) in Taihape District Court. Gibbes, who at the time lived in Motueka, spent the night of 12 January last year at Flora Hut with his dog. Department of Conservation Motueka Area Manger Martin Rodd said dogs were known to kill ground-dwelling birds such as kiwi and weka and also blue duck/whio and were not allowed in national parks without a permit. 'It was especially irresponsible to take a dog into the Flora area where the community conservation group Friends of Flora has been tirelessly working for more than a decade now to enhance the native vegetation and wildlife. Whio numbers have been steadily increasing in their conservation project area due to their efforts in partnership with DOC and two years ago they returned kiwi to the area which has entailed an enormous trapping and fund-raising effort. Taking a dog into Friends of Flora's project area posed a threat to the whio and kiwi they have worked so hard to foster and protect. A Friends of Flora member saw the offender, the dog and the party he was with at Flora car park and told them dogs were not allowed in the national park without a permit and that there were kiwi in the area. The member also pointed out a sign stating dogs are not allowed but he still took the dog in. Some international visitors staying in Flora Hut that night were also concerned about the dog and told the group it shouldn't be there. It showed shameful disregard for the safety of native wildlife and for the outstanding conservation work of Friends of Flora to ignore those warnings and take the dog into the park overnight'. Friends of Flora chairman Peter Adams and secretary Maryann Ewers said Friends of Flora were pleased the matter was taken seriously. 'We hope it will deter other dog owners from contemplating taking their dogs into protected areas, such as national parks, without a permit. Our hope is the general public will put pressure on anyone seen in the Flora area with a dog, and hopefully dog owners will take heed.'

Hugh described the Sabine Hut at Lake Rotoroa as the sand fly capital of New Zealand. It was bad but a breeze and sun helped keep the numbers down. A swim in the lake helped wash off a few days' exertion and Mike swore there was an oil slick surrounding him in the water!

Day 5 we turned for home with a tramp through beech forest and bush to the Speargrass Hut. The track was a steady climb and the roots and guts made for more careful walking. Near the summit of the saddle we found a new board walk that crossed wetland. It went onwards and upwards for what must have been over a kilometre. We found ourselves at the hut mid afternoon and settled in for a quiet night so used to either having the hut to ourselves or sharing with one other group of Northland farmers (who had climbed to Angelus for their last night) By 4pm it was obvious we were not to be alone with 6 Aucklanders arriving and the 12 bunk hut was full with two electing to sleep on the floor. By 6pm the numbers had swelled to 22 and chaos was looming! A fair bit of negotiating sorted the sleeping arrangements with 4 electing to bivvy outside and the rest packing in. One of the Auckland party had a reputation as a serious snorer and he exceeded expectations by several decibels! Needless to say not much sleep was had and by 6am we gave up and escaped back to Mt Robert carpark to be met by our other tramping group.

We were a group of tired but content trampers. We had walked over 114 km and climbed 4,507 m and descended 4,587 m. We had enjoyed a magnificent alpine landscape. The weather had been so kind, the company fun and supportive, Dave and Jill's planning meticulous. I felt so privileged to be to be a member of the Taupo Tramping Club so I was able to experience another of the Martins' famous tramping adventures.

Sarah Hart

Adventures of three women, fourteen Legs and Dolly Parton

Travelled from St Arnaud in light rain to Lakehead Hut for the first night. Next morning to John Tait, a cool clear day. Two of the party went on ahead to book bunks and the slower two had time to enjoy the bush and take photographs. Back to Lakehead the next day via a much easier track to Coldwater Hut and waded across the river. Lakehead Hut again for the night then back to St Arnaud. Both huts had part of the verandah covered in for boots and wet gear and it also stopped the mozzies, midges and wasps getting in. Good wood burning stoves and insect screens on several of the windows. Beware of wasps in toilets! Lime green banks of sphagnum moss, ferny dells under soaring black trunk beech trees. Soft paths with red beech leaves, clear cool sparkling rivers and streams and friendly cheeky robins. Some tracks were grassy with sparkling diamond dew, others used fixed chains to clamber over slippery rocks – not new hip friendly! Swing bridges with steep approaches, roots by the billion and rocks to hop on; river crossings to cool our feet. One pair got lost in savannah grass for a while. Oh for an orange triangle! Met interesting people along the way and in the huts. Five Kiwis from Whangarei. Two Ozzies followed us from John Tait to Lakehead. They were from WA and were employed by the Department of Environment and Conservation – jurisdiction in the Kimberly area. A real Lufthansa pilot with a great personality entertained us at Lakehead. She flies longhaul 747's. An enjoyable time was had by Jan, Isabel, Lorna and Lesley.

Lorna Chinn, Lesley McKeesick

More on the South Island Trip

In time if you want more about the Angelus and Travers-Sabine tramps then go to the web page www.taupotrampers.com and click on **walks** then browse through the list to the named tramps. Words, photos and maps are included.

Forthcoming tramps**Saturday 7 April: (Easter Saturday) Sunset tramp to summit of Red Crater,**

organised by Tongariro Natural History Society.

A guided walk along the Tongariro Alpine Crossing to Red Crater at sunset. Return trip by moonlight. Full details will be available shortly on the THNS website

(www.tongariro.org.nz); e-mail expressions of interest to info@tongariro.org.nz, noting that you are a member of THNS through Taupo Tramping Club.

Reserve day 6 May 2012 - full moon required. Costs not known - check TNHS website.

Tuesday 17 April: Maraeroa Cycleway (Pureora FP). 8.30 am

Own cars and bikes. Meet at police station car park and then drive to Pureora HQ.

Grade beginner-plus to intermediate. The cycleway is 23 km in length. It starts at the Pureora HQ and passes through the Pikiariki ecological sanctuary before heading off into pine plantations. It passes over a mixture of pumice tracks and quiet logging roads, some of which are gravel. The contours are fairly gentle most of the way, with a couple of shortish uphill and two short steep downhill, which some may prefer to walk. In one section the track passes through old logging tramway cuttings. The route is circular and returns to the Pureora HQ via Village Road. Anticipated time to complete the ride: 3-4 hours, with morning tea and lunch stops on the way.

Barbara Morris **378 6620**

Tues/Wed 15-16 May: Waihohonu Hut/Mount Tama (Tongariro NP) Moderate \$10

11.00 am Stay at Waihohonu Hut; climb Mount Tama next day and walk out.

Opportunity to have an overnigher at the hut and do easy day walk. Three hut tickets (\$15.10) or annual pass can be used.

Barbara Morris **378 6620**

Wednesday 4th July: Computer Mapping Course

The previous course covered using maps and GPS. This time the plan is to:

- Install OziExplorer on to members' computers – hopefully laptops rather than full sized PCs - but even big ones could be brought along.
- Set up all the required "configuration" files to get the programme to work
- Link your GPS to the computer
- Install copies of maps (BMP format if you are to use the "Shareware" version) – several local maps are prepared and ready to install / use.
- Lots of data files will then be installed covering "waypoints" and "tracks" so these will show on your maps.
- How to move data between the GPS and computer.
- How to plan, save and print routes for new tramps
- How to print maps or sections of maps from your system

Lake Waikaremoana: October/ November 2012

Contact Colin McLeod **377 4826**

Tramping Club Trip to Nelson Lakes

In the winter of 2011 I read in the Club newsletter that our club captain Dave and wife Jill were planning one of their famous tramping adventures for March 2012. The Nelson Lakes was the proposed area and as I had always wanted to go there (I always wondered why the Nelson Lakes weren't in Nelson!) I rang immediately and put my name forward for the trip. Over the summer Jill organised the timetable and accommodation while Dave planned the tramps. Jill's planning is legendary and I knew that all I had to do was get fit and pack ready for a three day alpine tramp and a six day alpine tramp making sure I had plenty of insect repellent for the infamous Nelson Lakes' B52 sandflies and German wasps. On Monday 5 March 2012 I found myself standing on the corner of Tui Street at 5.15am waiting for the Club van and trailer which had already been packed the day before with all our provisions. We had a dozen in our group. Ten in the van Dave and Jill Martin, Austin and Isabel Hutcheon, Ken Sutcliffe, Jan Harding, Lesley and Hugh McKessick, Mike Keys and myself Sarah Hart. Alwyn and Lorna Chinn were already enroute to the South Island in their campervan. Our journey south was easy with a night in Picton and the odd visit to buy cheese and salt for Mike's provisions. St Arnaud's proved to be a delightful place with the old time NZ feel about it with a general store, baches snuggled in the kanuka, a beautiful little chapel and large DOC visitors' centre. Our base was to be the backpacker lodge in the Traverse Sabine Lodge, Motel complex, a well set up place run by trampers who provided storage and excellent laundry facilities.

The next day 9 trampers set off up the Pinch Gut to the Lake Angelus Hut via the Robert Ridge. The day was clear but breezy and walking was easy till midday. After lunch the terrain became much steeper and rocky with careful footwork required so progress was slower. The views were stunning even though some of the drop-offs were not for the faint hearted. The track was busy with the Marlborough Tramping Club sprinting past us on a day trek to the top of Mt Julius. We felt rather slow and laden in comparison but it was fun to share the beauty of the place and say hi. The new Angelus Hut (mark 3 version) was a welcome sight from the top of the final scree slope. It is a 36 bed hut which has a strict seasonal booking system and is sited overlooking the lake. It was pretty impressive to arrive and find the hut warden cleaning the windows. The hut was immaculate with Ian the warden from Aussie (ex Bass Strait lighthouse keeper) taking huge pride and care of the place. It was a full hut with 11 Americans on an "Active" tour of the South Island with two young guides. Doc has sold concessions to this guiding company and whatever the politics they were a pleasant bunch who had climbed the Cascade track to reach the hut. I wonder if the next Angelus hut will be built big enough for the 60-seater tour bus! Our next day was to be 1000m descent down the Cascade Track which from the top looked dauntingly steep. However the day was fine and the way down was technical but easier than it looked. We enjoyed magnificent waterfalls and lovely bush finally arriving at the Coldwater Hut sited on Lake Rotoiti. The site was lovely and the lake a haven for ducks and swans. We had the hut to ourselves and enjoyed a good rest pretty pleased with our efforts knowing the next day was an easy stroll out to the car park. Mike had by this time taken the role of group photographer and in the morning we lined up on the jetty for a photo with lake, mist and mountains behind. Poised with packs on, smiles all ready, Mike camera in hand exploded with suitable expletives that the **** battery was flat. It was left for Austin to take a photo and Mike muttering about life's injustices.

We returned to St Arnauds to re pack for our 6 day tramp. This was about the only acknowledgement of the fact that the average age of the 8 trampers was over 67years. A nine day pack was not an option for several of us and it was good to be able to have a rest day.

The six day tramp was the Travers-Sabine Circuit with a possible day walk to Blue Lake. We began our walk on March 11 to Lakehead Hut in the rain. It was 11km of easy benched track that as Mike noted can be avoided by taking a water taxi! We paused at the hut to have a look around but mindful that we had another 15km and heavy packs we kept moving. The ground became very wet underfoot and the rain got heavier so it was head down walking with a quick stop for a soggy lunch before crossing the swing bridge over the Travers River. The walk to the John Tait Hut was along the side of the river with plenty of roots and steepish banks to negotiate. The rain became drizzle before a watery grey sky emerged and we felt very lucky to escape the forecast heavy rain. The John Tait hut is sited by the river and was very lucky to avoid destruction by an avalanche last year. The up side of the mess is firewood is not going to be a problem for some years. The next morning was fine and clear and we walked to Upper Travers Hut. This was to be a short 3.5hour walk and an easy day. I found this to be the hardest day with my pack a lead weight and my legs like concrete. It was for several of us rather a slog and was all uphill through lovely beech forest. Alwyn continued in his role as pace setter and pathfinder. He set a kind pace and we eventually found the tree line and the hut sited in a lovely alpine bowl with stunning mountain peaks on three sides and a view down the Travers valley.

It was hard not to think about the next day when we looked up at the tops as we had the Travers Saddle to cross and a 1000m descent to follow. The 3rd day dawned clear and calm and we climbed the 450m to the top in 1hour 20 minutes which we all agreed was a good effort. The top was clear but cool with a breeze so we dropped down out of the wind quickly and had a snack before attempting the next main descent. The party divided with Ken leading Sarah, Jill and Mike down the Avalanche Detour with Dave kindly acting as backstop. The rest of the group followed the main track down what was described as a steep scree slope but was in reality a steep rock slope. The bush was longer but much kinder to knees and I appreciated having trees to hang on to and a lovely chorus of bellbirds in the beech forest. The other group just missed seeing a Chamois which was photographed by another trumper who was just a few steps ahead. The route continued down, down and down to the East Sabine river where we crossed over the deepest ravine (fortunately by bridge) that I have ever seen. Our tired legs had to cross another small saddle before we sidled down to the West Sabine River where a lovely large hut awaited us. Though we were pleased and I was relieved to have the Travers Saddle behind us, the majestic beauty of those mountains will stay with me I hope for a very long time.

The decision was made that night not to attempt the 7 hour round trip to the Blue Lake but rather to continue walking at a gentle pace for the rest of the route taking time to enjoy our surroundings. The next day was again beautiful with clear blue skies and we walked to the Sabine Hut along the Sabine River. Our first challenge for the day was to cross the river where the swing bridge had been destroyed by a fallen tree. DOC signs were warning of the dangers of a river that can rise very quickly but the hut chatter in the intentions book suggested a crossing over a fallen log. Most of the party crossed the log quickly showing excellent balance and courage with a reasonable drop into the river. Jill and I debated our options and were thankful that our packs were taken over by Alwyn and Dave leaving us to carefully cross over. I elected to walk at a snail's pace, knees quaking. Jill was much more creative and sat on the log while she moved safely across. We all crossed without incident and with dry boots, very satisfying! For me the 5 hours following the Sabine River was the highlight of my 6 days. The River has some of the clearest, purest water I have seen and the flow is constant. The back drop of Mt Travers and the upper valleys of the Sabine was breathtaking. It was great to have time to stop and take it all in.