



THE WAIKATO TRAMPER

Official Bulletin of

WAIKATO TRAMPING CLUB (INC)

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TREK'N'TRAVEL
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Trip reports

Trip 2769

“Explore Coromandel”

Jun 2-4

Walk of the wilderpeople

Our planned three day walking exploration of the Coromandel peninsula began the night before when we gathered Friday evening to travel to Whangamata for an early start the next day. Trip Leader and van driver Allan Wickens had put together a series of small one and a half to three hour walks up and down the coast to give a good sampling of what this beautiful area has to offer. But ohhh the weather...as we were driving we were watching the lightning flashing over the Kaimais. We arrived at Whangamata to stay in Backpackers accommodation at Surf 'n Stay. Tidy, but lacking in size and facilities. One toilet and one shower for the eight of us plus about five other guests. But we were dry and warm. Most of the party went for a moonlit walk down to the beach (200 metres away) to admire the moon backlighting Hauturu Island and reflecting off the sea. The weekend had started well. That night...the rain came.

Saturday morning, our first walk was to Wentworth Falls. Only about ten minutes drive away up Wentworth Valley Road. The track information stated two and a half hours return but I think it only took us about two hours. Donning our raincoats became a natural part of our day. We were immediately introduced to the new Kauri Dieback Protection stations. We found them in several places and they were like going through the ticket booth station at Piccadilly. A big NO ENTRY sign on one side and you were funnelled on to the boot brushes, then the hand spray nozzle hooked up to a large drum, a second hand-held boot brush, and then you stood on a sprung grid that sprayed up at your boots from underneath. Then out through the gates you go for the next stock unit to enter. Cool! They look expensive. Just after the start of the walk, there is a small cave entrance on your right. Put your head in. It is filled with cave wetas! An easy walk following the river with a couple of bridge crossings, and then a bit of a climb and a scramble down to the base of the falls. The falls are about 50 metres high overall split in two drops. Very picturesque.

Back at the van, we headed to the spit on the other side of the Whangamata township. A bit of a drive around but after just a short ten minute walk, you are rewarded with beautiful views down on the township and the coastline looking south.

Travelling north, we turned left just before Hikuai on to the Kopu Hikuai Road and our next tramp at Broken Hills – an old gold mining area. There are several circular routes from 15 minutes long to 2-3 hours. We took the anti-clockwise route up to a 322 metre point. The weather had really socked us in by now and visibility was poor. Angie was showing off the latest in fashionable rainwear with the “Nana skin” (as in Banana). I shouldn't poke fun because she was

certainly a lot drier than me by the end of the day. Coming down off this peak we came to a 500 metre tunnel called “Collins Drive”. Dead straight with plastic grating keeping you out of the water running through. Seeing the glow worms on the ceiling were a highlight. I don’t know how, but we lost David in there. We didn’t think there was anywhere to go...Something to do with a camera I was later told. Once back at the van, about two hours later, we walked in to the campsite to see the rocky bluff that gives the area the name of Broken Hills. The rain had cleared sufficiently to get a good photo.

We then drove on to Whitianga and our next nights’ accommodation at Turtlecove. A step up from the previous night to be sure. A lovely pub meal in town and most were back for a reasonably early night. The original plan for the Sunday was to drive from Whitianga across to Coromandel, and then up through Colville to Fletchers Bay at the very top for our walk through to Stony Bay. The weather forecast however had us doubting roads would be open, let alone being safe on the Stony Bay Track. Allan was getting rainfall estimates of over 25mm for a two hour period and gale force winds with thunderstorms. Discretion before valour came to the fore and we decided to get to Coromandel and reassess the situation. The Information Centre was very helpful and although roads were still open, water levels were rising so we opted to book in to our Coromandel accommodation early and sit out the worst of it. A more idyllic spot would be hard to find. Perched near the top of Wyuna Bay, views (when the rain cleared) of the harbour, Long Bay, and the Coromandel Ranges would take a while to tire of. With rain smashing in, we hunkered down to eat rubbish and watch a movie – “Hunt for the wilderpeople”. Later that afternoon the weather cleared and we ventured outside for an hours’ walk around Long Bay and up in to the hills behind where there are stands of kauri trees.

The weather was breaking temporarily and the call was made to get away early Monday morning at 7.00 a.m. to get to Fletchers Bay and start tramping as soon as possible. The aim being to get down the coast to Stony Bay before the weather turned brown again. The drive from Coromandel took about an hour and three quarters to the top with a very slippery fjord to cross in the van. We were hoping Allan was going to get back across it without our weight in the van as he had to drive the two and a bit hours back through Colville and up the eastern side. We just didn’t know what the roads or the track were going to be like.

We got on to the track at 9.00 a.m. and although not raining to speak of, the wind was howling. The first section is climbing steadily through farmland until we entered the bushline heading south. Overall, the track is around 11km long. About a third of the way in, you drop down to sea level at Poley Bay, and then immediately climb out again. The remainder of the walk from this direction is then a slow descent to Stony Bay. Track conditions were remarkably good and easy to negotiate. On a fine day an easy walk. The sea and coastline look

different in varying weather conditions and although this section of the coastline is breath taking on a sunny summers day, when the wind is smashing the waves on to the rocks and the water is like inside a washing machine, it really is quite exhilarating. There were plenty of opportunities for taking photos, Laurette had a fantastic eye for spotting all the different mushrooms and toadstools. The weather held for two hours of our three hour walk. Then the thunderstorms caught up and we were belted. The temperature however remained mild and it was comfortable walking.

We arrived at Stony Bay just on midday and Allan had been there about half an hour (yes, he did manage to find a coffee on the way around). Who could blame him. The wind was probably gale force at that point and the rain was horizontal. He had driven through one reasonable slip getting to us and we decided to get off the Peninsula as soon as possible before more damage was wrought. It was a long drive back to Hamilton with coffee and ice cream greasing the wheels. Although wet, and although plans were changed a little, the majority of the weekend achieved the brief and was utterly enjoyable. Good company, a beautiful part of Gods Own, and a very well organised and run trip. Thank you Allan for both the organisation and the commitment to drive us. Trampers – Allan W, David T, Jocelyn W, Laurette S, Amanda C, Dave and Debbie W, Angie.

Trip 2770

Mahoe Forest to Waitomo track

Jun 10

Solicited comments in the bus on the way back - painting a picture of different peoples' highlights.

Lorna: The Waikato looked stunning in the mist. Highlight seeing Selwyn and Dianne sitting on the track waiting for us. (*Ed note: truly, we weren't 'sitting'*).

Fiona: Yellow light in the fog from on high.

Tracy: Snowy mountains in the distance.

Marianne: Orange mud.

Selwyn: Te Araroa trail at its best, twisting and turning through the countryside, surprises around every corner, signage patchy, navigational skills!

Pamela: The appearance of snow covering the foot of Pirongia. Dave: 26,000 steps, around 14.5 km, 6 hours 20 minutes.

Dianne J: A talking track, not a walking track.

Debbie: Nobbly knees shown in order to cross the creek.

Jenny: Great for me to go first time tramping with this group, watching the group sort through occasional hurdles, the views were stunning, and I managed to keep up.

Ray: I walked an extra kilometre for a non-existent track.

Allan: Special thanks to Dave for his collaborative leadership, and Dianne for her patient, careful driving.

Dawn and Colin: Were great as tail end Charlie and front end scouts.

Diane: Muddy. The first part was very nice especially the view and walking in the forest.

Isla: Loved the rewarewa trees.

Reflections by poets and muses. **Scribe:** Allan

Trip 2771

Crosbies Hut

Jun 16/17

Day 1 we walked up the Karaka track from Thames to the Crosbies clearing hut. This was an interesting walk up an old horse and sled track from the 1920's. The Crosbie family took horses and sleds up the route, and so it is up to six foot wide in places and on a gentle slope and so easy to navigate. We took our time and reached our destination in 5.5 hours after an extended lunch break at the Waiotahi track. We arrived at the hut at the same time as another party of three from Auckland who had taken the Waiotahi track instead, they commented that it was steep and muddy.

We really enjoyed the new hut and there were twelve of us who enjoyed talking and cooking. The hut takes 10 and so two of our party had tents to camp out. When bed time came those two then headed to the tents for sleep, one wisely pitched his self standing tent on the deck. When the wind and rain started and the thunder and lightning lit up the sky I was unable to sleep for the noise of the tent rustling and the pounding of the rain. So later in the evening I quietly entered the hut and slept on the floor. This was a real relief as I did not like the thought of no sleep. The new day was cloudy but clear of rain. We made good time and said goodbye to our new friends from Auckland. The walk out was again a gradual climb on a good track.

There were also some good views out over the hills.

We also stopped at the square Kauri on the Tapu Coroglen road. This was a highlight. Ross came and picked us up and took us down to the car we had left in Thames. Here we met the Aucklanders who were pleased we could drop them back to their car, they came down the Karaka track instead. Talk about perfect timing, or should I say Gods' timing?



My thanks go to Judith for arranging a great trip. I will definitely go back on a clear day - the view is going to be stunning. People on the trip: Damon Crawford, Ashley Hoskins (scribe), Allan Taylor, Bruce Laugesan and Leader Judith Bogle.



Crosbies' Hut trampers

photo by Judith Bogle

There are no wrong turnings. Only paths we had not known we were meant to walk.
Guy Gavriel Kay

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