



# New Zealand Canoeing

## In this issue

**High water on the Thuli Bheri ..... pg 3**

**Conservation Update ..... pg 7**

**Hollyford Holiday Hoedown ..... pg 9**

*In this edition* Polly takes us abroad to Nepal; a mountaineer's temple to most. While her majestic peaks beckon the climber, it's the cracks at the root of these pushed-up beasts that call the adventure boater. With a compact, capable team, Polly shares her enthusiasm of a holiday abroad.

Conservation is an ongoing, tiring process. Doug, Graeme and Ally report the latest.

Lake Pukaki is freezing, Milford Sound has its share of sandflies – UCCC's Butt Naked Kayak Club try to convince the onlooker it's really not that bad... follow UCCC on their pilgrimage South.

*Taking on the edges of the river – Chris shows the way.  
(Photo: Mike Savory)*

## About

### New Zealand Canoeing

*New Zealand Canoeing* is the official newsletter of Whitewater NZ Inc. *New Zealand Canoeing* is published quarterly and distributed free to around 1,200 members of Whitewater NZ throughout New Zealand/ Aotearoa. The views expressed in *New Zealand Canoeing* are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Executive of Whitewater NZ.

*New Zealand Canoeing* welcomes advertising from organisations associated with recreational canoeing. Please contact us for our advertising rates, and find out how to show your products and services to kayakers around New Zealand.

Thanks to contributors and advertisers and the myriad of e-mail correspondents for their contributions to this issue of *New Zealand Canoeing*.

Unless otherwise noted all material in *New Zealand Canoeing* is © Whitewater NZ. All rights reserved.

## Whitewater NZ Executive & Officers

as elected May 2013 with people from WhiteWaterNZ executive

### Patron

Hugh Canard  
Christchurch  
[patron@rivers.org.nz](mailto:patron@rivers.org.nz)

### President

Matthew Bennett  
Rotorua  
[president@rivers.org.nz](mailto:president@rivers.org.nz)

### Vice-President

Graeme Wilson  
Christchurch  
[vice-president@rivers.org.nz](mailto:vice-president@rivers.org.nz)

### NI Conservation

Ally Price  
Auckland  
[niconservation@rivers.org.nz](mailto:niconservation@rivers.org.nz)

### Conservation

Doug Rankin  
Christchurch  
[conservation@rivers.org.nz](mailto:conservation@rivers.org.nz)

### Safety

James Rae  
Auckland  
[safety@rivers.org.nz](mailto:safety@rivers.org.nz)

### Education

Aidan Haig  
Oamaru  
[education@rivers.org.nz](mailto:education@rivers.org.nz)

### Access

Sean Bellamy  
Wellington  
[access@rivers.org.nz](mailto:access@rivers.org.nz)

### Treasurer

Marnie Fornusek  
Whakatane  
[treasurer@rivers.org.nz](mailto:treasurer@rivers.org.nz)

### Communications

Martina Naplawa / Anna Matson  
Masterton / Rotorua  
[communications@rivers.org.nz](mailto:communications@rivers.org.nz)

### Administration

Stu Richards  
Wellington  
[admin@rivers.org.nz](mailto:admin@rivers.org.nz)

### Membership

Peter Davis  
Wellington  
[membership@rivers.org.nz](mailto:membership@rivers.org.nz)

### New Zealand Canoeing Editor

Debbie Bloxham  
Christchurch  
[editor@rivers.org.nz](mailto:editor@rivers.org.nz)

### Webmaster

Jonathan Hunt  
Christchurch  
[webmaster@rivers.org.nz](mailto:webmaster@rivers.org.nz)

**Paddle Power**  
www.paddle-power.com

**ZET**  
ADVANCED BOATS

**SR**  
MADE BY AXI

**sweet**  
PROTECTION  
... and take care!

Import & Distribution of Gear for Paddlers  
Topline Agencies NZ - PO Box 1160 - Rotorua

# High water on the Thuli Bheri

Article by Polly Miller, photos credits marked throughout article.



The team at the confluence of the Karnali; Mike, Chris, Yan and Polly. (Photo: Polly Miller)

---

*As all paddlers know, it always works seamlessly to plan a river trip on the other side of the world many months in advance.*

---

Chris Dickinson confessed a yen to paddle the Thuli Bheri before he reached 60, partner Mike and friend Yan both expressed interest in a weak moment and we had a team. Come what may (and in Nepal, the monsoon is the major player) we had leave arranged and flights booked for November of 2013.

The source of the Thuli Bheri is in the Dolpo, a very traditional area of the Himalaya and the river and the Karnali into which it flows, drains a large part of Western Nepal. It's possible to put onto the Barbung Khola (the main tributary) at 2,600m and paddle over 200km down to meet the Thuli Bheri (meaning big river), the Sani Bheri (small river) and eventually to the Karnali, finishing the trip close to Indian plains at a height of 198m.

The river is best accessed by chartering a small plane, and to make stumping up with a wedge of cash even more worthwhile we decided to go for a walk in Shey/Phoksando National Park, home to blue sheep and snow leopards and visit the famous Phoksando lake. Yan had limited time and our itinerary allowed for 3 weeks.



Chandra, Chris, Mike and Yan about to load boats on the plane. (Photo: Polly Miller)

Mike and I felt a month off work was the right amount, and took an extra week to visit Bardia National Park right at the takeout and do a little extra boating on the Bhote Kosi.

As luck would have it, Chris runs a trust to support Nepali schools in Nepal and his brother in law Mukunda is a Nepali raft guide and has considerable experience planning expeditions. Based in the UK and Nepal, Mukunda's involvement took all the hassle out of planning the trip, and in the weeks leading up to our November departure as Yan sat a major medical exam and my work became particularly smerkish it was wonderful to just transfer cash into Mukunda's Nepali bank account and know that if anyone could sort it, he would.

The airstrip normally used by teams flying into the Thuli at Juphail had been closed for several months and emails flew between New Zealand, the UK and Nepal on different options for getting to the river. Mukunda was then advised by his contact that the airline was taking bookings so he made a deposit and booked a flight... only to find a week later that the trial flights had not gone well and the airstrip closed again. More emails and discussions...

*Happily, Mukunda found that there is a new airstrip at a place we'd never heard of called Masinechaur. We landed in Kathmandu, hopped in a minibus the next morning and enjoyed the drive along the Terai to Nepalgang. A few short hours later, much to our surprise and delight, we were seeing the river - and indeed the Dhaulagiri massif and the western Himalaya - from the air.*



*It was a long first day – Chris picks up the boat.  
(Photo: Mike Savory)*

The airstrip at Masinechaur has been open for less than a year and is located high above the Chu Gad, which comes in on the river right at Tripurakot (the start of the golden canyon). An incredibly scenic spot, it was described as a 6 hour walk to Dunai, and I'm sure for fit acclimatised locals that is true! However after walking all afternoon we finished our trip to Dunai via jeep, at the time of writing there were two jeeps operating on the "road" between Jupail and Dunai. There isn't much at the village of Masinechaur

and especially given the tihar holiday we were lucky that Mukunda had arranged for donkeys from Dunai to meet us there. As you know, mobile phones have completely changed the way Nepalis do business - to our lasting benefit. We were one porter short and had to carry a boat between us... my strategy of always paddling with people stronger and fitter than me began to pay off earlier than expected.

Dunai is an important regional hub and has power, wifi and cell service that is more reliable than in Kathmandu. The increase in donkey and pony trains down the river corridor has improved the availability of (expensive) supplies locally and has apparently been eroding the availability of porters in the area as men instead go and work elsewhere. We also paddled the river in the lead up to the general election and there was a 10 day bandh or strike called to disrupt the ability of locals to get home to their villages (i.e. go home and vote). Happily, the turn out in the election was the largest ever and the attempts of the losing parties (Maoists) to undermine the process have so far been unsuccessful. The Maoists are perceived to have lost face - it will be interesting to see what happens next.

Because Mukunda was concerned about finding porters locally over the tihar holiday and the run up to the election, he arranged for two porters to come with us from Kathmandu. Chandra and Sancha supported us for 11 days, providing the very best of Nepali service. Our first hint of what we could expect came on our first morning in Dunai. A cheerful voice announced "Polly, Mike here is tea!"

Tea was invariably followed by warm water for washing, then by the call for breakfast. Our first day walking towards Phoksando served to further highlight how a busy period at work had been less than ideal preparation for the trip, as we all struggled with the altitude and unaccustomed exercise.

We quickly realised that not only is Mukunda a superb organiser, he is also a wonderful chef. Our expectations of a diet of noodles and dahl baht were surpassed by a range of delicious dishes made with local produce and staple ingredients brought from Kathmandu. As most of my trips have been self support adventures, I particularly noticed how the extra level of comfort meant I had more energy to admire and appreciate the local people and the environment. The trek to Phoksando is an extraordinary walk. An easy ascent up a river valley over three days, we climbed to 3600m, taking opportunity to camp and also stay with a Tibetan family in a tiny village.



*Keep the chortens on your left.  
(Photo: Mike Savory)*

The day we climbed past the 200m waterfall and visited the lake was clear and warm temperatures at midday meant we behaved like thoroughly inappropriate western tourists by swimming in the crystal blue water. A visit to the Bon Po monastery, a beer and a little shopping in the village rounded out the perfect day.

Back to the river... We did a one day warm up, hiring a couple of local porters to help carry up from Dunai - Tarakot (we noted hiring porters was surprisingly complicated and expensive). The day trip from below Tarakot was our first indication of the river level. There was more than 30 cumecs in the river in the section Slime had indicated we could expect about 10. The harder rapids on the first day were certainly too chunky for me!



*Scouting with most of the village as company.  
(Photo: Mike Savory)*

Chris proved his worth immediately by hopping on and leading easy lines through improbable looking rapids. Places I had privately decided would be a portage for me as we walked up unrolled in front of us broken down into easy class IV moves. Yan quickly slotted into the group and his unfamiliar boat, and Mike as usual tootled down often without troubling the water with his paddle. I initially felt everything - from boat to the thin air - was unfamiliar and I had more than the usual level of nervousness about paddling a high water river weeks away from the end of a road.

*The monsoon was late and while walking back from Phoksando we had two feet of snow up high.*

The locals said that it had continued to precipitate through October which is most unusual. We also heard that in October people had been killed in unseasonal flooding. All of the extra rain ended up in the river, contributing to the river feeling like a freight train.

Rather than rely on local porters, Mukunda hired a couple of ponies to carry gear from Dunai, which worked well. Of course, two ponies became three, and the pony handler was joined by his wife... Another day of easy boating brought us to some big rapids downstream of Tripurakot, and a campsite at the beginning of the golden canyon.

We made different choices putting on next morning - Mike and I chose to walk to the bottom of the first rapid to appreciate a warm up on 30m of so of class III before the next big drop. Yan went for



*Pony support. (Photo: Polly Miller)*

the chicken chute while Chris lined up for the tiger line. Rolling out of one of the largest holes I've seen in a while is a sobering start, and Chris proceeded to lead conservatively down the edges of the river, with the occasional big ferry and/or portage combination. A lot of the IV+ described in the guidebook had morphed into V, and the V wasn't really V anymore. Sancha, tasked with shadowing us from the path high above the river would often pop up on the bank and say - Polly/Mike, I carry your boat? Amazing.

*Chris lines up for the tiger line.  
(Photo: Polly Miller)*



We covered the 10km golden canyon and found Mukunda had set up camp in the first possible spot.

Popping our heads over the river terrace we were greeted with Nepali smiles, popcorn and tea. The paddling team was quiet that night - we'd had a tough day and we knew the hardest boating was yet to come.

Surprisingly, I woke feeling more positive. "Imagine," I said to Mike, "how much worse this would be with loaded boats." I also privately reflected that the team was paddling well together, with

similar comfort levels related to risk and a workable balance between scouting from the boat and from the bank. We took three more days to paddle down to Radi Joula, and Mike's recollection was we undertook 6 major and 6 minor portages over the six days on the upper river (including a porter-supported walk around the Awalgurta rapids, a portage for most). Not bad for a recreational team hopping off the couch and onto 100km of high water boating.

*As a contrast to our trip, a US team of boaters fresh from boating in Russia and Kazakhstan flew into Masinechaur a week behind us. They were unable to find porters and when we saw them they were having no trouble carrying their boats and gear to Tarakot themselves. Paddling with loaded boats, they took on many more of the big rapids than we did, reportedly also boating the (frankly enormous) Awalgurta section.*

A few days later, a British team had an epic resulting in a heli-evacuation from the golden canyon. My overwhelming feeling was one of luck and good grace that we got down the upper river in six days without incident.



*Paying the porters. (Photo: Polly Miller)*

where finally the high water was just what we needed.

Unfortunately, with the bandh still in place, our porters spent many days getting back to Kathmandu, alternatively walking and travelling at night. We chose to spend a few more days on the lower river and made it a beach holiday, foraging in local villages to supplement supplies and taking off two days after the election. Transport had settled down and we were all able to get to where we needed to go. (Yan to Kathmandu to catch a plane, Chris to a village on the Terai and Mike and me to Bardia for a few days of R&R).

*Fabulous trip. We are now (of course) thinking of the next one!*

Particular (and fervent) thanks go to Mukunda. Should you need support for your next Nepali adventure you can contact him on: [mukundaraj.uk@gmail.com](mailto:mukundaraj.uk@gmail.com).

And of course no write-up of a Nepali river can be complete without acknowledging Peter Knowles' excellent guidebook.

**YOUR AD  
WOULD LOOK  
GREAT HERE**

email [editor@rivers.org.nz](mailto:editor@rivers.org.nz) to  
reserve a place next edition.



## EVENTS AND RELEASES

### Wairoa River Release from McLaren Falls

2, 9, 16, 23, 30 March 2014	10:00 - 16:00
6, 13, 27 April 2014	10:00 - 16:00
11 May 2014	10:00 - 16:00

### Pukaki Release

24, 25 March 2014	10:00 - 16:00
-------------------	---------------

### Piripaua River Release

13 April 2014	09:00 - 15:00
---------------	---------------

Refer to our website ([www.rivers.org.nz/event/](http://www.rivers.org.nz/event/)) for the latest release schedules, including flow information.

### NZ Secondary Schools Slalom - Monowai

21-25 March 2014	Southland
------------------	-----------

### NZ Secondary Schools Freestyle - Hawea

26 March 2014	Central Otago
---------------	---------------

### NZ Slalom Nationals - Hawea

27-30 March 2014	Central Otago
------------------	---------------

---

*Good things take time and results from conservation activities by Whitewater NZ and paddlers throughout the country are no exception. The groundwork laid by those that have gone before and that been involved in these activities often does not bear fruit for some time, and the results of some of our recent activities and recent successes clearly illustrate these points.*

---

Many people are often involved in these activities, from those involved in submission writing, preparing evidence to hearings, analysing impacts of schemes that impact on kayaking values. Speaking to local landowners or community groups or councils or businesses, and attending meetings all add to the picture of raising awareness of our community values and the resources we value. We have had some significant successes recently to celebrate, which is great, but there are still storm clouds on the horizon. We are very grateful for all the efforts that people had made in the past and continue to make to help preserve New Zealand's whitewater resources for future generations of paddlers and river runners to enjoy.

## Waitaha River and the Morgan Gorge

The fate of the fabulous Morgan Gorge on the Waitaha River, an 'Everest' of rivers run on the West Coast (it has only been run successfully three times to date such is its difficulty), hangs in the balance. Westpower on the Coast continues to commission resource investigations, including on recreation and ecological values, in support of a run-of-river hydroelectricity scheme they would like to build on this untouched wilderness river. Westpower have consulted with local paddlers on the kayaking value of this pristine river but have not been deterred to date from proceeding with their investigations. The scheme proposes to take up to between 19 to 23 cumecs of water from the river at the bottom of Kiwi Flat just above the Morgan Gorge and leave a residual flow of 3.5 cumecs in the Morgan Gorge. At present, as the time approaches for Westpower applying to the Minister of Conservation for a concession to proceed with the development, after which resource consents will need to be applied for, we are finding out exactly what is proposed and how it might impact on our values.

## Nevis River

Glenn Murdoch, a recent Conservation Officer for Whitewater NZ, who along with Maree Baker-Galloway helped orchestrate the Whitewater NZ case aimed at protecting kayaking values on the outstanding Class V Nevis River tributary of the Kawarau River in Central Otago, attended the announcement late last year by the Minister for the Environment, Amy Adams, on her decision on the outcome of an Environment Court Appeal. A number of expert kayakers including Gordy Raynor, Pete Simpson, Keith Riley, Dave Ritchie and Glenn presented kayaking evidence to an Environment Court hearing on the kayaking values of the run and the impact of the dam on kayaking values if it were to go ahead. The majority decision of the Court was to decline the building of the dam, although Judge Jackson in a split minority decision was in favour of the dam as kayaking still could occur via releases. Amy Adams announced that in line with the Court's majority decision the dam would not be permitted to go ahead and that the Nevis River would be included and protected under the Kawarau River Water Conservation Order. This is a fantastic outcome for this river, the paddling community and New Zealand!

## Hurunui River

After years of argument and commitment to have the outstanding whitewater values of the upper Hurunui River recognised, we finally have reached a hiatus with recognition of the values of the river by way of a damming prohibition on the North and South branches in the Hurunui and Waiau Rivers Regional Plan. We have been involved in a massive effort to input into various consultation, planning and appeal processes to look after this river, with mixed success. The damming prohibition in the Plan is less forceful in our view than a Water Conservation Order (WCO) that we originally applied for but were gazumped from obtaining. It can be reversed if a plan change is successfully applied for - mind you WCOs can be revoked too if a strong enough case is provided to do so.

In addition, water resource consents have been granted to the Hurunui Water Project for a massive take of water (20% of the whole river discharge but all at lower flows and so impacting hugely on the river flows we and others use!) from lower reaches of the Hurunui River below Maori Gully for irrigation in the region, and for a water storage facility in the adjacent Waitohi River Catchment.

Sadly there will be some impact on flow availability in the Hawarden Gorge run down below Maori Gully, and a larger impact on flow availability for the beginner's Lower Hurunui Lowry Peaks Gorge run. We have negotiated a very limited number of no-take flow days as mitigation in the Hawarden Gorge run but were unsuccessful in getting anything for the lower Hurunui run. However, as the river will not be dammed the lower sections will still be able to be run at times of high flows. As we understand it the project is now going into the next phase of feasibility study and design in readiness for the next stages of consent applications, investment and build.

## National Policy Statement on Freshwater Amendments

As part of its freshwater reforms the government has recently called for submissions on amendments it proposes to make to the National Policy Statement on Freshwater Management that it announced in 2011. The changes the government wishes to make include the inclusion of tāngata whenua values and guidelines for adoption of a National Objectives Framework, which is designed to assist with construction of Regional Plan objectives to serve the whole community and set bottom lines for water quality throughout the country. We have recently submitted on this document. Sadly, in our view, although the promulgation of guidelines is probably an excellent idea to get some sort of uniformity in water management throughout the country, the document legitimises the parlous state of poor water quality throughout the country in the choice of water quality parameters it makes for two compulsory values of ecosystem health and human health it requires councils to monitor for waterbodies in their regions. Regions are required to maintain 'on average' or enhance water quality within their regions but the effect of the parameters they want to introduce would be that they do not require rivers to be safe for swimming and nor do they guarantee ecosystem health. Some aspects of what is proposed are probably really good, but until there is a requirement to improve water quality across all regions across the whole country and to use parameters that perhaps more correctly reflect what New Zealanders would like for their rivers in terms of ecosystem and human health values, the water quality of New Zealand's freshwater ways is likely to remain compromised and possibly decline further in the face of ongoing intensive farming and dairy development.

## Canterbury Issues

Despite a massive effort by Whitewater NZ and the Whitewater Canoe Club submitting through a wide variety of channels into various planning, consulting and hearing processes under the Canterbury Water Management Strategy (CWMS), supported by paddler witnesses and other recreation groups including rafters, jetboaters, and river buggers, to have whitewater river recreation values included in the Canterbury Land and Water Regional Plan (CLWRP) and sub-regional plans, we seem to have achieved very little. Perhaps it is early days for Environment Canterbury planning staff in recognising or understanding our whitewater values, perhaps this is part of the CWMS process failing to properly deal with recreation values and interests at present, the reasons are not clear. What is clear is that there are significant information gaps in knowledge about kayaking (and other recreation) values on rivers in the Canterbury Region. Recently some Canterbury kayakers have been involved in producing a detailed report for Environment Canterbury detailing the Region's treasured whitewater kayaking runs and the flows required to retain their values. This report has been done in an effort to fill the apparent information void in this area and assist with incorporation of our river values into future plans. We are still talking to Environment Canterbury with a view to having our values more appropriately included in the CLWRP. We also intend to talk to other regional councils with a view to informing them of valued kayaking runs in their regions so that they too can more appropriately include our values into their plans.

## Environment Court Appeal of Tasman District Council Regional Management Plan

Tasman District Council (TDC) planners about three years ago undertook extensive studies to examine various community uses and values of rivers in their region. This was done with a view to listing valued recreation resources including kayaking in the Tasman Regional Management Plan (TRMP) and planning for their management, as required under the Resource Management Act (RMA). Detailed information was gathered from paddlers and other recreational users in the region.

TDC went ahead with this but various power companies and farmers appealed naming any valued kayaking river sections in the plan. The Nelson Canoe Club, Mick Hopkinson and Whitewater NZ joined this appeal, which after recent mediation has reached an agreement to ask the Environment Court judge hearing the case to have general statements made about kayaking values for rivers in the region in the TRMP and some more specific statements about the Buller River and its tributaries.

We await the outcome of this deliberation. We have actively supported TDC in their stance looking after our values, and although we don't quite have what we want stated in the current plan, the intention of TDC is to further develop and incorporate our values more fully along with management plans in the future. This is something that we would like to see all regional councils do in the near future, so we view working closely with councils that are interested in recognising and addressing our values as very important. When our values are stated in plans we have a better chance of having them recognised and accommodated.

## RMA Reforms

The government seems to have gone very quiet at present over proposed RMA reforms that it was possibly going to announce before Christmas last year. Perhaps they don't want to rock the boat too much in election year. Let's hope some of the feedback and submissions by various river users and bodies involved in water management and freshwater values have been successful in persuading the government that many of their proposed reforms were of little or no value. It remains to be seen. We will announce any proposals as soon as they come to hand and what we suggest people do about submissions on them.

## Matakitaki River



After some years of investigating a dam on the Matakitaki River, we were delighted to see that Network Tasman has now decided not to proceed and has placed its land holdings in the Matakitaki valley on the market. The classic middle Matakitaki run would have been inundated, and the

lower (Earthquake) run would have been massively affected. Congratulations and thanks to all those who opposed this scheme, and in particular Mick Hopkinson and Tony Ward-Holmes, - may the Matakitaki always run free!



# Hollyford Holiday Hoedown

Article and photos supplied by Andrew Yates.

*Ordinarily, the thought of a week in Fiordland conjures up thoughts of Milford Sound sandflies, perhaps sea kayaking across Deep Water Basin under the towering Mitre Peak, classy cheese and wine and tourists. We saw no such thing.*

*The Butt Naked Kayak Club at Lake Pukaki.*

Instead thunderstorms, driving rain, avalanches and flooded rivers formed the backbone of our journey. Sound epic? It was.

The pilgrimage of the UCCC (you-triple-see) kayakers down to the depths of south-western Te Waipounamu has become an annual excursion riddled with epic tales, tall stories and ruined bodies. The legends of a trip which swallows cars by the handful are true, indeed on only the second Hollyford Holiday Hoedown, three cars succumbed to a tragic end, the combined burden of wet gear, heavy kayaks and a weeks' worth of food. Two cars met the same fate only one year earlier.

Now-a-days the folk of the UCCC are somewhat wiser, rental companies take on the risk of wear and tear.

2013's Hollyford Holiday Hoedown saw 15 kayakers traverse 11 sections of 5 different rivers.

After much faffing, we set off to Queenstown to jump on the Citroën section of the Kawerau River, a great thrill to set the wheels in motion for what was sure to be an adventure of a lifetime! One swimmer and a busted ankle later we flew through Ferg's for a famous burger-stop and continued on to the ever-spectacular Moke Lake which proved



*UCCC showing their true colours at Mitre Peak, Milford Sound.*

---

*Now-a-days the folk of the UCCC are somewhat wiser, rental companies take on the risk of wear and tear.*

---

to be a perfect camp site with many wide eyes amazed at how much beauty and variety was on offer in NZ.

A sunny trip down the Dog Leg section of the Kawerau was a great way to kick start the trip for the beginners, with most experiencing the pleasures of a surf on the famed 'Do-Little, Do-Nothing' waves. Tim Grunshaw, Will Hand and Jo Jury closed out day two conquering the mighty Nevis Bluff rapid at a pushy 140cu. We continued south heading into the Mavora Lakes, the area doomed with a prospective future of monorails and scores more tourists.

Onwards and upwards with more on-river fun, this time on the Mararoa River which drains the southern Mavora Lake. We enjoyed



1.



2.



3.



*The crew rests mid-way through the hike in to the Tutoko River, Milford Sound.*

the scenic gorges and remote wilderness feel with a relaxed day of whitewater. We stocked up with fuel and food in Te Anau and headed to the historic Gunn's Camp on the banks of the Hollyford River. The rain began as we entered Fiordland and didn't relent for the next 24 hours. Excitement was high; the anticipation of high water creeking was thick in the already musty air.

Early the next morning we set off to Milford Sound knowing we wanted to get on the rarely paddled Arthur River and, though not feeling confident, we found the permit issuer and secured our de-didymo kits! It was all on. We cleaned boats in the driving rain, thunder echoing through the valleys. The towering Bowen Falls thundered as we paddled across Deep Water Basin, a 30 minute paddle preceding the hour-long hike up the last section of the Milford Track for a somewhat unknown class IV/V run. We arrived at the top of the run, the rain still unrelenting and put in onto a now flowing lake. Three hours later we had seen a dead stag, its 12+ point antlers straining an otherwise clean drop, probed a house sized hole (two

swimmers later) and paddled amongst some of New Zealand's premier whitewater, waterfalls pouring into the river, the river valley inescapable even to Spiderman himself. Contact Rosco's Sea Kayaking in Milford Sound for a permit. All of this near the end of day four, and still no sand flies!

Back on the horse, the following day we hiked in glorious sunshine up the Tutoko River, uncertain if we could, or even would, find the put in:

*“walk for between 50 to 70 minutes. You are looking for a stream crossing with mostly clean boulders in the bed, (instead of moss and slime) and possibly a rock cairn just before the stream (I built one there once). Take a punt if you are new to the game and bash down this (approx 35 mins) to the main river.”*

Fortunately, with these decidedly vague instructions, we arrived at the bottom of a



4.

Top 5 images, from far left...

1. Jo Jury, Tim Grunshaw and Will Hand drop in for an evening lap of Nevis Bluff (Kawerau River)
2. Tim Grunshaw on the Citroën Rapid (Kawerau River)
3. Long exposures at Gunn's Camp, Hollyford Valley
4. Jo Jury on the Falls Ck section of the Hollyford River.
5. DOC campground, Moke Lake, Queenstown.



5.

All of this was a warm up for the final challenging day. I had flagged the Marian Creek section of the Hollyford as a 'must-run' for the trip. After a quick bomb down a low Falls Creek, Tim, Will, Jo and I set off into the unknown. With a gradient of over 40m/km, three gorges and dense Fiordland bush separating us from the (dirt) road where even contacting help was at least three hours away, we knew this was pure NZ adventure boating at its best.

heinously steep looking rapid. Perfect. The next few hours was filled with boulder gardens, more inescapably steep valley walls and an unheard of royal blue sky, all surrounded by brilliant white snowy peaks. We were in paradise. And if this wasn't paradise, we were dreaming. This was to be our biggest day with a hustled trip back to Gunn's Camp halted by several large avalanches (all away from the road), a truly spectacular sight that will stay with me for years to come. We arrived at camp and rallied within 15 minutes to do a reduced Gunn's Camp section on the Hollyford with our beginners. With minimal daylight to spare we finished the Gunn's Camp section which wraps up at the start of the Moraine Creek section. Knowing we had a solid crew, less than a kilometre of whitewater and a run I somewhat vaguely remembered, we bombed on down. Eagerly I probed each rapid, enormous boulders obscuring my view; I hopped eddy to eddy, signalling the upstream crew with a solid thumbs up each time. Mid-way through and my memory growing stronger, I dropped down just one eddy further. Wood. Massive wood. River wide. Shit. I scrambled for the eddy, my heart in my mouth, knowing if I blew this move, it was curtains. A huge effort and much sustained concentration I caught the last chance eddy, big enough for only one boat. Next, my attention moved to the rest of the crew, straight on my whistle I was out of my boat with a bag, clearing the eddy for the person hot on my tail. Luckily we had spread ourselves enough that everyone eddied out and, with wide eyes, we portaged the deadly strainer. Stoked I got to use my "massive wood" hand signal (imagine what it could be), we carried on an otherwise exhilarating run. This section, while only short, rates as one of my most enjoyable sections of continuous, challenging, read-and-run in the Hollyford region. Get there and lap it up!

Some amazing pool drop rapids provided a warm up until we were in the thick of the gorge. Rapids which seemed good to go occasionally ended in false leads, most were so steep they had to be run in parts; scouting from a boat was, in places, the only option as enormous boulder prohibited views much more than 20m at a time and some classic West Coast creeking was enjoyed by all. After three hours of plush green waters, pools in every shade of blue and green imaginable and some horrendous strainers, not to mention the abundance of perfect whitewater, we were clear of the first gorge. Exhausted from several days of kayaking, travel, sickness and some pretty bad banter, we called it a day there, knowing much of the second and third gorges was steeper and involved more difficult portages. And what a great decision that was, our shuttle driver had fallen asleep in the sun and came tearing past not long after we emerged from the bush. Great timing.

The rest of the trip is a blur of spectacular scenery, naked swims in pristine lakes, Captain Morgan's spiced gold rum, Queenstown's Fergs and getting the trailer up on one wheel while four wheel driving. Eeeek. There, you thought we were well behaved students up until now didn't you?!

For a more visual account, check out Tim Grunshaw's edit of the trip here at: <https://vimeo.com/75956140>



The UCCC 2013 Hollyford crew.

WHITEWATER NZ

Our purpose is to preserve New Zealand’s White Water resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely.

PO Box 284 Wellington • Ph +64 21 027 58661 • whitewaternz@rivers.org.nz • www.rivers.org.nz

Want to make a donation?

You can use the form below to join Whitewater NZ and make a donation which will go towards preserving rivers you enjoy for tomorrow.

Individual Membership Form

Whitewater New Zealand

PO Box 284 Wellington

E-mail: whitewaternz@rivers.org.nz

Website: www.rivers.org.nz/membership

Individual Membership

\$30.00

Please note that Club and Associate members pay different fees. See our website: www.rivers.org.nz/membership for details of other membership classes.

Donation

\$ .00

Additional support for our work in Conservation, Access, Safety and Education is gratefully appreciated.

Total \$ .00

Tick to receive a receipt

Make cheques out to “Whitewater NZ” and send to: PO Box 284 Wellington

WELCOME!

Personal Details

Name

Ph (day) Ph (a/h)

Address

Email

Fax

Occupation

Club

For Whitewater NZ Use Only

Membership ID

Receipt#

Grid for Membership ID

Grid for Receipt#

Response Date

Deposited

Grid for Response Date

Grid for Deposited

Your membership details are managed by Whitewater NZ in accordance with the Incorporated Societies Act (1908) and the Privacy Act (1993).