

A photograph of a rugged mountain peak with a small pond in the foreground. The mountain is composed of dark, jagged rock with patches of green and brown vegetation. The sky is a clear, bright blue. In the foreground, there is a small, dark pond surrounded by dry, yellowish-brown grass and some rocks. A small, simple wooden building is visible on the right side of the foreground.

Lee Traynor

Voyage to  
Te Wai  
Pounamu

Rambling Around New Zealand's Southern Islands

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## Te Wai Pounamu

Day 0, Fri-Sat, Feb 1-2: Hannover - Frankfurt -  
Singapore  
Day 1, Sun, Feb 3: Sydney - Auckland  
Day 2, Mon, Feb 4: Auckland  
Day 3, Tue, Feb 5: Auckland  
Day 4, Wed, Feb 6: Auckland

Day 5, Thu, Feb 7: Auckland  
Day 6, Fri, Feb 8: Auckland - Christchurch  
Day 7, Sat, Feb 9: Christchurch - Invercargill  
Day 8, Sun, Feb 10: North-West Circuit 1  
Day 9, Mon, Feb 11: North-West Circuit 2  
Day 10, Tue, Feb 12: North-West Circuit 3  
Day 11, Wed, Feb 13: North-West Circuit 4  
Day 12, Thu, Feb 14: North-West Circuit 5  
Day 13, Fri, Feb 15: North-West Circuit 6  
Day 14, Sat, Feb 16: North-West Circuit 7  
Day 15, Sun, Feb 17: North-West Circuit 8  
Day 16, Mon, Feb 18: North-West Circuit 9  
Day 17, Tue, Feb 19: North-West Circuit 10  
Day 18, Wed, Feb 20: Invercargill - Christchurch  
Day 19, Thu, Feb 21: Christchurch - Waiau  
Day 20, Fri, Feb 22: Waiau - Hanmer Springs -  
Cathedral Cliffs - Kaikoura  
Day 21, Sat, Feb 23, Kaikoura, Mt Fyffe  
Day 22, Sun, Feb 24, Kaikoura - Blenheim  
Day 23, Mon, Feb 25: Blenheim - Nelson  
Day 24, Tue, Feb 26: Nelson  
Day 25, Wed, Feb 27: Abel Tasman Coastal Track 1  
Day 26, Thu, Feb 28: Abel Tasman Coastal Track 2  
Day 27, Fri, Mar 1: Abel Tasman Coastal Track 3  
Day 28, Sat, Mar 2: Abel Tasman Coastal Track 4 -  
Marahau (water taxi) - Murchison  
Day 29, Sun, Mar 3: Murchison - Springs Junction -  
Reefton - Greymouth  
Day 30, Mon, Mar 4: Greymouth - Hokitika - Ross -  
Glaciers - Haast - Wanaka.  
Day 31, Tue, Mar 5: Wanaka - Cromwell -  
Queenstown  
Day 32, Wed, Mar 6: Queenstown - Te Anau  
Day 33, Thu, Mar 7: Dore's Pass, Lake Marian  
Day 34, Fri, Mar 8: Te Anau  
Day 35, Sat, Mar 9: Kepler Track Walk-On

Day 36, Sun, Mar 10: Milford Track, Day 1  
Day 37, Mon, Mar 11: Milford Track, Day 2  
Day 38, Tue, Mar 12: Milford Track, Day 3  
Day 39, Wed, Mar 13, Milford Track, Day 4  
Day 40, Thu, Mar 14: Te Anau - Dunedin  
Day 41, Fri, Mar 15: University of Otago & Skeptics  
in the Pub, Dunedin  
Day 42, Sat, Mar 16: Otago Peninsula, South  
Dunedin  
Day 43, Sun, Mar 17: St Patrick's Day in Dunedin  
Day 44, Mon, Mar 18, Dunedin - Waianakarua  
Day 45, Tue, Mar 19: Waianakarua - Oamaru  
Day 46, Wed, Mar 20: Oamaru - Twizel  
Day 47, Thu, Mar 21, Twizel - Mt Cook  
Day 48, Fri, Mar 22: Twizel - Fairlie - Geraldine -  
Methven  
Day 49, Sat, Mar 23: Mt Somers - Sharplin Falls  
Day 50, Sun, Mar 24: Rakaia - Rakaia Gorge  
Day 51, Mon, Mar 25: Methven - Akaroa  
Day 52, Tue, Mar 26: Akaroa Skyline  
Day 53, Wed, Mar 27: Akaroa - Tourist Drive - Little  
Akaroa - Christchurch  
Day 54, Thu, Mar 28: Christchurch  
Day 55, Fri, Mar 29: Christchurch - New Brighton  
Day 56, Sat, Mar 30: Christchurch - Sydney -  
Singapore  
Day 57, Sun, Mar 31: Singapore - Frankfurt -  
Hannover

## Epilogues

A Wicked Wee Time  
Sploggers  
WordPress  
WP Facebook Plugin  
Other WP Plugins

# On the Precariousness of Technology Introducing GEOrgET

Place Names

Links

**Ata Whenua**

# **The Shadow Land Preparations**

*Yet seemed it winter still, and you away,  
As with your shadow I with these did play.*

Shakespeare, Sonnet 98

## Green Light



*Koru - the fern leaf spiral, 2010*

The go-ahead for the new adventure came late last week, after a couple of weeks of prelegal danse macabre. Anyhow, it's there now, and the final preparations can begin in earnest.

For begun they have well before this time last year, when I was originally planning this trip. There have been plans and preparations, and prices to compare and check again. One of the most comprehensive questions covered was that of photography, although that was no longer a question of what camera to take, but rather how to deal with all of the eventualities that hacking the current set of three cameras has brought with it. I now own not just a couple of cheap Canons, but a couple of cheap Canons pimped with CHDK, which turns them into little photographic wonder machines. The possibilities (as I will detail in a later blog) are truly awesome, and nothing is quite as awesome as the thought of rephotographing the South Island with them, processing all of the shots in as near to real time as circumstances will allow, and assembling them into short films.

So now the cat is out of the bag: This trip will be mainly the South Island, and the barebones details are:

- Auckland: February 3-8, 2013
- Christchurch: February 8-9
- Invercargill - Stewart Island (North-West Circuit) - Christchurch: February 10-23

From there I will hire a car and go on a number of tramps in Fiordland, near Wanaka, and possibly the Heaphy and Abel Tasman Great Walks.

Return date is set for around March 30, but not before traipsing through Dunedin to do an interview (more as details become finalised), and back to Christchurch for a final couple of days.

Apart from the photos, quite a bit of time and effort has been put into the question of the North-West Circuit of Stewart Island. This is a tramp that I have been wanting to do ever since I attempted hiking from Oban to Mt. Anglem in 1974. Needless to say we never got past Big Bungaree on that occasion - and indeed in 2009 Big Bungaree was again visited as a stop along the extended Rakiura Track, on my way to North Arm. The complete North-West Circuit is estimated at around 125 km in 9-11 days and involves taking everything with you. This will include not just having enough food and enough fuel to cook it with, but also suitable gear and equipment for everything from laundry logistics through GPS tracking to emergency procedures and the inevitable photos. Again, for the barebones details: I'll be toting everything around in a 38 L Moorhead Evolution rucksack, and have reduced the sleeping bag weight from 1.8 kg to just under 1; likewise the tripod. And, of course, having to be able to go all those miles, and the extra one if necessary, was demonstrated on 4 long distance hikes of 13, 9, and 9 days, and the crowning jewel of an Alpine



crossing from Heidelberg to Milan in 30 days, all within the last 15 months.

So if I don't get completely bogged down in the mud, there's a good chance I'll make it around the island alive.

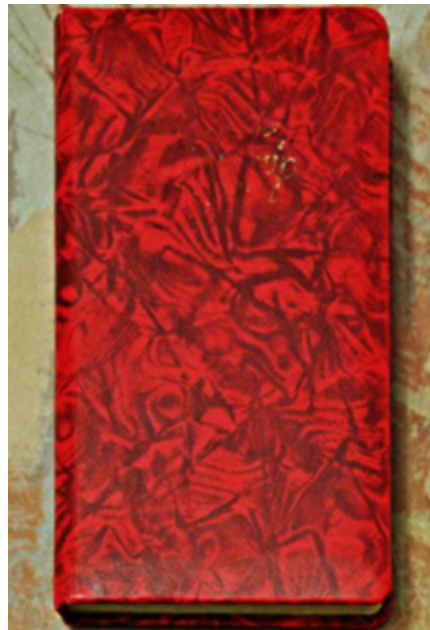


*Arthur River from the Milford Track, March 4, 2009*

## Travel Diaries

**F**or a long, long time, I have kept travel diaries. The oldest one still in my possession is a dedicated travel pocket diary (9 cm x 15 cm, 90 leaf, left: cover, “My Trip”; right: excerpt) given to me by my grandmother in 1974 to record the 74/75 two-month New Zealand round tour in.

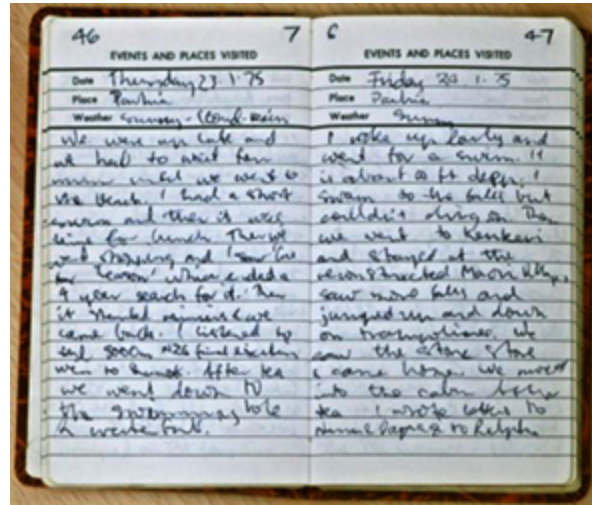
It was this diary that prompted me to take all the holidays I could and re-live part of that tour in 2009, and not just take a few days off for the conference I was invited to.



*“My Trip” Diary 1974-1978*

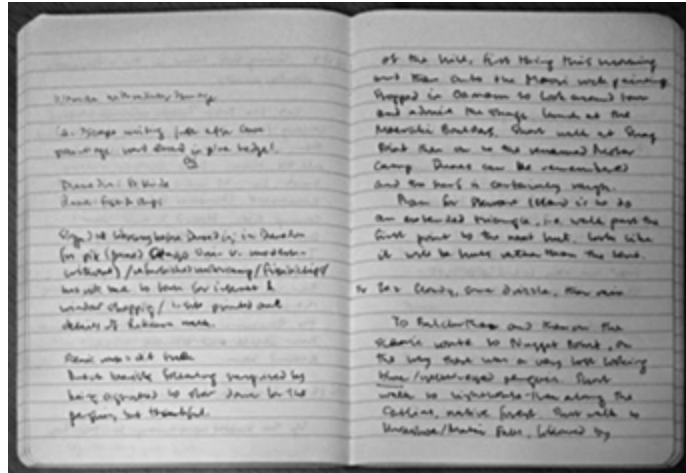
Now, a 15 year-old doesn't write much in his diary, but there was enough there for a moderately successful reconstruction - I didn't stick to it strictly, as I had other things I wanted to do as well (i.e. the Milford Track). Even some of the motorcamps - to judge from the kitchen inventory - had been around back then (both countries went decimal in 1974, so that °F on an oven is a sure sign of its vintage), and many were as near as dammit the places we

must have stayed in. Not having any of the pictures that I took, I was able to recreate some of these; but 30 years of absence takes an indisputable toll on your memory.

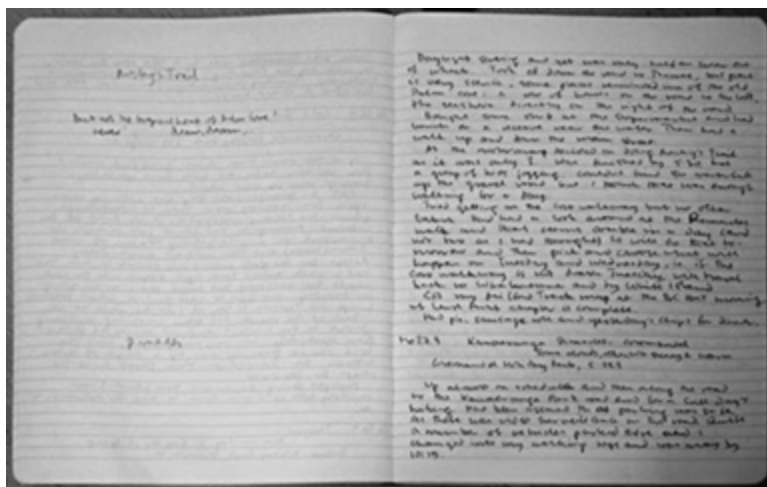


*Diary entry Jan 23-24, 1975*

Since then, diaries of various sorts have been kept. The original diary was later continued for the summer holidays 1976, and Germany '77/'78, but then A4 stiff cardboard note books begin appearing. After 2004 the format changes to A5, and fairly soon to the Clairefontaine series, with their seductively smooth paper (below left); I have a whole heap of them to demonstrate to students what free-writing is. Then an interlude at A4 size, and a change in 2010 to the reintroduced Moleskine series whose paper is also deliciously smooth, and at off-white a little easier on the eye; at first a 19.2 cm x 25 cm volume (below), then the more portable 13 cm x 21 cm size. For this trip I will continue with the smaller size for the tramps, where size and weight will be at a premium, and start a new larger size journal for everyday use.



Diary entry Feb 19-20, 2009



Diary entry Sep 26-27, 2010

The structure has matured in the course of all this. We start with the day of the week and the date, and then the day's itinerary; then the weather, and finally, the accommodation, with all details, including the price. Writing is on the right side only, leaving the left for later additions and comments. Then the diary proper begins (right: excerpt; left: cover). I am still in two minds as to whether to detail the photos I've taken; contra says that with all the GPS data I should be able to reconstruct where and when I took them; pro says the story behind them counts.



*Diary cover (Moleskine)*

On the longer tramps from Denmark to Italy in 2011/12, the diaries were kept on the computer, which had to be dragged along to deal with the photos. But, once back, they seem now strangely inaccessible, and I really should redeem them onto paper and indeed, into book form, to leaf through at will on warmer or colder evenings.

## Booking the Flights

Last week's goal was to book flights from somewhere close by (perhaps Frankfurt) to Auckland, with a week's stopover before heading on to Christchurch and returning to Frankfurt from there.

Still lots of operators on the market here, so it is a hard job separating the wheat from the chaff. A number of sites whose names I cannot remember for the life of me still entice you in with a good-sounding offer which immediately becomes 100 € more expensive when you try to book it; forget it. The proffered excuse - that in the meantime the cheap tickets have been booked out - reeks of dishonesty. And the same prices crop up when you start a new inquiry. I don't know how these sites manage to survive, but it just goes to show that there is still enough stupidity around for black sheep to sponge off of.

With those sites out of the way, there is still the choice of a direct booking with an airline, or with a reputable agency. I had a look at Air New Zealand, but their multistop flight booking page seems to require major brain surgery, at least at first. With that out of the way, a couple of spectacular round the world flights come into view; unfortunately the prices are similarly spectacular and involve long waits. Back to the agents.



*Fat man*

One prominent advertiser is [fluege.de](http://fluege.de), but they do not seem to do Y-flights. Nor do they realise how appalling their mascot choice is. For some reason, there is sort of an “anything goes” approach to advertising in this country. In any case, the sight of two-dinners and three-seats Rainer Calmund giving the thumbs up makes me want to weigh up the pros and cons of sharing a cell with Kim Dotcom. No, [fluege.de](http://fluege.de) I am not sharing my row with this fat man, nor my lunch, nor even the aeroplane.

On to [opodo.de](http://opodo.de), which does have Y-flights, and also does allow a Rail & Fly option which significantly reduces the cost of the 3-hour train journey to Frankfurt. The only thing that makes me suspicious is that every day of the week is a Sunday in their calendar, and that nobody cares, because this has been this way for as long as I can remember.



Wir bearbeiten jetzt Ihre Buchungsanfrage. Bitte haben Sie ein wenig Geduld und klicken Sie nicht auf "Zurück" oder "Abbrechen".

**Flug 1**  
 Sun 01 Feb 2013  
 Frankfurt%20International%20Airport,%20Frankfurt%20am%20Main,%20Deutschland  
 %20%5BFR%5D  
 nach  
 Auckland%20International%20Apt,%20Auckland,%20Neuseeland%20%5BAK%5D

**Flug 2**  
 Sun 08 Feb 2013  
 Auckland%20International%20Apt,%20Auckland,%20Neuseeland%20%5BAK%5D  
 nach  
 Christchurch%20International%20Airport,%20Christchurch,%20Neuseeland  
 %20%5BCHC%5D

**Flug 3**  
 Sun 09 Feb 2013  
 Christchurch%20International%20Airport,%20Christchurch,%20Neuseeland  
 %20%5BCHC%5D  
 nach  
 Frankfurt%20International%20Airport,%20Frankfurt%20am%20Main,%20Deutschland  
 %20%5BFR%5D

**Flug 4**  
 Sun 22 Feb 2013  
 nach

und die Reise beginnt  
 über 700 Airlines  
 100.000 Hotels  
 7.000 Mietwagenstationen weltweit  
 - der TÜV-geprüfte Online-Reisebüro



### *Month of Sundays*

So a reasonable flight chosen (with Qantas), then through the entire booking system and in the end it transpires that there is no Rail & Fly for the return journey! Opodo's communications system is completely overloaded, so it takes them more than 24 hours to reply to an email, by which time booking the extra rail ticket attracts its own surcharge. Opodo? Fail! Is it really that difficult to put together a comprehensive booking system that doesn't require the customer to constantly check and double-check every time and still results in erroneous and incomplete bookings? If so, then I'll go directly to Deutsche Bahn next time; at least their prices are comparable and you can see what you order.



## Playing With Food

Long distance tramping is always challenging when it comes to balancing taking everything that you need with taking only what you need. I have a couple of formulas that I use to calculate how much food I need to take, but there is a more pressing question when most of the food you take is dehydrated in nature: How much fuel do you need to carry to cook it. My favourites of rice, instant noodles and surprise peas still need to be softened for their nutritional value to become available.



*Companions true*

I first took a small gas can and burner with me on the Waikaremoana Great Walk in September 2010, and was impressed by the performance. More than half of the gas was still in the can at the end; but this was far from being a controlled experiment, because I let the girls cook for me on night #2 at Waiopaoa, and they cooked ordinary noodles.

On the track, the amount of gas remaining can be quickly determined by shaking the bottle, or observing the condensation line formed as the gas is boiled off during burning. Having transported the gas can home without either blowing the plane up or being arrested for

transporting flammable materials (Are they joking? Most spray cans nowadays run off - flammable - butane), I decided that more accurate experimentation with the help of the kitchen scales was required.

Water can be brought from room temperature to boil with around 1 g per 100 mL, so that one gas can should be enough to boil 22.7 L of water. Low burning used up about 0.3-0.5 g/min, so that two sausages could be thoroughly cooked in 25 minutes using a total of about 10 g of gas per pair of snags. Practical quantities of rice (e.g. 200 g rice with 480 mL of water) used up 12 g of gas to boil and cook completely (using 20 minute parboiled rice). Now I am not sure that I would be using the gas burner for the simmer phase if there happens to be enough firewood for the hut stove. In any case, there is a small amount of gas that could be saved by buying 10 minute rice instead. Oh, and I fried 4 eggs with 6 g of gas, but I don't think I'll be taking the raw eggs with me to Stewart Island this time. Cooking 150 g of spaghetti requires boiling about 1.5 L of water (15 g gas) and leaving it to simmer for 10 minutes (5 g). The surprise peas can be cooked with the rice/spag. So all of the cooking, washing and drinking needs per day come to:

Breakfast: 500 mL water for coffee and washing up	5g
Drinking water: 1 L	10g
Rice dinner	12g
Spaghetti/Macaroni with cheese dinner	20 g
Instant noodles dinner (2 packs)	6g
Washing up: 500 mL	<b>5g</b>

Or about 33 g per day.

For the North-West Circuit (current planning: 10 days) this will mean two gas cans @ 227 g, even if some fuel can be saved by using the hut stoves.



*Waiau River, February 10, 2009*

## **Kiwi I, 1974-75**

The first trip to New Zealand was my first trip overseas at all, and my first flight. In those days passports were not necessary for travelling across the ditch (even if it meant it was a little tricky getting through the international airport that Tullamarine surely already was). From Tuesday, December 10, 1974 to Friday, January 31, 1975, starting in Christchurch we completed an almost figure-of-eight of the two islands.

Taking the road down south, first to Kurow and then to Dunedin we quickly reached Invercargill and crossed the Foveaux Strait for a couple of days on Stewart Island, including an ambitious tramp that only got as far as Big Bungaree. Back on the mainland we spent Christmas at Manapouri, taking in a couple of very touristy cruises in the Doubtful and Milford Sounds and embarking on another, less ambitious hike to Hope Arm and actually reaching the summit of the Monument. New Year's Eve was celebrated in Queenstown. Then it was up the west coast, past the Pancake Rocks (Punakaiki) and across to Picton where we spent a few days at the Blackwood Bay "boatel", an isolated near paradise.

Across to the North Island, we took the tractor ride to the gannets at Cape Kidnappers and then stayed about a week near and in Rotorua for the thermal attractions, first in Golden Springs, then in Rotorua itself. Then it was to the far north via Auckland and Whangarei to Paihia.

Then one final slog all the way through to Waitomo to see the caves and then past Mt Egmont to Stratford, with one stop just before Wellington and one more in Lower Hutt before returning to Melbourne in the evening.

My diary records every day where we went and what we did, and the photos that I took, but which are no longer in my possession. Apart from that there are only memories, and what more than a quarter of a century could do to memories I could only test on the next journey, which was for a long time uncertain when, if at all.



*Author, ca. 1976*

There were the motorcamps; Dunedin being a sand dune away from a surf beach; and at Greymouth the beach was only a short walk away. The expanse of Manapouri, and the bamboo, the swimming pool and the spout baths at Golden Springs, the canopied river at Paihia. The thermal park (which one?) whose track lead through a forest down a valley to the east. And somewhere up north there has been an intense fit of homesickness, when after being away from them for so long a plantation of light-soaked eucalypts replaced the cool darkness of the Southern beech forests.



*Hope Arm, first visited December 26, 1974; this photo: February 26, 2009*

Of course, there would be plenty of contamination of the old memories with newer images, particularly of the very touristy spots; but our lives change, changing our memories imperceptibly. But this was a lesson I was yet to learn.

## Choose your weapon, er, camera

If there's one area where you would be spoiled for choice, it would be choosing a camera. I made my choice, and it turns out that I made a good one, but it is many a snapshot and many a line of programming later that I would be able to say that. But, rather than go into all that, I can give a couple of tips about choosing a camera, any camera, in any case. Have a look for:

**Zoom.** A good zoom saves having to get up close. A moderate zoom of 3-4 is good for a start, and a zoom of 10 or more borders on the telescopic, if only at the Galilean level. However, take care to understand how the zoom is measured. I have seen a number of cameras with a claimed zoom of, say 14, but this is measured against a default focal length of 28 mm, instead of the usual 36 mm. This gives an effective focal length of 392 mm at zoom 14, which is not much more than a zoom of 10 would produce from a starting point of 36 mm (i.e. 360 mm). Keep in mind that a camera with a focal length of 28 mm is a wide angle device; the question is then whether you need a wide-angle camera. And only optical zoom counts here; the digital type is worthless.

**Macro.** A feature that allows really, really close-up shots (cm range) is useful for the microscopic end of things.



*Canons A470, SX120 and SX110*

**Batteries.** My logic behind choosing cameras that run off ordinary batteries, is that there might come a time when the camera's custom battery pack would give up the ghost and that the only alternative to utter despair would be run-of-the-mill batteries. That has yet to happen, but a further advantage of batteries, especially rechargeable ones, is that you can choose a reliable brand, instead of having to rely on the camera manufacturer's choice. A battery meter is not essential; just an indication before the batteries expire.

**Memory card.** Memory cards of the sort that require exact positioning of holes over pins generally result in the pins becoming bent; better look for cameras that use SD cards or similar, which have few contacts and can easily be slotted in and out.





*Lake Tekapo from Mt John, February 18, 2009*

Having said that, cameras should allow manual control over ISO (80-1600), shutter speed (0.001-15 s), aperture (f2.8-8), focus (0-8) and exposure bias ( $\pm 2$ ), as well as having automatic options. Video in reasonable quality, with sound recording. Time-delay shooting. And forget all the face-detection, special modes, “my colours” and print buttons. They won’t be missed.

As we shall see, such a camera in the price range under €150 would have a number of drawbacks that will have to be overcome, depending on the use the camera is put to. But I’d much rather drop a camera of that price into a river than one costing 10 or 20 times as much, wouldn’t you?

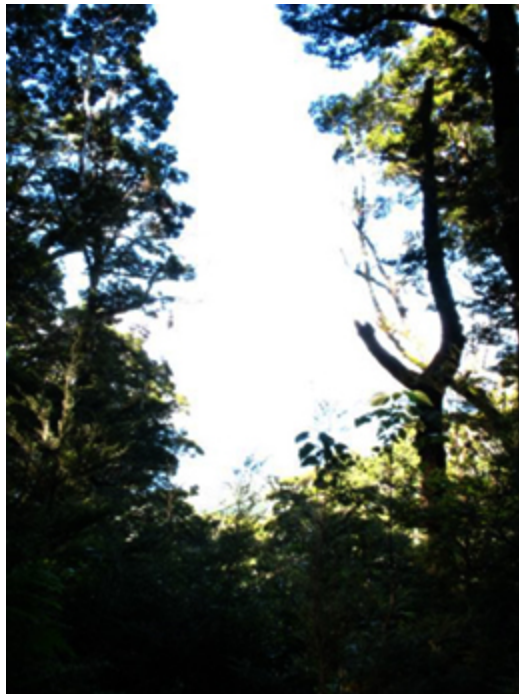
## Bracketing

**A** major drawback of digital photography, and one that I have been aware of all along, is the lack of dynamic range, the difference between how dark is going to finish up as black, and how light will result in pure white. The closer these two values are, the greater the contrast, but there will be no detail visible in light or dark sections. The eye and its brain have an extraordinary dynamic range which allows us to see details both in the very dark and the very bright at the same time.

However, digital photography also offers a way out. Since the shots themselves are dirt cheap, why not take a couple of shots at different exposures to allow detail in the very darkest and brightest regions to be recorded and then combine the images. The very simplest (and most simplistic) way of achieving this is to take one over- and one under-exposed shot. In the GIMP use a copy of the overexposed shot to make a pure black-and-white picture (via Colors → Threshold), blur it and use it as a layer mask for the underexposed shot. The white areas of the mask will show regions of the overexposed shot, whereas the black areas will come from the underexposed one. Not a bad result for a start.



*Underexposed*



*Overexposed*



*Threshold*

But all was not well. To begin with, I noticed even as I was taking this pair of shots that even with a tripod it was impossible to take two absolutely identical shots, because pressing the shutter rotated the camera ever so slightly. Coming down from Limestone Bluffs, where these shots of Te Anau were taken from in late February, 2009, I teamed up with an animationist from New York. Spotting my tripod he enquired what I was up to and I told him my woes. His suggestion: Use the Self-Timer to get a hands-free, stabilised shot. Duhh!

My friend got his reward, though, as he wanted to know what particular bird he had spotted. “That boid” was a New Zealand Wood Pigeon. So we both got something out of it.



*Blurred for layer mask*



*HDR combination*

The next problem that arose was that even with the tripod and the self-timer, the shots needed to be registered