

PUNCHY'S BRIDGE and ROAD

Topo50 Map: BH37 Rangitaiki

GPS: NZTM on WGS84

How to get to START: Exit Taupo on **SH5** for Napier:

- In about 20 minutes turn right into **Taharua Road**
- After another 7 – 8 minutes again turn right into **Clements Mill Road** which quickly becomes gravel and enters the forest.
- 5 minutes on this gravel road brings you to a car park on your left (**WP1**).
- Park here and follow the gravel road that leaves the back of the car park uphill into the forest.

The route can be traced on the map right where the major highway is labelled. Clements Mill road is shown leading from SH5 to WP1 whilst Punchy's Clearing is shown as WP12. There is some debate if the man who lived in here was known as Punchy or Punchie Wallace.

Rough description: A moderately, adventurous outing following paint marks and rough, uncharted tracks previously followed by TTC. As can be seen in the profile below the only real ascent and descent is over the hill with the quarry at the top right at the start of the outing – and this is only about 150 metres ascent. The walking is tricky since it is mostly on uncharted hunters' tracks or minor sections of bush-whacking - but it is nice soft going. The first part is on old, heavily overgrown logging road (**WPs 2 to 3**) and the latter part is on Punchy's Road (**WPs 11 -12**) which is an old, disused gravel road. Total walking time, including smoko and lunch, is 6 hours 30 minutes covering about 16.5km in total.

Detail: From the car park on Clements Mill Road (**WP1 804 masl**) head off S to SSE up the gravel road towards the quarry. This takes about 20 minutes as it is not the friendliest of starts to a tramp and is a bit steep in places. The quarry on the crest (**WP2 976 masl**) can be a bit wind-swept and running away from you on the right are a large number of dead trees – these are the results of a cyclone (Cyclone Bola?). Exit the bare, gravelly quarry area at the back, right hand side and go down an old, quite heavily overgrown logging track where progress is slowed further still by a few detours round rather large wind-falls and in negotiation through areas with flax, which is good at tripping the trumper and has similar effects to razor grass and will cut the skin.

After 55 minutes walking the track bends to the left and soon after this there is a "cabbage tree" almost in the middle of the track with a second about 100m after the first and a small, indistinct track goes off downhill (**WP3 766 masl**) just before a windfall to enter a small valley with native species, broadleaves etc. There should be some "orange" markers on the trees.

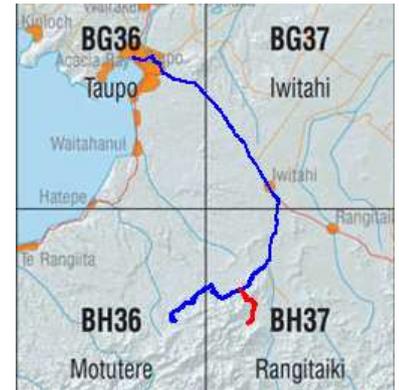
Seven minutes on this path brings you to a clearing (**WP4 739 masl**) where there are conifers growing at the edge and there is a fence down the W edge. Exit the clearing on the right hand side going slightly upwards through beech trees. There is a very clear U-bend (**WP5 738 masl**) with a short descent into a stream line or minor gully about 10 minutes after the clearing. This clearing has been known to the TTC as Merrylees Clearing but history indicates this is not the correct location of Merrylees.

The less than perfect path, which is not as yet overburdened with markers, continues through the forest and more mature native species trees are now seen before the Quarry Burn Hut is reached. This hut (**WP6 755 masl**) is easy to miss but is well worth trying to find as it appears it would be a perfect haven on a bad day. This is private property so treat in the usual respectful manner as the hunters who use and maintain it might not be too pleased. This is a good place for a 10–15 minute morning tea stop anyway. From the Hut back-track and head uphill to the South (**WP7 744masl**).

Quarry Burn Hut



Descend the bluff and in a matter of metres hit a gravel road then go right to Punchy's Bridge (**WP11 743masl**). This is "Punchy Wallace's" road and bridge, the bridge (**WP11 743masl**) being a wooden, very slippery Irish bridge which crosses the Mangatoatoa Stream. From here it is a 20 minute stroll along the track to reach the clearing where Punchy had his abode, but his hut has been removed and the site (**WP12 785masl**) cleared and all that remains is the clearing plus odd bits and pieces.



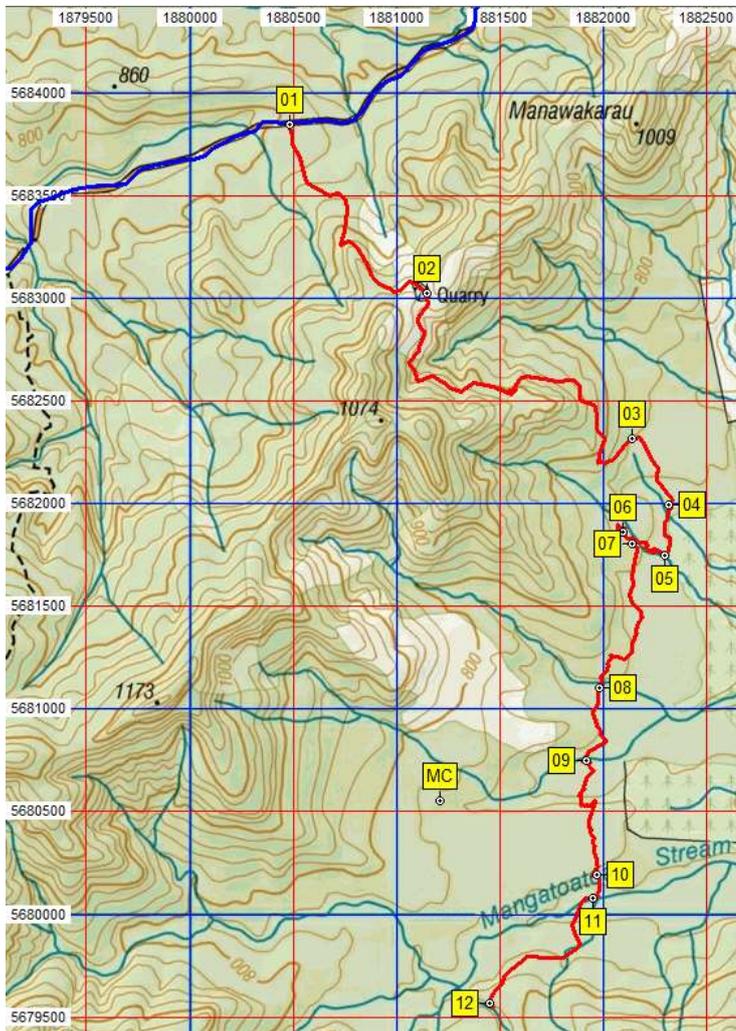
Access from Taupo as a GPS trace is the blue line superimposed on the mapped roads above whilst the tramp route is the red line

Trail paint mark on tree

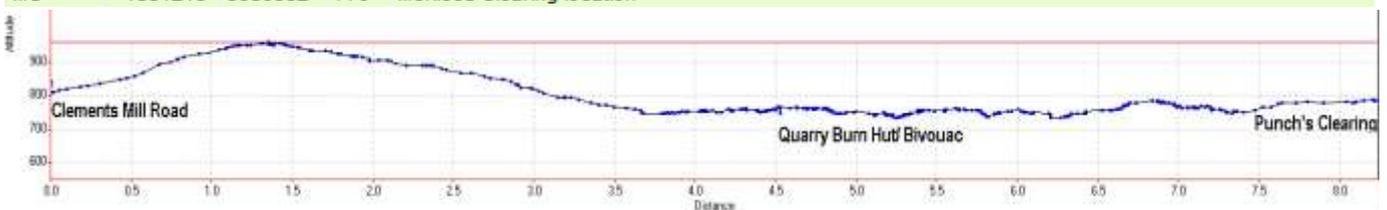


The clearing





Name	Easting	Northing	Alt...	Description
01	1880485	5683844	804	Car park on Clements Mill Road
02	1881145	5683022	976	20min (1.32km); Quarry after fair grunt on eroded track. Then overgrown downslope
03	1882138	5682318	766	1hr (3.40km); Minor track downhill to right after second cabbage tree and before third
04	1882317	5681996	739	1:15min (3.86km); Enter clearing and bear right on unclear track
05	1882298	5681748	738	1:20min (4.16km); Hard right on entering small valley
06	1882093	5681860	755	1:30min (4.71km); Quarry Burn Bivouac then back track post smoko
07	1882140	5681803	744	5min (4.92km) from Hut; Head R upslope, due S in small valley
08	1881978	5681101	738	2:20min (5.81km); Steep down into V-shaped valley and cross stream
09	1881917	5680749	736	2:30min (6.32km); Cross second stream line and head uphill and to the R on due South bearing
10	1881967	5680196	770	+/- 3hrs (7.14km); Steeplly downslope on minor bluffs
11	1881947	5680081	743	3:10min (7.34km); Degraded road at edge of collapsing Punchy's (Irish) Bridge over Mangatoatoa Strm
12	1881447	5679566	785	3:35min (8.24km); Punchy Wallace's clearing
MC	1881213	5680552	770	Merilees Clearing location



Punchy Wallace was a boxer who lived in this area and, seemingly, defended his hunting area and did not quite welcome visitors. The walk back takes virtually the same length of time as outwards as care must be used in staying on and not straying off the trail. The fact that this is a very popular hunting area might well explain the relative paucity of birdlife heard on the tramp, however the odd call was heard with Tui and Robin being mentioned and fantails did escort the party.

2012 Update: In October 2012 this tramp was revisited and the trip used as a GPS training exercise. It was discovered that a new track, well-marked with paint splodges, ran in a SE direction from WP09. This track was followed and it did offer fast progress but in fact it led away from the target of the outing. When this track reached the fence line of the exotic forest (pine trees) the group then had to "bush-bash" to get back on course. The outcome can be seen on the map extract on the right where the broken pink line is the original, recommended route.



- Notes:**
- GPS = Garmin GPSMap 60CSx
 - WP = Waypoint as taken by GPS unit
 - masl = metres above sea level (as recorded by GPS unit and may not agree exactly with map spot heights)