



Hills & Valleys

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE HUTT VALLEY TRAMPING CLUB (Inc)



Father Christmas heading to Ngauruhoe

Please submit your **March 2025** H&V articles to the editor by **28th February 2025**

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CLUB NIGHT PROGRAMME
Starts 7:30 pm promptly



5 February 2025 : Open Night

A chance for members to show about a dozen images of their recent activities or other topics that they feel may be of interest. If you have more than about a dozen slides that you wish to show, talk to Graeme McVerry or email him at graememcv2@xtra.co.nz about making a presentation of your own at a later club night.

12 February : Anna Yeoman – Geckos and skinks in the NZ backcountry

Author Anna Yeoman shares stories and photographs from her new book, *Geckos and Skinks: The Remarkable Lizards of Aotearoa*, a collection of gripping tales about lizard discoveries, research and conservation in the New Zealand wilds.

Her book will be on sale on the night for \$55, bring cash or you can bank transfer.

19 February : Kyle Marshall – Matiu-Somes Island wharf project

Kyle, a Project Engineer with Brian Perry Civil, managed the engineering, programme, budget and overall running of the site for the duration of the works on the Matiu-Somes Island wharf project.

His presentation will cover the scope of the project, how it was built and the challenges faced along the way, His talk comes highly recommended by club members who heard his presentation to the Eastbourne Forest Rangers in August.

26 February : Emma Gregg and Louise Hammersley – Current FMC projects

FMC Executive Member Emma Gregg from Palmerston North will discuss current projects and issues being tackled by FMC. Emma is also Vice-Chair of the Greater Wellington Backcountry Network, so is well aware of Wellington and Manawatu tramping issues. Emma will be accompanied by new FMC Executive Member Louise Hammersley from Wellington. Both are keen to meet HVTC members.

5 March : Jonty Crane – Hiking in Timor-Leste (1)

Jonty Crane spent a year in Timor-Leste (East Timor). One of the least visited countries in the world, it is an undiscovered hiking gem just north of Australia. In the first of two talks Jonty will share his experiences in this "undiscovered hiking gem", including day walks around the capital Dili, and an eight-day hike across the country. His second presentation is scheduled for 26 March.

UPCOMING EVENT



FORTHCOMING TRIPS



NOTES

Where there is no leader given for a trip, please email tripcoordinator@hvtc.org.nz to volunteer to lead a trip, either as shown or an alternative.

| FEBRUARY | | | | |
|-----------------|-----|---|-----|------------------------|
| Tue 4 | | Pauatahanui Inlet North Trail | | Tony and Jo |
| | | Colonial Knob Area | | Leader Required |
| 6 - 9 | | Waitangi Weekend (needs Friday off work) | | |
| 6 | D1+ | Ohau Gorge | | Tania Hatfield |
| 8 - 9 | T1 | Powell Hut (FMC Love Your Huts) | Van | Emma / Debbie |

| | | | | |
|--------------|---|--|-----|------------------------|
| Sun 9 | D1+ | Climie Ridge | | Jackie and Chris |
| | | Clothes Optional - Pakuratahi | | Patrick |
| |  | Bike ride 2hrs - 9.30 from Avalon Park | | Leena |
| Tue 11 |  | Makara MTB Park | | Leader Required |
| |  | Wright's Hill | | Paul Labett |
| 15 - 16 | T1 | Atiwhakatu Campout | | Jim Cousins |
| | T2 | Leader's Choice of Destination | | Leader Required |
| 16 - 19 | T1 | Routeburn Track | | Marina |
| 21 - 24 | T1 | Kepler Track | | Marina |
| Sun 16 | D1 | Gollans Valley Explore | | Bernice and Bob |
| |  | Bike ride 2hrs - 9.30 from Avalon Park | | Leena |
| Tue 18 |  | Battle Hill | | Leader Required |
| |  | Battle Hill | | Leader Required |
| 22 - 23 | T1 | Leader's Choice of Destination | | Leader Required |
| | T2 | Leader's Choice of Destination | | Leader Required |
| Sun 23 | D1 | Mountain House Circuit | | Bernice and Bob |
| | D2 | Full Tauherenikau Gorge | | Tania Hatfield |
| |  | Bike ride 2hrs - 9.30 from Avalon Park | | Leena |
| ~24 – 3 Mar | WP | Waitewaewae Painting Party | | Murray Presland |
| Tue 25 |  | Pt Howard to Petone | | Helen Lukes |
| |  | ECNZ Pylon Track | | Leader Required |
| MARCH | | | | |
| 1 - 2 | T1 | Pinus Contorta (Environmental Weekend) | Van | John Simes |
| | T2 | Environmental Trip | | Leader Required |
| Sat 1/Sun 2 | WP | Te Awa Kairangi – Ava Park Work Party | | Clare Kelly |
| Sun 2 | D1 | Turere Loop | | Jim Cousins |
| |  | Bike ride 2hrs - 9.30 from Avalon Park | | Leena |
| Tue 4 |  | Remutaka Incline | | Tony and Jo |
| |  | Tunnel Gully MTB Tracks | | Leader Required |

FROM THE GENERAL COMMITTEE

WE'RE GETTING A NEW CLUB VAN

The extraordinary general meeting on 22 January voted to replace our van with a new Toyota ZX Hiace minibus.

Most of the 50-plus members at the meeting spoke in support of a new van, and several people expressed concerns and had questions.

Doc Watson and I have followed up with King Toyota about two key issues raised.

Safety ratings

The Toyota ZX Hiace minibus we have ordered does not have an ANCAP safety rating. However, other Toyota Hiace models from 2019 onwards with the same safety features have a five-star ANCAP safety rating.

Toyota does not put all variants of a model through the ANCAP safety tests because of the expense (\$750,000 each in one article I read).

It has tested the two-seater and five-seater Toyota Hiace vans, which share the same platform and features as our minibus model and scored the maximum five-star safety rating.

More information is here: [Toyota Hiace | Safety Rating & Report | ANCAP](#)

There are several other safety ratings for vehicles. The Rightcar website gives 2022-2024 Toyota ZX Hiace minibus models a five-star safety rating.

More information is here: [Vehicle detail: TOYOTA HIACE - Rightcar NZ](#)

By contrast, our 2001 Ford Transit van has a Rightcar safety rating of one star.

More information is here [Vehicle detail: FORD TRANSIT - Rightcar NZ](#)

Warranty

The van we have ordered comes with a three-year or 100,000km mechanical warranty that converts into a five-year/150,000km warranty after the first three years of servicing at a Toyota dealership are completed.

The warranty covers everything on the van except for wear and tear items, such as wiper blades, tyres, and brake pads.

What's next

Our Toyota Hiace is on order, but it could be several months before it arrives.

In the meantime, we will review the processes around van use and our club transport fares. Please let me know if you'd like to help with the review.

Thank you for the feedback and questions from everyone at the EGM and in recent months. I'm also grateful to my fellow transport sub-committee members for their work assessing club transport options last year – that took a lot of work. And a huge thank you to the generous members who have donated to our van replacement fund.

I'm really looking forward to the arrival of our comfortable, easy-to-drive new van and I hope all members have the chance to enjoy it in the coming years.



Image borrowed from Google

Marina Skinner

HVTC President

UPCOMING EVENTS

HVTC ENVIRONMENT WEEKEND ACTIVITIES

28 FEB -2 MARCH 2025

John Simes

Environment weekend has two trips on offer. If you have not been on one of these trips before it would be great if you could join us as there are sure to be new and interesting things for you to experience.

Trip 1, Pinus contorta eradication leaving clubrooms 28th Feb at 10am

Come and join us for an excellent weekend traversing interesting topography and botany on the south slopes of Mount Ruapehu above the Karioi exotic pine forest. We will be on a seek and destroy mission for wilding pines, just below the round the mountain track. We work as Dept. of Conservation volunteers, so we are cared for by DOC in various ways. They subsidise our transport, provide a camping spot and a portaloos and much of the evening meal for Saturday night. We will travel to Ohakune on Friday where we will camp at the DOC base (with facilities) for an 8am start Saturday morning. We camp Saturday night in a stunning patch of beech forest very close to the work. We return home after a Sunday morning of more pine weeding. I hope to vary the journey this year by going through Fielding and Kimbolton and coming out just north of Mangaweka via Ruahine Road, a much more scenic route. We leave the clubrooms in the van at 10am Friday 28th February and return Sunday 2nd March, leaving Karioi between 1 and 2pm. We arrive in Ohakune in good time to set up camp and then stroll into town for an evening meal. Transport by van is free and food is subsidised so there is very little cost for the weekend. Bring your best sleeping pad as there will be plenty of van space. Also bring the usual storm and sun protection, breakfast, lunch, snacks, all drinks and a bit of cash for the Friday night meal. Tools supplied by DOC but bring your favourite gardening gloves if you like.

Leader John Simes 027 464 1824.

Trip 2 Ava Park bush patch care, Saturday 1st March from 9 am.

HVTC has adopted a small patch of bush to care for on the banks of Te Awa Kairangi in Ava Park. The project has gone well with huge piles of mulch and many new plants added over the last 3 years. The task now is to simply reduce the weed burden by finding and releasing whatever plants can be located. Weeds can be left where they fall as mulch. There is a small amount of blackberry so it would be good if someone who knows how to deal with this does so. The other task is to socialise and join in for a convivial morning tea. Bring your thermos, cake will be provided. Bring gloves, secateurs, hedge clippers, drinks, and sun protection. Ava Park is accessed from the eastmost end of Wakefield Street on the West side of the Hutt River. Walk up and over the flood embankment and you will see the patch of bush we are caring for pretty easily. It is the third patch of bush upstream of the Ava Train Bridge and on the west side of the cycleway.

Leader is Clare Kelly swordfish100@hotmail.com

RUAPEHU LODGE WORK PARTY

21 - 23 March 2025

Kate Brownsword



The first Ruapehu Lodge work party of 2025 is scheduled for the weekend of 21 – 23 March. Here is your chance to help with the maintenance that keeps the lodge running for you. The "après work" facilities are outstanding. So come and join in the fun.

We are looking for 10-12 able bodied persons to undertake thorough spring cleaning of the lodge, food stock take, changing mattress covers etc. Extensive maintenance skills are not a requirement.

We won't have the benefit of using the chair lift for access this year so all tools and materials will have to be carried, although we don't expect to have too much of this.

If you are interested, please contact Kate Brownsword on ph. 027 562 0177 or the.brownswords@xtra.co.nz.

As the lodge will be open that weekend, if you wish to come up and enjoy the mountain but not participate in the work party, the usual very cheap summer rate of \$35 per night applies and there are plenty of yummy roasts in the freezer to be eaten! Book with the Booking Officer in the usual way at Ruapehubookings@hvtc.org.nz.

Kate

OTARI NATIVE PLANT MUSEUM
Guided Walk - Saturday 25th May 2025
Bernice Deller

I am organising a guided walk around the Otari Native Plant Museum for Saturday 25th May. The trip will be in the morning but the time hasn't been decided yet. I thought this might be of interest to club members. The walk will take approximately an hour and a half and is a very easy walk. I thought learning about the plants that are native to our region may be of interest and learning about plants that we could grow in our own backyards. Otari Native Plant Museum has the most extensive collection of native plants in the country. The cost for the walk is \$20 per person.

Afterwards we could have lunch in the gardens and have a hike around the tracks there.

If you are interested, could you email me at bandb1875@gmail.com

Ngā mihi

Bernice.

FMC NEWS
Nick McBride

You might have seen from the FMC newsletter that I am now a member of the FMC executive. This came about after David Barnes asked me during a day walk if I would be interested. He explained there had been a shortfall of candidates so the executive would be co-opting two members. I said "sure, why not" and David passed my name onto Megan Dimozantos. After a few weeks I talked to Megan and submitted my profile as a candidate.

The HVTC general committee kindly nominated me and David arranged for Otago TC to do likewise. Many thanks to both clubs! The other co-optee is Louise Hamersley from Victoria University TC; great to have a younger perspective! The attraction in my case was apparently my legal background.

A number of months into my tenure I've been struck by the number of emails FMC executive members send to each other. This partly because there are many significant campaigns relevant to our work, and to all trampers. This includes the Fast Track Amendment Bill, a pending review of the Conservation Act and proposals by DoC to charge for huts and carparking. I'm also struck by how busy Megan is and one of things I would like to help with is options to relieve the pressure.

I've had one committee meeting in person in Christchurch and have joined a few other meetings. One offering is the Club korero where clubs are invited to dial in and discuss issues directly with the FMC executive. Unfortunately, on one club participated! The time of Wednesday 7pm may have limited HVTC participation.

I look forward to working with my fellow FMC members, who I met in Christchurch and joined for dinner and a walk into the Port Hills. There is a lot for FMC to do and I look forward to the continued support of HVTC. Please feel free to approach me if anyone has any questions about the work before the FMC.

Nick

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Welcome to the following new members who joined the club in late 2024.

Jo McFarland, Helen Stapleton, Sylvia Jackson, Abdullah Chaudry, Darren Stevens and Mary Horner.

I'm sure a lot of members have already enjoyed their company on trips, and we look forward to many more enjoyable times.

Doreen Courtenay

Membership Officer

SPECIAL REPORT : CHRISTMAS IN THE LODGE 2024

Sheldon and Rachel Bruce

For many years we have wondered what it would be like to spend Christmas in the Ruapehu Lodge and 2024 turned out to be the time to try it out. We would normally be more distracted by the thoughts of sun and sea but in 2024 our daughter Laura was working in hospitality at the Knoll Ridge Café on the Whakapapa Skifield so we decided to join her at the lodge.

We arrived on Christmas Eve and made two trips up with the Christmas paraphernalia. We decided we needed to do this right so we took up a Christmas tree, presents, decorations, fairy lights, the right sort of food and even Father Christmas on skis. Christmas Day was fine and warm and we enjoyed good food, family and a couple of glasses of wine.

Laura worked on Boxing Day and we took a trip up the Sky Waka gondola and had gourmet burgers for lunch. Laura arranged for us to travel in the glass-floored gondola which was a pretty cool experience.

The following day we walked from the lodge via the Yankee, Aeroplane Gully and Delta Corner then on up to enjoy the views from Skyline Ridge above Te Heuheu Valley. That was a very pleasant 3 hour walk that traversed a lot of country that we routinely ski over so was all very interesting. A sandwich and a beer in the café was followed by walk back down the Staircase to the lodge.

I would thoroughly recommend Christmas or other summertime trips in the lodge. You can plan your own tramps but if you're looking for something a bit less strenuous the summer experience



Christmas Eve

currently being offered by RAL is excellent. The trip on the gondola is supported by a good quality summer menu including high teas (need to be pre-booked) and there are a range of marked walking trails around the mountain.

Sheldon



Rachel on Skyline Ridge



The lodge looking Christmasy

TRIP REPORTS

WAIORONGOMAI HUT

7 September 2024

Andrew Robinson

A late call to change a weekend tramp in Hawke's Bay to a day tramp in the Remutaka Forest Park proved to be a good move. With just two days' notice my trip to Waiorongomai hut had three takers in the form of Doc Watson, Nick Brownsword and Lyneke Onderwater.

Being a short tramp and not a long drive we had a leisurely 8:30 a.m. departure and we started tramping at 10:05. The route was up the Waiorongomai River for the first half hour and we crossed it several times. Fortunately the water wasn't cold. It was windy so when we left the river and the track took us to a sheltered patch of bush, morning tea was called. Lyneke spotted some orchids where we'd stopped and on the rest of the walk she pointed out a variety of plants. I don't know that I'll remember any of the names but it was good to have confirmed what I thought was the case in that the vegetation around there is a bit different from what you'd get in the Tararuas. From our morning tea spot through to the hut was mostly on a track but with multiple river crossings. In several places there was a steep drop



Nick and Doc in the Waiorongomai River

into the river but there was always a rope for support there when one was needed. Being my third trip into the hut the route was pretty familiar but there did seem to be a couple more sections than I remember where the track was in the river rather than on the bank. The wind gradually picked up and it was interesting to note while mostly it was a head wind there were times when it was a tail wind.

We got to the hut in time for lunch and having decided the weather wasn't the best for further exploring we had a leisurely lunch. A group of five had turned up at the carpark just as we were starting, and they arrived at the hut about quarter of an hour after us. One of them had a lightweight 2-person tent that he was going to sleep in that night and seeing the way it was erected made me appreciate as much as ever the simplicity of my Macpac Olympus. The hut was in a sheltered spot so he probably wasn't going to have concerns with the wind. The wind picked up on our way out and at times was blowing spray off the river. On one crossing I nearly got blown over, not something I've experienced on a river crossing before. Unfortunately, Lyneke lost her hat when it got blown off and went sailing down the river at a rate of knots. We didn't bother with any stops on the way out so were back at the carpark at 3:20. I think we'd all enjoyed a not too strenuous walk with plenty of variety and the odd minor challenge.

Andrew

GOAT STREAM

3 November 2024

Andrew Robinson

In September Marina asked me if I would lead the longer of two introductory day trips planned for 3 November. Most of the planning had been done and I was available so I was happy to oblige. Although there were plenty of new people interested in the easy trip there was only one interested in mine, but one was better than none. Murray and Chriselda McMillan and Nick McBride decided to join me to make a total of five.



Looking down Mukamuka Stream

We left the carpark ahead of the easy group and got to the Orongorongo River an hour and ten minutes later. We had morning tea then headed up the river for twenty minutes. Our newbie Siewmin (like Swimming she said) had done a lot of tramping in New Zealand but I don't think she'd done river crossings before. Apart from being a cold day it was a good opportunity to learn about river crossing. We crossed the river several times before we got to Goat Stream. The stream had no water in it which I mention because I know from experience that it's easy to miss the track if you're looking for a stream

with water in it. Having found the track easily enough this time we got to Goat Stream hut in five minutes. From there the aim was to get onto the spur on the northern side of the stream and follow it all the way to the head of the stream where I'd been told there is a slip with good views. I hadn't been on the spur before but figured there would be a well-worn trail if not a marked track. The only question was what was the best point to get onto the spur. I had slightly differing information from Patrick, Dave H and I think Jim but I figured it didn't matter too much. As we left the hut I told the others to look out for a track to our left and not even a minute later we found a permolat arrow pointing to South Saddle which is near the head of the stream so we had found the start of our route. We climbed for an hour on a steep, quite well- marked track, which we only lost a couple of times. We stopped at a fork in the track where we had to decide to turn right for the head of the stream or left for South Saddle. If we went right, we had more climbing ahead of us and would probably have to return the way we'd come whereas if we went to South Saddle and continued on to the Mt Matthews track it might add half an hour to our trip but would give added variety and would probably be easier. Everybody agreed to head for South Saddle where I guessed there would be a good lunch spot. Nick had been on the route before, so he led the way. We sidled for quarter of an hour then the bush turned to scrub. We could see South Saddle 50-100 metres away but from Nick's previous visit and from what Dave had told me the direct route was not the best route to take. Either we lost the track, or the track disappeared, but we spent about 10 minutes bush-bashing until we stumbled onto a track that would take us to South Saddle. We were still about the same distance from South Saddle as when we left the bush but we were sheltered and there was a bit of grass so I decided to make it our lunch stop. The sun was out and we had a great view so we had a very pleasant break. When we decided it was time to get moving again the sun disappeared and it got cold quite quickly.

Five minutes after lunch we got to South Saddle where we could see down the Mukamuka Stream to the coast. There is a route that follows the stream to the coast but I have yet to do it. The 1971 story from 100 years, 100 stories describes a trip that included the Mukamuka Stream, in a parody of a trip in the vicinity of Mt Cook I believe. Ten minutes after the saddle we reached the Mt Matthews track which was familiar territory for most of us. In terms of gradient and height loss/gain the descent to Matthews Stream was much the same as the ascent beside Goat Stream and took almost as long. Three quarters of an hour down the Orongorongo River we reached the Orongorongo track which again took an hour and ten minutes. Total time was seven and a half hours, only half an hour longer than estimated. We all had an enjoyable day, including Siewmin who unfortunately is unlikely to join us again as she is leaving Wellington early 2025.

Andrew

MANGATOETOE HUT
16-17 November 2024
Andrew Robinson

I put my hand up to lead the trip to Mangatoetoe hut for part of HVTC's contribution to the FMC Love our Huts campaign which ran through November, and I was joined by five other volunteers.

A few days out the forecast wasn't looking good but being just a short walk (the drive to the start is longer than the walk), only a significant weather event was going to stop us. The forecast improved and in the end the weather wasn't too bad. We didn't get rained on but did keep our coats on the whole way as it was cold and windy. Fortunately, it was a tail wind. To about the halfway mark we mostly followed the Mangatoetoe Stream bed then the rest of the way to the hut

we were mostly on a marked track which was mostly in the bush. We got to the hut at 12 o'clock so we had lunch before starting on the spring clean.

The checklist from FMC guided our tasks. Tony did a fine job of removing grass around the base of the hut, to stop condensation and rot. Derek did a splendid job of cleaning the toilet while Chris volunteered for the unenviable task of retrieving the rubbish from under the hut. Doc cleaned the windows while Elaine and I did the walls and ceiling. The hut has an open fire so the walls and ceiling, particularly close to the fire, were brown. Fortunately, all it needed was a damp cloth to make it presentable - not quite white, but a vast improvement on what it was. Other jobs we tackled were cleaning up the fireplace (Tony) and scrubbing the mould off the water tank (Doc and me). All up we spent about four hours spring cleaning, and everyone worked solidly in that time.

After a traditional macaroni cheese dinner there was time for reading. A previous occupant had left a decent light hanging from the ceiling, so we made good use of it.

Sunday the two jobs we had left to do - wiping down a couple of mattresses and doing a thorough sweep of the floor - didn't take long so we were away at quarter past nine. Actually, make that three jobs. The final job was to carry out the rubbish left behind by previous hut occupants, mostly bottles and cans. As Chris pointed out, if someone has gone to the effort of carrying in a full bottle they're quite capable of carrying the empty bottle out.



Job done!

On the way out we followed the route we'd taken on the way in as far as the halfway point then we managed to pick up a trail on the true right. That went for a decent distance and when we got to the stream again, we picked up the trail on the true left. It was through lupins which was easier going underfoot than the stream bed but not as easy to tell which way to go. When we next got to the stream, I led us astray following what wasn't a track. We bush-bashed through some head-high manuka back to the stream then stuck

to the stream for all but the last half kilometre or so which was on decent track that is not shown on the most recent LINZ map.

From the carpark it was a ten-minute drive around the coast to the Cape Palliser lighthouse. In climbing the 253 steps to the lighthouse we gained almost as much height as we had on the hour and a half walk to the hut. It was a calm day and we got some great views but I expect that's not always the case. From the lighthouse we drove to Pirinoa and stopped at the café for lunch. From Pirinoa it was an hour and forty minutes back to the clubrooms and crunching the numbers that means that we spent just over twice as much time on the road as we did on the track.

Many thanks to the volunteers: Doc Watson, Derek and Elaine Richardson, Chris Hobbs and Tony Jaegers

Andrew

WAIIOPEHU HUT

Saturday 30th November 2024

Debbie Labett

Emma and I had great support for trip #3 of our Hut Bagging series.

We had 9 unsuspecting trampers sign up for this Grade 1 easy trip

The club van set off from clubroom enroute to pick up Debbie, Bev, Steve and Mimi from Silverstream

Thanks to our trustee driver Emma we set off heading towards Levin

Given the tradition of previous easy trips, we stopped at Salt and Pepper cafe in Levin, located at the back of a lovely garden centre.

Back into the van drove to the Poads road end, allocated party gear for each person to carry.

Signed intention book, more people started arriving

We thought hmmm 18 bunk hut, this will be cosy or overcrowded, do we continue?

Emma and I decided, Yes let's just do it.

DOC signboard time frame said to allow 4-5 hours to the hut (Easy tramping track)

Off we set crossing private farmland for 1km before reaching Tararua Forest park boundary.

Climbed over a couple of stiles, followed the Ohau track for 8km.

Well let me tell you by the end of this trip, I feel it would be fair to regrade this trip.

The NZ Wilderness and DOC reviews state easy 3.5 to 4 hour trail.

Having hiked this trail, both these statements are misleading.

We found this track very rough up through the forest, it is marked well enough that you would not get lost.

There are no places to gather water, you will need to be self-sufficient and carry enough water for 5 to 6 hours.

There are no zig zags to take the sting out of the climb.

The stone and clay steps had become mini streams, thank goodness for sturdy walking boots and gaiters.

I was pleased I had my walking pole.

Some would say the track is muddy, this is an understatement, it was very boggy in most places due to the weather in which we were tramping.

It certainly was a good slog up to the Hut, we crossed several board walks, uncountable tree roots not to mention mud, mud and more mud!!!

Our new saying was "Embrace The Mud"

Bev kept us in good spirits by counting 20 seconds during some respite moments of no mud, then boom we hit the mud again.

You just gotta love that sucking sound as one boot succumbs to the depth of mud, taking care not to fall in as you pull one foot out whilst trying to keep one's balance.

Bobs attitude was to walk straight through the middle, this proved to be effective, no point trying to skirt around the edge.

He was an amazing support to the slower ones in the group by offering to be tail end Charlie along with the lovely Tony Jaegers.

We got to see and hear several birds, lovely views across the river and surrounding peaks



We have never been so ecstatic to reach a hut after very slow progress. Due to track being very slippery.

There was a youth group of a dozen kids with their support leaders. Very well behaved I must add.

Encountered our fellow singing Americans (the young couple we had met at Roaring Stag Hut on previous trip)

Once billy was brewed, hot drinks and nibbles had, we tucked into the delicious tacos followed by steam pudding.

We managed to accommodate 30 people into an 18 bunk hut, one party decided to walk out, some slept on the floor and a couple outside on the deck.

Thanks for the great company on this trip: Emma Dobbie, Debbie Labett, Toney Jaegers, Bob Deller, Tania Hatfield, Vera De Graauw, Bev Slater, Steve MacDonald and Richard Polley (Dickie)

Statistics: Distance 9.5km

Elevation gain 867m

My Strava stats show tramp in took 5.58 hours includes stops

3.50 hours to tramp out

Debbie



PAPATAHI HUT

1-2 December 2024

Jackie West.

As part of our get fit for Marina's two Great Walk tramps during February 2025 Chris and I decided to lead an overnighter to Papatahi Hut. After checking out the DOC booking site we discovered it was impossible to book Papatahi for Saturday night so decided to stay Sunday night instead. Knowing Diana our neighbour had never been on an overnight tramp I let her know that it would be the ideal tramp for a first overnighter. This trip then became part of the FMC Love Our Huts campaign with ten keen hut cleaners participating.

Loaded up with rubber gloves and cleaning equipment we left the Catchpool carpark at 9.20 am on Sunday morning. On reaching the Orongorongo River we stopped for a leisurely morning tea before continuing on up the river valley arriving at the hut by 12.45pm. As the hut was to be cleaned it was decided that we would leave the packs outside but have lunch before starting the cleaning. But first we chose to inspect the inside of the hut. I called out the door code as someone punched it into the keypad but to no avail. The code was checked and various people tried to enter it still with no luck. On finding a window on the other side was unlocked Sam was able to wriggle his way in and open the door.

With lunch over everyone got busy cleaning. Chris disappeared up the track to the toilet for well over an hour. The Brownswords scrubbed the water tank, Doreen and I washed down the mattresses on the deck where the warm weather meant it didn't take long for them to dry. They were also in much better condition than the mildew covered mattresses Chris and I had scrubbed as clean as possible five years ago at Waitewaiwai Hut. The rest of the group tackled the inside of the hut. By late afternoon Papatahi was spick and span. The pre-dinner entertainment was watching Kate and Nick erect their new tent for the first time. Next morning they announced that the tent had been a good purchase as they could both sit up in it. They had also heard numerous kiwi and ruru during the night.



Before departing on Sunday we did a final tidy up. Tony had discovered a pile of used toilet paper up the track from the loo and armed with shovel covered it up. Chris and I walked further up the track in search of fire wood and much to our disgust discovered a number of smaller piles of toilet paper which we also covered up.

We were away at 8.30 am having locked the door and shutting but not locking Sam's window. On the way out we met three DOC rangers and reported to them the problem with the door. We reached the car park before midday so some chose to picnic there while others headed home for lunch. Many thanks to the participants for the great team work in cleaning Papatahi Hut.

The cleaning team were: Doreen Courtenay, Diana Rickman, John Smeith, Sam Visvalingam, Jo Scott, Tony Birtwistle, Kate and Nick Brownsword and Chris and Jackie West.

Jackie

HAWKINS HILL EXPLORE

Sunday 12 January 2025

Heather Eskdale

A picture speaks a thousand words!! The weather was certainly less than ideal – cloudy, grey, windy with the promise of random showers and cool temperatures. It certainly delivered ALL of those! However, undeterred, 16 hardy trampers set off from Disley Street, Highbury for the 16km explore along the Wellington Hills. More of an urban walk than a full on tramp, it took us along some lovely tracks. Initially following the Zealandia fence line, it then branched onto tracks with quirky names such as Highland Fling and Sawmill. After approx 1 hour 20 minutes, we reached the wind turbine. Today, with the weather as it was, it was rotating at a mighty speed and making a magnificent noise in the wild, gusty wind! A hot drink at morning tea was very welcome, however, as we sat, the rain came at us sideways!



Letting the worst of it pass, we set off once more, forward along Car Parts extension track, onto Barking Emu track (yet another quirky name) toward the now smaller, green and grey dome on Hawkins Hill.

The tracks themselves are very gentle, with minimum undulation. It's more of an amble than a "grit your teeth" type of walking generally – however, I can assure you many of us were gritting our teeth against the punishing weather! Southerly icy rain and gusty wind came at us and we were all in our wet weather gear, and layered up.

With views today out of the question, we barely paused at the dome and made a quick turn back to a slightly more sheltered spot to rush down a bit of lunch energy for the return walk. Today, we did not muck around and walked briskly along the road, past the mysterious Woofington's Luxury Dog Stay and then once more along the Zealandia fence line. The weather kindly cleared a little and we were treated to some diverse bird sightings from the sanctuary. So we finished back at the cars in finer weather, which was a treat. The bad weather was soon forgotten and we felt the sense of accomplishment from having been "active in the elements" with a fabulous group of people.

Trampers on the day

Jackie and Chris West, Marina Skinner, Clare Kelly, Sharman Robinson, Jan Arts, Sylvia Jackson, Vera de Graauw, Leanne Asher, Valray Climo, Lex Grubner, Tania Hatfield, Tony Birtwistle, Jo Scott, Rob Buxton, Heather Eskdale

The walk was approximately 16.5 km and our moving time was 3 hours 57 minutes.

Heather



SIBERIA AND BEYOND

25 and 26 January 2025

Ann Hayman

On Saturday, HVTC intrepid cyclists set off riding the Remutaka cycle trail from their homes in the Hutt valley meeting along the way at Korokoro, Melling, Silverstream or Te Marua. Three joined us by car from further afield in Wellington bringing the group size to ten riders. It was hot, and a much-needed snack and drink stop at the Te Marua dairy picnic table fortified us for the next part of the journey.

From Te Marua we rode through Tunnel Gully, along Plateau Road, under the bush canopy on Station Road, past the gun club and on up the 10km Remutaka Rail Incline part of the cycle trail. Lunch was at the picnic table and stream area below the first incline tunnel, and another drink and sweat replacement stop at the Summit shelter. Through the Summit Tunnel and over Siberia bridge which was gentle and calm on this nearly windless day. Beyond Siberia it was all downhill to Cross Creek before the most challenging part of the ride, the single track to the Cross Creek Road and the final 10km to Featherston.



Debbie, Neil, Vera and Lex beyond Siberia

At the Featherston Motels we rehydrated for an hour on the verandah, showered and walked five minutes to the Royal Hotel. The menu choice was excellent, and the restaurant and bar area decorated and upgraded beautifully and comfortably. We all came to life, with renewed energy sharing many stories and plans.

Next day, one member took the train/bus replacement home. Nine cyclists retraced their tyre tracks for the return route, stopping for massive rehydration at the Summit under the trees. Then it was all downhill with a regroup at Te Marua dairy picnic table for lunch. Here we made our farewells as riders peeled off to cars or down the Hutt River trail to turn off for home.



Neil and Tony repairing a tubeless tyre – notice how the tyre has collapsed and sucked inwards to itself by the internal “goop”

By the end of our ride, the list of unexpected incidents included two flat tyres, two falls, one lost wallet, one E bike battery refusing to start on Sunday and one loose jacket arm caught in a derailleur. No problems for this group. Neil, Tony, Helen and Lex became even better flat tyre fixers learning to put tubes in tubeless flat tyres. Lex demonstrated apt first aid skills on Helen's wounds. Debbie showed Tony how to use his mobile phone App to “lock” his money card which was lost with the wallet and she figured out how to kickstart the battery into an operating mode which was a relief for Jo. Helen extracted her jacket arm from the back wheel without further incident. It was a team effort all weekend.

The distance was nearly 140km for those from southern Hutt, with less for those meeting further up the valley. We felt the heat on Saturday, dodged the heavy rain forecast for Sunday and counted ourselves very lucky with the weather. We all enjoyed the ride to Siberia and beyond whether on an E or manual bike and felt very satisfied with our efforts. Thanks to everyone for a terrific weekend ride.

Cyclists; Debbie Bainbridge, Lex Grubner, Helen Kettles, Vera de Graauw, Bruce Anderson, Frieda Collie, Tony and Jo Birtwhistle, Neil Parker, Ann Hayman

Ann

JUST A THOUGHT

Pat Tristram

The lack of leaders and trips was mentioned at the recent EGM and seems to be talked about anecdotally. But there do seem to be a number of trips being run currently, which we hear about at Club nights and sometimes see on Facebook and read about in Hills and Valleys. A cursory look at trip reports of Club trips over the last 12 months in Hills and Valleys publications, range from one trip account (in three H & Vs) to four trips (in two H & Vs). Given there is the potential for four weekend trips and four day trips each month, this isn't a high number. In looking at the last couple of months on Facebook, about a dozen Club trips were mentioned, some of which were also in Hills and Valleys.

This got me thinking. Hills and Valleys is a great place to record trips with the details of the trip, the weather and names of participants. Some years ago (well maybe many) a trip leader was tasked with writing up their trip for Hills and Valleys, or they could delegate this job. Maybe it's time to resurrect this duty, although in saying that, some leaders do diligently write up their trips and post them to Facebook. I'm also mindful of not wishing to give leaders any more work.

Hills and Valleys, our monthly magazine, has a wealth of information including what is coming up on Wednesday night Club evenings; the trip syllabus of Weekend, Sunday and cycling trips; information on upcoming events – Ruapehu, Baring Head, Environmental Days, etc. This publication keeps members informed and is also given to potential members. When there are a good number of trip reports, it does look as though we are a Club that is actually getting out and doing interesting things. It could also inspire some current members to go out on more trips or maybe lead or suggest trips for the Syllabus.

Another thought! With technology (now way ahead of my expertise) perhaps a trip could be devised by all the participants while heading home in the Van and just about be ready to send to Bruce by the time you get back. However, please check, edit and don't forget to add the names. The same could be done for Facebook, with the number of participants and maybe names added to the blurb that accompanies the photos.

So please consider writing up your trip for Hills and Valleys, or delegate. Your fellow club members are interested in what you are doing, even if they may not be able to get out much themselves. It would also show potential members what we are doing, and I'm sure Bruce would be delighted.

Just a thought.

Pat

RECIPES

ORANGE CHOCOLATE TRUFFLES

Heather Eskdale

- 4 1/2 cups biscuit crumbs
- 5 cups icing sugar
- 2 cups coconut
- 1 1/2 cups cocoa
- 500g butter or low fat spread, melted
- 2 tsp vanilla essence
- Zest and juice of 2 oranges

Combine, shape and roll in coconut. Refrigerate until firm. Will keep for 2 weeks in the fridge or up to 6 months in the freezer.



Heather

MUESLI BARS

Clare Kelly

- 1 1/2 cups whole rolled oats - lightly toasted
- 1 cup fruit (chopped if figs/apricots etc)
- 1/4 cup dess coconut - lightly toasted
- 1/2 cup almonds/ Brazil/hazelnuts very roughly chopped
- 1/4 cup pumpkin seeds
- 2 Tb sesame seeds
- 1/8 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon/ cardamom/ ginger

Mix well in a large bowl

- 120g peanut/other butter
- 175g honey

In saucepan over medium heat mix peanut butter & honey until smooth. Turn to low. As soon as tiny bubbles appear at edges, cook 5 mins stirring constantly until thick caramel-like and can draw a non-closing path across.

Immediately pour it over oat mix and stir quickly to completely combine. Press well into 8inch square cake till or similar.

Cool in fridge then cut into preferred shape & size. Freezes well.

Clare

TRAMPING CLUB SMALL TALK

Here is an anonymous light-hearted view of the current state of tramping clubs.



PHOTOGRAPHIC FILLERS

Here are a few images, borrowed from Facebook, taken by club members over recent months. Note the kiwi footprint that Lex Grubner found on the Mt McKerrow track.



The views expressed in the articles in this newsletter are not necessarily the views of the Hutt Valley Tramping Club. Any queries or comments should be directed to the writer of the article. Contributions to the Hills & Valleys are welcomed and encouraged but all are accepted on the understanding that the Editor has the authority to make minor changes if deemed necessary, refer back to the contributor for amendment, or return the contribution for amendment by the Writer.