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Hills & Valleys

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE HUTT VALLEY TRAMPING CLUB (Inc)

Happy trampers in Ava Park, 'releasing' native plants. Photo: Clare Kelly

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

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CLUB NIGHT PROGRAMME
Starts 7:30 pm promptly

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.

12 March : Andrew Robinson – New Year trip to Toaroha and West Coast
Over New Year Andrew Robinson led a club trip doing a couple of day trips in the vicinity of Hokitika before heading off on a challenging seven-day Toaroha, Hokitika, Lower Whitcombe track trip. Highlights included Mt Brown hut, Mungo River, Poet hut, Bluff hut and the cableway across the Hokitika River.

19 March : Lex Grubner – Two weeks exploring Stewart Island in March 2024
In March 2024. Lex and Valray headed off to Stewart Island for 2 weeks of exploring and learning. They did two multi-day trips, the Rakiura Track and Freshwater Hut to Mason Bay and back. They also did fairly much every day walk possible from their base in Oban, and a day trip to Ulva Island. This presentation shares some of the photographs and videos taken during the trip as well as discussing the overall trip logistics. Spoiler alert... Yes, they did see Kiwi in the wild and the evidence was captured on video.

26 March : Jonty Crane – Hiking in Timor-Leste (2)
In his second talk Jonty will cover Atauro Island, and multi-day hikes around the mountainous centre of the country.

2 April : Jackie & Chris West – South America 2024 Part 2 Peru
The Wests spent nearly three weeks enjoying the varied scenery of Peru, watching the crossing of the Condors, visiting Machu Picchu and for Chris a day in hospital. Come and hear the details and see their photos of their journey.

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.

MARCH				
8 - 9	T1	Leader's Choice		**Leader Required**
Sat/Sun 8/9	D2	Full Tauherenikau Gorge		Tania Hatfield
Sun 9	D1	Norbett's Creek		Clare Kelly
		Bike ride 2hrs - 9.30 from Avalon Park		Leena Stowell
Tue 11		Silverstream - Totara Park Circuit		Debbie Labett
		Blue Mountains Loop		Wil van't Geloof
15 - 16	T1	Leader's Choice		**Leader Required**
	T2	Leader's Choice		**Leader Required**
Sun 16	D1	Mystery Destination (TBD)		**Leader Required**
		Bike ride 2hrs - 9.30 from Avalon Park		Leena Stowell
Tue 18		Avalon Bridge/Hutt Trail South		Doreen Courtenay
		Belmont – Korokoro Stream		Paul Labett
22 - 23	T1	Leader's Choice of Destination		**Leader Required**

	WP	Ruapehu Lodge Work Party		Kate Brownsword
Sun 23	D1	Pinnacle Ridge		Jackie and Chris
		Bike ride 2hrs - 9.30 from Avalon Park		Leena Stowell
Tue 25		Gums Loop Wainuiomata		Paul Haines
		Wainuiomata MTB Park		Wil van't Geloof
29 - 30	T1	Leader's Choice (Ruahines)		**Leader Required**
	T2	Tunupo – Iron Gate (Ruahine FP)		**Leader Required**
Sun 30	D1	Te Whiti riser – Pt Howard Return		Heather and Rob
		Bike ride 2hrs - 9.30 from Avalon Park		Leena Stowell
Tue 1		Baring Head		**Leader Required**
		Pencarrow Lakes – Cameron Ridge		**Leader Required**
APRIL				
5 - 6	T1	Leader's Choice		**Leader Required**
	T2	Leader's Choice		**Leader Required**
Sun 6	D1	Kaitoke Ridge Return		Clare Kelly
		Bike ride 2hrs - 9.30 from Avalon Park		Leena Stowell

FROM THE GENERAL COMMITTEE

UPDATED FIRE ACTION PLAN

You may have noticed the new blue "Fire Action" signs going up in the clubrooms - the General Committee has been working on an updated fire action plan should there be an emergency while we are at the club rooms.

In the event of a fire being discovered, or the smoke alarm sounding, please evacuate using the front door, or the fire exit in the main hall, or the side door in the garage, and meet in Philip Evans Reserve. Please keep away from the front of the clubrooms to allow the emergency services through.

Please help anyone who requires help to evacuate.

The Wednesday night host will delegate someone to ring 111 and notify the fire service.

The host will also delegate someone to carefully check for the seat of the fire and use the fire extinguisher or fire blanket from the kitchen, or the fire hose in the main foyer as appropriate, with regard to their safety at all times.

Kate Brownsword

For the General Committee

UPCOMING EVENTS

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 $40 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 – Sunday 25th May 2025
Bernice Deller

I am organising a guided walk around the Otari Native Plant Museum for Sunday 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 by April 6th 2025.

Ngā mihi

Bernice.

Please note. This walk is on Sunday 25th May 2025 in the morning, not Saturday as I wrote in last month's Hills and Valleys. My apologies.

FANNY BAYLISS BEQUEST GRANTS SCHEME

Tania Hatfield

Have you thought of an idea that could be a worthwhile candidate for a grant from the Fanny Bayliss bequest? It should be an idea that:

- Provides an opportunity for club members to expand their experience, competence and enjoyment of the natural environment.
- Improves the club assets and facilities in line with the Club's overall objectives.
- Supports the activities of an individual or organisation outside the Club which promotes our Club's primary objective.

If so, the Fanny Bayliss sub-committee would like to hear from you with your proposal. Your written proposal needs to cover the following points.

- Describe the idea to be funded and why it is a good idea.
- Comment as to how members will benefit and whether it has the support of any other club member.
- Provide likely costings.

Alternatively, have a chat to me, or Mel Stoneham, or Debbie Labbett about your idea and we can help get the proposal up and running.
The Grant's Scheme currently has $5,082 available for distribution. Previous grants have been for a wide range of assets and activities however note that routine maintenance is outside the scope of the Grant's Scheme.
The sub-committee looks forward to receiving your applications. Submissions by email may be made directly to me at taniajh@xtra.co.nz.

Tania Hatfield

(for the sub-committee)

EXPLORING THE UNDISCOVERED

Discover incredible hiking in one of the newest and least visited countries – Australia's northern neighbour, Timor-Leste.

Jonty Crane

This article was submitted by Jonty Crane last year. It is included here as an accompaniment to his two clubnight presentations this month.

Many Australians and New Zealanders may not know much about Timor-Leste (East Timor), other than its history of struggle and independence, but having spent the best part of a year exploring the country, I can confidently say that the hiking here is some of the best in the world.

Upon arriving in Timor-Leste, I was struck by the diversity of its scenery, with near 3,000m-high peaks, picturesque waterfalls, rejuvenating hot springs, and idyllic beaches. For a country 20% of the size of Tasmania, the range of landscapes is quite incredible, and not what you may imagine from a small island in Southeast Asia.

Trails, while largely unmarked, cross the entire country. While hiking, you're almost certain to encounter only locals, who are among the friendliest and most welcoming people in the world. For those who enjoy venturing off the beaten path and discovering new frontiers, Timor-Leste is a great adventure destination.

Summit fever

Mt Ramelau views

The literal highpoint is Mt Ramelau (2,986m), a relatively easy five-hour round hike from the village of Hatu Builico, the highest settlement in the country. The summit is marked with a statue of the Virgin Mary, known as Nain Feto Ramelau (Our Lady of Ramelau). The hike is most popular during March and October when Timorese make pilgrimages for religious ceremonies, but for the rest of the year, it's likely you'll have the mountain mostly to yourself. On a clear day, hikers can enjoy breathtaking views of the entire country, from coast to coast, a unique experience in Southeast Asia.

For those looking for a greater challenge, Mt Matebian (2,376m), the second highest peak, provides a more difficult and logistical challenge. With waist-high grass, unclear paths, and a steep ascent, this climb is not for the faint-hearted. The summit is marked by a statue of Jesus, and is a popular pilgrimage site for locals. Before heading to the summit you can stay at Baguia Fort, one of a number built during Portuguese colonial times, which have been turned into atmospheric accommodation.

For thrill seekers, Timor-Leste's fourth highest peak, Mt Kablaki (2,062m) combines steep, rocky terrain, shoulder high grass, and challenging paths with exposure. It rewards though with magnificent vistas, reminiscent of the European Alps, and you're almost guaranteed to be the only non-local on the mountainside.

The highest point of Mundo Perdido may only be 1,763m, but Timor-Leste's largest remaining rainforest is home to a diversity of bird and plant life, in particular orchids, and is an atmospheric

place to explore on foot. It was named the “Lost World” by the Portuguese as it is so often hidden in mist, with August to October the best time of year to visit for clear views.

Multi-day adventures

The mountainous central spine of the country, which runs through the municipalities of Bobonaro, Ermera, Aileu, Ainaro, and Manufahi, offers spectacular multi-day hiking experiences. Here, coffee plantations – Timor-Leste’s second-largest export after oil and gas – are common, as well as terraced fields and remote villages, adding to the cultural richness of the journey. Guest houses are rare in these areas, so you’ll likely be camping, perhaps at a local school or by a hot spring!

Tapo to Atsabe is a challenging three-day hike (but four-day trip with 5 hour drives at the start and end), including natural hot springs at Marobo and Ilat-Laun, the highest waterfall (200m) in the country at Bandeira Falls, and huge views from Mt Abendudatoi. The scenery varies from lichen filled forest, reminding me of home in New Zealand, through to terraced rice fields shaded by palm trees.

Mt Saboria to Mindelu is another spectacular three-day hike, offering visits to the shrine at the summit of Mt Rabilau, the lush landscapes of Manufahi, and the remote site where Timorese hero Nicolau Lobato was killed by Indonesian forces in 1978. You will see what life is like in remote Timorese communities, plenty of traditional thatched buildings, and lush landscapes unlike anything you’ll find in Australia.

Dokomali Falls

For the ultimate hiking adventure, the Coast2Coast trek takes 8-10 days to walk across the entire country from the capital Dili to the south coast (usually Betano), which can include Mt Maubo, Mt Ramelau, and Mt Kablaki as well as the impressive Dokomali Falls, depending on the route taken. Less than 100 people have completed this ~100km journey with over 5,000m of elevation gain and loss. A few impressive trail runners have completed it in a day!

City walks

Almost all visitors arrive in Dili. Though often overlooked, the city offers excellent hiking opportunities, and many of the walks can be accessed by public transport. Hills rise to 500m above crystal-clear waters, with trails offering panoramic views. The 27m tall Cristo Rei is one of the tallest statues of Jesus in the world and allows access to hiking trails through the Hera Hills. Afterward, cool down with a swim at Back Beach, which also offers great snorkeling.

Tasi Tolu, located near the airport, surrounded by hills, is home to three lakes visited by migratory birds, and provides walking opportunities for all abilities. It is where Pope Francis held mass in September 2024 to over half the population of Timor-Leste. It is the second most Catholic country in the world, behind only the Vatican City.

Hikes in Dare, in the hills behind Dili, are through eucalyptus bush, and offer spectacular views, along with an opportunity to visit the WW2 Memorial Café, which tells the history of the conflict between the Australian Sparrow Force and Japanese troops.

Island time

A short 15-minute flight or 90-minute ferry ride from Dili lies Atauro Island, a paradise known for its diving and snorkeling. However, Atauro also offers amazing hiking, with options ranging from coastal walks to trekking across the island’s mountainous spine. The summit of Manucoco (995m) is a popular challenge, though the Vila to Makili Circuit is easier and arguably more scenic, while others will enjoy walking across the island from Beloi to Adara. A full circuit of the island can be done in 3-5 days, staying in remote village homestays, with a mixture of beach and hill walking.

Practicalities
Timor-Leste is one of the least visited countries in the world, and its infrastructure reflects this. Hikers won't find mountain huts or many campsites, and there is almost no trail signage. For all but the shortest hikes around Dili or Atauro Island, a local guide is recommended, and for multi-day treks, a support crew is essential. Access to food can be difficult outside of cities, and many roads are impassable without a 4WD vehicle.

Eco Discovery, a Timorese owned tour operator, have been welcoming visitors to Timor-Leste since 2005. They are the only locally owned company focusing on, and with extensive experience, of supporting multi-day hikes. They also provide guided tours other places of interest including Jaco Island (Timor-Leste's other island), Baucau (Timor-Leste's second city, filled with historical sites) and Balibó (where in 1975 the invading Indonesian army killed five Australian based journalists).

Need to know
For more inspiration, check out Jonty Crane's books 'Exploring Timor-Leste: A comprehensive travel guide to one of the least visited countries in the world', a travel guidebook, and 'Exploring Timor-Leste on Foot: 30 Incredible Hikes in one of the least visited countries in the world', a hiking guide, both available on Amazon, and his websites exploringtimor.com and jontytravels.com. He has been volunteering in Timor-Leste through New Zealand's Volunteer Service Abroad.

Other info
Getting there: There are regular flights with Qantas and AirNorth between Darwin and Dili.

Safety: Timor-Leste has one of the lowest crime rates in Southeast Asia. While it has a reputation based on its turbulent past, it has been stable and democratic for decades, though the usual common-sense rules should be applied.

Climate: Coastal hikes are hot year-round, with temperatures in the low 30°Cs, while mountain temperatures are more comfortable in the 20°Cs. It feels hotter than this though, and hikers need to be prepared for heat and humidity. The dry season between June-November is the best time for hiking, with July and July particularly good as the landscape is still lush from the wet season.

Terrain: Hiking is mostly on rough tracks used by locals, with some dirt road walking in places. There aren't really any managed hiking tracks in Timor-Leste like you may find in other countries. There is almost no signage either, and often a multitude of tracks make it easy to get lost without closely following a detailed route or local guide.

Guided v Independent: Due to the many infrastructure challenges and lack of signage, independent hiking is recommended only for experienced adventurers.

Tasi Dolu, Dili

Jonty

NICHOLAS BOYACK REMEMBERED

Dennis Page

The Hutt Valley Tramping Club acknowledges with considerable sadness the passing of Nicholas Boyack, on 17 November 2024, after a short stay in hospital. Nicholas joined the HVTC in late 2001 after attending a New Members' Night earlier that year. By coincidence, his soon-to-be partner, Louise Gibson, had also attended the same New Member's evening and the interested pair soon became 'an item.' I had not realised it at the time, when Nicholas and Louise were settling into HVTC culture, that I unwittingly played a hand in cementing their relationship. According to Louise, I had led a day trip into the Tararuas from Otaki Forks and in the process of organising transport, I had 'assigned' Nicholas and Louise seating in the same vehicle which was the catalyst for what would become an enduring partnership.

Prior to Nicholas formally becoming a member of the HVTC, the club had developed a supportive rapport with Nicholas though his work as a journalist with the '*Hutt News*.' In my role as club publicity and promotions officer in the first two decades of the 2000s, I'd often rely on Nicholas's good will in publishing written promotions with accompanying enticing images that aimed to attract potential new members to our club's promotions events. Although Nicholas was primarily a sports reporter, he had a keen interest in natural and human history and was usually able to pull a few strings to help get our articles published (at no cost to the club) with the desired effect. One year, he suggested a change of tactic from the usual promotional piece that included a scenic shot that typically incorporated trampers, generally distantly placed, in the image. The new promotional piece was to incorporate an article written by one of the club's younger members outlining why they enjoyed being a member of the club and it was to be accompanied by a fuller image of that person. A young teenager, Sarah George, was chosen and the promotional piece duly published. I have no doubt that a young and attractive person played a huge role in enticing an extraordinarily large turnout on the promotions evening in question – especially with young teenage and 20-something males in huge attendance and with the clubrooms bursting at the seams! This phenomenon, I later dubbed 'the Sarah George' effect and kudos must go to Nicholas for the on-point marketing acumen.

Nicholas's journalistic experience and contacts also benefited the club for several years when I took on my first term as club president in 2004. Prior to that time, when I was serving out my vice-president 'apprenticeship,' I was also guest speaker convenor for two years and began to appreciate how hard it was to find varied and interesting topics/speakers for the 48 club nights per year that the club operates over. Nicholas very kindly agreed to take over the role and used his extensive network of contacts to provide the club with numerous interesting and varied talks for many years prior to his stepping down from the role – We owe Nicholas a lot in expanding our repertoire of topics for Wednesday night talks.

In addition to being an active tramper over many years, Nicholas also served the club in other capacities during his time with us. He was a convenor of the Fanny Bayliss Committee (he applied quite a bit of scrutiny when I applied, in 2006, to purchase the club's first digital projector but eventually, I was persuasive) and he was also the club's representative of the (now disestablished and replaced) Tararua-Aorangi-Remutaka Huts Committee (TARC) that worked

with DOC to prioritise upkeep and maintenance of many of the huts and tracks across the Greater Wellington's conservation parks. In this capacity, he also served as its chair and secretary – there would probably be many in the club that either underappreciated or were not aware of his efforts with this body. His fondness of tramping in and exploring the Tararuas would have undoubtedly given him a good awareness and understanding of the conditions and challenges facing the local outdoor network, especially in times of austerity measures that were frequently applied to DOC's operational budgets.

As well as tramping locally, Nicholas and Louise enjoyed tramping overseas, especially in the Himalayas. In addition to his own garden and a definite fondness of roses, Nicholas was also keen on rhododendrons and enjoyed seeing them in one of their natural settings in 'the roof of Asia' – One of the talks he presented to the club was highly geared to showcasing some of our often-taken-for-granted garden shrubs in their full natural glory. The combination of a keenness to explore and travel, an interest in people in general, as well as a strong trait to advocate for 'natural justice' saw Nicholas and Lousie change their approach to travel in the Himalayas after they became aware of what small proportions of their trip costs went towards paying the local Sherpas and guides for their hard efforts. Subsequent trips were organised in a way that saw their local hired guides and porters paid directly so that a bigger portion of money went towards those that most needed/deserved it, and they also sponsored the children of some of the Sherpas they grew to know well with their education. Alpine clothing, footwear and tramping kit were often also donated to good causes at the conclusion of trips rather than taking gear back to NZ.

Nicholas's journalistic and photography skills, the desire to tell a good story and his enthusiasm for human history naturally meant that the Boyack-Gibson residence had a well-stocked library. HVTC social convenors often relied on Nicholas to provide a talk or two each year on varied outdoor-related topics of interest to our club's members. Although open to discussion and informed debate, Nicholas did not suffer fools and on many occasions, you could be left with a distinct impression on what his thoughts were on a particular topic. Poor composition in photography often rankled with Nicholas to the extent that on one occasion, he presented a talk to the club on how to take decent photographs and how to compose them so that they told a good story. You could also be given a fairly straight assessment on how your trip meal was prepared if he felt there was room for improvement! In saying that, Nicholas's frank assessment was never cruel or with malice – As noted above, he had a strong sense of natural justice and for righting past wrongs. In one of his most recent talks to the club he presented an excellent exposition on why a member of Shakleton's Endurance crew, the ship's carpenter, Henry McNish, did not receive a Polar Medal for his heroic and vital efforts in saving the stranded party. Nicholas was working with contacts in the UK to try and reverse a past wrong – it will be interesting to see in the future if the right outcome will be achieved, maybe in part, thanks to Nicholas's efforts.

In the 23 years that Nicholas was a member of HVTC, I enjoyed many trips in the hills with both him and Louise. Sadly, in more recent times, back pain and other injuries prevented Nicholas from enjoying the backcountry and overseas travel as much as he would have liked. Injuries aside, Nicholas's interest and involvement with the club and his support of our members never wavered and he will be sorely missed. I know that club members will join with me in offering our support to Louise and the Boyack and Gibson families as they enter a new season in their lives.

We might have been forced to say ‘haere ra’ to Nicholas too soon but his contributions to the HVTC culture will long be appreciated and not forgotten. See you in a Maungahuka sunset, our friend. Rest easy and peacefully.

Dennis

TRIP REPORTS

ORONGORONGO CIRCUIT
2 February 2025
Tania Hatfield

The route: Started from the Sunny Grove roadend. Up the track, right along to McKerrow Ridge, down the McKerrow Track to the main highway, dropped down to the river then along the river to the Whakanui Track. Up that track and then down Sunny Grove track back to cars.

McKerrow Ridge – the less forested parts – is getting quite overgrown. It had rained the night before and so we got very wet as we pushed our way through the vegetation. Saw some cool fungi on the way down to the main highway. Going down was the first time we saw other trampers.

Lunch was had at a nice spot on the old 5 Mile track. The river travel was straightforward due to not much water in the river. Then it was the Whakanui track and so the second ‘Up’ of the day got started - and kept going, and going, and going!

This was a long day. Started at 7:30am, got back to the cars about 5:45pm. Thank you to my fellow trampers who joined me - Lex Grubner, Mel Stoneham, Tony Jaegars, Tania Hatfield (leader)

Tania

OHAU GORGE - 6 February 2025
Tania Hatfield

Photo: Andrew Robinson

We walked in to the Ohau River from the Poads Road end, along the track that runs alongside the river. Encountered some mud and navigated both slips. Early lunch at the river, accompanied by a dragonfly. Then it was down the river! The day was perfect – hot, calm, sunny. The swims we had were refreshing in the heat of the day, though it was more walking than swimming through the

length of the gorge. We had a short stop at the big slip to have a look at it from the river angle and spotted a few others walking across the slip at the time.

After a few hours, we spotted the concrete pad and set about finding the ‘get out’ point. That took a few minutes as the start of the track had gotten quite overgrown since I last did this trip (many moons ago). But find it we did and so clambered out and up back to the farmland. Then we had a short walk back to the cars, all agreeing that Ohau Gorge is really good fun, and an enjoyable length.

Enjoying the river travel were Andrew Robinson, Marina Smith, Shannon Kelly and Tania Hatfield (leader).

Tania

CLIMIE RIDGE
9 February 2025
Jackie West

A group of fourteen trampers set off from the Tunnel Gully car park for Tane’s Track at 9 o’clock. After a few minutes we left the track and started the climb up Climie Ridge on an old and no longer maintained track. The day was fine but a strong northerly was blowing so being in the bush meant the heat was not the problem it had been on some recent tramps. When we stopped for morning tea most of the group donned another layer of clothing.

As we climber higher we reached an exposed spot where there is a number of old wind falls and views over Mangaroa and the Western Hills. Soon after midday and following requests from two members of the group that a suitably sheltered spot was found for lunch. The moss was drier than normal and it had been noted earlier on that the kidney ferns, always the first plant to show stress due to lack of water, were shrivelling up.

It was 1: 40 pm when we dropped down to the Climie Hill Road which was slightly sooner than I had expected. Jim had expressed an interest in continuing on up the road to the installations which the group had been told about before we sorted out transport at Upper Hutt Station. While most of the group headed down to the cars Jim took Tim, Abdullah and Oo for whom it was their first time on Climie up the road as far as the last installation. They must have enjoyed the extra climb as “dozens of photos were taken.”

The trampers were: Jim Cousins, Marilyn Sickels, Helen Stapleton, Vera de Grauuw, Heather Eskdale, Rob Buxton, Clare Kelly, Ann Hayman, Neil Parker, Abdullah Chaudry, Tim Lawson, Zaw Lin Oo and Chris and Jackie West.

Jackie

GOLLANS EXPLORATION

SUNDAY 16TH FEBRUARY

Bernice Deller

It was a lovely day for a walk with perhaps the thought that it might get a bit hot in the afternoon. Some of us met up at Woburn Station while three others joined us at the beginning of the MacKenzie Track in Eastbourne Village.

We tramped up the track and from there took the route up to Hawtrey where we stopped for our morning tea.

Bob then outlined the plan which was to make our way down the spur to the Butterfly Creek picnic area. He used a phone app that he had marked a route on, prior to the trip. Even so, a lot of the time we were following trap lines which lead us off route a couple of times – beware the pink markers! There was an upside to this as we saw a lovely clump of flowering orchids on one of these side diversions. At several places Grant pointed out orchids to us as we tramped along and it was good to have someone on the trip with a botanical interest and knowledge.

We met a couple of people who mentioned that there was a grim sight ahead – a possum hanging from a trap, possibly a "Flipping Timmy" trap. We had earlier seen another possum in a trap on the ground so there's obviously a few around in that area.

Bob had previously been down this spur with a friend, and they had come across a hut which we were hoping to spot and then suddenly there it was right beside the route we were following! We decided to have lunch there and some of us spent some time looking at the two rather flimsy logbooks which were actually exercise books, one which dated back to 1975. We made our entry and found another HVTC entry from 2001. We were wondering if anyone in our current membership remembers being on this trip?

David looked up a map over lunch and saw that the hut is called Stan's Hut.

The next part of the route was easier to follow as the bush was more open and we were down at the picnic area in about 50 mins.

A bit of a refuel and then we joined first the Butterfly Creek Track and then we followed the track back alongside Butterfly Creek to the MacKenzie Track.

We were back to the cars a bit later than we had anticipated but it was an enjoyable trip doing a bit of red line. Thanks to those who joined us – Mike, David B, Sally, Emma, Heather C, Grant, Jo'ann, Clare and Sam.

Bob and Bernice (scribe)

WAINUIOMATA HILLS
Sunday 23 February 2025
Bernice Deller

Sometimes it's sorting out cars and people that is the most challenging part of leading a trip and today we had the added challenge of rain at the beginning of the trip. Luckily Doc forgot his raincoat - lucky because while we were organising to have a vehicle at the road end, Doc was able to pop in to a friend's house and borrow a raincoat and that seemed to be the trigger for Huey to decide to stop raining!

We walked up the Konini Track which was red line for some of us. Doc, Leanne and I had all grown up in Wainuiomata and of course we spent a bit of time reminiscing about the great times we had, growing up there. I enjoyed seeing some views of the Wellington Rd extension area which was the particular area of Wainuiomata where our family had lived. Then the conversation turned to Chloe and "that terrible" TV programme. Having got that out of our system we were able to talk about more agreeable topics and it wasn't long before we reached the top of the track and the ECNZ road.

A short distance south along the road we turned into a side track and climbed the short distance up to Mt Towai. The weather had cleared by now and we got a great view of the Hutt Valley - just a slightly different view from the view at the top of the Riser, as we were further south and a bit higher. We also got a good view of the Eastbourne Hills a bit further along the ECNZ road. Bob took a photo of the group with this view in the background.

It was good to get back into the bush after passing over the bridge at the top of the Wainuiomata Hill Road and heading towards Mt Lowry. We had lunch near a sign which said we had a half hour to go before we reached Mt Lowry. We agreed (once we got to Mt Lowry) that it was a long half hour and mostly uphill so it was good to have refuelled before we did that part of the track.

The track from Mt Lowry was good going through mature and regenerating bush until the last 10 to 15 minutes when the track became a bit slippery as we made our way down to Stanley St.

Thanks to the cheerful group of trampers who joined us for this outing – Leanne, Nic, Catherine, Patrick, Mike, Doc, Tim, Ann.

Bernice (scribe) and Bob

PHOTOGRAPHIC FILLER

Here is a set of images of the Lyell River track, taken in 2009 before it became developed into The Old Ghost Road. They record two days travel.

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.