



Kohekohe flowers, Tawa.

Photo: Marina Skinner

Please submit your **July 2026** H&V articles to the editor by **26th June 2026**

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CLUB NIGHT PROGRAMME
Starts 7:30 pm promptly



3 June : Open Night – members' contributions

Summer has drawn to a close (and almost autumn as well), so come along and show up to about a dozen images of what you have been doing in the outdoors over the last few months. If you have more photos than that, contact Graeme McVerry at graememcv2@xtra.co.nz for a dedicated talk later in the year, but also perhaps give a taster tonight of what's to come.

10 June : Andrew and Catharina Fisher – Five Lakes Trip

"Five Lakes Trip" is what Andrew and Catharina have called it - partly due to proximity to the Five Passes Trip. From Theatre Flat in the Routeburn they climbed up to Lake Unknown, then via a convoluted route past the melt lake of the Park Pass Glacier, down to Park Pass and then along the Serpentine Range past Lake Nerine to Lake Wilson and then out past Lake Harris down the Routeburn Valley.

17 June : Debbie Labett – Alps to Ocean Cycle Trail

Debbie Labett biked the 300k Alps to Ocean (A20) cycle trail from the snowy peaks of Mt Cook to Steampunk festivities in Oamaru. This iconic route crosses braided rivers, passes turquoise lakes and historic valleys and passes over hydro dams. Come along to enjoy some photos of the beautiful scenery of our very own South Island.

17 June : Sales Table

There will be no Sales Table this month – back on 15 July

24 June : Andrew and Catharina Fisher – Albert Burn

Several years ago, Andrew and Catharina did a trip from Makarora which they hoped would get them into the Albert Burn, but poor weather and time constraints put paid to that. So with a bit more flexibility with time and a suitable weather window they went from the Matukituki valley - up the ridge past Eostre and Dragonfly Peaks and then down the Albert Burn. They took a side valley up past Mt Jumbo and descended into the Wilkin, returning to their start point via Rabbit Pass and the Bledisloe Gorge sidle.

1 July : Chris McMillan – South Westland Tramping February 2026

In February Chris McMillan led a couple of back-to-back trips in South Westland taking in the Copland Valley, part of the Haast-Paringa Cattle Track and the Mataketake Range. Hear about the trips which included hot pools, torrential rain, frog-filled tarns and a hut with a library.

22 July : Showing of the film Hut Keepers

Bookings open, be in early because there is a limit on numbers. See page 16 announcement for details.





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.

June				
Tue 2 June		Haywards Reserve / Towai Moonlight Walk		Kirsten Reid
5 – 7 June	T1	Trip Required		Leader Required
	T2			
Sun 7 June	D1	Turakirae Head Seals		Mel Stoneham
		Bike ride 2hrs - 9.30 from Avalon Park		Leena Stowell
12 – 14 June	T1	Destination TBA	Van	Andrew Robinson
	T2			
Sun 14 June	D1	Te Marua to Kaitoke		Clare Kelly
		Bike ride 2hrs - 9.30 from Avalon Park		Leena Stowell
19 – 21 June	T1			
	T2			
Sun 21 June	D1	Belmont Trig from Cornish Street		Diana Rickman
		Bike ride 2hrs - 9.30 from Avalon Park		Leena Stowell
26 – 28 June	T1	Tutuwai Hut	Van	Mel Stoneham
	T2			
Sun 28 June	D1	Ecclesfield Circuit - Silverstream		Jackie/Chris West
		Bike ride 2hrs - 9.30 from Avalon Park		Leena Stowell
Tue 30 June		Moonlight Walk: TBA		
July				
3 – 5 July	T1			
	T2			
Sun 5 July	D1	Red Rocks Track		Leader Required
		Bike ride 2hrs - 9.30 from Avalon Park		Leena Stowell

FROM THE GENERAL COMMITTEE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - Wednesday 29 July, 2026

The Annual General Meeting of the Hutt Valley Tramping Club will take place in our Clubrooms at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 29 July, 2026. The General Committee warmly welcomes your presence at this meeting.

An important function will be the election of Officers and Members to the General, Ruapehu and Social Committees.

• Nominations for all positions on these committees will be received by the secretary from 4 June through until Wednesday 1 July.

- The General Committee requires a President, Vice-President, Secretary and Trip Co-ordinator. There will also be vacancies for General Committee members.
- The Social Committee is also looking for new members.
- The Ruapehu Committee has three vacancies,
- We need our members to fill the above positions and any other vacancies so that we can continue the activities offered within the Club. Please talk to any of the present officers /members of the committees about any of their roles and duties. You are welcome to contact Marina (ph 021 792 260).
- Nomination Forms are available at the Clubrooms and from the Secretary.
- Any Notices of Motion for consideration at the AGM should be provided to the Secretary before Wednesday 3 July.

The formal Notice of the Annual General Meeting will be distributed to members by email on or before the 15th July. Included in this email will be the Annual Report and the Performance Report, which includes our Annual Accounts.

FORMATION OF A MEMBERSHIP SUBCOMMITTEE

Members are the foundation and reason for being of any club or organisation including Hutt Valley Tramping Club. Members allow us to deliver on the purposes outlined in our constitution and cover a wide range of activities including arranging trips, education, supporting recreational activities in the community, and providing facilities and a sense of community.

To ensure we stay focussed on our membership, the General Committee has set up a 4-person membership subcommittee consisting of Lex Grubner (Chair), Marina Skinner, Doreen Courtenay and Debbie Labett. The initial activities centre around review and analysis of club membership and activity over the last few years to gain an assessment of where we are today, and how successfully we are attracting new members and delivering on the expectations of current members.

We are very keen to collect any feedback from our current members about how well the club is delivering for you, and what you think could or should be done to make the club more appealing to you and/or others. We are also interested in ideas you may have around how we might find and attract new members. Please feel free to talk with any subcommittee member at a Wednesday meeting or via email/phone.

The subcommittee is also working in the background on a range of potential ideas we have already collected and discussed. All findings and recommendations will be reported back to the General Committee for review, and a summary of key conclusions and actions will be communicated to all club members via email, Hills & Valleys, or the weekly meeting as appropriate.

Lex Grubner

UPCOMING EVENTS

2026 HVTC PHOTO COMPETITION 26th August 2026

It's time! Yes, the 2026 Photo Comp is here! The competition is for both experienced photographers and beginners. All photos need to have been taken since 1 September 2024. Anything older is automatically entered into the Historical category. Cups are awarded to the winners in most categories.

The judge will present the results and provide pointers for improving your photography at the club night on 26th August. To allow time for compilation and judging of the entries and engraving of cups for the winners, entries must be emailed to taniajh@xtra.co.nz by 26th July. Alternatively, entries may be handed to Tania Hatfield on a USB stick at a club night before this date. Please don't leave your entries to the last minute.

Our Club Competition is largely aligned with the FMC Photo Competition, with some additional HVTC categories. The Club competition is the only path for HVTC members to enter the nationwide FMC competition. The winning two entries in each of the FMC categories will be forwarded to the FMC Competition. FMC allows clubs to select up to two further entries in total to allow other meritorious entries to be submitted to FMC. Entrants must be willing to have their images placed on the club's Facebook page and printed in Hills & Valleys, and for winning entries to be forwarded to the FMC competition. A condition of FMC entry is that the images can be used in publicity material for promoting the objectives of FMC. The winning entries in the FMC competition are published in the November issue of FMC's Backcountry magazine.

- You may enter up to 4 images in each category, with no more than a dozen in total.
- An image file size of 1 Mb is about the minimum of acceptable quality – and much beyond 3Mb has detail that cannot be displayed. (The FMC competition requires file sizes between 1 MB and 5 Mb.) Please submit as .JPG or .TIF files.
- The entries must satisfy the following filename format: Code (given below) Photographer Caption e.g. ABN Joe Blogs Crater Lake

Please take the time to name your photo files in this format - and provide a text listing in the same format, either in your email or as an attachment. A few minutes of your time saves me hours of work renaming and tabulating the files.

IMAGE CATEGORIES

There are 7 FMC categories:

ABN ABOVE BUSHLINE (with no human element)

ABW ABOVE BUSHLINE (with a human element)

BBN BELOW BUSHLINE (with no human element)

BBW BELOW BUSHLINE (with a human element)

HIS HISTORIC

For historic shots, please provide a brief background (two or three sentences, including naming the photographer if it was someone other than you), as well as a title.

Although nominally any image taken before 1 September 2024 qualifies, the historic category is really intended for photos earlier than about 2000, either of specific events (e.g., hut building or openings) or scenes that are clearly from another era, because of the gear, clothing or activities shown - rather than purely scenic shots that could equally well be taken in 2024.

NFF NATIVE FLORA & FAUNA

LE LONG EXPOSURE

There are 5 HVTC categories:

TOP TOPICAL (tells a story)

PER PERSONALITY (illustrates a character)

OVS OVERSEAS (from your recent travels over the past year)

NOV NOVICE (for those who have not previously entered a photo competition)

PR PRINTS

Rules (from FMC website)

1. Definition of a “human element”

The definition of a “human element” is flexible but the general intention is: Where the photo contains other than as a very minor feature: people, a hut, a track sign/marker, bridge, ice axe and anything else that has been introduced by humans into the environment then we would define that as having “a Human element”. But if a photo has what could be called a Human Element but that element is very small, inconsequential and not a feature in the photo then you could count it as “No Human Element”.

2. Entries for the contemporary categories must be taken since 1 September 2024. Any photos taken prior to this date will automatically be entered into the historic category.

3. Definition of “historic”

The intention for the historic category is for entrants to go back through club and individual archives to select “old photos” rather than “photos of old things”. As an example, a recent photo of a hut built in the 1950’s is not a ‘historic’ photo. However, a photo of the same hut taken in the 1960’s certainly is an ‘historic’ photo. Judges tend to favour images which capture the essence of eras past, rather than images which qualify by date but illustrate a contemporary age.

4. Definition of “Long Exposure”.

The intention of the long exposure category is for photography of scenes that the naked eye cannot normally comprehend. These shots would require a very long exposure and the use of a tripod. The category is intended for highly technical images of shots taken at night (including star trails) or in extremely low light situations such as caves or canyons. The category is not intended for normal dusk/dawn photography, or images where a long exposure is used to ‘blur’ the image (such as flowing water, or movement of the subject).

5. All photos must be taken within New Zealand, which is defined as within our Exclusive Economic Zone. This includes the following islands: North, South, Stewart, Chatham, Kermadec, Sub-Antarctic.

6. Rules on post processing:

- Adjustments for exposure, white balance, contrast & levels are allowed
- Cropping is allowed
- Stitching for panoramic shots is allowed

- Removal or insertion of features not in the original image is not allowed

Remember to submit entries by 26th July, preferably earlier.

Let's all get involved and have a successful competition!

Tania Hatfield

Organiser, 2026 HVTC Photo Competition

taniajh@xtra.co.nz

BELMONT REGIONAL PARK

Marina Skinner



Kia ora koutou

HVTC representatives last week attended a workshop to help shape a new masterplan for Belmont Regional Park's future.

Greater Wellington Regional Council invited along stakeholders who value the park, including conservationists, trappers, bikers, horse riders, farm lovers, and trampers.

Ann Hayman, Derek Richardson and I represented the club, and John Simes and Elaine Richardson were there on behalf of other organisations.

We were split into small groups so we got to hear the varied perspectives of other types of park user. We focussed on what we saw as the priorities for the park, any tensions between the different users, and any compromises we could accept.

Despite the differing views of people at my table, everyone was respectful and showed a lot of love for the park. I was interested to hear from a horse rider who was disappointed that some horse-riding trails had been planted over and were no longer rideable. We all agreed that we want the park to be as accessible as possible and to include varied landscapes.

The three-hour workshop at Kelson Community Centre was very well run and followed another workshop in Porirua the previous night. There will be many opportunities for everyone to contribute to the masterplan in coming months as the regional council broadens its consultation.

Ngā mihi nui

Marina Skinner

President

FROM HALL AND GEAR CUSTODIAN

Doc Watson

Gear

Most recently two people have very kindly donated some climbing gear to the club.

Brian McKeon from the Wellington Bonsai Club has donated some karabiners, tape loops and a climbing rope plus the odd pair of crampons.

Doreen Courtenay has also donated some climbing gear including an ice axe and two snow stakes, plus a pack in very good order.

Many thanks to Brian and Doreen for these items.

Changes to the garage lighting

Neil Parker has changed the lighting subcircuit to the garage at the clubrooms to facilitate the use of garage lighting when the club Minibus is being picked up or returned. The lights are now able to be switched on and off at any time, which will make it safer, especially at times of darkness.

Don't forget to turn them off when leaving the garage.

Ideally, the last person to leave the hall should also check to see that the garage internal and external lights are off before they turn the clubroom main power off as they lock up.

Doc

TRIP REPORTS

MOUNT REEVES CIRCUIT ANZAC WEEKEND 2026

Mary Horner

On Sunday 26th after a quick meeting at the club, we set off for Waiohine Gorge; Mary, Kirsten, Anna, William and Angela. We met Emma there and set off promptly, thinking we'd have morning tea 'at the top'. After the impressive swingbridge crossing (which looks to be being reinforced), we soon turned a hard turn left and made our way down into Coal Stream. After a wee slide and a fair crossing so early in the walk, we headed up the other side, climbing but mostly walking the 600 metres to the top. Enroute, we enjoyed morning teas and lunch before we found Pt 785, the geographic centre of Zealandia. The views across the Wairarapa to Lake Ferry and opposite, to snowy Mts Holdsworth and Hector were spectacular. The downward walk from there was not too steep until the very end, and seeing the corrugated iron roof of Tutuwai Hut happened soon enough. We were there in time to snack, refill our water, cook dinner and enjoy the company of some younger walkers who'd come up the river. The pumpkin and kransky cheese sausage risotto was well received and after some moon and star gazing, we were tucked up for a warm and comfortable sleep.



In the morning, we were off smartly having enjoyed hot coffee and our own breakfasts. We enjoyed the meander up the river to Cone Hut and stayed left to climb for just under an hour before enjoying the ridge before descending into Waiohine Gorge. We purposely stopped for

lunch before the descent as the bush was so lovely and we were still enjoying each others' company.

Another excellent adventure in the Tararuas, and plenty of talk about what might be next!

Mary

AORANGI CROSSING OVER ANZAC 2026

Rosie Doole

It was the invite we'd all been waiting for - a tramping trip that was not too long and not too short at three nights, three and a half days. And so it began, a team of 5 following Andrew Robinson into unknown territory, believing in the promise of a nice tramp with time to enjoy everything! After a week of rain chances were the weather would be fine-ish but would the rivers be low and crossable? Arriving near Cape Palliser, the size of the tramping packs hauled onto backs at the outset suggested everyone was prepared for any eventuality. We meandered upriver to Mangatoetoe Hut in time for sunset. The orange bucket full of cleaning gear for the GWBN follow-up to Love Our Huts campaign was duly delivered by Maarten.



We had the hut to ourselves for the evening. Our culinary adventures began with Andrew whipping up a perfectly cooked and satisfying meal using passive heat in a sleeping bag. Treats followed including yummy apple crumble. The clear Wairarapa night sky sparkled and Maarten promised us bedtime stories from the Te Araroa trail (TA) the next night.

Day 2 We followed DoC markers upstream, in and out of the water as we crossed back and forth multiple times until the stream narrowed. The legendary Onga onga (stinging nettle) was encountered fairly quickly.

Andrew had secateurs, several trampers had gloves but no-one escaped the fiery attacks unscathed. Having several pairs of eyes did help us overall. The stings pierced fabric long pants and shirts.

We climbed up a spur then sidled across steep slopes. Eventually we crossed over and started sidling and then descending steeply into a different stream. Here the marked route became more washed out. After a lot of stream/river crossings we eventually picked up a 4wd track on the true right. This "mirage" of an actual track lasted several hundred metres taking us to Kawakawa hut. We arrived a bit later than planned. Time for a hot brew. The weather was fine but cold, and as the steep downhills were challenging for some, we made a group decision not to press on to the next hut (descents under torch light slow progress even more). About an hour after us, 2 more trampers (P & J) arrived who'd come directly from the road end where we'd left the van. They were happy to camp. The hut was small inside so that was good. Late afternoon a couple more trampers arrived from Washpool Hut. The man tented and his workmate decided to sleep on the floor of the hut, turning out to be an old friend of Janine's from the MeetUp tramping group. They had a great catchup. We enjoyed another lovely meal cooked perfectly by Andrew and set about tackling the 2 dozen Anzac biscuits he'd specially home-baked to mark ANZAC day. Then Maarten launched into the TA bedtime stories, as there was nowhere else to be in this cosiest of huts on our wirewove bunks that moved in unison when we laughed.

Day 3 Sunday had to be the biggest day of our Crossing, possibly 8 hours. We left at 7.29am. A short stretch of stream travel led to a steep narrow uphill. We were getting into some lovely native forest but underfoot was shifting shingle on steep slopes that we diagonally sidled upward. We heard various stags roaring near the saddle. Andrew was wearing his brightest blue top - the safest colour in The Roar (he said).

On the way down we met a day runner about 1km from the next hut. He'd started the Crossing before daylight, and declared he wasn't running but 'shuffling' to cope with the steepness of the route.

We made it to the sunny clearing of Pararaki Hut by 11:30 and stopped for a hot brew. P & J did too. It was great to chat in the sunshine as we all refueled. After lunch another even bigger ascent was followed by the inevitable long descent. Near the top there was a view out to the left of Mt Matthews in the Orongorongos, the sea and the end of Lake Ferry. The birdlife here was impressive. We couldn't see where we were putting our feet for undergrowth thick with young miro. The last part of the descent is notoriously sketchy and here the group became quite spread out. Only the first 2 of our party to reach Washpool hut won the prize of a "jacuzzi" warm wash kindly provided by our new friends. We all made it well before dark so it was a good decision the day before. P & J even opted to tent again which meant we'd all have a bunk. This hut was larger so they cooked and left their gear in the hut but slept down by the river. P was ex-Forest Service so contributed a couple of gems to story-time when pressed. Andrew seemed like an energiser bunny, chef-ing up another dinner plus fetching water and filling up water bottles from the canyoning side stream some of us had no energy left to visit. We'd slowed to a full stop. "Condiments Andrew!" was the call that signalled recovery. Tonight's dessert was crème brûlée - sugar in any form so welcome. Andrew did the dishes yet again. After P & J set a mouse trap (just to check) and retired to bed, korero evolved about PLBs and when to pull the pin. Lex and everyone contributed examples. More dynamic tales were told before some very solid sleeping after the day's exertion.

Day 4 The last day started off with yet another fine uphill, steep at first. When P & J passed us the gradient eased off a little. "Pack a bit lighter" was P's recommendation. Patches of low grass appeared like lawn as we ascended the spur to the ridgeline. We reached an orange marker on a warratah where the track did a 90 degree turn to the left. If you go up to the right at this point there's a fantastic 360-degree viewpoint above the marked route. Our friends P & J had enjoyed a brew up here but moved on as we all caught up. Janine pulled out her lunch of a large salad roll (did we pass a dairy?) and shared her mango chocolate which was enthusiastically accepted by all. Now 400g lighter in load we didn't see Janine again for quite a while! The birdlife was really notable, like a flock of 9 kereru seen approaching a large podocarp. The small-leaved coprosmas were in full fruit, not on single bushes but in 6 metre long swathes with the sun gleaming through the translucent red berries as if they were on fire.

We progressed along the ridge, anticipating our return to civilisation as most Onga onga was now marked by hazard tape. A quick lunch then down a 4wd track toward the Pinnacles. As our leader had predicted Janine was waiting for us at the signposted turn off. A quick excursion to the viewing platform for the Pinnacles was appreciated. Several local and foreign tourists passed as



we went lower, eventually arriving at the carpark. Three took Lex's car 20km around the coast to our start point to collect the club van. Sadly they missed out on the celebration bubbles shared so enthusiastically with the rest of us. Yes, real bubbles! Just for us!! Generously shared by a gentleman who was soooo impressed that we'd done the Crossing. As Valray says "definitely not for the faint-hearted" on sometimes 'barely there' routes. But what a special trip we had, fine weather every day, so well-fed and entertained, with thanks to Maarten and Janine for all their

route-finding, and Andrew for suggesting and leading. Special thanks to Aorangi Restoration Trust - exciting to see natives given the chance to thrive again.

Trampers: Janine, Lex, Maarten, Andrew (photos), Valray, and Rosie .

Rosie

FIVE DELIVER A SPECIAL ORANGE BUCKET TO WAIORONGOMAI HUT

Lex Grubner

On the weekend of 16/17 May, Andrew Robinson led a party of 5 (Andrew, Derek, Elaine, Angela and Lex) on an overnight trip to Waiorongomai Hut with intention that we try get up onto Waiorongomai Saddle to camp. We were also delivering an orange cleaning bucket to the hut. Laying in my sleeping bag I couldn't stop thinking about how a trip like this could be told as a perfect children's adventure story... so in the theme of the famous five novels, here goes:

Before it was even light on Saturday morning while everyone else was still asleep, 5 intrepid adventurers, who were members of the very special Hut Valley Tramping Club, made their way to the clubrooms, with special packs they strapped to their backs carrying everything they needed for the weekend. They jumped into a shiny minivan and their leader transported everyone over a really big hill called the Rimutaka Ranges, and then along side a really large lake, to the starting point of their adventure. The minivan had big writing all about the tramping club along the side, and the adventurers felt really proud that everyone else driving along the road would know they were off on an exciting adventure.

Once they arrived at the starting point of their adventure, everyone put on their packs and special boots designed to safely transport them up the river and rugged tracks. This trip was also different to most, the group had to carry a special orange bucket to the hut which contained magical chemicals and cleaners that would allow everyone in the future to make the hut sparkling clean when they stayed there. The bucket was very heavy, so everyone agreed to take turns to help carry it all the way to the hut.

The leader had promised that rather than just go to the hut, everyone would try and find a way to make it all the way up to the saddle so it would be an even bigger adventure, especially since there were not any actual known tracks to take them there. The group set off in anticipation, thinking about what might lay ahead. It took the adventurers 3 hours to reach the hut as they had been slowed down by the extra weight of the special bucket. One especially strong member of the group carried the bucket for half of the trip and when he finally took off his pack and the bucket at the hut, found his legs and body moved really funny for a few minutes while he adjusted again.

The intrepid group set out after a hearty lunch to try and find a way up to the saddle. As there were no tracks for them to follow, this took all the navigation skills and experience they had learned over many years of tramping. Although the group put in their very best efforts, they were unable to find a special place where they could climb up out of the stream bed which had eroded away to form a deep canyon over thousands of years. Reluctantly the group decided it was safest to head back to the hut otherwise they might still be trying to find somewhere to camp when it was dark and scary. They were still happy though, as they had seen all sorts of special magic mushrooms and waterfalls exploring up the stream.

The hut was their home for the night, but it was not like a normal house. Everything was in one tiny room and people had to sleep next to others they may not have even met before this adventure. Everything had to be carried in the adventurer's special packs, including food, cooking equipment and bedding. There was no running water and no electricity, and the toilet was just a hole in the ground with a rickety shed built over the top. It was hidden in the bush so the older members of the group had to be really careful not to get lost when they had to go there in the middle of the night. After a hearty communal dinner where each person had bought some of their favourite vegetables for everyone to share, they all told stories of the wondrous adventures they had all been on in the past, and how the weather in particular, had made some of these

adventures even more exciting. As there was no television or internet in the hut, everyone was tucked up in bed by 8.30pm.

Next day everyone was up as soon as it was daylight and had a hearty breakfast and repacked all their things into their packs. Then it was off again for the group as they adventured back down the river and out to where their minivan was faithfully waiting to take them back over the big Rimutaka hill and to the clubrooms. Without the extra weight of the special orange bucket they had carried in, it only took 2 ½ hours to get back, which meant they had time to stop for tea and scones in a little town before the big hill. Back at the clubrooms, the 5 adventurers said goodbye to each other, and thanked their trip leader for arranging such a special adventure in the most magical of places, the great New Zealand outdoors.

Lex

**FRIENDS OF PETONE BEACH
PLANTING SATURDAY 13 JUNE**
Graeme Lyon

All are welcome to help the Friends of the beach plant some more natives.

SATURDAY 13 JUNE : 10 - 12.30

The first of the 2026 public planting needs helpers.

PLEASE JOIN US.

On the beach about 100 m from the new Waimarino building at Honiana Te Puni reserve, or near the brick pumphouse opposite Nevis St.

Parking at the reserve or by the wharf.

If you can, bring a spade or shovel but we have some to share.

And we will share a cup of tea after.

Graeme for

Friends of Petone Beach

ph 021 154 3850 lyonpetone@gmail.com

**"WE WERE TRUSTED TO JUST GO"
HOW WELL-KNOWN TRAMPERS FIRST DISCOVERED
THE BACKCOUNTRY**
Jonty Crane

Growing up outdoors

For some, tramping was not a choice so much as an inheritance.

Former Department of Conservation director-general **Lou Sanson** grew up in Hokitika, exploring the hills with his family.

“As soon as I could walk, I was told to walk. From the age of three or four we were being dragged up the Tūtaekurī Valley or up Kellys to see the alpine plants,” he recalls. “So we were always in the hills and the mountains and being taken on some adventure.”

Victoria Bruce, who later walked the length of Te Araroa with her seven-year-old daughter Emilie, grew up partly in outback Queensland and Tasmania.

“Being homeschooled, the bush was my backyard,” she says. “Building little huts and wigwams in the bush... just enjoying the best parts of a childhood lived outdoors.”

Publisher **Robbie Burton** grew up in Nelson, and remembers spending school holidays in what is now Abel Tasman National Park.

“In the early seventies it was really remote. There was no real tourism, just the odd tramper. The tracks were overgrown,” he says. “It was a free-range New Zealand childhood.”

Finding the outdoors later

Others came to tramping later, and didn't always have a good first experience.

Backcountry Trust manager **Rob Brown** grew up on a Waikato farm. His experience aged 14 on an outdoor school programme in the early 1980s nearly put him off altogether.

“It was run a little bit like the army in those days... and in many ways possibly put me off for a while,” he says. It wasn't until joining the Alpine Club at Massey University that things changed. “I suddenly learned that tramping was actually supposed to be fun.”

Writer **Kathy Ombler** was also raised on a Waikato farm, and had an eventful first tramp with the husband of a friend of a friend.

“We crossed the Mohaka River on a tree branch,” she recalls. “The river was screaming underneath us. If we'd slipped, we'd still be there.” At the time, she thought it was “extremely adventurous”. With hindsight, she's less sure.

Teenage freedom and trust

It is amazing how young some were when they were first trusted to tramp on their own.

Lou Sanson was only 13 when he was dropped at a West Coast road-end with a few equally young mates.

“It was just so cool to be trusted enough to head up to the sticks... on our own,” he says. “That sense of maturity at age 13, being trusted to cross a river and take a pack and go into the hills.”

One of his companions was hut advocate **Andrew Buglass** who remembers West Coast life in the early 1970s.

“We had 15 or 16-year-olds running around this old Forest Service network on their own,” he says. “We were trusted and we would just let go.”

Robbie Burton describes a school outdoor education programme that allowed teenage “leaders” to take younger students tramping for a week with minimal oversight.

“You would never be able to do that these days,” he says. “It was very loose.”

These and other stories come from [The Tramping Life](#), a podcast in which guests share their lifetime of experiences in the outdoors, near misses, and their favourite huts and campsites. It can be found on podcast platforms including Spotify and Apple Podcasts.

Jonty

PAM BRUCE

Pam Bruce died on the 10th of April 2026 at the age of 93. She was the loved lifelong best friend of Max. They joined the Hutt Valley Tramping Club in 1950 so she was a member for 75 years. The following article gives a brief summary of Pam's life and especially her activities with the tramping club which was a big part of both of their lives.

Pam was born in Dunedin on 10 January 1933. The family was from Wellington but Pam's father was briefly posted to Dunedin and they returned to Wellington six months later and Pam lived in Wellington and the Hutt Valley for her long and happy life.

Pam went to Queen Margaret College and in her last two years at school Pam received a birthday gift of a hand-colouring set. This was in the days when all photography was in black and white. Pam then decided to pursue colouring and retouching as a career and joined National Publicity Studios in about 1949. That is where she met Max and the love story began. They shared an enthusiasm for the outdoors and relished



Max and Pam on Tongariro Crossing March 1997 (John Flux)

daytime tramps together around the Wellington hills and, from 1950, weekend trips to Hutt Valley Tramping Club's recently constructed ski hut at Mount Ruapehu.

In May 1968 Pam and Max opened the Camera-Film Bar in the Transport Centre in Lower Hutt. They built a thriving photographic business based around developing and printing of films. The shop was tiny, designed to work as a drop off/pick up location for films, and had the second highest developing and printing turnover for Kodak in New Zealand. Many tramping club members purchased cameras from Max and Pam and availed themselves of their developing and printing services.

In 1987 Pam and Max were informed the lease on their shop was to be terminated and they had the opportunity to move into the new Queensgate Mall. This was a watershed moment as they had been developing a business, Monochrome Photographic Reproductions, for quality reproduction of old photos. This business was the perfect blend of their skills; Max copying and reproducing the old photos and Pam retouching and restoring the images. They opened a studio in Queens Drive in Lower Hutt then latterly ran the business from home in Pokohiwi Road.

Pam and Max raised three children, Matthew (Matt), Sheldon (Shelly) and Johan (Jo) all of whom have been long term active club members.

The Hutt Valley Tramping Club has been a big part of Pam and Max's life. Over their 75 years of membership, they have enjoyed numerous tramping and skiing trips. They were active skiers for many decades at the Ruapehu Lodge and they passed on that love of skiing to their children and grandchildren. They were very active at organising and participating in the Vets Trips to the Ruapehu Lodge which were fantastic social events. Skiing was always the main activity but many members also joined the group to just enjoy the location and the company. Pam and Max also extended the winter Vets Trips to summer tramping trips in Tongariro National Park based out of the lodge.



Bruce Family at Donnelly Flats 1968

We tramped as a family, sometimes in the Tararuas, but more commonly in the Tongariro National Park. Mum and Dad were very adventurous. We walked the Tongariro Crossing as a family when Jo was five and completed several legs of the round-the-mountain track. The success of these trips relied heavily on Pam's organisational skills. She was constantly supportive of us when the going got tough.

Pam particularly enjoyed the club's South Island ski trips run by Doug Fowler. For a number of years Doug ran these trips to various skifields up and down South Island. They travelled by van and stayed in a variety of accommodation along the way. Great skiing and fantastic social times.

Pam and Max were active participants in the club's mid-week tramps and Sunday trips.

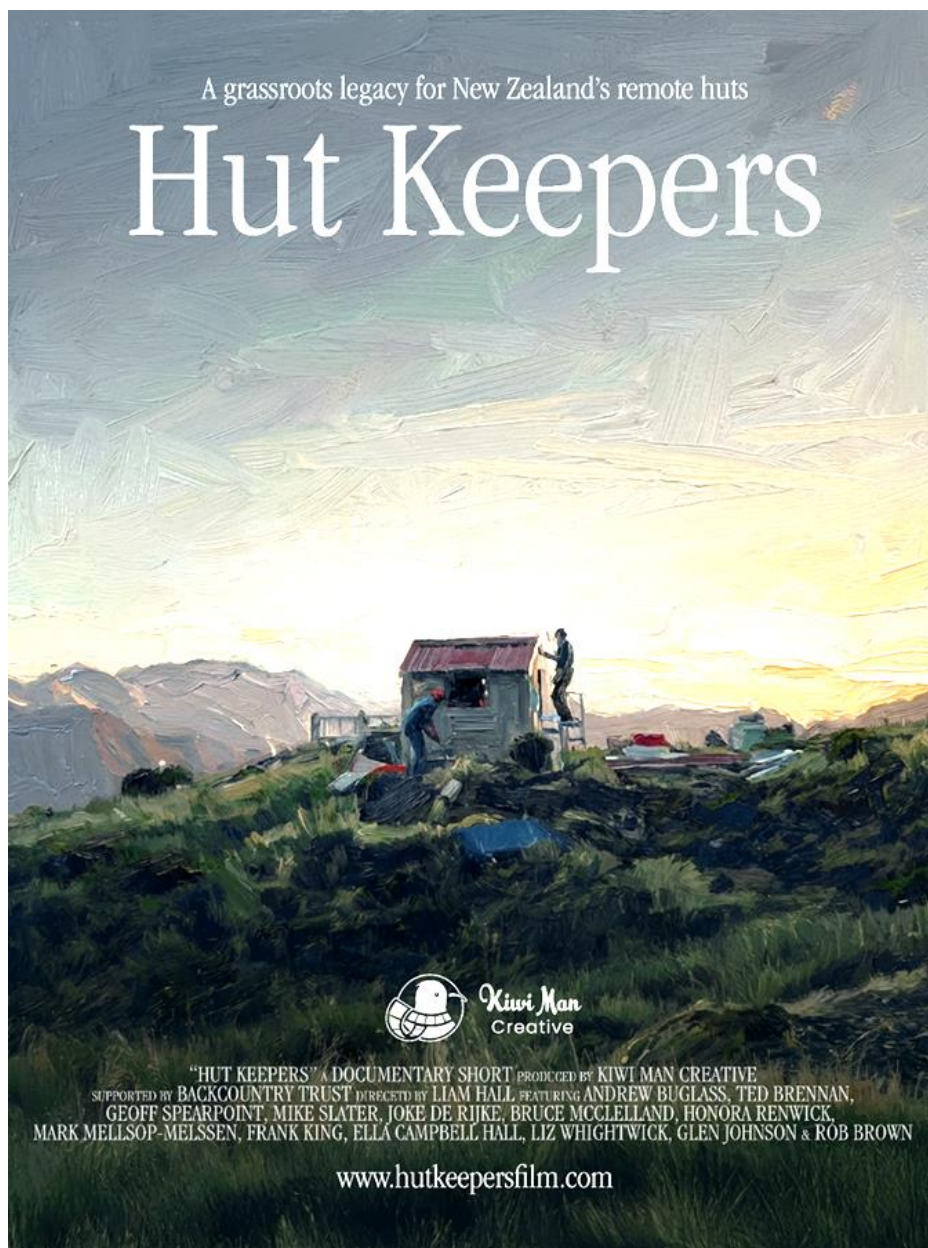
A big contribution Pam and Max made to the tramping club was establishing the photographic archive and organising the impressive photographic displays at the club's notable birthday celebrations. Pam's organisational and cataloguing expertise came to the fore in these endeavours. Pam was also a member of the Ruapehu Committee for many years and was heavily involved in the success and operation of the Ruapehu Lodge.

Mum loved Scottish Country Dancing and was active for many years with the Lower Hutt club. Pam and Max loved to entertain, and they combined their interest in Scottish Country Dancing with the family's Scottish heritage by holding several Scottish themed evenings on St Andrews Day that involved many club members. These were classic evenings combining haggis, piping, malt whisky, Burns poetry and, of course, dancing. Dad loved to dance the eightsome reel, a serious challenge for the uncoordinated in a moderately sized lounge.

One of the most enduring legacies of Pam's life is the amazing partnership she had with Max. They were married for 72 years and they also worked together for most of that time. Pam was the constant in their relationship; always supporting Max and making sure everything happened when it needed to happen. In 2018 they moved into a townhouse at the Shona McFarlane Retirement Village and in late 2025 they moved into the rest home. Max remains a resident at Shona McFarlane.

Sheldon Bruce and Johan Barclay

**HUT KEEPERS FILM SHOWING
HVTC CLUBROOMS 22 JULY**



Hut Keepers film - about volunteers maintaining back country huts

Entrance by koha with proceeds to the Back Country Trust and the film's producer Liam Hall

Doors open 7.00pm - Light refreshments will be served so please be there on time

7.30pm Movie starts - Duration 51 minutes

8.30pm approximately - Tea, coffee will be served

RSVP to Pamela at - pamela.campbell@xtra.co.nz by Sunday 19 July 2026 if not full earlier.
Book early because this showing is likely to be popular and there is a limit on numbers. Please let Pamela know if you need to cancel so your place can be offered to someone else.

One-off showing by kind permission of Liam Hall