0DATE: August 2024 **Vol. 77 No. 07**

Hills & Valleys

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE HUTT VALLEY TRAMPING CLUB (Inc)

MICK McPARLAND

August 1932 – July 2024

Please submit your **September 2024** H&V articles to the editor by **1st September 2024**

HVTC Postal Address: PO Box 30-883, Lower Hutt:
Clubrooms: Birch Street Reserve, Birch Street, Waterloo
Internet: http://www.hvtc.org.nz E-mail: *info@hvtc.org.nz*

President: Marina Skinner 021 792 260 **Secretary:** Emma Dobbie 027 252 5045
Trip Coordinator: Dennis Page 021 229 9901 **Treasurer:** Jim Cousins 586 2135

Editor H&V : Bruce Miller 027 563 5966 the-bruce@xtra.co.nz

CLUB NIGHT PROGRAMME
Starts 7:30 pm promptly

7 August : Open Night
Please bring around 15 or so of your photos to share with the members.

14 August : David Barnes – Herenga ā Nuku Aotearoa Outdoor Access Commission
You may know the commission by it's former name, the NZ Walking Access Commission. Club member David Barnes is the local Regional Field Advisor. He'll tell you about the his work, including a couple of projects he's working on which should improve access to some corners of the Tararua and Ruahine Ranges.

21 August : Nicholas Boyack – Harry McNish Shackleton's Carpenter
Harry McNish was an unsung hero on Sir Ernest Shackleton's 1914 British Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition. When the Endurance became trapped on ice, it was the skill of the ship's carpenter Harry McNish that saved the day. Nicholas Boyack will examine why he did not get a Polar Medal. McNish is buried in the Karori Cemetery and there is a statue of his beloved cat, Mrs Chippy, on his grave..

28 August : HVTC Photo Competition 2024
The 2024 HVTC Photo Competition has been judged by well-known tramper, cyclist and photographer John Rhodes. Come along and view the entries, hear John's comments and learn his selections of winners and place-getters across the various categories. The evening will conclude with presentation of the trophies.

4 September : Josh Nicholls – HVTC centenary school grant
Hutt Valley High School was one of the recipients of a HVTC centenary school grant last year. Assistant Head of Physical Education Josh Nicholls talks about how the grant supported students to experience outdoor recreation and the natural environment.

.

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.

August			
Sun 4	D1	Colonial Knob	Mel
		Manual bike ride 2hrs - 9.30 from Avalon Park	Leena
10 - 11	T1	Cattle Ridge Hut	Tania
	T2	Poutaki Hut	Andrew R
Sun 11	D1	Trip required	
		Manual bike ride 2hrs - 9.30 from Avalon Park	Leena
Tues 13		Moonlight Walk	Leader Required
	T3	Moonlight Southern Crossing	Andrew R
Sun 18	D1	Belmont Trig	Doreen
		Manual bike ride 2hrs - 9.30 from Avalon Park	Leena

Sat 24	D1 / 2	Orongorongo Hut Bagging	Andrew R
Sun 25	D1	Mt McKerrow	David B
		Manual bike ride 2hrs - 9.30 from Avalon Park	Leena
31 - 1	T1		
September			
Sun 1	D1	Trip required	
		Manual bike ride 2hrs - 9.30 from Avalon Park	Leena

FROM THE PRESIDENT

August 2024

Sheldon Bruce elected a Life Member

Congratulations to Shelly Bruce, who was elected a Life Member of the Hutt Valley Tramping Club at our AGM on Wednesday 31 July.

Shelly has made an incredible contribution to the running of our Ruapehu Lodge, serving on the Ruapehu Committee for 28 years.

For 12 of the past 14 years he has been an enthusiastic, good-natured booking officer for the lodge. He is a marvellous host on the mountain, guiding new people to the lodge and volunteering as custodian and cook when outside groups stay there.

Thank you, Shelly, for your wonderful service to our club.

Welcome to new committee members

The AGM elected several new members to our club's three committees.

I welcome all new committee members and thank everyone who is continuing in their role.

And I'd like to thank the committee members who stood down at the AGM:

- Tania Hatfield and Michelle White from the General Committee
- Russell Oliver from the Ruapehu Committee
- Cathy Priest, Doreen Courtenay and Debbie Labett from the Social Committee

The full list of elected officers

President	Marina Skinner	
Vice-President	Doreen Courtenay	
Secretary	Emma Dobbie	
Treasurer	Jim Cousins	
Trip Co-ordinator	Dennis Page	
Transport Officer	John Smeith	
General Committee (6)	Lex Grubner	Ann Hayman
	Debbie Labett	Chris McMillan
	Mel Stoneham	Doc Watson
Vice-President Ruapehu	Kate Brownsword	
Ruapehu Secretary	Bruce Miller	
Ruapehu Treasurer	John Simes	

Ruapehu Committee (8)	David Biegel	Sheldon Bruce
	Ian McIlraith	Alison Newbald
	Brendan Quirke	Robert Thompson
Social Committee (8)	Pamela Campbell	William Liao
	Carolyn Lyon	Graeme McVerry
	Sharman Robinson	Marilyn Sickels

President's awards

At the AGM I acknowledged the outstanding work of several club members:

- **Russell Oliver** for his practical and administrative support for the Ruapehu Lodge, including 11 years on the Ruapehu Committee.
- **Andrew Robinson** for editing the magnificent *100 years 100 stories* publication to mark our centenary.
- **Michele Lythgoe** for her contributions to the 100th Sub-committee and organising the Saturday afternoon event in November and supporting other centenary initiatives.
- **Bob Deller** for his contributions to the 100th Sub-committee, organising the 14 May walks, the Saturday afternoon event in November and supporting other centenary initiatives.
- **Bernice Deller** for her contributions to the 100th Sub-committee, organising the 14 May walks, the Saturday afternoon event in November, the slide presentations and supporting other centenary initiatives.
- **Gerard McGreevey** for his contributions to the 100th Sub-committee, organising the Friday evening mix and mingle and supporting other centenary initiatives.

Marina Skinner

President

UPCOMING EVENTS

UPCOMING EVENTS AT RUAPEHU LODGE			
In	***Out***	***Event***	
Mon 26 Aug	Fri 30 Aug	Club Week 1	*Contact Booking Officer (Sheldon Bruce) 027 451 0415*
Mon 02 Sept	Fri 06 Sept	Club Week 2 (Vets and allcomers)	*Contact Rachel Bruce 027 486 8961*
Mon 09 Sept	Fri 13 Sept	Club Week 3	*Contact Booking Officer (Sheldon Bruce) 027 451 0415*
Fri 13 Sept	Sun 15 Sept	75th dinner at the lodge	*Contact Kate Brownsword 027 562 0177*

Fri 20 Sept	Sun 22 Sept	Uni students and young professionals' weekend	*Contact Abigail Brownsword 027 431 7737 (text please)*
Mon 30 Sept	Fri 04 Oct	October School Holiday week 1	*Contact Booking Officer (Sheldon Bruce) 027 451 0415*
Mon 07 Oct	Fri 11 Oct	October School Holiday week 2	*Contact Booking Officer (Sheldon Bruce) 027 451 0415*

Booking can be done by contacting the Booking Officer Sheldon Bruce by:

- Email to Ruapehubookings@hvtc.org.nz , or
- Phone to 027 451 0415 and leave a message if there is no reply.

Since my last epistle Whakapapa has experienced several weeks of fine frosty weather which has been fantastic for snowmaking. With that snow the Ruapehu Alpine Lifts team have been able to get Happy Valley fully open for learners and the Rangatira Chair has been open for the last week for intermediate skiers. The latest development is that the Valley T-bar is now open for advanced skiers on ungroomed slopes and the Delta Chair is expected to open in the next few days. The reality is the skifield needs more snow to be fully operational, but some snow is forecast for later this week.

So, time to start planning some trips up the mountain whether it be for skiing, climbing or just rambling around enjoying the fantastic mountain environment. Contact me on Ruapehubookings@hvtc.org.nz or 0274510415.

The lodge was occupied in the second week of the July School Holidays with Chris Keen climbing up around the summit with some budding alpinists and Emelie Kane sitting and passing her Level 1 Ski Instructor course – well done Emelie.

There is plenty of space to use the lodge throughout the season and we also have some great trips organized:

26 August to 30 August – Club Week 1

A week trip opportunity pretty much at the height of season. What could be better. No one has put their hand up for this week yet but feel free to book with me and I'm sure we can get a group together.

2 September to 6 September – Club Week 2

Put this one in your diary. This is the traditional Vets Week. Rachel Bruce is the leader and is promising fun, sun, good skiing and great company. Contact Rachel on rals.bruce@xtra.co.nz or 0274868961.

13 September to 15 September – Lodge 75th Celebration

The big weekend on the Ruapehu Lodge calendar. The first Ruapehu Hut was built in 1949 so we have now hit the big 75. A weekend of fun with plenty of skiing and riding to celebrate. (See below.) Get your names on the list. And better still, the week before the 75th is **Club Week 3** so why not take a few days off and turn it into an extended spring skiing trip. If you want any more information about the 75th please contact Kate Brownsword on 0274317737.

20 September to 22 September – Young Professionals Weekend

Abigail Brownsword (Text 0274317737) is leading this trip that is aimed at the youngsters (see below). Party time!

30 September to 4 October – 1st Week of School Holidays

Deb Ryan is the leader of this trip. Contact Deb on debryan6011@gmail.com or 0212256368 to get more details.

7 October to 11 October – 2nd Week of the School Holidays

Let me know if you would like to lead this trip. You can't beat spring skiing at Whakapapa so this is a fantastic time of the year to get parents and children enjoying the slopes together.

This list doesn't mean that you have to go on an organised trip. There are plenty of other opportunities to use the lodge throughout the winter season for skiing, climbing, ski touring or just relaxing. Just pick a time, contact the booking officer (details listed above) then come on up.

That's all for now.

Sheldon Bruce

Ruapehu Lodge Booking Officer

LODGE 75TH CELEBRATION
FRIDAY 13 SEPTEMBER TO SUNDAY 15 SEPTEMBER

Come and join us for ANOTHER celebration weekend at the club's Mt Ruapehu lodge!

To mark the lodge's 75th birthday, please join us on 13-15 September for:

- a great weekend of skiing/riding. This is traditionally one of the peak weekends of the season.

- a chance to catch up and spend time with friends and fellow club members, and to enjoy being on the mountain

- a celebration dinner on Saturday night, including with mulled wine and nibbles, and the usual fabulous and legendary lodge hospitality.

If you missed out on our 100th event last year, or saw the photos and would like to join us this year - we are looking forward to seeing you! And if you came last year, you will know what a great time we had, so please come again.

Events this year will include: dress for the dinner in shades of blue - sapphire being the colour associated with 75th anniversaries and light blue being the club colour; a gold headdress competition - wear your best gold headdress for the Saturday night dinner, plus an additional prize is available if you have already worn it on Saturday for skiing/riding/tramping/climbing; and add to our 'memory book' of your best memory of time at the lodge, whether it's a photo or something written.

Of course there are many fantastic outdoor opportunities around the mountain, so if you would like to come up for the weekend but prefer not to ski, we can help you to organise day walks or other activities. Please contact Kate Brownsword on the.brownswords@xtra.co.nz if you are willing to organise an alternative activity.

Cost: Standard lodge fees will apply. There will be a charge for the Saturday night dinner, and we are just working on that currently - more very soon!. There will be no requirement to bring nibbles/vegetables for the weekend, just yourselves and your tipple of choice.

Please book now for this great weekend with Sheldon Bruce on Ruapehubookings@hvtc.org.nz or 027 451 0415.

Couple of points to note: This is usually one of the peak weekends of the ski season, so please consider coming to the lodge on Friday 13 Sept, as there may be limited car parking available on the Saturday. On Saturday 14 Sept, we are only accepting bookings at the lodge for those attending the dinner. We have 32 beds available at the lodge.

We could also use your help! If you are able to help out over this weekend, please contact me on the.brownswords@xtra.co.nz

Looking forward to seeing you on the mountain!

Kate Brownsword

For the Ruapehu Committee

UNI STUDENTS AND YOUNG PROFESSIONALS' WEEKEND AT HVTC LODGE RUAPEHU FRI 20 TO SUN 22 SEPT

For uni students, 'YoPros' (young people working) or anyone who identifies as young at heart!

Come and spend the weekend hanging out with fellow ski bums.

There will be skiing and awesome food, accompanied by witty commentary on everything.

Contact Abigail Brownsword

Text 027 431 7737 or email abigail.brownsword@outlook.com

RUAPEHU LODGE TO GET AN AED.

The General committee of the club has agreed to a funding request from the Ruapehu Lodge Committee for an AED or Auto external defibrillator also known as a heart defibrillator. The Natusch bequest is to be the source of the funds required.

Defibrillators come in various models and makes but we have chosen one that is designed to be portable, that is, it is compact enough to be carried around and comes in a ready to go backpack rather than being stored in a cabinet fixed to a wall. The model we are considering is the AED7000 and here is a link to the details. AED 7000 Package Defibrillator (supplyme.co.nz) The intention is for this to be available for any outdoor incident should the need arise. To facilitate this, we intend to register the AED on AED Locations so that it is locatable by anyone so long as the lodge is open. We will also consider 24/7 access by registering our door code with the emergency services. It will be installed in the foyer in a prominent position. Currently there are AEDs available at the following locations. Iwakau medical centre, Ski Patrol Chalet on the upper mountain, Aorangi Ski club, Scout lodge and Matamata ski lodge. The latter two well below the Top of the Bruce. Ours would appear to be the only registered AED on the upper mountain apart from the one at ski patrol near the top of the Sky Waka.

We thank the General Committee for their accommodation of this request. This device will be a further HVTC contribution to our tradition of mountain safety.

John Simes

for the Ruapehu Committee.

Ps. It's worth clicking the link to AED Locations app so as to get an idea of how to use this valuable tool just in case you need it someday!

THE BRUCE FAMILY SEAT

Tony Birtwistle

The picture is of Lochmaben Castle in Dumfrieshire, Scotland. The castle, built by Edward 1st of England was never occupied by the Bruces however it replaced an earlier wooden 'mote' built by Robert the Bruce's great grandfather and Robert was brought up in the area. The Bruces were the Lairds of Annandale and moved to Lochmaben when their Annandale seat was inundated (by water). Robert the Bruce became King of Scotland and famous for his defeat of a much larger English army at Bannockburn. Once again the Hutt Valleys can count Scottish nobility in its ranks (along with the Maxwells) – Lord Sheldon has a certain ring to it!

Tony

MISSING AVALANCHE TRANSCEIVERS

Doc Watson

Can anyone help me solve the mystery regarding the whereabouts of two Ortovox brand Avalanche Transceivers.

I have not been able to locate these, they are numbers 2 and 3 and don't appear to be assigned to anyone in the book.

Please let me know if you have come across these items, they are in two small red bags with the writing H.V.T.C 2 on one and H.V.T.C 3 on the other one.

Doc Watson

Gear Custodian

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Please welcome new members Emelie Kane and Ruth Crawford. We look forward to enjoying days in the hills with you.

Doreen Courtenay

Membership Officer

TRIP REPORTS

WINCHCOMBE BIV
KING'S BIRTHDAY WEEKEND : 1-3 JUNE

Andrew Robinson

For a while my trip to Winchcombe biv was over-subscribed with six of us heading for a two-person biv, but two withdrew for different reasons and it was down to a more manageable three plus one.

The road was quiet as Dave, Doc, Zaw and I went over the Remutaka Hill. There weren't many cars in the Waiohine Gorge Road car park which was a good sign. The forecast was for wind and rain from mid-afternoon but with most of the route in the bush I figured we weren't likely to be affected by the weather.

We climbed for about an hour then after another hour of reasonably flat track we stopped for morning tea. After that we had a half hour of slightly downhill to Cone Saddle before another hour of uphill until lunch time. After lunch it was three quarters of an hour to the bush edge just before Cone. I'd been monitoring the wind and although the wind had picked up a bit there had been significant lulls so I was fairly confident we'd be able to make a dash across the clearing. A group of three had passed us at lunch time and there was no sign of them which most likely meant they'd got across okay. We discussed our plan of attack then left the shelter of the bush. We'd made it all of about 5 metres when a gust sent us all sprawling. We staggered as best we could back to the trail and clung onto rocks waiting for a lull. With no sign of a lull Dave suggested we

give it a go anyway and I agreed. The ground was mostly soft and there were no precipices to be blown over so it was low risk. Dave headed off and I followed and took about a minute to cross the open stretch of about 50 metres to the next bit of shelter. I was able to pretty much keep to the track but Doc and Zaw found it harder. I had shelter for about a minute before the next stretch which would take us to about halfway. The wind was more consistent which I found made it a lot easier as I just walked with a significant lean. The stretch was about 100 metres and when I reached the next bit of shelter I turned around to see the other three spread out over most of the stretch. Some cloud blew in and Doc who was furthest away disappeared from sight but thankfully the cloud just as quickly blew away and after five minutes we'd regrouped and were ready for the last bit. We'd made it to a slight depression before the tarn where the ground was quite swampy but it was sheltered. I gingerly made my way hoping not to sink in up to my knees, although that would perhaps have been preferable to getting blown over. We did maybe 20 metres of that until the tarn blocked our way. We climbed up onto the track not much more than a metre above us where I was expecting a blasting from the wind but although we were still in the open we were in a quiet spot. We had no problems with the final 100 metres or so of clearing to the bush.

From the bush edge it was an hour and a half along Cone Ridge to the turnoff to Neill Forks hut. There were just a couple of spots where we were briefly exposed to the wind and got a reminder that it hadn't died down. At the turnoff we had a bit over 600 metres of descent over a distance of a bit over a kilometre so it was going to be steep. We had perhaps an hour and three quarters of daylight left which I figured might be just enough. It wasn't and it took over two and a half hours from the top. When we got to the bottom we weren't quite there either. We lost the track and I was a little confused by a stream not shown on my gps. We crossed the stream (Neill Creek) when we shouldn't have but didn't get far before Dave found the track back on the other side. The hut was then only about ten minutes away which we discovered was full. Apparently Neill Forks hut is a popular destination if the forecast isn't the best. Some of the hut occupants were cooking in the porch and some space was made for us but it would have been rather cramped so after a bit of dithering I went in search of a site to pitch the tent. About 30 metres from the hut I found a nice grassy almost-flat. It was raining lightly but at least it wasn't cold and once I had the fly up I was pretty comfortable apart from the insects flying into my eyes because I had my head torch on. It took about an hour to prepare tea so it was about 8 o'clock before we ate. Doc wanted to sleep in the tent rather than the hut so I figured I would too. Dave and Zaw opted for a space on the floor of the hut. I put the tent up inside the fly and Doc and I had a comfortable space.

The next morning it was fine, calm and cold and the forecast was for it to remain that way for the next two days. Better to have bad weather at the start rather than the end of a trip I think with the only downside of that being having to carry a wet tent.

The first part of our route was off track following a spur I'd been up a couple of times previously. It used to be a marked track so the going had been pretty good and had taken about three hours. We got off to a good start with Dave finding the unmarked start of the track on the other side of the creek. The track was still easy to follow and we made good progress to somewhere around the middle where we lost the trail for a while as we had done the last time. When we picked it up again it was good going again but maybe because it was more than ten years since the previous time, after three hours we still had quite a bit to go. We stopped for lunch just before the vegetation changed and when we resumed I figured we had about a 50/50 chance of avoiding the leatherwood. We had been successful in avoiding it on one of the two previous occasions though from memory when we had ended up in the leatherwood it wasn't too bad. Dave had had advice at the hut to go right at the start of the spur and at the top. We'd gone left at the start and that had been the right choice. Despite the advice both Dave and I felt we should go left at the top so we did and Dave found a route that completely avoided the leatherwood. When we hit the main track there was a bit of marker tape to mark where we'd just come from. Twenty minutes along the main track we reached the peak called Neill and that's where Dave left us to carry on past Winchcombe biv and hopefully get to Kime hut for the night. With greater fitness and longer legs than the rest of us I figured he'd get there okay.

Ahead of us we could see our route to the biv though the biv itself was just out of sight in the bush. After the descent from Neill the route looked a bit more jagged than the map suggested which was slightly discouraging but the distance wasn't great so I thought we ought to get to the biv before dark. The descent was a bit steep in places but nothing too challenging. When the track levelled off we then fell into a pattern for a while. There was a notch we had to descend for maybe 20 or 30 metres, usually with caution required for foot placement, then we had to ascend a similar amount, then it was relatively flat for 100 metres or so. None of the notches showed up on my gps. From the last of the four or five notches we had more than a kilometre to go but the route was straightforward with just a final short climb at the bushline. It was a relief to see a sign saying 30m to the biv.

The biv was well sited, sheltered from the wind on most sides. There wasn't much of a view from the biv but a track through a bit of bush took us to the helipad where there was a good view. We figured the toilet was in the vicinity, out of sight most likely, but we couldn't find it. From a recent online trip report that I'd found I knew there was one somewhere so after I'd put the billy on I had another look. By that time it was getting dark so I was keen to find it but with no luck I headed in the opposite direction, the way we'd come in. I spotted a sign and when I got to it there was the thunderbox just around the corner. It was to our left as we'd come in and the sign hadn't been visible. Like the biv it was mostly sheltered from the wind but unlike the biv it had a great view. When I got back to the biv it was time to started cooking tea. It was a chilly five degrees but because we were out of the wind Doc and I didn't bother putting longs on. By the time we went to bed the temperature had dropped to two degrees. It was significantly warmer in the biv but not long after getting in my sleeping bag I found I had the same problem as when camping on Cone at the end of last year. I felt warm enough but was starting to shiver so had to put about three more layers on. It wasn't a great night's sleep for me but definitely much better than when we camped on Cone.

We probably should have had an early start for our last day but we didn't. It had taken an hour longer than my estimate to get from Neill to the biv which meant we could well be walking the last bit to the carpark in the dark but with good weather forecast it wasn't going to be a problem. As I'd anticipated the notches were easier going the other way and it took us 15 minutes less to get to Neill than it had taken from Neill. From Neill we could see most of the route from Neill Saddle to Cone which is a long but gentle climb that takes longer than you think it will. Before that we had a descent to the saddle that was steeper and longer than I remembered from the two previous occasions I'd done it, but on a better track than we'd had between Neill and the biv. We had lunch after the saddle then set off on the climb. Near the top we lost the track for a while but because we'd been heading in the right general direction we probably only lost about five minutes. The last half a kilometre to the top seemed to go on and on but at half past two we reached the clearing at the top and had a fifteen-minute break. From there it was going to be more or less downhill all the way.

At the junction near Cone it was a marked contrast with Friday as there was next to no wind. Although we were only just over half way it felt like we were on the home stretch. The route from Cone to the carpark can be a trudge at times but on this occasion I was quite happy with it. Eventually the time came to get torches out. I wasn't looking forward to the final steep descent which is usually quite slippery, whether it's wet or dry, but for once the surface was just right. We got to the van ten and a half hours after leaving the biv. It probably wasn't the best trip to do in

winter but it had been successful. Dave had also been successful in getting to Kime on Sunday then out to Otaki Forks on Monday

Andrew Robinson (leader). Trip participants: Dave Hanley, Doc Watson, Zaw Lin Oo

Andrew

ECCLESFIELD/SILVERSTREAM
Sunday 30 June 2024
Jackie West

Sixteen trampers entered the bush at the end of Chichester Drive on a cloudy Sunday morning. Only three of them had not done this walk before so most were out for some exercise and an opportunity to catch up with friends. After a five minute climb we took the track branching off to the left which sidles through the bush to the Ecclesfield Reserve which in 1965 was gifted to Forest and Bird. Here there are well formed tracks, mature beech trees and a lookout with a seat which is a suitable place to morning tea. Once refreshed we retraced our steps up hill for a short distance and then walked along the ridge from which Remutaka Prison can be glimpsed through the trees.

Usually we go down to the reservoirs from where there is a view of Upper Hutt and the Tararua Range but when Chris and I walked this route in April we found the gorse growing in the area burnt by the Anniversary Weekend fire in 2022 was growing over the track and the exit to Arundel Rd blocked off because there had been a slip in the area. This time we took the most direct route to Chatsworth Rd and walked up Arundel Road to find access to the reservoirs was blocked off and the view limited. We returned to the Chatsworth Road entrance and by following another track found ourselves in the burnt area above the reservoirs where someone had cut back the gorse making the climb up to the trig less painful than it would have been for those with bare legs.

Since DOC took over the management of the area the poisoned pine trees had been felled which opened up parts of the bush. As it was after 12 o'clock I decided a sunny spot among the pine logs would be an ideal spot for lunch. Nixon also found it a great place to do some climbing when he finished his lunch. With lunch over we continued our up hill climb passed the junction of three track junction which is the usual lunch spot and on to the track that went down to Chichester Drive. We had been away from the cars for four hours and according to Neil walked 5 km and ascended 290 m. The forecast showers never eventuated and everyone had plenty of time to indulge in conversation while they stretched their legs.

Those on the walk were: Clare Kelly, Marilyn Sickels, Kate Livingston, Debbie Labett and her nephew Nixon Campbell aged 10, Ann Hayman, Neil Parker, Anna and William Liao, Sharman Robinson, Jan Arts, Heather Eskdale, Chris McMillian, Doreen Courtnay, Chris and Jackie West leader.

Jackie

SOUTHERN WALKWAY
Sunday 28th July 2024
Heather Eskdale

Fourteen trampers gathered at Wellington Railway station on a rather overcast, breezy morning, with rain forecast later in the day – not the brilliant sunshine we had hoped for, but at least dry to begin with! We headed off along the waterfront and onto Oriental Parade before the turnoff 100m shy of Carlton Gore Road took us climbing uphill onto the slopes of Mount Victoria. The climb certainly brought on more laboured breathing but is amongst native bush and some grassland areas, so is very pretty, and a wonderful distraction from the incline! We stopped for morning tea in a sheltered grassy spot not far from the summit, then continued upward to the lookout platform. Due to the weather, the views were less than perfect but certainly better than anticipated.

From here, we followed the ridgeline, criss-crossing some suburban roads, walking through a couple of small pine plantations, skirting the SPCA and looking out to the hospital, playing fields and other known landmarks scattered around Newtown and Berhampore. Strolling by Truby King Historic Park, some stopped to read the history on the signage before we all settled for lunch in Melrose Park. We felt very fortunate to have stayed dry this far, but lunch became a somewhat rushed affair as the rain really started to set in. Parkas and waterproof over-trou were dragged hastily from packs before we set off once more along part of the Wellington Zoo Boundary fence before reaching the clay track leading to the summit of Mt Albert. As the rain continued to be steady, we didn't stop to stroll to the trig (alas, there was no view to admire in this weather) but continued downhill to Mt Albert Road and into Sinclair Park, which merges into Buckley Road Reserve. From here, it was easy to follow Houghton Bay Road to the coast and then wander the 1 km along to the Island Bay bus stop at Shorland Park. A bus trip through town took us back to the Railway Station and then homeward bound - a somewhat damp, but happy bunch finishing a very rewarding day.

Thank you everyone, for such wonderful company, lots of chatter and laughter and a thoroughly lovely outing.

Very basic stats:

Length: 14.9 km

Elevation gain: 413 m

Moving time: 3 hours 38 minutes.

Group participants:

Valray Climo, Lex Grubner, Clare Kelly, Marilyn Sickels, Jackie West, Chris West, Vera de Graauw, Marina Skinner, Doreen Courtenay, Elaine Richardson, Jim Cousins, Anne Marie Kay, Heather Eskdale, Rob Buxton

Heather

MICK MCPARLAND REMEMBERED
Dennis Page

The Hutt Valley Tramping Club acknowledges with considerable sadness the passing of Mick McParland, on 22 July 2024, after a short illness. Mick joined the HVTC in 1962 and had chalked up considerable 'tramping miles' by the time that I joined the club in 1999 – Mick would have been in his late sixties, and I was in my late twenties. The following is a transcript from my informal

tribute to Mick at his funeral service on Monday 29 July 2024 – I spoke from the dual privilege of having known Mick as a neighbour for 21 years and as a fellow HVTC tramper for 25 years.

My first tramping trip with the HVTC was a Sunday day tramp incorporating Cone and Mt Reeves in the Eastern Tararua Forest Park co-led by Mick together with his illustrious wingman of many years, Gilbert Stone. The trip was a mixture of both on and off-track travel, and I remember being particularly impressed with Mick's navigation and tracking skills – detecting from some distance away on very overgrown and hard-to-follow former trails, old tree blazes and other navigational aids that even many seasoned trampers might not have recognised. Mick and Gilbert took turns at leading and being 2IC, and successfully escorted a large and enthusiastic party safely (and enjoyably) back to the road end without loss, injury or drama – I think it was in part their professionalism, skill, cheer and humour that helped to convince me that HVTC was a good fit to meet my adventure needs so I signed up for my second prerequisite trip and then filed an application from to join shortly after that.

Not very long after the Mt Reeves trip, Mick was my paddling partner in a Wellington Anniversary Weekend kayaking trip to Abel Tasman National Park organised by Chris Keen. Our group was a somewhat rag-tag collection of newbies, novices, and unknowns after other groups of more seasoned kayakers had formed their own collectives and set off. We became separated from the other groups after a head wind had come up in the afternoon and we had not been able to round a point to reach the designated campsite – This had been anticipated in part by Chris Keen and we had all been organised as independent groups with our own food, cookers, and tents in the event we did become separated. We found another campsite and set ourselves up for the night. Two members in the party had cookers – Chris Fraser had a new MSR and Mick had a very old-school brass Coleman that took a lot of priming to get going and made a lot of noise once fired

up – It was duly dubbed 'the rocket' by some of the sneering and cynical younger group members and Mick copped a bit of flack. Mick took it in good humour – He'd probably heard it all before and as if to prove a point and fulfil some unwritten tramping prophecy, Chris Fraser's MSR soon became choked with soot, could not be cleaned, and conked out before it had barely warmed its first billy of water. Mick's 'rocket' was it as far as cooking for the rest of the expedition was concerned, and I think he won some newfound respect from the young and cocky early-twenty-somethings on the trip…

As many in the HVTC will know, Mick loved a bargain. Over the Christmas/New Year period of 2000/2001, Mick organised a trip to Nelson Lakes National Park – in part to recreate a trip he had been on to the same region in the 1960s and to visit some 'old haunts' such as Blue Lake (which back then was untracked and was affectionately known as 'The Wilderness') – and I was invited to join in. Mick had decided to upgrade his pack to cope with the ten-day journey and one day, shortly before departure, he proudly showed me over the low fence that separated our properties his 'as new' Macpac Torre he'd scored for ~$90 from Cash Converters (back then a new one retailed for ~$500). "That's fantastic, Mick," I said, "but what sized harness is it?" He looked at me somewhat quizzically and disclosed that he was not aware

the harnesses came in separate sizes. "Well, I'm a size 2 and you're about the same height and build as me." I noted, "so I expect yours should be the same to be a good fit." Mick looked and noted that the harness number was a '3' and I warned him that the pack might slop about and potentially become a bit of a burden on his back and perhaps take away from some of the enjoyment of the trip. As the trip was soon to depart, there was no chance to exchange for something else and he decided to tough it out. Needless to say, the pack harness, when fully loaded with ten-days' worth of food and kit did cause the pack to slop about and did give Mick gip. But to his credit he completed the trip without complaint. Indeed, I marvelled at his balance and agility (gained from many years of working on construction sites at height) on that trip which was a pretty wet affair – Mick would adeptly balance on a slippery log to cross a side creek while the rest of us opted for mutual support in the water – none of the rest of the party were game enough to try his stunts… As far as the pack was concerned, Mick promptly sold it shortly after the trip had concluded. He beamed at me from over the fence: "Resold it for the same price that I purchased it for," he said with an infectious laugh – Experience gained, and no financial penalty deducted!

Mick could also be quite forthright and offer an opinion, sometimes if not correct or warmly welcomed – On the same Nelson Lakes trip mentioned above, our party of four was lunching beside a bridged tributary to the Travers in the sun when a group of young adults, heading up valley, all crossed the bridge simultaneously. The bridge deck and cables all wobbled and jiggled like jelly and Mick (probably with his construction supervisory hat on) was up in a flash and gave the party a stern lecture about the needs to cross one at a time. One feisty young woman in the party was righteously indignant and was having none of it. "Well!" She scolded Mick, "you clearly have not read the sign because if you had, you'd have seen it says five at a time are permitted so we have done nothing wrong, and you should get your facts right!" And off she huffily strutted with the rest of the bewildered party in tow and with Michael Grace (in our party) noting that "she'd probably be dining out on that exchange all night…"

One advantage of having a fellow tramper as a neighbour means that you have someone who 'gets' the raison d'etre for your weekends away in the hills and willingly keeps an eye on your place and collects the mail. The additional advantage of having a tramper that also worked in the construction industry for a long time is that they accumulate a lot of tools and materials over many years and there is always something handy to assist with disaster and the unexpected events that crop up as a consequence of home ownership. Mick was always there to help if disaster struck – A burst hot water tank, complete with cascading water down the stairs, that greeted me one evening when returning home from work, was efficiently tamed and dealt with by Mick with tools in hand. A plumber was then organised, and I was most grateful to have received such kind gestures of help and assistance in times of need.

My reciprocal help had to be in the form of IT support and troubleshooting for Mick's wife Pam who was the embracer of all thing's internet and digital in the McParland household. Mick was having none of computers, e-mails and cell phones and a lot of credit must go to Pam for

receiving electronic club communications and passing them on to Mick so he could be fully informed in a timely manner. During the first Covid lockdown, cash that was normally king in Mick's eyes was not welcome in many stores due to fear of multiple handling and the potential to spread virus. Internet shopping was tricky for Pam and Mick was insistent on one particular store and certain brands of products etc which caused some dilemma for a household where those over 70 were strenuously encouraged to stay home. I'd offered to do the shopping and was happy for delayed payment, but Mick insisted cash up front - the compromise was the McParland credit card was placed in one of the bags for me to collect at the front door while maintaining social distancing. True to his mischievous self, Mick would sneak downstairs after Pam had dictated the shopping list to me over the phone and quietly call out, 'psst, could you add a king-sized bar of chocolate to the list but be sure to remove it from the bag when you get back and don't tell the missus…' So, confession time – I'm probably guilty of abusing the family credit card – but hopefully for a good cause…

Mick's encouragement, mentoring, volunteering of time, skills, and labour, plus sense of humour and mischief were all qualities that endeared him to many club members over many years and he will be sorely missed. As I noted from the kayaking trip recollection above, in our journey together, there was the occasional 'tip-out,' but it was mostly smooth paddling. Sixty-two of the nearly ninety-two years of life spent with the club – That will be a lot of handshaking and socialising in the next life Mick. Thanks, Mick, on behalf of all HVTC, for the memories, friendship, and support. Rest in peace.

Dennis

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.