

Smith Creek waterfall.

Photo: Jackie West

Please submit your **March 2024** H&V articles to the editor by **3<sup>rd</sup> March 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](mailto:info@hvtc.org.nz)

**President:** Marina Skinner 021 792 260  
**Trip Coordinator:**

**Secretary:** Emma Dobbie  
**Treasurer:** Jim Cousins

027 252 5045  
586 2135

**Editor H&V :** Bruce Miller 563 5966 [the-bruce@xtra.co.nz](mailto:the-bruce@xtra.co.nz)



**CLUB NIGHT PROGRAMME**  
**Starts 7:30 pm promptly**



**7 February : Andrew Robinson – Reflections on 50 trips with Doc and with Murray**

Since his first trip with HVTC in 2005 Andrew Robinson has done 50 trips each with Murray Presland and Doc Watson. Andrew will reminisce on some of his adventures over the years with these two

**14 February : Graeme McVerry –Amsterdam to River Cruise**

Graeme will talk about his river cruise through the heart of Europe last June, 14 days on the Rhine-Main-Danube waterways system from Amsterdam to Budapest. Cruising past the castles and vineyards of the Rhine Gorge and Danube Valley was interspersed with town and village walks and occasionally excursions further afield by tour coach. There were overnight stays at three of Europe's great cities, Amsterdam, Vienna and Budapest. Definitely a different style of travel from his previous trekking tours in Europe, but very enjoyable nevertheless.

**21 February : Kate Livingston – Long distance walking in south-west France**

France has a great network of long distance hiking trails. Kate covered 1000+ kms on these in 2019 and 2023. She followed two trails - Via Gebennensis and Via Podiensis, which lead from Geneva to the Pyrenees. She will talk about logistics (such as finding the route, accommodation, food), the places she passed through and some interesting facts and figures.

**28 February : Bill Jorgenson – “Letting in the Light” The story of my Italian family research and writing the book.**

After retiring from work at the end of 2019, Bill Jorgensen "suddenly" decided to write a book. He thought the story of his mother's Italian family so interesting it needed to be told for the younger generation. Bill had never ever anticipated writing a book! He had never been actively involved with genealogy! Over two years he found out how little of the story he actually knew. He found researching addictive and kept finding new paths to information. By the end he published a 300+ page book and organised a reunion attended by 160 family members.

Bill worked over 50 years in the insurance industry. On leaving school he joined State Insurance and, in a 40-year career, worked from office boy to branch manager to company secretary. Then, in pre-retirement, he worked 10 years for the Insurance Ombudsman as a case manager. In this role he got a taste for research which stood him in good stead when he researched for the book.

Bill is a member of the Kaumatua Tramping Club.

**6 March : Debbie Bainbridge – Old Ghost Road**

Ghosts and Goblins

These are 2 things they did not see.

They did see the Boneyard, come along to find out more.

Paul, Debbie and 2 friends did a 3-day Mountain bike packing adventure into the magnificent Mokihinui Valley, starting at the mosquito mega of Lyell finishing at Seddonville.

Set off in search of views and adventure into the wilderness, They also have a video to share.

Hope to see you there





## FORTHCOMING TRIPS



### NOTES

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

| February |    |   |                 |
|----------|----|---|-----------------|
| Sun 11   | D1 | Clothes Optional Day Trip                     | Patrick         |
|          |    | Manual bike ride 2hrs - 9.30 from Avalon Park | Leena           |
| Tue 13   |    | Petone Historical Circuit                     | Leader required |
|          |    | Dry creek loop via Kaitangata Crescent        | Paul L          |
| 17 - 18  | T1 | Trip Required                                 |                 |
| Sun 18   | D1 | Orchid Hunt                                   | Murray Mc       |
| Tue 20   |    | No easy ride scheduled                        | Leader required |
|          |    | Leader and ride required                      | Leader required |
| 24 - 25  | T1 | Trip Required                                 |                 |
| Sun 25   | D1 | Skyline walkway                               | Tony & Jo       |
| Tue 27   |    | Remutaka Incline to summit                    | Leader required |
|          |    | Remutaka Incline via backroad to Siberia      | Paul L          |
| March    |    |   |                 |
| 1 – 3    |    | <b>Conservation Weekend</b>                   |                 |
|          | WP | Pine Pulling Weekend Ruapehu                  | Derek R         |
| Sat 2    | WP | Ava Park Clean-up                             | Leader required |
| Sun 3    | D1 | Rewa Bush Conservation Area                   | David B         |
| 15 – 17  | WP | Ruapehu Lodge work party                      | Kate B          |

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### ENVIRONMENT WEEKEND: 1ST WEEKEND MARCH 2024 3 TRIPS ON OFFER.

**John Simes**

An update for Environment Weekend as it gets closer. Refer to December Hills and Valleys for the basic facts and wait for a club email for each trip for the fine tuning details.

Derek Richardson will lead the Pinus contorta weekend to Ruapehu.

Leader still required for Ava Park. Any offers please contact John Simes 027 464 1824 . It would be very helpful if someone offered to bake a cake for morning tea for this event. Always a good way to improve the participation rate. I have asked GWRC to supply a truck load of mulch to spread around at Ava Park. We did this on the second work party and it has been a great help.

Sunday trip to Rewa Bush near Castlepoint as previously advised. David will be in touch via email.



A note on Ava Park. Geoff Norton has been spending time down there and I want to shout out to him for his efforts. The Northern tip had always been a bit less lush and more unkempt. Geoff has gone down there over the Christmas break and tidied it up considerably, removed all weeds, staked all plants and then bailed water from the river and hauled it to the plants. Thanks Geoff. Photo is of the northern tip after Geoff has done his best. I expect to be out of town this year for these events but am very happy to assist by keeping up the liaison with DOC and GWRC.



Many thanks to Derek

Richardson for leading the Pinus contorta weekend and to whoever puts their hand up to lead at Ava Park. I will be your helpful adviser from afar.

*John*

## **RUAPEHU LODGE WORK PARTY**

### **15 – 17 March 2024**

The first Ruapehu Lodge work party of 2024 is scheduled for the weekend of 15 – 17 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](mailto:the.brownswords@xtra.co.nz).

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



# SOS FOR LEADERS FOR TUESDAY BIKE RIDES

Debbie Labett

We are short of leaders for the below-listed bike rides. Any members who would like to help please contact me at [debby.40@hotmail.com](mailto:debby.40@hotmail.com). It is a matter of picking up the ride you would like to lead, send me a blurb about the ride, where to meet, what to bring. You can choose the date and meeting place.

## Easy Rides

6 Feb No ride Waitangi Day

13 Feb Petone Historical Circuit Leader Required

20 Feb No easy ride scheduled

27 Feb Remutaka Incline to summit Leader required

05 March Leader and ride required

12 March The Pavilion in Eastbourne to Shipwreck return. Leader required

19 March Leader and ride required

26 March final ride before the Easter break. I have decided to make this a combined ride for everyone. Meet for 6.15pm departure at the Kiln Street Kindergarten Car park in Silverstream, come along for a flat easy mystery ride. Plenty of parking.

## Intermediate Rides

6 Feb No ride Waitangi Day

13 Feb Dry creek loop via Kaitangata Crescent leader Paul Labett 027 3442906

20 Feb Leader and ride required

27 Feb Rimutaka Incline via backroad to Siberia Leader Paul Labett 027 3442906

05 March Totara Park to Cannon Point Trigg. leader Debbie Labett 027 2093721

12 March Burtons Gate to Pencarrow Lakes Baring Head tops. Leader Debbie Labett 027 2093721

19 March Leader and ride required.

26 March final ride daylight saving ends, combined ride with easy group.

Please let me know if you prefer to bring cash and buy fish n chips or come back to our place for a BBQ dinner I can provide sausages, salads, and dessert, or if you prefer to bring chilli bin with food contribution, let me know. I am happy to cater and split cost by the number of people who turn up on the night.

Would appreciate an indication of who may be joining us on the 26th March for catering purposes. Some riders have told me they struggle to get to departure point by 6pm. Hence the later departure time. If I know you are coming, I will wait for you.

Leader Debbie Labett 027 2093721

*Debbie Labett*

## ACCESS TO MT REEVES

As you may be aware, access across private land from Waiohine Valley Road to Tararua Forest Park and the track to Mt Reeves was closed by the landowner some time ago. Herenga ā Nuku Aotearoa Outdoor Access Commission and the Department of Conservation have attempted to negotiate its reopening, without success. There is an unformed legal road (sometimes called a paper road) that approximates the previous access route. However, investigations by Herenga ā Nuku have confirmed that the first 200 metres of the unformed legal road is entirely in the river, with a deep undercut channel. It is not practical to mark a safe route through this, which means that the marked route will not be reinstated by the Department of Conservation.

The unformed legal road still exists from where it emerges from the river to the park boundary. Near the river, it is obstructed by dense vegetation. Legally, any users who can stay on the alignment of the legal road after exiting the river could do so. However, they would need to be certain that they did not stray onto the private land. Trespass notices have been issued in the past. Also note that the track beyond the park boundary has not been maintained since the access was closed and is unlikely to be in future.

The Department of Conservation intends to do work on the (currently informal) track from Waiohine Gorge (Wall's Whare) to Mt Reeves.

Herenga ā Nuku acknowledges that this outcome will be disappointing for many users.

David Barnes  
Regional Field Advisor  
Herenga ā Nuku

## TRIP REPORTS

### HVTC LEWIS PASS 2023 CHRISTMAS TRIP

Our group of seven made several overnight and day walks in the Lewis Pass area over a nine-day period. On December 27 we travelled in the club van to Palmer Lodge, a New Zealand Deer Stalkers hut on State highway 7 a few kilometres beyond the Lewis Pass and the start of the St James walkway, on the Canterbury side. We returned home on January 6<sup>th</sup>. The story of our adventures follows, written in parts by individual group members.

#### *28<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> December Lake Daniels (scribe Ann)*

The faithful van took us to Marble Hill campsite and the start of the Lake Daniel track along the Alfred River to Manson Nicols Hut. The track was in excellent condition, winding through beautiful dense beech forest. Lake Daniels with unnamed peaks behind and three family groups of Canada Geese made for a stunning scenic sight. The sun was out, and we all swum in the lake, followed by a walk to the head of the lake.

Next day, with rain starting, we walked again to the head of the lake, with a plan to walk as far as possible along Sheriff River, surrounded by beech forest, friendly South Island Robin accompanying us on the track, Kakariki calling from high in the canopy, and Fantail and Tui nearby. We stopped for lunch at a private property boundary fence about an hour passed the





Start of the Lake Daneil track l to r Neil Parker, Ann Hayman, Elaine Richardson John Smeith (behind), Rosie Doole, Derek Richardson (behind), Kate Livingston. Photo credit another walker.

head of the lake and made the return journey to the hut. Activities here included yoga, cards, reading puzzles, cooking and another swim in the lake. Although the 20-bunk hut was completely booked out online, we were the only seven staying tonight. We later heard about an orange weather alert in the area, which might have changed plans for the other 13.

We walked back to Marble Hill campsite on the 30<sup>th</sup>, as planned, part one of our trip complete.

### *30<sup>th</sup> December Palmer Lodge (scribe Derek)*

After our sojourn at Manson Nicholls Hut, our plan to tramp and then camp en route to Lake Christabel hut was largely contingent on vagaries of the weather. Mobile reception at Springs Junction implied bad weather approaching overnight and possible lighter, but persistent drizzle on the following day. No one expressed enthusiasm to camp in unknown territory in the wet so, after a call to and confirmation from the appropriate custodian, we decided to spend another night in Palmer lodge. The remaining part of the day could instead be spent on a walk up the access route to Mt Norma.

### *30<sup>th</sup> December Norma access track (scribe Rosie)*

The afternoon was fine and bright so most of us crossed the road and river to tackle the Norma Access track in search of a view. It was steep but nothing to complain about as we had only day packs. Emerging from the bush line gave us views of more wonderful South Island steepness in all directions. Back to the lodge and a quick dinner before setting off in search of the old Sylvia Flats hotpools (destroyed in 2017 by landslide). A whiff of lingering thermal activity sadly didn't translate to bathing pools so we headed back to base for dessert.

### *31 December 2023 and 1 January 2024 Lake Christabel (scribe Derek)*

Drenching overnight rain convinced us that our decision to stay at Palmer Lodge was the right one. Confident that the rain would remain relatively mild for our long walk to Lake Christabel, we enthusiastically made a 9am start from Palmer Flats. Despite our initial enthusiasm, the rain fell periodically throughout the day. It soon became clear that this tramp was also not quite what we



were expecting. After initially battling our way through constantly wet, waist-high (sometimes head-high) grass where the path was effectively hidden from view, we reached the main path through the beech trees. Here short but steep sections of glistening-wet rock were interspersed with longer flat sections where ankle-deep streams provided the best indication of the whereabouts of the path.



*Crossing a Blue Grey River side stream.*

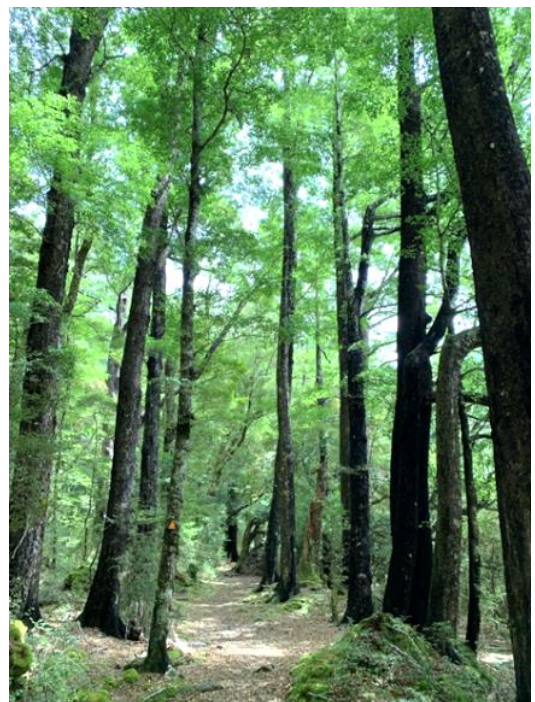
*Photo: Derek*

While we looked warily at the swollen and muddy-coloured Blue Grey River on our right, the force of the water flow at one innocuous-looking side stream convinced us that, even here, we needed to follow correct river-crossing protocols. Inconveniently, and not mentioned in any tourist brochures, the path suddenly ended precariously overhanging, 20m above the river. The way forward was effectively cut off by a major slip. We followed the eroded, sandy scuffling's from previous parties up the steep mountainside and around the slip. Neil had meanwhile discovered an easier but slightly perilous route directly across the slip and he led us all thankfully back to firmer ground.

After about 5 hours in on/off drizzly rain, we were brought to a sudden halt at the edge of the very angry Blue Grey River. With no obvious way of continuing without a risky crossing, we beat a hasty retreat to a campsite that we had previously noticed a few hours back. Tents were pitched, dinner made, and we were soon tucked up in sleeping bags on New Year's Eve. On New Year's Day the level of the main river had clearly dropped, and its colour had returned to a healthier bluish grey. The sun had reappeared but there seemed to be an unspoken agreement that Lake Christabel was no longer on the agenda. We retreated to the van and set up camp at Marble Hill campsite. A group of five soaked up the mineral water goodness at Maruia thermal pools before a pleasant evening cooking, eating, chatting and camping under the stars.

### *2<sup>nd</sup> January Lewis Pass Tops (scribe Kate)*

After dropping packs off at Palmer Lodge we drove back along SH7 to the parking area for the start of the St James Walkway. Here, while a group headed off toward Cannibal Gorge, three of us decided to walk the Lewis Pass Tops track, which began directly across the road. The marked track rose steadily but reasonably gently through the beech forest to the tree line and then up to the high point at 1568m. We continued further along the tops track till we could overlook some tarns. There was a cool breeze so we dropped down slightly off the ridge to find a sheltered spot amongst the golden tussock for lunch and gazing at the expansive view. Eventually we thought we ought to make tracks and headed down, stopping for a long rest in the sun before entering the bush again. We arrived back at the SH7 carpark with time to spare before the other group arrived back, so wandered around an alpine nature walk.



*Beech forest on the St James walkway Photo: Ann*



## *2<sup>nd</sup> January Cannibal Gorge Hut (scribe Elaine)*

While the more intrepid of our group of seven had set off for the heights, four of us decided a more leisurely walk to the first hut on the St James Walkway would be our choice. As this walk starts at the same car park as the Lewis Pass Tops walk this was ideal. We had a deadline of a 4pm return, which worked out well, with a three hour walk into Cannibal Gorge Hut, lunch at the hut and a three hour walk out.

It was a lovely walk – a fairly steep drop down to Cannibal Gorge and a swing bridge. Some signage there attempts to explain the name, best forgotten if one is to enjoy the walk! After that it is a good track with a few stream crossings. Nice views of the surrounding mountains, especially at the hut. I think a few have been inspired to do the whole St James walkway.

I think I must add that, as that night was the last one that Rosie was to spend with us, she cooked us a sumptuous dinner at Palmer Lodge. We had enjoyed her delicious dessert on a previous night.

## *3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> January Nina Hut and area (scribe Neil)*



*On the way to Nina Hut*

*Photo: Neil*

Today we farewell Rosie and the 6 of us head up to Nina hut. It's a solid mission in the sun. We exceed the stated times but its more beautiful South Island beech and scenery. The hut is in a spectacular position and several of the party head for a swim/wash.

### *4<sup>th</sup> January*

After a good sleep at Nina hut Derek, Kate and Neil leave at 8.30am for Devilskin pass. It's a steep side and then up a river valley and the weather is good.

The track to the pass is steep, as Mike Scott, who we met with his family at Nina hut said "a full body workout". On the way up Chriselda, Murray and Andrew pass on their way down after a night at Devilskin bivvy. It's beautiful in the bush and we leave it for tussock and sunshine just below the pass.

The descent is quicker and steep. Down at Nina hut by 2.15pm and our thighs start tightening up. The others have been into the cool stream for a dip, and outdoors for yoga. A very satisfying day. It's warm and sunny and we all relax followed by a nice communal meal by Elaine and Derek. The clouds start to appear as the sun goes down. 2 extras arrive after dark so it's a full hut.



*The Devilskin bivvy and beyond.*

*Photo: Neil*

### *5<sup>th</sup> January*

Our last day of tramping! Overnight rain has cleared as we head back down the Nina track with Andrew's party. The trip out seemed a lot easier.

Ann and Neil's luxury dinner seals the trip nicely at Palmer Lodge after they hitch hike to Maruia Lodge for a soak in the hot pools.

Thanks to Kate and Derek for leadership and logistics.

We were. Kate Livingston, John Smeith, Rosie Doole, Derek Richardson, Elaine Richardson, Ann Hayman, Neil Parker

# SMITH CREEK WATERFALL

Sunday 21 January 2024

Jackie West

As it was Anniversary weekend I had the choice of going on Sunday or Monday with the forecast for showers both days. Monday looked the better option but on Saturday when I had to make a decision three of the six people who wanted to come could only go on Sunday so that decided it. This proved to be the right choice as we had a fine day though a bit too hot for most of us but great for a swim at the waterfall. Having emailed out my choice more emails flooded in so a group of fourteen left the Kaitoke car park at 9 o'clock.

We had a brief stop at Puffer Saddle where I pointed out the track we would be coming down from along the ridge. We continued on down the track towards the Tauherenikau Valley. After about twenty minutes we left the track and began a side and bush bash in the direction of the waterfall. It was not easy travel but the McMillians who had been in the area recently and had tracked their route to the stream led the way. When we found a slightly open area we stopped for morning tea. Eventually we dropped down to some boggy ground before reaching the creek at 11:15. The upstream travel took a bit longer than I expected with several windfalls and small waterfalls that required some tricky sidles. Just



*Tricky sidles*

before one o'clock I spotted a small cairn at the base of a spur and recognised the spur we would climb to get out of the creek. Within ten minutes of upstream travel we were all at the base of the Smith Creek waterfall. There was not much room for fourteen people to sit but a large log provided a convenient spot for most of the group to perch on to have lunch. Having eaten Ann and Chriselda decided to have a swim in the pool at the base of the waterfall and were followed by: Tania, Leanne, Mel, Doc and Chris. We then made our way back to regroup at the cairn. John then led the way up the spur to the ridge at the top. This involved a steep climb but near the top the vegetation was dense and it was a matter of pushing through the bush in the direction of the top with the occasional regroup as fourteen people can get rather spread out. It was with great relief that we all rested on the trail before heading off to Puffer Saddle to complete the round trip and then down to the cars by 4:30 pm. Thanks to all those on the tramp for their positive attitude and team work.

Sunday trampers: Kate Livingston, Tania Hatfield, Leanne Asher, Heather Eskdale, Ann Hayman, Mel Stoneham, Mike Priest, Chris and Murray McMillian, John Smeith, David McQueen, Doc Watson and Chris and Jackie West.

*Jackie*





# **CAMPING ON CONE TOO**

**9-10 December 2023**

**Andrew Robinson**

I had a trip to Neill Forks on the schedule for 9-10 December but I changed the plan a bit to better fit with the grade one camping on Cone trip. I decided to follow a partly off-track route I did on a trip led by Alwyn in 2011 but going to Cone instead of Neill Forks. I only got one taker but that was all I needed. Mel had two takers, so between us we had enough to take the van. When we got to the car park at the end of Waiohine Gorge Road it was pretty full but I managed to squeeze the van in. It didn't matter that there were presumably lots of people about because we weren't staying in a hut.

Across the first swingbridge Jude and I said goodbye to the others, expecting to meet them again in about six hours' time. We followed the track towards Totara Flats for a couple of hours then got onto the spur on the true left of Makaka Creek. My recollection of the off-track route was there was a small amount of supplejack at the bottom of the climb which didn't take long to get through and navigation was straightforward. That's more or less what Jude and I found but we probably zigzagged more for maybe the lower third looking for the best route and that part probably took as much as an hour longer than the previous time. Early on I saw a tape marker which I hoped would put us on a marked route but I only saw two other markers on the ascent.

We eventually got onto a good ground trail and it was pretty much normal speed from then on. We hit the top at quarter to five so we'd taken six and a quarter hours to that point. We had a fifteen minute break before the last stretch to Cone which I knew would take about an hour. It was clear we had been sheltered from the wind on the ascent but we were still reasonably sheltered on the ridge. Not long before Cone there was a gap in the trees and I watched the clouds being blown up the gully near the top and got an idea of the wind's strength. It looked strong but I'd met worse. We soon reached the bush edge where there were suitable tent sites but no sign of the others. Ideally they would have headed back down and made it into a day trip. We had about 500 m in the open to cross then we'd be in bush for the descent. On the final gradual ascent to Cone the wind was strong but not strong enough to get blown over. When we reached the top I was just wondering where the others might have left a note for us when Mel's head appeared out of the bush about 20 metres away. There were several reasonable tent sites in the trees and the three of them had set up camp there.

Once I'd put up my tent and helped Jude start to put up hers I went off to get water for our tea from the tarn about 300 m back the way we'd come. The wind was weaker than when we'd reached the tarn earlier so I got to the tarn without any problems and filled the two billies I had. I was hopeful that the wind had done its dash but also knew the forecast was for the wind to get stronger overnight. It took about an hour to prepare tea so it was getting dark by the time we'd finished.

The wind picked up considerably after we'd all gone to bed so it looked like we might be in for a rough night. I've experienced high winds in my tent before with no issues but with the noise I wasn't expecting to get much sleep. I noticed one of the others shining a torch around, but I was comfortable in my tent so stayed put. A while later I saw a torch again, so I thought I'd better check up on the others. I discovered that Jude's tent had collapsed so she had moved into the club's shelter tent with Mel where there was plenty of room. The shelter tent is a similar design to my tent and seemed to be coping with the wind. It was about 10 o'clock when I went back to bed. I lay there trying to get some sleep, but the noise made it impossible, for me at least. Doc seemed to be getting some sleep. After what seemed like several hours, I checked my watch and it was only 12 o'clock. I don't know how I passed the time, perhaps I did manage to get a few minutes of sleep, but when I next checked it was 3 o'clock. Still a way to go but it wasn't going to get any worse. The wind came and went in waves, and I would hear the next one coming, sometimes

sounding like a large diesel engine such as a train or Cook Strait ferry, sometimes like a Jumbo jet and sometimes like thunder. Eventually dawn came and I checked on the others. Janine's tent had also collapsed but she had chosen to stay put with her tent draped over her. Fortunately it hadn't been raining. Mel and Jude were fine, but they hadn't had much sleep. Doc probably got the most sleep.

With the daylight I felt better able to plan our departure. Keeping together and keeping to the track (an off-track route had been an option) were the sensible things to do. The forecast was for the strong winds to continue through to mid-morning and rain was on its way so I figured the thing to do was slowly pack up to give the wind a chance to drop and then head off. I went to see if I could get water from the tarn. I took two billies with me and got about half way there when the wind suddenly picked up and it became very difficult to stand up. One of the billy lids was whipped away out of sight in a flash. I staggered back to the tents where we had a cold breakfast then started packing up. I did my last bit of packing under the fly as it started to drizzle. We left at 8:50 and fortunately we were out of the wind pretty much straight away. With no desire to linger we didn't stop until we got to Cone Saddle at 10:40. Three of us did a side trip down the Cone Saddle track in search of water and we didn't have to go far to find it. From a trip earlier in the year I knew it was at least a couple of hours from the saddle back to the car park but the preference was to wait until the carpark to have lunch. Because of the muddy track we didn't get back to the van until 1:45. At the swingbridge there was a lot more water in the river than the previous day. We were all quite wet even though the rain had stopped somewhere about Cone Saddle. It was good to see the others were cheerful despite the difficult night and the rain on the way out.

*Andrew*

## **GEORGE KENDALL (26 DEC 1939 – 26 DEC 2023)**

### **By Tony Birtwistle – A Personal Remembrance**

George was born in my own county of Lancashire in the town of Ulverston (birthplace of the comedian Stan Laurel) on Boxing Day 1939 a date he shared with his elder brother – yes, George died on his 84th birthday. He was born into a working-class family, his father being a labourer who had to travel 12 miles on a push bike to his work (no e-bikes in those days), and a mother who was home looking after five children. They lived in a modest house – which is still standing, and which Jo and I were able to show to George on Google – with no running water inside, no electricity, only gas for cooking and lighting. An open fire was the only source of heating and baths were taken in a tin tub warmed by kettles of hot water. An outside 'dunny' stood at the end of the garden. Needless to say, George had no issue with the facilities in tramping huts.

George was friendly with a young woman on a neighbouring farm, and she (Mary) had been to New Zealand, possibly working as a Woofer. Her experiences piqued George's interest and so he became one of the many Ten Pound Poms to emigrate during the 1960's. His passage on a ship was shared by quite a few moneyed people, presumably on extended holiday, and at first, George felt uncomfortable – he said they, 'were above his station,' though he was made to feel welcome. He didn't possess a jacket but was advised kindly, 'you don't need to dress for dinner,' which conjured all sorts of images in his mind, but blushes were spared when it was explained what 'dressing for dinner' actually meant.

Not long after settling in Wellington a fellow border took George to the Tararua Tramping Club and his tramping and climbing hobbies took off (particularly the latter). It wasn't the first time George had travelled to go climbing – in the late 50's or early 60's a team from Ulverston travelled to Afghanistan to scale a few peaks. This made the local paper – George kept the article which I have read. In the 70's George spent several months in Antarctica supporting the New Zealand



survey work there. On one occasion an American plane dropped him and a colleague at the South Pole with equipment for the developing American Base which was just a shell. The weather turned nasty, and the plane couldn't return, so George and his colleague dug a snow hole and spent an uncomfortable night not just on the ice but in it!

He also climbed Mount Cook with limited experience, two students and inadequate gear which was first reported in the Club's publication, Hills and Valleys, in the 90's and reprinted in 2021.

On moving to Upper Hutt George joined the Hutt Valley Tramping Club where he and I first encountered each other on Robert Ridge in the South Island in the late 90's and we carried on our conversation – Lancastrian to Lancastrian – back at the Club Rooms on Wednesday nights.

By coincidence, my former wife Barbara and I had bought a holiday home at Waikanae at the time George was looking for a house there. He was fed up with traipsing from the Hutt to Waikanae twice a day to view houses, so we offered him board and lodging in exchange for painting and maintenance jobs. I admired his handiwork – he appreciated an opportunity to earn and so a 23-year friendship was born.

George's early years were during, and just after, the 2nd World War and money must have been tight which probably contributed to George's frugal nature - generous with others but exceptionally frugal with himself. One example of this frugality was his refusal to throw away a bent nail (usually hammered in by me). He would extract it, place it on a hard surface and knock it into some semblance of shape to be used again (and usually bent again by me). He saved me money on our many projects. "Let's go to Bunnings", I'd say, whereupon George would advise, "Now just hold on", and assure me he either had something at home or knew where to find it. Sure enough he would appear the following weekend with some serviceable piece of equipment or timber. Whenever I enquired as to where he found it, I'd get the same answer, "Somewhere down by the river" or "from a bloke I met". I never got more detail than that, so his sources pass with him.

There are many projects George helped me with – he the craftsman and me the apprentice. He planned carefully – in our home county we say to 'give things a good coat of looking at' first and George was definitely a 'measure twice – cut once' person. When tempted to embark upon something on my own my wife Jo would often advise, tactfully of course, "I think that's a George job Tony". Tramping club members who have visited Jo and I have seen many projects which George helped accomplish, from erecting a greenhouse, building garden beds, planting trees and cutting bush tracks. Our circular bushwalk has always been known as the 'George Kendall Track' and will remain so.

Only once was George (and I) defeated. I had ordered a sizeable aluminium shed with a wooden frame, wooden floor, doors and windows from Mitre 10. George was shocked at the price to have it erected by their team and assured me we could do it ourselves. Well, after 3 hours of shuffling the parts around on the lawn, reading and re-reading the instructions, scratching our heads and backsides we had to give in and bring in the experts – hence George missed his chance to have a shed also named after him.

In July 2016 George had a bike accident whilst training for the 20k Karapoti Classic which he intended to attempt with his young grandson. Suffering brain injuries and neck trauma he spent 5 months in Porirua's brain injury unit supported by Barbara, Jo and I and his family. On being deemed able to return to self-living (albeit with significant help) he was reasonably fit and able until needing to enter care in May 2021. On Christmas Eve 2023 he was admitted to Wellington Hospital and died at 11am on Boxing Day with his family and Barbara in attendance. George was considered family by Barbara, Jo, me and son Nick and he reciprocated. His funeral on Thursday 4th January was attended by some of his former tramping colleagues from the Hutt Valleys. He'd appreciate that.

It was a pleasure knowing George these past 20 odd years – from our first meeting on Robert Ridge; our last weekend tramp together on Cattle Ridge in the Tararuas; our many building and gardening projects; his being a guest at mine and Jo's wedding; taking our dogs Tinker and Daisy on regular walks; sadly an urgent call from the hospital to advise of his accident; supporting him over the past seven and a half years; to our last meeting only a week before he died when we

looked through the Hutt Valleys 100th year photographs with me pointing out people he knew. His last question of me was the same he always asked when being shown Hills and Valleys. "Is Bruce (Miller) still tramping?" "Yes George, Bruce is still tramping" I'd reply to his satisfaction. It was as though whilst he couldn't tramp at least his friend could.

To Jo and I George is still out there somewhere - tramping, climbing, painting, planting, straightening bent nails, grumbling about Bunnings prices.

Fondly known and sadly missed.

*Tony*

## PHOTOGRAPHIC FILLER

To fill the remaining space in this edition here are a number of images from a couple of trips which George Kendall, I and others, undertook together in the early years of this century.

### WANGAPEKA/HEAPHY

2005







## LESLIE/KARAMEA 2006





George Kendall contemplating Mount Kendall

*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.*