



Lake Chalice and its surroundings

Photo: Andrew Robinson

Please submit your **April 2017** H&V articles to the editor by **31st March 2017**

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Trip Coordinator:	Nick McBride	021 410 551	Treasurer:	Jim Cousins	586 2135
Editor H&V:	Bruce Miller	563 5966	the-bruce@xtra.co.nz		



WEDNESDAY NIGHT PROGRAMME



Starts 8.00 pm promptly

Wednesday 1 March : Debbie Bainbridge – Jungles, Waterfalls, Summits and Borders

Come join Debbie to share a journey she did in September 2015 into a part of Venezuela where many of us may not have been-trekking, Mt Roraima which is 2,700m high and a side trip to Angel Falls, the world's highest uninterrupted waterfall at 979 metres and plunging an amazing 807 metres.

Wednesday 8 March : Jan Heine – A Ruahine Traverse in 2 bites

Frank, Andrew, Tom and Jan started a traverse of the Ruahines from Whariti in Feb 2015, for a 3 day stint. The idea of completing the trip in several bites didn't work, so in November 2015 three of them began at the Taihape Road and got back to where they started 14 days later at Tamaki.

Sales Table run by Graeme Lythgoe. Bring your cash and your saleable items.

Wednesday 15 March : Jan Arts – Vanuatu

Jan and Sharman spent 3 weeks in Vanuatu ten month after cyclone Pam and explored Port Villa, Tanna Island and the island Espiritu Santo. Active volcanoes, sea, rivers, mountains, forest, history, culture and fantastic people make these islands a great place to visit.

Wednesday 22 March : Bruce Miller – Leslie-Karamea Track

In the middle of the Mt Arthur Tablelands, the sight of a signpost which pointed to "Leslie Valley", "Karamea Bend", "Wangapeka Track" and "West Coast", followed by a glimpse of the Karamea River from the Wangapeka Track, inspired Bruce to want to investigate. With a small group of club members he had a memorable experience walking the Leslie-Karamea track from north to south in March 2006. These are the images captured on that trip.



Wednesday 29 March : Pat Tristram: Italy Part 1

In May/June 2016 a group of HVTC friends visited Italy, Germany, Austria, Slovenia and Croatia. Tonight is the first part of the Trilogy covering the group's arrival in Munich (Germany), travel to Innsbruck (Austria) and onto Bolzano (Italy). The group then biked from the Dolomites to Venice. After sightseeing in Venice the group rode onto Trieste.

Wednesday 5 April : HVTC Extraordinary General Meeting



The General Committee is calling the meeting to seek approval for changes to the club membership and subscription structure to more equitably share club costs among all members. The changes enact a successful motion at the 2016 HVTC annual general meeting endorsing fairer rates across single and partnered member subscriptions, and for additional payments to be levied for members receiving extra services, such as printed communications.



FORTHCOMING TRIPS



LEGEND


- T = Tramp of two or more days
D = Day tramp
M = Mountain biking or cycling trip
O = Other
C = Cycle
 = Dog Friendly
 = Moonlight Walk

NOTES


Where there is no leader given for a trip, please contact the Trip Coordinator to volunteer to lead a trip, either as shown or an alternative.

MARCH

TONGARIRO NATIONAL PARK

03 – 05	T1	<u>Pinus contorta</u> eradication	John Simes	565 0259
Su 05	D1	Boys Brigade Camp – Mt McKerrow	Bob Deller	021 994 854
Tu 07	M1	 Belmont Harcourt Park	Leena Stowell	589 5856
	M1+	 Belmont – Dry Creek	Marina Skinner	021 792 260
	M2	 Belmont – Dry Creek – Boulder Hill	Graham White	565 1168


RIMUTAKA FOREST PARK

10 – 12	T1	Papatahi Hut	Sharman Robinson	586 5060
	T2			
Sa 11	M2	 Toratora MTB Tracks	Murray Presland	562 8194
Su 12	D1	Clothes Optional – day trip	Patrick Fotheringham	567 0157




12 – 21		Haast Cattle Track – South Westland	Graeme Lythgoe	479 6630
			<i>Trip fully booked</i>	

Tu 14	M1	 Rimutaka Incline	Julie Lewis	526 7271
	M2	 Rimutaka Incline – de la Rosa	Doc Watson	934 7155

RUAHINE FOREST PARK – Makaroro

17 – 19	T2	Maropea Forks	Murray Presland	562 8194
	M1	 Pohangina Pedalling	Michael Grace	563 9040
			Sandra Pearce	566 9083

Trip fully booked

Su 19	D1	 Catchpool – Cattle Rdge	Bruce Miller + Polly	563 5966
Tu 21	M1	 Te Marua – Twin Lakes	Tony Jaegers	973 7124
	M2	 Wainuiomata Trail Project	Murray Presland	562 8194

TARARUA FOREST PARK – Holdsworth

24 – 26	T1	Totara Flats	Sharman Robinson	586 5060
	T2	High Ridge – Totara Flats	Nick McBride	021 410 551
Su 26	D	Belmont Reg Park: Puke Ariki Traverse	Marina Skinner	021 792 260
	D2	Penn Creek	Nick McBride	021 410 551
Tu 28		Fish and Chips	Pat + John Tristram	569 6705
	M1	 Pencarrow Coast	Tony Birtwhistle	934 9229
	M2	 Pencarrow Lakes	Murray Presland	562 8194
	W	Eastbourne Walk	Margaret Aitken	566 2731

Daylight saving ends 3:00am 2 April, clocks go back 1 hour

PRESIDENT'S PIECE

New Social Convener

At the last General Committee meeting Doreen Courtenay was appointed the new Social Convener. Doreen already does a lot for the Club primarily around the Hills and Valleys distribution. We welcome Doreen to the position.

A big thanks goes to Pam Smith for doing a sterling job as Social Convener over the last 18 months. It has been greatly appreciated along with the numerous and wide variety of Clubnight activities and speakers that she scheduled for our weekly Clubnight meetings.

Multi-Day Club Trips

There has been some concerns raised over the booking system for multi-day trips, both tramping and cycling trips. These trips often fill up early and the demand by Club members is high. Whichever way these trips are booked, this results in members being disappointed when they miss out. The obvious solution is to have more of these trips which means more leaders coming forward and volunteering to lead such multi-day trips. The General Committee is aware of this and we are encouraging suitable leaders to come forward to lead trips. The complex cycle trips are usually led by a couple but could have a leader and assistant leader, which is a way of new leaders gaining experience.

Those of you who have been regular participants on such trips and seen how they can be organised should consider leading a trip. This would see more trips offered, which might also reduce the average size of each trip, which can assist with both safety and organisation.

From the leaders perspective multi-day trips require much forward planning, organising and booking transport and accommodation, arranging food along with some substantial deposits being required. This often means that money has to be put up front by the leaders themselves to secure bookings early. Booking accommodation for a large number of people is becoming more difficult as the number of tourists is increasing remarkably. There may be a degree of uncertainty on how many will go on the trip and they need early confirmation which often involves canvassing members early. Sometimes this all happens before the Trip Schedule is printed. Some examples are the trips to the South Island, Great Walks, weekend and week-long cycle trips. Trip numbers vary depending upon the availability of transport, accommodation, and what can be safely managed on a trip.

If you are interested in such trips it is not practical to wait for a sign-up sheet to be put up in the club rooms or for a trip announcement. You need to make yourself known to the likely trip leaders as soon as possible. This might mean before a trip is even organised. Once sufficient numbers have been confirmed for the trips there becomes little point in advertising the trip further. However, trip leaders need to be transparent about how they have selected participants to join their trips.

In summary, please give our trip leaders consideration on what they do, it is not a simple job. They need support and we need to provide every assistance necessary to make their job easier. There is a new Trip Schedule being planned. Please give your thought to leading some trips and if you are not a regular leader, please talk to Nick McBride, our Trip Co-ordinator, a committee member, or one of our experienced leaders for advice. If you wish to go on such trips make your interest known early on.

Frank Usmar

President

HVTC EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday 5 April

All members are invited to an extraordinary general meeting at the club rooms, Birch Street Reserve, Lower Hutt, at 8pm on Wednesday, 5 April.

The General Committee is calling the meeting to seek approval for changes to the club membership and subscription structure to more equitably share club costs among all members. The changes enact a successful motion at the 2016 HVTC annual general meeting endorsing fairer rates across single and partnered member subscriptions, and for additional payments to be levied for members receiving extra services, such as printed communications.

A subscriptions sub-committee formulated a new structure in a report summarised in the December Hills & Valleys, and emailed in full to all members. The General Committee endorses all recommendations.

The report is available by emailing Secretary Marina Skinner at marina.skinner@xtra.co.nz. A printed copy is on the club noticeboard. President Frank Usmar at usmar@actrix.co.nz is happy to answer any questions.

Motion 1:

THAT the Hutt Valley Tramping Club (Inc) endorses as club policy the revised membership and subscription structure as proposed by the subscriptions sub-committee and adopted by the General Committee. These changes will take effect from 1 June 2017.

Moved: Frank Usmar

Seconded: Jim Cousins

Motion 2:

THAT to implement the new revised membership and subscription structure, the following amendments to the Club constitution are made:

A. Clauses 4.3.2.1 and 4.3.2.2 of the HVTC Constitution are replaced with the following clauses:

Veteran Member

4.3.2.1 A Veteran Member shall be any person who has been a member of the Club for more than 21 years.

Senior Veteran Member

4.3.2.2 A Senior Veteran Member shall be any person who has been a member of the Club for more than 50 years.

Note: This change confers status as a Veteran Member or Senior Veteran Member on an individual member. It removes the extension of this status to the individual's partner/spouse.

It is not intended that there be any change to the Veteran or Senior Veteran status presently held by the partner/spouse of a current Veteran or Senior Veteran Member.

B. A clause 4.3.4 is added to the HVTC Constitution:

Student Member

4.3.4 A Student Member shall be any person who is in attendance at a secondary or tertiary institute of education.

Note: This change tidies the definition of Student Member that was adopted at the AGM in 2015.

C. Clause 6.1.1.2 of the HVTC Constitution is replaced with the following clause:

6.1.1.2 The annual subscription shall be fixed for:

Members.

Veteran Members.

Senior Veteran Members.

Absentee Members.

Student Members in attendance at a tertiary institute.

The annual subscription for Student Members in attendance at a secondary institute shall be zero.

Note: This change removes the obligation to set subscriptions for Married Couple and Partner Members.

D. Clause 6.1.5.2 of the HVTC Constitution is deleted.

Note: This change confers the status and privileges of a Life Member on the elected individual. It removes the extension of the privileges to the individual's partner.

It is not intended that there be any change to the privileges presently held by the partner/spouse of a Life Member.

Moved: Phaedra Upton

Seconded: Murray Presland

General Committee

UPCOMING EVENTS

SALES TABLE

8 March.

As always, the second Wednesday of the month is the day for the Sales Table. Please bring along items that you wish to donate to this effort. Home baking and preserves are especially welcome. Garden produce is also popular so bring along all the excess from you vegetable garden. Everyone else bring some cash to purchase some goodies with. Prices are always reasonable.

Graeme Lythgoe

TORA TORA MOUNTAINBIKING

Postponed to the 1st April 2017

A day riding the Tora Tora trails was scheduled for Saturday 11 March but I would very much like to postpone the event, because I have muddled some commitments, until Saturday 1 April (seriously!), departing from the Hutt Valley at 7 am so that we get a full-day's riding.

Tora Tora is a private mountain bike trail park located on Tora Station, 30 minutes from the wine village of Martinborough and 90 minutes from Wellington. It offers more than 25km of exhilarating trails that snake through 375 acres of spectacular native bush, via meandering creeks and the breathtaking ridge-tops that dominate the skyline above the Tora Coastline.



'The Loop' (grade 3-4, best suited to Intermediate+ riders): is a 16 km, one-way, wide single-track trail through native bush that circumnavigates the perimeter of the Native bush block. The trail has beautifully sculpted berms, rollers, tabletops, long flowing descents, switchbacks, rider friendly hill-climbs and exhilarating down-hills.

The 'Airstrip Loop' (grade 2, suited to Beginners+ riders): is a 6 km trail created for beginners. Riders experience everything from down-hills, up-hills and technical switchbacks all on a 1.2m wide purpose built trail and redundant forestry track.

Technical Trail (grade 4+, for advanced riders): this recently developed 4 km trail offers more challenging, tighter and technical alternatives among luxurious undergrowth. 'Stews Downhill' has been created to provide more technical riding for the more advanced rider.

Tora Beach: you can walk, ride or drive 10 km down to the remote Tora Beach – 15 km of wild, black sand - exploring along to a seal colony at Manurewa Point and on to the wreck of the Opua.

A Trail Day Pass costs \$25 per adult and \$15 per child (under 13 yrs old)

*(Note: The word tora (虎) means "tiger" in Japanese, and was used by the leader of the first wave of Japanese fighters attacking Pearl Harbour in 1941 as an abbreviated radio codeword, an acronym for **totsugeki raigeki** (突撃雷撃), literally meaning "lightning attack". Therefore all mountainbikers on this trip can think of themselves as "tigers" making a "lightning attack" on the trails around Tora Station. Or possibly they are entering "tiger country".)*

If you are keen as tigers to explore the mountainbiking trails at Tora Tora with me on this later date please let me know of your interest!

Murray Presland

ph: 562 8194 e-mail: murray.presland@xtra.co.nz

ABBA NIGHT AT CLUB ROOMS



Saturday 8 April 2017:

The date of Saturday 8 April has been chosen for those who are interested in an Abba Night...so pop it in your diary if you are keen for some fun. It will be a "let yourself go and dance and sing along to all the Abba tunes"

The world famous 1970s pop band Abba is well known ...and you may have a favourite Abba song to get up and dance to so plan to come along and hit the dance floor with others. Or you may want to come along to just sing or listen to the music.

Costumes for the theme can be fun and colourful and long wigs are a must! Dressing up adds to the atmosphere but is not necessary. Enthusiasts might even be keen to go to Rebound in Petone as a group to look for outfits and share their finds over a coffee afterwards.

Social Committee

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Please join me in welcoming these new members to the club:

David Barnes
Richard Benefield
Nicholas and Anne Cox
Sebastian McBride

Deidre McRobbie
Ben Nicholl
Debbie Stephens
Leanda Rock

Jackie West

Membership Officer

PROTECTING PARADISE



New Zealand's native wildlife is in crisis, withering under a relentless assault from rats, stoats, possums and other introduced pests. If we are to realise the vision of a predator-free New Zealand, we must defend our biodiversity more doggedly, across a broader front than we do now. 1080 poison remains one of the crucial tools in this fight. As pest control techniques have been honed, 1080 has prevented the loss of crucial remnant populations of native birds and other creatures. Yet it is condemned by vocal and passionate opponents. This book examines their arguments, and finds conclusively that the many claims made by 1080 opponents are plain wrong. 1080, the way it's used today, does not kill more birds than it saves.

This book is now in the club library & also available from FMC Books for \$21.00, hand delivered from Arnold Heine.

RUAPEHU LODGE

Help needed to replace the cedar wood cladding



The south-facing second-story wall of the club's Ruapehu lodge is, at present, clad in cedar wood boards (see the picture above). These have been in place since that section of the lodge was built in the 1970s. Almost 40 years of wear and tear by the extreme conditions of the mountain have resulted in considerable deterioration.

The Ruapehu Committee has, therefore, approved the replacement of the cladding. The replacement material is to be pine weather boards fixed over battens in a way that will form a rigid air barrier and prevent any leakage.

Under the supervision of Kerry Lawrence and with the invaluable advice of Ron Pynenberg it is intended that the work will be undertaken before next winter. Ruapehu Alpine Lifts are being approached to check the possibility of using the chairlift to transport materials.

However a good number of willing volunteers will still be needed for two or more weekends to complete the work.

Please consider giving some of your time and energy to this worthwhile project. Take the chance to climb on ladders, decks and scaffolds and be part of a convivial team in the most magnificent environment in the North Island.

Contact Russell Oliver (russelljoliver@vodafone.co.nz, 566 0110 or 021 245 9596) to volunteer and confirm when you will be available.

Ruapehu Committee

HINTS AND FAQs

5 Survival hints for safer biking on the roads.

Know what's going on behind you - particularly when the road is narrow and there is an oncoming vehicle approaching. If the three of you arrive at the same point expect a squeeze! It may be necessary to hold back or pull over.

When approaching a left turn which you intend to ride straight pass look over your shoulder to check that there is not someone intending to overtake you to do their left turn!

When a vehicle is pulling out of a side road or reversing out of a driveway - ensure you have had eye contact with the driver.

Passing parked cars with the driver in them signals to me they may be about to fling the door open

as you pass, so look behind to see what you may be swinging out into in case the driver hasn't looked and be cautious.

Sun strike – has the driver waiting to pull out seen you when the sun is low and behind you?

5 Most frequently asked questions I am asked by trip leaders

How to book the van – Arrange with the trip coordinator Nick McBride.

What are the minimum number of passengers to book the van – 3 but you have to divide the fare it would cost for 5 between you.

What is the fare for journeys not listed in the fare chart – Take a journey equivalent to one which is listed. If you exceed that distance it costs an extra \$1.00 per 3 km and that sum is divided by the passengers and added to the fare.

Does the Fuelcard have to be used only at BP – No, most garages will accept fuelcards. There is no pin, it's signature only.

Quirks unlocking the van. This is work in progress. Occasionally the side passenger and or rear door won't unlock even when the correct procedure of double unlocking is exercised. It wakes up eventually, be patient.

All these and more are explained in the “**Trip Leaders and Drivers Handbook**” which those members should have a personal e.copy of. There is always a hard copy on the van dashtop if you want to see what it looks like or email me to get your own copy.

Graham White,
Transport Officer.

TRIP REPORTS

WAIPUKURAU CYCLING : 18-20 November 2016

Frank & Robyn Usmar

With the logistics of organising this large group of 29 to all meet up at the Waipukurau Holiday Park it was a relief when the last 3 arrived there safely by 9pm on the Friday evening. We very much appreciated the assistance of Michael Grace who took on the job of picking up the hire trailer for the Clubs bike rack and organising 11 others to help load it and the Club van with bikes and luggage. Thanks also to those who shared with the driving. We had fully booked all the units available at the Holiday Park, including a caravan, along with two others staying independently.

With sunny weather Saturday morning everyone was geared up by 8.30am and ready to begin the day's cycle ride. With such a large group Robyn went by car to assist in case of any bike break downs or weary cyclers. From the Holiday Park the group cycled over the Tukituki River Bridge, then turned onto the Central Hawkes Bay cycle trail that went under the bridge, followed beside the river till it meet up with the Tapairu Road. There was then about 1km of unsealed road to bike on but the rest of the weekend we were on sealed roads. We headed north to emerge just beside SH2 at the southern end of the bridge crossing the Waipawa River into the township of Waipawa. Frank led the group on a scenic ride around the back streets of the town ending up at Jelly Ned Park in the town centre for morning tea.

Robyn had parked the vehicle at the park earlier and had got on her bike to meet up with the group at Tapairu Road so as to enjoy a bit of riding. Following at the rear of the group while on Abbotsford Road on the hilly part of the township she came across John Smeith who had just had

a serious breakdown with his bike. The rear derailleur had bent and completely jammed. After close inspection from other riders it was evident it was not a quick fix so Robyn biked quickly back to the nearby vehicle and returned to pick up John and his bike.

Luckily there was a Mower & Cycle shop open in town where John's bike was accessed by the very obliging owner, and it was left there for 1 ½ hours to have enough repairs done so John could continue riding for the rest of the weekend. After morning tea, while John, Robyn and Jean waited for the bike to be fixed, the rest of the group continued on their ride heading along the Tikokino Road to Tikokino. It was very fortuitous that the Tikokino Primary School was celebrating its 150 year Jubilee over the weekend and was having a gala day, so it was a perfect place for us to regroup and have our lunch break, strolling around the stalls. Some of us sampled their BBQ sausages, hot beef sandwiches and smoothies while resting under the shady trees.



A serious breakdown

Next the group headed around the block to one of the locations where the Tikokino area were also holding an Open Day for several local gardens. The one we chose to see was a commercial Peony grower. After an enjoyable stroll through their fields of flowers including the owners very beautiful rose garden many were tempted by the coffee and delicious carrot, chocolate and lemon cakes they had for sale. It was also very interesting to see inside the chiller shed where they store their picked Peonies ready for sale.

Robyn then drove the vehicle on to Ongaonga while the group biked along SH 50 into a strong head wind. Once at Ongaonga the group enjoyed a look around the historic SF 70 DOC hut and buildings in the small park there. Everyone was then happy to continue biking the last section back to Waipukurau where after showers and a bit of a rest, the day was rounded off with Happy Hour in the sunshine outside the camp kitchen before heading across the road to Dax Restaurant for our evening meal.

Sunday morning although still sunny was quite windy as the group cycled out of Waipukurau along Porangahau Road then headed towards Takapau. Robyn drove ahead stopping at road junctions to point out the route and to offer assistance with any rider that needed a rest. All did well in the strong winds with only one deciding to forgo the one moderate hill climb not long before our major morning tea stop.



Restored St Vincent's Church

Morning tea was to be quite a treat as we were all booked to visit the historic Oruawharo Homestead a few kilometres from Takapau, for tea/coffee and scones. All served in the restored St Vincent's Church moved on site from its original location in Takapau. The church is now used for weddings and numerous other functions. While enjoying our morning tea we were entertained by the owner Peter Harris while his wife Diane kept replenishing our drinks, topping up the cream and jam bowls for our scones. Peter gave us a very interesting talk and photo display on the fascinating history of Oruawharo and surrounding area. Afterwards we were free to wander the beautiful grounds and look inside the large Homestead which is decorated with antiques, artwork, beautiful china and amazing old furniture. Restoration is still a work in progress but certainly a lot has been done. I'm sure there will be a few of us who might return to treat

ourselves to the High Tea they offer.

By the time we had finished it was midday, so rather than bike into Takapau, Peter was more than happy for us to sit out in the garden by the numerous wooden picnic tables and eat our own packed lunches. It was now time for Frank to take a turn driving the support vehicle so Robyn could enjoy the nice tail wind to cycle back to Waipukurau. Once everyone was back at the Holiday Park it was the usual pack up, a quick cup of tea or coffee and then we all headed for home.

Thank you to all those who joined us on this successful weekend. Pat, John, Helen, Paul, Elaine, Derek, Tony, Jo, Frieda, Liz, Michele, Graeme, Martin, Ray, Michael, Sandra, Graeme, Carolyn, Murray, Chriselda, Jean, Vera, Pam, John S, Tony J, Kate (in her campervan) and Simon . Leaders and photographers Robyn and Frank.

Robyn and Frank.

LAKE CHALICE : Wellington Anniversary Weekend

January 20 - 23 2017

Leni Mäcke

Andrew's grade two trip to Lake Chalice in Richmond Forest Park sounded very promising: warm weather, not too strenuous days, and great views. The plan was to take the ferry to Picton on Friday afternoon, then a shuttle to Lake Chalice car park, and from there a one hour walk to Lake Chalice Hut. On Saturday to Old Man Hut via Old Man, mainly uphill in about seven hours. On Sunday an easy four hours downhill to Mid Goulter Hut. On Monday via Mid Goulter Route back to the car park in about seven hours, starting with a steep climb, then reasonably level.

As you all know, this summer was different and so, things did not quite turn out like predicted, but we had a memorable and sometimes even enjoyable trip.

Friday, January 20

We took the 2:45 pm ferry to Picton and had a surprisingly smooth sailing in perfect summer weather. But appearances are deceptive. Earlier that week, the whole country had been hit by a weather bomb and unfortunately, the forecast did not look good with rain from Saturday afternoon through to Sunday evening. Our trip leader was admirably prepared and advised us to adjust the route to the conditions which meant going clockwise from Lake Chalice Hut to Old Man Hut and back in order to avoid most of the streams in heavy rain.

The shuttle driver who picked-up our party of seven in Picton did not expect to take us almost 20 km on a rough 4WD road up to Lake Chalice car park. Keith giving directions with his GPS from the back of the van was highly welcome. Suddenly we heard strange noise and it turned out we had a flat tire. HVTG quickly jumped into action with special mentions to Doc and Keith, whereas our driver almost kept his hands clean. Luckily, the car had a full sized spare tire and with excellent teamwork we only lost ten minutes.

The track from the car park was steep but easy downhill and it took us 35 minutes to reach Lake Chalice Hut at 9 pm, a really nice and spacious 8-bunk hut built in 1963. There was a bit daylight left to explore the surroundings and take a few photos of the lake. We all hoped for good photos on this trip, everybody brought a camera and Ian McIlraith - on his first tramp with the club after more than 30 years and henceforth called Ian the photographer - even had two and carried a large tripod.

Saturday, January 21

We left the hut at 8:15 am and had a leisurely start with lots of stops to take photos of the lake. There is abundant honeydew in the beech forest and therefore also wasps which badly stung three of us traveling at the end of our party. We were warned beforehand by Andrew to carry antihistamine and it did help. It was good to hear the birdsong and to see Robins very close a few times.

Travel got more and more difficult after leaving Goulter Track with uneven surfaces with lots of roots and trees to climb over. The half-hour lunch break gave us a good rest and soon after, around 2 pm, exactly like the forecast had claimed, it started to rain. Then we had two deep streams to cross which led to water-logged boots and being completely soaked. The climb to the hut was very steep and exhausting. Andrew tried to cheer us up with the indications from his GPS: "600m direct line to the hut" but it also showed how slow our progress was. The person with the longest legs, Ian the photographer, was far ahead and we knew the fire would be already going in the hut to get us dry soon. But when arriving at 4 pm our mood darkened by learning that the 5-bunk hut was already full with eight Te Araroa trampers. It was decided that Ian would squeeze in there and the rest of us would tent outside.



Deep streams to cross.

While fabulous grass to camp on was available, we settled under the trees behind the toilet to get some protection against the coming winds. We had a two-person club tent that was tricky to set up as nobody knew how to do it. It was quite cold by then, with around 4 degrees and our fingers numb. Due to the lack of space in the hut and on the veranda, cooking was quite a mess and slow but somehow we managed to all sit down and enjoy chatting with our fellow trampers from all around the world (Canada, Sweden, Germany, Slovakia and Switzerland). It was good to hear that Wellington and the Tararuas were among the highlights of their trip so far. They were very jealous of our freshly cooked food and hoped for leftovers which was unsuccessful. But Andrew always has his Wheat Bix Squares to share and as Doc says: "these are magic", so the recipe had to be shared too.

Sadly, after dinner, the first-aid-kit was needed as Ian burnt his hand while handling the billy with hot water. Thankfully, he reacted quickly enough to avoid more serious injury. Again, great team work doing the clean up. Doc sacrificed his tea towel and later skilfully put a bandage on.

All days come to an end and we had to leave the steamy sauna (aka hut) for our forest retreat. It was still raining heavily and so, when reaching my tent, I found it in the middle of a big puddle. Doc and Keith thankfully helped me to move it to a much better place quite far away. I didn't sleep much that night, but had it warm and relatively dry inside while being satisfied with myself for sealing the seams of my tent earlier that week.

Sunday, January 22

The next morning, it turned out that the other tents were now sitting in puddles and that the others had a night much worse than me. The hut was shaken by the wind during the night but we didn't notice much of it sheltered by the trees. The TA hikers were to have a rest day in the hut due to the bad weather. For us, staying there and spending another night in a wet tent was not an option. The hut book showed that Old Man Hut was full or over-full pretty much every night since January 1st and so was the toilet. With the TA becoming more and more popular, taking a tent when planning to stay in a hut on the trail is a sensible idea.

It was still pouring down and packing and getting ready took much longer than usual. We were expecting to be wet all day with exposed parts on the ridge, so long johns, over-trousers and mittens came to a use.

We left around 10 am with almost no wind and relatively warm around 10 degrees. The track was completely flooded and the steep climb was like going up a waterfall. Once on the Alpine Route, we didn't get much of a view but nevertheless it was fantastic to be up there and definitely the highlight of our trip. After passing Old Man with 1514 m, we had a short stop when in the trees again to get the party back together. Our trip leader reminded us that we signed up for this

voluntarily... I didn't think it was too bad, we were lucky to have almost no wind and the scenery (although we didn't see much) helped in keeping spirits up.



Great views in better conditions

We had a quick 20 min lunch stop on the saddle in a beautiful beech forest. A full stomach certainly didn't make the next arduous ascent any easier. Again, up to 1500m and an open top which would have great views in better conditions. From there it was "only" downhill but with multiple stream crossings. Some of them were not on the map and looked like freshly formed overnight. It was definitely right that we changed our plans as the original route would have been too dangerous on that day. When almost at the lake there was a powerful river that seemed unsafe to cross. But after careful evaluation, Keith and Andrew found a good spot

further downstream and with mutual support everybody made it to the other bank. With the sun coming out, so did the sandflies and wasps. From here, it was a short and easy trip to the hut which we reached at 5:30 pm.

What a relief it was to have all that space in Lake Chalice Hut for ourselves. This is a great hut. The fire helped a bit to get our clothes and Doc's sleeping bag less wet and dinner was a feast. First blue cheese and crackers by Ian, then rice with nice crunchy vegetables in honey soy sauce cooked by Keith followed by steamed pudding that Grant carried all the way for us. Everybody had a good sleep, only disturbed by the assassination of a mouse around 5 am which I missed completely thanks to my earplugs.

Monday, January 23

We all got up around 7:30 am in good weather and had a leisurely morning. Everybody except Keith and myself left around 9 am for a tour around the lake which took about 2:30 h and was very enjoyable. The fear of wasps and the need to have a little rest made us stay at the hut where the time was spent with reading, solving crosswords, housekeeping, and drying our stuff in the sun. Apparently there was a sign giving two options to cross the stream, depending on low or high water - knowledge we could have used the day before. Around noon, a father with two boys age 5 and 7 arrived at the hut and he was relieved to hear that we would leave soon and they would have the hut for themselves.

After lunch, we left the hut at 1:30 pm and worked up a good sweat going up to the car park which took around an hour. Finally, the sun was out and the clouds gone. We had a glimpse through the trees of what we had missed the days before, absolutely stunning scenery. Our driver was already waiting for us and after only driving a few meters we had to ask him for a photo stop where Andrew took a picture of Lake Chalice and its surroundings (see the front page). On the way back, we saw that the Wairau River carried much more water than on Friday. Indeed, it had rained a lot.

Picton was sunny too and felt a bit like another world. We had enough time for a coffee and fish and chips before going on board for the ferry departing at 6:45 pm. And again, smooth sailing in nice sunny weather.

Thank you Andrew, for being a great leader knowing every trick to ensure our safety in nasty conditions. It only rained for a full day and we missed the views but certainly learned valuable lessons to be even better prepared next time.

Trampers: Andrew Robinson, Ian McIlraith, Ian Milne, Doc Watson, Grant Roberts, Keith Thomas, Leni Mäcke

Leni

LOWER TAUHERENIKAU GORGE : 28 January 2017

Graeme Lythgoe

Late January is usually a good time for gorge trips but this summer had been very changeable and cool. The Tararua Range in particular had been swept by westerly rain bands and the rivers kept higher than normal. Thus it was that the Tauherenikau was running about 4 times (6 cumecs) its normal flow at this time of year. The full gorge trip was therefore postponed but with a reasonable weather forecast, I decided to push ahead with the lower alternative. Six of us met up at Bucks road-end at 1100hrs and set off on the track which provides access to the gorge.

Although the sign said 90 minutes it took us only 50 along a mainly excellent track in warm and mainly sunny conditions. We had our lunch and changed into wetsuits and inflated our tubes.



Photo: Doug Flux

Bruce and Ridgy walked the two dogs back along the track and four of us set off down the gorge.

The river was quite cold and quite swift, but the advantage was the rapids could nearly all be "rafted" and the pools were deep and required little "paddling". We stopped for a quick break after 45 minutes and realised we were almost through the gorge. Sure enough, another bend and another long pool and we were following the short track back to the carpark. The river section had only taken 90 minutes - a very fast trip that was most enjoyable. Bruce and Ridgy had only been back in the carpark for 10 minutes! By now the sun was very hot and no doubt the river would get

slightly warmer later in the day but we were happy!

Gorgers were Doug Flux, Keith Thomas, Mark Mills, Graeme Lythgoe together with Bruce Miller with Polly and Ridgway Lythgoe with Dash.

Graeme

RUAPEHU ROUNDUP

Over the weekend of 10-12 February nine enthusiastic workers, including 2 Australians and two teenagers, had a memorable time sprucing up the lodge. The kitchen, lounge and the access stairwell were upgraded to a level of cleanliness greater than most domestic homes. The sterilisation of the extractor fan was an epic achievement. The youngsters changed the mattress covers and carried the scatter cushions and the soiled mattress covers down to the cars to be taken home for re-covering and cleaning. The outside achievements included:

- renewing the gravel surface on the ramp to the front door
- painting the front window and entrance doorway
- painting and staining the deck
- painting the barge board above the deck
- repointing the concrete blocks on the north wall
- starting the removal of the flaking paint from the concrete blocks on the south wall.

Also of note was the 'return of the prodigal recycling mule'. The old 'recycling mule' pack which went missing some months ago, was found taking a holiday at the back of the ski lockers.



A welcome break



Removing the paint



Painting the front window

Photo: Bruce Miller



'The return of the prodigal mule'

Unless stated otherwise, all photos by Ian McIlraith.

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