



Photo: Marcus Vandergoes.

Please submit your **August 2021** H&V articles to the editor by **30<sup>th</sup> July 2021**

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:** Dennis Page 970 6901  
**Trip Coordinator:** Chris McMillan 569 9019

**Secretary:** Murray Presland 562 8194  
**Treasurer:** Jim Cousins 586 2135

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



**CLUB NIGHT PROGRAMME**  
Starts 8.00 pm promptly



**7 July : Stephen Day – Strategic Communications Manager, NZ Walking Access Commission**

Stephen will talk to us about his national work on land access. You may also wish to read the FMC article he wrote on the subject for the March 2021 “Backcountry” magazine.

**14 July : Aileen Logie – Tristan da Cunha – a Dentist’s Life**

Tristan da Cunha is the remotest Island Community in the World. Cape Town is 2,787 km away, Saint Helena 2,437 km and Falkland Islands 4,002 km. It is a British Overseas Territory with its own constitution. There is no airstrip, and the only access is by boat. For 5 years, Aileen spent 6 weeks of each year providing an essential dental service to the community living on this volcano, perched on the mid-Atlantic Ridge. The people, their origin and way of life, the landscape and the wildlife....and getting there (!) made this a fascinating and rewarding journey. Aileen has compiled a photographic record of her stay on the island and she will share her experiences with Club members

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

**21 July : Nicholas Boyack – The Big 60**

Journalist and long-time club member Nicholas Boyack reached a significant milestone earlier this year. To mark this milestone he has dug out 60 of his favourite pics. Expect to see everything from Mid King Biv to Mt Everest.

**28 July : HVTC Annual General Meeting**

Come along and hear all about and have your say on the Club's activities for the last year and the outlook for the next. Election of officers will also be held.

**4 August : Dr Marcus Vandergoes – The Answer lies in the Mud – unearthing the history of New Zealand lakes.**

The health of New Zealand lakes is central to New Zealand’s environmental, economic and cultural well being. Many lakes are not monitored and their health status and history is poorly known. Marcus (GNS Science) and Dr Susie Wood (Cawthron Institute) and their colleagues have been sampling and analysing water samples, lake bottom sediment and lake sediment cores from over 300 lakes in New Zealand. They will share initial findings. Also of interest to trampers will be magnificent images of some of New Zealand’s most rarely accessed lakes.



**TRIP CATEGORIES**

**Tramping**

- D Day walk or evening stroll
- T Overnight or longer tramp
-  Dog Friendly
-  Moonlight Walk

Grade 1 Relaxed pace with plenty of rest stops. All terrain types may be encountered, occasionally off-track. Duration depends on the terrain and conditions, but is usually for no more than 6 hours per day.

- Grade 2 Steady walking pace with regular snack and drink breaks. Terrain may vary from flat river valleys to ridges above the bush line. Off-track travel may be involved. Up to 8 hours walking time per day, depending on conditions.
- Grade 3 Brisk pace with few drink and snack breaks. Terrain encountered is as for grade 2 trips but the distance travelled is usually much further. More than 8 hours walking time per day.
- Family Family trip. Very relaxed pace with plenty of rest stops. Suitable for small children.
- WP Working Party. Overnight or for a day. Voluntary work on HVTC Ruapehu Lodge or a conservation project.

### 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.

### JULY

tba		Lake Wairarapa from Featherston	John Smeith	027 244 2498
<b>School holidays 10/7 – 25/7</b>				
<b>10 – 11</b>	<b>TARARUA FP – HOLDSWORTH</b>			
	T1	Totara Flats Hut		
	T2	Mid Waiohine Hut	John Evans	020 4166 4410
Sun 11	D1	Sunny Grove Track & Offtrack		
<b>12 – 16</b>	ski	Ruapehu - School Holidays - Week 1	Booking Officer	027 451 2587
<b>16 – 18</b>	instr	How to get to the lodge in the snow	Alison Newbald	027 451 2587
<b>17 – 18</b>				
	T1	Trip required		
	T2	Trip required		
Sun 18	D1	Te Whiti Riser – Wainuiomata Rd	Bob & Bernice	021 994 854
<b>19 – 23</b>	ski	Ruapehu - School Holidays - Week 2	Booking Officer	027 451 2587
Tues 20		Moonlight walk – Point Howard	Emma Dobbie	027 252 5045
<b>24– 25</b>				
	T1	Trip required		
	T2	Trip required		
Sun 25	D1	Plimmerton - Pukerua Bay circuit	Tony & Jo	021 228 4430
<b>Wed 28</b>	<b>ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING</b>			
<b>30 – 1</b>	<b>TARARUA FP – HOLDSWORTH</b>			
	T1	Atiwhakatu Hut		
	T2	Powell – Jumbo Circuit	Andrew Robinson	586 2438

### AUGUST

tba		Round the Bays	Graeme Lythgoe	479 6630
Sun 1	D1	Wainui Circuit	Pamela Campbell	021 857 953
<b>2 – 6</b>	ski	Ruapehu - Club Week 1	Booking Officer	027 451 2587
<b>7 – 8</b>	<b>TARARUA FP – WAIRARAPA</b>			
	T1	Tutuwai Hut		
	T2	Marchant – Block XVI – Tutuwai Hut	John Evans	020 4166 4410
Sun 8	D1	Explore Matiu Somes Island	Julie Lewis	021 293 2118

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### SALES TABLE 14 JULY

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.

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### ***RUAPEHU EVENTS 2021***

<b><i>In</i></b>	<b><i>Out</i></b>	<b><i>Event</i></b>	
Mon 12 July	Fri 16 July	July School Holiday week 1	<i>Contact Booking Officer 027 451 2587</i>
Mon 19 July	Fri 23 July	July School Holiday week 2	<i>Contact Booking Officer 027 451 2587</i>
Mon 2 Aug	Fri 6 Aug	Club Week 1	<i>Contact Booking Officer 027 451 2587</i>
Mon 23 Aug	Fri 27 Aug	Club Week 2	<i>Contact Booking Officer 027 451 2587</i>
Mon 30 Aug	Fri 03 Sept	Club Week 3 (Juniors' and others)	<i>Contact Neil Hickman 04 380 1192</i>
Mon 13 Sept	Fri 17 Sept	Club Week 4 (Veterans and All-comers)	<i>Contact Russell Oliver 021 245 9596</i>
Mon 04 Oct	Fri 09 Oct	October School Holiday week 1	<i>Contact Kate Brownsword 027 562 0177</i>
Mon 11 Oct	Fri 15 Oct	October School Holiday week 2	<i>Contact Booking Officer 027 451 2587</i>

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.

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### **INTRODUCTION TO RUAPEHU LODGE IN WINTER** **16-18 JULY**

Have you always wanted to go to the Ruapehu lodge in winter but not known how? Always wanted to know how to open up and shut down the lodge but been too worried you wouldn't do it right? Well, this is the weekend for you.

By the end of the weekend you will know the best routes to get to the lodge in different conditions including to and from Hut Flat and how the lodge operates including opening up and shutting down.

To book your place on the course - contact Alison Newbald on 027 451 2587 or  
Ruapehubookings@hvtc.org.nz

*Alison*

# **2021 HVTC PHOTO COMPETITION**

## **25 AUGUST 2021**



All Club photographers are invited to submit their favourite/best recent images into the 2021 Club Photographic Competition. The time for entries is now, with acceptances closing on 28 July. The competition includes a novice category for those who have not previously entered a photo competition, while for the club's top photographers the club competition is the only path for the HVTC members to enter the nationwide FMC competition.

Our Club Competition is aligned with the FMC Photo Competition – so that the winning two entries in each of the FMC categories will be forwarded to the FMC Competition.

A condition of the FMC competition is that the images can be used in publicity material for promoting the objectives of FMC. The winning entries in the FMC competition are published in the November issue of FMC's Backcountry magazine.

You may enter up to 4 images in each category. An image file size of 1 Mb is about the minimum of acceptable quality – and much beyond 3Mb has detail that cannot be displayed. The FMC competition requires file sizes between 1 MB and 5 MB. Please submit as .JPG or .TIF files.

The images, and comments, will be presented by the Competition Judge on Wednesday 25 August 2021, with cups awarded to the winners in most categories.

### **FMC CATEGORIES and RULES:**

There are 7 categories – including a category for Long Exposure images for which there were no HVTC entries last year. There is also an annual theme – in 2021 this is FMC's proposed Wild Rivers Park of the South Island's West Coast (see [www.fmc.org.nz/wildrivers](http://www.fmc.org.nz/wildrivers) ). In the FMC competition, the best image fitting the theme will be awarded a separate prize. Enter themed images in their normal categories but note that they are also to be considered as theme entries.

- A. ABOVE BUSHLINE** (with no human element)
- B. ABOVE BUSHLINE** (with a human element)
- C. BELOW BUSHLINE** (with no human element)
- D. BELOW BUSHLINE** (with a human element)
- E. HISTORIC**
- F. NATIVE FLORA & FAUNA**
- G. LONG EXPOSURE**

### **Rules**

#### **1. Definition of a "human element"**

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

2. Entries for the contemporary categories must be taken after 1 January 2019. Any photos taken prior to this date will automatically be entered into the historic category.

### 3. Definition of “historic”

The intention for the historic category is for entrants to go back through club and individual archives to select “old photos” rather than “photos of old things”. As an example, a recent photo of a hut built in the 1950’s is not a ‘historic’ photo. However, a photo of the same hut taken in the 1960’s certainly is an ‘historic’ photo. The aim is to catch the essence of past eras. The prize for any winning photo from a club archive by a deceased member will go to the club. The prize for any winning photo from an individual archive by a deceased person will go to the person who entered the photo, whether through a club or as an individual supporter.

### 4. Definition of “Long Exposure”.

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

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

### 6. Rules on post processing:

- Adjustments for exposure, white balance, contrast & levels are allowed.
- Cropping is allowed
- Stitching for panoramic shots is allowed
- Removal or insertion of features not in the original image is not allowed.

### HVTC CATEGORIES:

- H. TOPICAL** (tells a story)
- I. PERSONALITY** (illustrates a character)
- J. OVERSEAS** (from your recent travels)
- K. NOVICE** (for those who have not previously entered a photo competition)
- L. PRINTS**

The Rules on post-processing remain as in FMC Rule 6 above.

You should submit your images to Graeme McVerry (graememcv@xtra.co.nz) on disc, memory stick or preferably as attachments to an e-mail.

Each image should have a title – and you should prefix the title with the letter (A – L) that denotes the intended category into which your photo is being entered.

The deadline for entries is midnight **Wednesday 28 July** – to allow time for the judge to deliberate and cups to be engraved.

### WINNERS OF CUPS LAST YEAR

Please return the cups to the Social Committee by the end of July to allow time for cleaning and engraving.

Good luck for the competition. 😊

*Cathy Priest*

Convenor HVTC Social Committee

## **RUAPEHU LODGE JUNIORS AND OTHERS WEEK** **MONDAY 30 AUGUST TO FRIDAY 3 SEPTEMBER**

This year Juniors Week is again being run by Neil Hickman and John Simes at our Ruapehu Lodge. This time is also open to others bearing in mind that Juniors bookings come first and any others should be aware kids are excitable, noisy and robust.

The grandparents and parents love the R&R and for the little ones it is an out of this world experience whether it's skiing, tobogganing, wandering or just digging holes in the snow. While it runs for a week, nights can be arranged to suit your time and budget.

For more info contact me and I can email you "All you need to know about Junior's Week".  
[neil.hickman@xtra.co.nz](mailto:neil.hickman@xtra.co.nz) or ring me Neil 027 4413 285.

*Neil*

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## **RUAPEHU LODGE VETERANS & ALL-COMERS WEEK** **MONDAY 13 SEPTEMBER TO FRIDAY 17 SEPTEMBER**

**Planning on a great ski week at Mt Ruapehu?  
Come join us this year**

This trip is guaranteed to provide:-  
Great food & wine  
Great weather

Great snow for skiing walking or just looking at from the upper deck  
Great company especially if you join us.

But the trip is not only for vets to come on, everybody is welcome. A good chance to bring friends along to experience the club's facilities, taste the pleasures of the mountain and enjoy the skiing and perhaps join the club.

New to the club and or skiing you are welcome. Let a few of us older, mature, well perhaps experienced, members show you the ropes so to speak. Come along and find out what a great asset the club has on the mountain.

**DECIDE NOW**

**SAY YES TO A SKI WEEK AT OUR RUAPEHU LODGE**

For Vets week initially contact Russell Oliver, [russell@gnawt.co.nz](mailto:russell@gnawt.co.nz) or 021 245 9596.



*Russell*

## **FROM THE GENERAL COMMITTEE**

July 2021

### **General Committee Positions:**

At the close of nominations, on 30 June, the Ruapehu and Social Committees had full slates of candidates - which is excellent! There are however some more tasks that must be taken up on the General Committee. We - that means all of the members of this Club - need volunteers to be Secretary, Transport Officer (especially) and at least one other member. Our Club will not function well without volunteers willing to take up these tasks. Please think about your contribution to our Club and talk to Dennis Page or Murray Presland, before the Annual General Meeting on 28 July, about the roles you could undertake for us.

## **First Aid training:**

There was little uptake for the full-day Outdoor First-Aid course that we scoped for Club members earlier in the year. Perhaps you were all daunted by the level of knowledge and skill that would be required! However it is certain that we each should be prepared to deal with any medical emergency that happens on a tramping or biking trip in the back-country or on a cycling trip – and the best way to improve one's knowledge and skill is to attend a course with an experienced instructor. We have now set up the following, less daunting, ½ day, opportunity for you to learn/refresh/practice your knowledge and to be prepared. It will be run in conjunction with the Upper Hutt Walking and Tramping Club. The course will not qualify for NCEA certification.

### **Emergency First Aid**

Date: 21st August 2021 8 am – midday.

Instruction: First Aid Consultants - paramedics associated with Wellington Free Ambulance.

Venue: Upper Hutt Art Society, corner of Ward and Miro Streets, Wallaceville.

Subjects to be covered:

- CPR (adult)
- hypothermia
- soft tissue injury
- burns
- shock
- breaks
- choking
- poisoning
- skills for keeping people alive and comfortable if we are in a remote area

**Cost to you:** \$20 per participant (the General Committee has committed funds from the Natusch Bequest to meet the rest of the cost of the course).

The course will cover most of the common first aid challenges we are likely to meet - in the city and the backcountry - so it is essential knowledge to have readily available. Please register your intention to join this course with me, Murray Presland - ph (04) 562 8194; e-mail [murray.presland@xtra.co.nz](mailto:murray.presland@xtra.co.nz) - by early August, so I can keep you informed.

## **Trips and Transfers – Nelson Lakes**

Trips and Transfers – Nelson Lakes and Beyond is a new shuttle service, based in St Arnaud but operating over the northern South Island. Jennifer Sloots set up the company in December 2020 with the following benefits to you:

- We offer bespoke & flexible transport solutions around the Top of the South Island to and from St Arnaud – as far south as Arthurs Pass.
- Small (and large groups by prior arrangement ) catered for.
- As I personally have a P endorsement and class 2 license it's also possible to have your own club minivan/bus relocated and stored at my place to ensure its safety.
- Members of FMC can make use of our FMC discounts; 10% discount offer on transport or make use of transport & accommodation offer on presentation of their membership card at time of reservation.
- We aim not to just be a shuttle service. 5 star reviews from the past season are a recognition of this goal.
- In our commitment to sustainability a portion of the fare is donated to the Kea Conservation Trust.

### **Contact:**

Trips & Transfers - Nelson Lakes and Beyond

RD2 Nelson 7072

T 03-5394896

The General Committee welcomes your comment on any Club issues at any time!

*Murray Presland* ([secretary@hvtc.org.nz](mailto:secretary@hvtc.org.nz))

## OUR EXCELLENT WEDNESDAY NIGHT SPEAKERS.

We have many good talks on our Wednesday club nights, and our social committee are to be commended for coming up with such a varied and relevant programme of guest speakers. In recent times I have been particularly taken with talks from outside speakers such as Steve Tallon who talked about his cell phone map application for trampers and outdoors people by which you are able to keep a track of your route using the phone GPS system and find your way home with confidence. More recently a speaker told us of our (and his) frailties in the hills and the ocean and the air and how to take ownership of the risks rather than ignoring them and how to better manage them. I was also very taken with the talk by Les Molloy last week when he told us about his trip to Tannu Tuva in 1999 on an assessment of a World Heritage site. Les has given us many talks, some of his recent ones include the environmental protection battles in Tasmania many years ago, Tajikistan and protecting the high Pamirs. Travelling in the Karakoram of Pakistan and his travels in the Yellow River area of China. We always get an excellent overview of geography, both physical and social, history, politics and customs and many other anecdotes to boot. I was impressed with his modelling of a local Tuvan ceremonial hat during this last talk. It's not the first time Les has managed to wear something from the area that he has travelled to. For those who could not make it, I can at least show you the image I took of Les wearing his hat from Tuva. Thanks Les for many good talks over the years and thankyou social committee for such a great variety of Wednesday night talks.



*John Simes*

## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Please welcome new members Elsie Barry, Diana Rickman, Richard Carpenter and Adam Bruce. We look forward to enjoying days in the hills with you all.

*Doreen Courtenay*  
Membership Officer

## VALE GRAHAM COLLINS

Club members that were active in the 1980s and 1990s will be saddened to learn that Graham Collins passed away recently. Graham and his wife, Denise, were active in the club and served on the General Committee. Graham held the role of Transport Officer and he also managed a Transport Sub-committee charged with investigating the feasibility of the HVTC having its own transport for club trips.

Graham's work and contributions resulted in the purchase of a three-tonne Mitsubishi Canter truck in July 1982 – The truck was specially outfitted to carry 23 passengers to many road-ends throughout New Zealand and was used until 2000 when the currently owned Ford Transit van was purchased. In addition to securing club-owned transport, Graham also directed club work parties to help build significant components of the club's garage structure. It was noted by a member that 'he gave us clear instructions and trusted us to implement them – though he probably kept a close eye on what we managed!'

The HVTC extends its deepest sympathies and condolences (as well as its gratitude for contributions past) to Denise (who served as HVTC Treasurer for several years), and to Glenn and Ian - Okioki i runga i te Rangimarie, Graham.

*Dennis Page*

## TRIP REPORTS

### NORTH SADDLE TO MT MATTHEWS - 2ND ATTEMPT

Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2021

Mike Wespel-Rose

Our first attempt on Mt Matthews via the North Saddle two weeks earlier had gone awry when we had taken a wrong stream turn and so only got as far as North Saddle itself before having to retreat down Matthews Stream due to lateness.

There had been 6 on our first attempt. However for our new attempt only 3 were available.

We left Lower Hutt even earlier than last time – 5.40 am at the old Griffins factory and we left the Catchpole and started tramping at 6.15am.

Torches were needed most of the way in to the Orongorongo River.

In spite of recent rain the river was still low as we headed upstream to Matthews Stream. And then our turn up Matthews Stream. We passed the 2nd side creek on the left (according to the map) which we had actually ascended mistakenly the previous trip. In fact, with the extra water around this was the third side creek we noted this time.

We found our correct stream this time with the expected sign – MT MTHW NTH SDL – the stream we had descended from Matthews Saddle previously.

We ascended the steep side around the waterfall 2/3 of the way up and reached the North Saddle in a moderate easterly and with good views towards Palliser Bay.

The ridge ahead looked pretty rugged on steep open rocky or grassy terrain. As we moved along the ridge there were open sections, at times above big drops, alternating with sections through bush clinging to the steep ridge. The route was generally well marked with orange triangles. (from DOC?).

Then there was a sudden burst out of the bush and onto the beginning of the “Knife Edge”.

The first part was a bit exposed and we used a short piece of rope for security as far as a first bump. Beyond that bump the going was easier. The talented and brave could from that point continue to follow the “Knife Edge” itself. We, more modest souls, could drop down onto easier ground and traverse straightforwardly across the rest of the open section and onto the rocky scrub on the other side.



If you search for (in Google) “The knife’s edge of Matthews” on vimeo you will see a video of someone from the Tararua Tramping Club earlier in the year traverse the ridge top itself. He is about 80! Colin Cook.

Then we continued, now fully in bush, very steep in places, to the Matthews summit where we stopped for lunch (11.45 to 12.15.) Very nice views to the East. Good to have a sit down.

Heading back along the standard track from the summit we were looking for the sign that indicated the diversion to the giant scree slide. SHNGL SLD. Almost missed it but luckily not. This side route with blue tape markers took us down through bush – at times very steeply as we dropped into a scree valley. We came to the edge of the bush and a green fixed rope allowed us to climb down a steep bank to the slide itself.

Who would have thought? A shingle slide this big in the Rimutaka’s. It looked to go on forever. And was generally good quality shingle with straightforward

running for most of the descent. We took care to not set rocks rolling onto each other – a definite danger and important caution.

A fun fun descent.

At the bottom of the slide we travelled easily through forest down to the stream, then 20 minutes or so working down the scrubby stream and back to Matthews stream which we had ascended earlier in the day.

Arriving there it was then straightforward travel down what has now become very familiar territory.

Down the main river and out over the track to the Catchpole. Passing lots of groups walking into the main river to overnight, or just day trip.

Arrived at the car park at 3.45. Really full of cars – and great to see so many people using this lovely area.

Participants – Catharina Fisher, Andrew Fisher, Mike Wespel-Rose

*Mike*

# WHANGANUI, MANAWATU, TARANAKI TRIP HOSTED BY WTC 30 May - 2 June Nick McBride

Over the last few years HVTC has benefited from a friendship with the Wanganui Tramping Club, which has meant some interesting trips on the schedule that we would be less likely to organise ourselves.

This year it was the WTC's turn to host us and they put a lot of effort into organising a fine itinerary that took us to some new locations.



*Photo: Derek Richardson*

Friday night we got off to a ropey start, due to a loud high-pitched noise emanating from the van dashboard. It turned out to be a fault in the electric door lock system, but we it wasn't something we could cope with over a two-hour drive so we quickly rearranged our transport.

On Saturday we had two walks lined up. The first was Lake Rotokare, which is about 14km east of Eltham, so quite a long drive up from Whanganui.

Lake Rotokare is fenced sanctuary round a small patch of original native bush and wetland: quite a standout in the otherwise denuded countryside. Like Zealandia there have been a number of native birds introduced into the sanctuary, including kiwi and pateke. With such a big party and on a schedule we did not see many native birds, but tieke and toutouwai were spotted.

We walked up a set of stairs and around the fenceline for a bit before dropping down to the main walk around the lake and wetland and through the pristine forest, much of it on boardwalk. The kahikatea and such swamp plants as hukihuki (swamp coprosma) were impressive indeed.

After lunch beside the lake itself we drove up to Stratford and then west for 6km to the York Road Quarry loop, which is right on the edge of Egmont National Park. It is the sight of a historic metal quarry that had provided material for much of the roading around Taranaki. Among the interesting features were the location of an old barracks for the workers, the remains of a crusher, and a dam where the rocks were washed. All were set in dense native bush along an interesting track.

Unfortunately, we ran out of time to walk the full loop and had to take the drive back to our campgrounds to prepare for the evening entertainment. That was a potluck dinner at Julie's and Trevor's house on St John's Hill joined by many WTC members. Trevor is a very talented carpenter and he had restored much of the house, with staircases, mantelpieces and other items built by his hand from fine native timber. It was his lifelong hobby and he had earned his house a historic places registration. A highlight was a trip to the turret and the view over Whanganui on a very clear night.

WTC had another well-chosen destination for us on Sunday morning. This was the Sledge Track, conveniently south of Palmerston North and on route for the drive home. The start of the track is

at the carpark to the Arapuke mountain bike park. After walking along a valley next to a stream we headed up some steps and then a ridge through bush to arise to a clearing that provided a choice of two loop walks. We chose the shorter Platinum Mines Loop, once an area for platinum prospecting. The short loop extension takes in four vertical and two horizontal exploratory mine shafts where prospector Alexander Menesdorfer searched for platinum ore in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

It was very interesting to find these shafts, which were narrow holes in the ground with aluminium ladders (chained to a railing) and as well as two ends of the longer shaft that appeared as a tunnel in the mountain side.

Despite the large amount of driving required, this was a very successful and interesting trip that took almost all of us to new destinations. Many thanks to Dorothy Symes, as the main organiser, Julie and Trevor for generously hosting out dinner, and Shane who led the party up the Sledge Track. We look forward to hosting the WTC in July next year.

Party: Bob and Bernice Deller, William and Anna Liao, Graeme and Michele Lythgoe, Jackie and Chris West, Derek and Elaine Richardson, Bruce Miller, Vera de Graauw, Julie Lewis, Nick McBride (leader)

*Nick*

## ANGELUS HUT NELSON LAKES

### 4th-7th June

Nick Cox

A friend of Cathy's suggested we undertake a walk to Angelus Hut in the Nelson Lakes. We chose the long weekend over the 4th to 7th June and took the late InterIslander on Thursday night, which was almost empty, the ferry getting us to our accommodation in Picton around midnight.

#### Day 1

After a lovely breakfast in Picton, we drove the hour and forty minutes to St Arnaud. We stopped at the Lake Roitoiti, where we saw many large eels and brown trout swimming in the clear water next to the jetty, before driving up to the carpark on Mt Robert Road at the start of Paddys Track.

The sunny weather with clear skies and accompanying birdsong made the hike up to Bushline Hut very pleasant. The track was well maintained and wound through Manuka bush where, as we climbed, gaps in the trees presented stunning views of St Arnaud across the glistening lake. Further up we looked down to see white-tops forming on the lake's waves below ... the wind was picking up.

Once we'd cleared the shelter of the trees the track weaved and climbed through tussock grasses and we now felt the chill of the wind on us. On this stretch we came across five day walkers who'd started at the top carpark, made their way up the steep Pinchgut Track to Relax Shelter before making a left turn and heading downhill via Paddys Track the lower carpark, making for a nice day walk.



After our steep climb, the track revealed Bushline Hut and levelled off to a gentle gradient up to its front door. Two women from Motueka greeted us inside and, shortly after we claimed our bunk spaces, eight young people who work together at a Blenheim vineyard brought with them plenty of wine and a drone. That night the sky was star-filled, and we sat out on the deck looking at the stars, watching aircraft flying high overhead and catching glimpses of several shooting stars.

## Day 2

We woke to cloud and, looking down at the lake and St Arnaud, we could see rain clouds rising to meet us. By the time we'd put on our packs and headed on our way, the rain was already falling and we were walking into the thick cloud. Today's weather was a rude, cold contrast to Friday's fine weather.



It didn't take long for us to reach the junction with Pinchgut Track, where we stopped to read the DOC warning sign before continuing a reasonably gentle climb in poor visibility.

Soon after we started to encounter patches of snow and, with the wind picking up, the temperature dropped significantly. By the time we reached the track junction leading down to the ski field our route was completely covered by snow, so we donned our crampons for extra traction. We felt a tad overdressed when a day walker wearing short pants and long-sleeved polyprop came up from Mt Robert top carpark ... by the time he returned from his turn around point he was wearing a jacket!



Approaching Flagtop, the cloud briefly lifted and we could finally see our surroundings and the route ahead. Though a short time later, the wind grew stronger, and the cloud dropped again making the marker poles more of a challenge to locate and, occasionally, we had to stop and wait for the next route marker to reveal itself, which made for slow going along Robert Ridge towards Julius Summit.

By now the snow was thigh deep in places and we benefitted from someone else's footprints for us to follow/use/avoid. Moving along ridge we were presented with several challenges: poor visibility, strong winds, snow

and ice underfoot and narrow ledges to traverse with sheer drops into the mist. The forecast rain arrived earlier than expected adding to the mix.

Crampons and walking poles were a must along with ice-axes. We'd skipped lunch and had snacks instead as we didn't want to stop for longer than a short catch-your breath/wellbeing check as the wind-chill was noticeable on any exposed skin and stopping meant cooling down. We made sure that we were both okay and not suffering from the effects of the cold, we also had plenty of time, so we were careful and cautious with our foot placements and handholds as we traversed the most challenging part of the day's route.

Nearing the junction with the track leading down to Speargrass Hut, the route levelled out, which made for a welcome change, though our visibility was still very poor and now we were walking in deep snow with the wind adding to the soaking effect of the rain.

We paused only briefly at the sign where the paths met and pointed us in an uphill direction. After a fifteen minute climb in snow, we started our steep descent towards the tarn and hut, which was somewhere in the cloud below us. A short time later we could hear voices in the distance and after another ten minutes we were by the frozen tarn, but still without sight of the hut. Following the markers, the modern hut revealed itself and was a welcome sight for the two of us.

The hut was fully booked and most of the drying space by the fire had already been claimed, however, it didn't take long for clothing to dry, so we soon had our wet gear dripping and drying

over the fire. We'd heard that Angelus Hut offers a spectacular setting and views – the large number of outdoor benches leans to that narrative – however, only once did the cloud briefly lift and reveal the full extent of the tarn and the towering hills around us. Alas, by the time I'd got my phone to take a picture, the cloud had dropped to tarn level again.

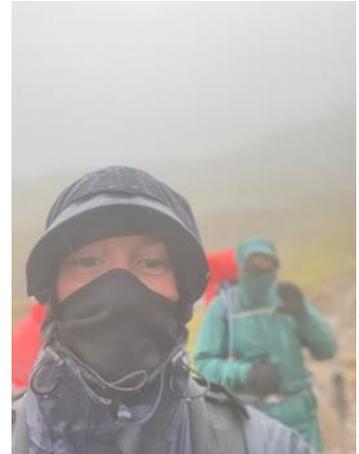
For the rest of the evening and night, the wind picked up, and the rain poured down. The volunteer DOC warden (a police officer by day), told us she had come in via Robert Ridge in the snow a few days earlier in blue sky and we'd probably been following in her steps as everyone else had come in via the Speargrass Creek Track. The warden agreed the route out via Speargrass Creek was probably best, as the forecast was for severe gales and 30mm of rain.

### Day 3

We were up reasonably early and into our dried clothes. The cloud was still low, and the rain continued to pour lifting occasionally to reveal the tops of the mountains surrounding the hut. Outside much of the snow that had greeted our arrival had either washed away or turned to icy mush. Our plan was to reach Speargrass Hut for lunch and decide on whether we'd press on to exit a day early or stop and dry out for the night. We checked out heading into low cloud and rain. After our climb up we descended to the track junction taking the fork for the Speargrass Creek Track. Up above, we saw impressive waterfalls, the rain and melting snow swelling the volume of water pouring down the mountain. At this stage we were not aware of what was to come!

The track was slippery and in many places, had formed a fast-flowing stream. We removed our crampons as they were unnecessary. We were in full waterproofs and wearing gortex socks, keeping us nice and dry ... at this stage at least.

Initially, the descent was steep and in tussock grass which gave way to an extensive fine scree field along steep slopes with only a boot-width track to follow. The track crumbled below our feet; any slip would see us in the white water of the creek below us and that's when we came across the first, of what was to be many, creek crossings. We were able to boulder hop across, the next there were no dry rocks to step onto, so our boots were soaked, but our socks held out.



Over the next few hours we had eight more crossings and, with each one, the creek grew wider and deeper; a rush of white water. By the time we reached the bush-line, only 1km from Speargrass Hut, we were soaked to the skin and the river crossings were thigh deep, an hour later they would have been impassable and we would have been bivvying in a safe area for the night.

The gradient was easier, which was a relief for our aching muscles from the previous two days, though the trail markers, on more than one occasion, disappeared, which slowed us down while we systematically searched for the next one. On this stretch, a few times, the trail ran down to and parallel to the creek and the ground was under water. The track, when clear of the creek, was boggy and, in places, there was knee-deep mud which at one point gave way to thigh deep mud, which brought Cathy to a stop and I had to help pull her free; a second pole being relieved of it's 'stop' as we pulled it out.

The sighting of a bridge over Speargrass Creek lifted our spirits, as we knew we weren't far from the hut. Not even DoC expected people to cross the creek at this point.

The track junction was a lake, but we were beyond caring, as we'd already made our minds up to overnight at the hut and exit the following morning. So we splashed though the ankle deep water, took the left fork at the bridge and climbing up the tree roots out of the creek bed. Minutes later we broke out of the bush and walked on new duct boards through the grassland to the hut.

We quickly changed out of our wet clothes, got the fire lit and set the water on for a brew.



Speargrass Hut is in a lovely location with extensive views of the valley and surrounding grasslands. We filled in the hut book and read that the two ladies we met at Bushline Hut on Friday evening had walked in on Saturday for the night as they intended and wrote that the walk to the hut was “more difficult” than they expected. A day walker on the way to Angelus hut had said the last 45 minutes to the carpark were a continuous uphill and quite demoralising. That night we had the hut to ourselves and felt extra special with our candlelit dinner for two.

#### Day 4

We were slow getting out of the hut at 8:30am. However, we were in excellent spirits and completely dry as we set off into the rain. The route signs said it should take 3 hours to walk out, and we broke the route into three sections: the first, downhill to the creek; the second, walk parallel to the creek; and, the third, leave the creek and climb to the carpark at the finish. The walk very much reminded us of the Tararuas; birch wood with roots and mud (though not as much mud as we see in the Tararuas).

At this point the Speargrass Creek Track was mostly well-maintained and contoured around before crossing feeders into the creek, which meant we rarely gave away height and burned unnecessary energy. Another similarity was the slips which we crossed along the second section. Some of these were a challenge, as there were no markers to show where to go. After a little exploring, we were soon heading in the right direction.



One last reminder of home was a fantail which joined us for quite a while as it flitted from tree to tree. While we expected the worse, the third section was easy when compared to what we are used to, so it was a delight to break out of the trees at the car park at 11:50am. We then had a short walk downhill to the next car park where Paddys Track started and where we'd left our car.

What were the take-a-ways from this trip? It was an enjoyable tramp where we'd experienced all the seasons and faced challenging walking conditions. We were absolutely right to make the decision to stop at Speargrass Hut for the afternoon and night. Would we do this tramp again? Not in winter and in snow/rain with gale force winds. Since there were only two of us, each of us carrying a PLB would make sense, as I carried the only one we had between the two of us. If I'd fallen on day 2 or taken a plunge in the creek on day 3, my having the PLB would have been a moot point. So we'll invest in a second PLB for Cathy.

*Nick*

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**Editor's Note:** Many thanks to those contributors whose trip reports have not been included this month, due to shortage of space. They will be included in the next edition,

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.