



# Hills & Valleys

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE HUTT VALLEY TRAMPING CLUB (Inc)



Tongariro summit and best ice axe competition.

Photo: Dave Hanley



Please submit your **October 2023** H&V articles to the editor by **29<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

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



**6 September : HVTC Photo Competition 2023**

Geoff Marshall - trumper, biker, photographer and tutor - will review the entries in the HVTC Photo Competition 2023, offering his comments then awarding first and second places, plus commendations, in the many categories of subject available. Club trophies will be presented and winning entries in FMC categories will be forwarded into the FMC Photo Competition 2023.

**13 September : Andrew and Catharina Fisher – Tramping Friends.**

I have gone back through my photos and selected a variety of shots mostly of people who we have tramped with over the years going back to 1979. So if you want to see a much younger Chris West with his shirt off come along. Should be a fun reminisce, a bit of a laugh and a chance to remember some who are no longer with us.

**20 September : Ann Hayman and Neil Parker – Cavalcade Bike Trip**

The Otago Goldfield Cavalcade is well known as a multi day horse trek in central Otago. For five years the Cavalcade includes a biking option. Ann and Neil will talk, show pictures and a video from the March 2023 week long bike Cavalcade starting from Millers flat, exploring the Otago Goldfields cycle trail area and ascending 4500m to Lake Onslow and along the Knobby range before descending to Roxburgh.

**27 September : Marina Skinner – Early tramping photo share**

To help mark our centenary year, please bring along a few photos from your earlier days of tramping to share (see below for details on how to submit your photos).



**4 October : Julie Lewis – Treasures, Artifacts, Memorabilia and Mystery Objects**

You are invited bring along any artifacts or memorabilia, not necessarily related to tramping, with an interesting history, which you would be happy to share with us. Or, alternatively, any item you may have acquired, the origins of which may be a mystery to you. Hopefully someone may be able to tell us what it is, and a little bit about it.

**FORTHCOMING TRIPS**

**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.

**SEPTEMBER**

Sat or Sun date tba		To be advised	Ann Hayman	021 880 097
9 – 10	T1 D1	Day walk needed		
11 – 15	Ski	Club week 4	Sheldon Bruce	027 451 0415
16 – 17	T1			
Sun 17	D1	Hemi Matenga loop	Jo & Tony	021 0499 146

**Daylight Saving starts 2.00 am Sunday 24 September. Clocks go forward 1 hour.**

23 – 24	T1 D1	Tutuwai Hut Day walk needed	Mel Stoneham	027 361 3423
25 – 29	Ski	School holidays week 1	Sheldon Bruce	027 451 0415
30 – 01	T1 D1	Day walk needed		
<b>OCTOBER</b>				
02 – 09	Ski	School holidays week 2	Kate Brownsword	027 562 0177
02 – 06	T1 D1	Day walk needed		

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### RUAPEHU LODGE

The mountain continues to look fantastic. It is turning into a seriously good season. No excuses now. You need to get up there. We're getting through the storm cycle and should be running into some fantastic spring weather. Our custodian Laura is in residence and looking forward to your company. There's plenty of space in the lodge in the next few weeks and here are some of the upcoming highlights:

#### **11 September to 15 September – Club Week 4**

The last official club week before the school holidays. Feel free to book with me (Ruapehubookings@hvtc.org.nz) at any stage.

#### **25 September to 29 September – School Holiday Week 1**

This trip is already looking pretty full. If you're thinking of coming up for the school holidays the second week may be a better option.

#### **2 October to 9 October – School Holiday Week 2**

Kate Brownsword (02 7562 0177) is leading this trip and expecting a big turnout so get your names down.

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.

*Sheldon Bruce*

*Ruapehu Lodge Booking Officer*

### CLUB NIGHT 27 SEPTEMBER – EARLY PHOTO SHARE

To help mark our centenary year, please bring along a few photos from your earlier days of tramping to share at club night on 27 September.

You can email them to [marinaskinner@xtra.co.nz](mailto:marinaskinner@xtra.co.nz) before 27 September or bring them on a USB on the night.

You might also like to bring along tramping gear that holds significant memories – your first billy or a special pair of boots, for example.

It doesn't matter how recent or how historic the photos or gear are. If they have a special association, please bring them to share with other club members.

*Marina*

## CENTENARY CONGRATULATIONS

Kaumatua Tramping Club Wellington (KTC) has sent us congratulations and warm wishes for our 100th anniversary.

KTC President Karen Aitcheson wrote: "HVTC has contributed hugely to tramping, mountaineering, snow sports and biking over 100 years and we are appreciative of your fostering a close relationship with our club, allowing us the use of your club rooms for meetings and recently entering an informal agreement between our two clubs whereby we welcome guests from HVTC on our tramps and KTC guests are welcomed on yours.

"We are also very appreciative of your recent offer to display our Life Member honours board in your club rooms."

*Marina*

## NEW GROUP TO ORGANISE CLUB TRIPS

Nine club members have agreed to be part of a new group to organise our club trips.

The group was formed from a meeting at the clubrooms on Sunday 27 August to review how we organise trips.

The 15 people at the meeting discussed what works well with how we currently organise trips and what they'd like to see in future.

Trip group members are Chris McMillan, Heather Eskdale, Jackie West, Andrew Robinson, Dave Hanley, Debbie Labbett, Doreen Courtenay, Derek Richardson and Murray McMillan.

Please support them as they take on new roles and work on developing an interesting range of trips for us all.

*Marina*

## A SLICE OF HISTORY : POSSIBLY THE FIRST HVTC MERCHANT RIDGE SNOWMAN OF 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY



## PODCAST ABOUT FORMER HVTC MEMBER

[https://www.rnz.co.nz/audio/player?audio\\_id=2018904345](https://www.rnz.co.nz/audio/player?audio_id=2018904345)

Here is a message received from current HVTC member Paul Clark concerning a podcast about former club member Dr John Featherstone.

“The above podcast ([https://www.rnz.co.nz/audio/player?audio\\_id=2018904345](https://www.rnz.co.nz/audio/player?audio_id=2018904345)) is about a former club member, Dr John Featherstone who now lives in Pacifica California. Members from the late sixties through to 1980 will remember him. He emigrated to the USA to take up a senior research position at the Eastman Dental Centre in Rochester New York. He was a club president for a couple of years in the seventies. John and I remain good friends and I was skiing with him in Squaw Valley in January this year. The above podcast was on the Radio NZ Sunday morning program 27 August. I just thought some club members might like to hear it.”

*Paul Clark*

## TRIP REPORTS

### KING'S BIRTHDAY WEEKEND KAWEKAS 3 -5 June

Andrew Robinson

Over the years the Kawekas have proven to be a good destination for long weekend winter trips. The weather tends to be better in the Kawekas than elsewhere in the lower half of the North Island and there are lots of tracks and huts so it's easy to change plans if the weather isn't the best. After seven previous Queen's birthday weekend trips to the Kawekas it was time for a King's birthday weekend trip. Options were limited this year because several roads in the area were still closed from the Hawke's Bay floods. The initial plan was to repeat a trip I did in 2012 but that had an unbridged river crossing near the start so I revised it to start from the Mackintosh carpark rather than the Lakes carpark. That opened up the possibility of walking for a couple of hours in to Mackintosh hut on Friday night, far more preferable than tenting at a frigid campsite. Doc and Phaedra, the two takers for my trip, could leave Friday afternoon which would get us to the start of the track early enough to do the walk on Friday night.

We left Lower Hutt at 10 to 2 and the holiday traffic was fine with the only delay being roadworks before Masterton. We had an early tea at Dannevirke.

Once we were onto the Napier-Taihape Road we started to see the damage the floods had caused to the road with increasingly significant washouts. Just a few minutes from our turnoff was an illuminated sign warning of hazardous conditions which had me wondering if we'd actually get to where we were going, but the sections where washouts had reduced the road to a single lane were well marked and not a problem. We turned off onto a forestry road which hadn't really been affected by the floods apart from a few potholes. There was one car in the car park when we arrived which made it likely we'd have company at the hut. We started walking at 8 o'clock on a track I'd done multiple times before but not in the dark.

There were no track markers and very early on we lost the track at a windfall but picked it up again easily enough with gps. We had half an hour steep descent to the bridge then started on a sidle. I wasn't surprised to come across some tape across the track about where I knew there was a long-standing slip. Just around the corner a large chunk of the hillside had been washed out. We retraced our steps and Phaedra found some tape marking a diversion. It was a bit hard to follow in the dark but we managed to keep to it. After the diversion



*Macintosh Hut*

the steep climb up the other side started. When we had a stop about half way up it was fairly windy and the wind was cold. Shortly after our break the climb eased off and three quarters of an hour later we reached Mackintosh hut. For about the fourth time for me we found Mackintosh hut was unexpectedly empty, very welcome at 10 o'clock at night.

Saturday morning it was fine, but looking at the clouds racing across the sky Phaedra verbalised what I'd been wondering – shall we take full packs or day packs to Studholme Saddle hut? Day packs seemed the sensible option so just after 9 o'clock we set off up Mackintosh spur. There is some beech forest near the hut but after that the trees are predominantly wilding pines. They did protect us from the wind but obscured most views we otherwise would have had. We did manage to find a small sheltered spot with a patch of sun and a bit of a view for a short morning tea. We got to the top of the spur two and a half hours after leaving the hut. A few metres from the top it was relatively sheltered but out in the open it was blowing a gale. We would have had about three quarters of an hour exposed to the wind if we'd carried on to Studholme Saddle next hut so it didn't take much to decide upon retreat. Before descending Phaedra and I looked at different weather forecasts, both of which indicated significant amounts of rain expected on Monday. On the descent we stopped for lunch at the spot we'd stopped at for morning tea but there was no sun this time so it was a short stop. We arrived back at the hut at two o'clock to find three young women there. The hut has eight bunks so there were enough bunks for everyone. At 3 o'clock Doc and I set out to remove the few wilding pines we could see in the marsh in front of the hut. It was encouraging that there were fewer pines than when I had last visited a couple of years ago. By the time we'd had enough of that a couple of hunters had turned up. That evening while Doc, Phaedra and I cooked inside the hut the others cooked outside in the cold, in deference to us oldies I think.

Sunday the weather was fine, with little wind. We had decided to finish a day early to avoid the impending rain. We then had a choice of a walk without packs before walking out the way we'd come in or taking a different and longer route out. Sensibly we opted for the former. The stroll was on the easy part of a track I'd done in 2019 with Keith Thomas. It is little used and in danger of being overwhelmed by wilding pines. We did an hour each way on that then had lunch back at the hut.



Tutaekuri River

A few minutes after leaving the hut we met a couple of guys out for a day walk judging by the limited amount of gear they had. On the descent we met a couple heading in for at least one night. I thought they were a bit game given the forecast. An hour after leaving the hut we got down to the diversion and could see the reason for it. The long-standing slip hadn't slipped much since I last saw it in daylight a couple of years ago but the side stream upstream from it was massively scoured out. After the diversion I suggested we try our luck following the river rather than the track down to the bridge.

There was some hesitation because of the likelihood of getting wet feet, but I guess because we were on our way out the collective thought was why not? We did have to cross the river a few times and it was deep enough to fill our boots but it wasn't as cold as I'd expected. It was an interesting route, particularly with a geology lesson from Phaedra. It wasn't a difficult route and I'd probably do it again at some point. From the bridge it was a half hour climb back to the carpark. There were I think five other vehicles at the carpark.

We got back to Lower Hutt around 8:30, good going from Hawke's Bay and even better was to have the following day free to do the washing and tidying up. I don't know what the weather actually did in Hawke's Bay on the Monday but I think we all had no regrets about coming home a day early.

Trip members: Phaedra Upton, Doc Watson, Andrew Robinson (leader)

*Andrew*

# ZEKES HUT 1-2 July

Andrew Robinson

I had just two takers, Chris Keen and Tom Halliburton, for my trip to Zekes hut which was fine because it is only a four-bunk hut. We left Lower Hutt 8 o'clock Saturday morning and our first stop was a short one in Bulls. Our next stop was for an early lunch at the Brown Sugar Café in Taihape. The food was delicious, and I got a proper cup of tea which not many cafés do. The start of the track through Hihitahi Forest Sanctuary is ten minutes' drive north of Taihape and we set off at 12 o'clock. After crossing a paddock then a swing bridge we squelched our way through a swamp, steering clear of the cattle which were probably Cows rather than Bulls. Once we were off the farmland we splashed and slithered our way along a muddy track for a while until we reached

a stream. We then skidded our way up a steep and slippery slope for a while. The going was much better when the gradient eased. About where we'd finished most of the climbing there was a bit of snow on the ground and further on there was a brief snow flurry. The track by that stage was in good condition and continued that way for a couple of kilometres, with snow covering the track in the open patches. There were no footprints ahead of us which was reassuring. We'd left our tents in the car because the car park was empty, but I thought later we should have taken some sort of shelter in case one of us got injured and we had to stop. The weather was passable, but we would have quickly got quite cold if we'd had to stop for long. When we



Hihitahi

reached the highest point Hihitahi there was a flat open area covered in snow. In fine weather there would probably be a good view. The track continued on the flat for about another kilometre until the descent to Zekes hut. The track was about as steep as the earlier steep ascent after the stream. The descent took about twenty minutes then it about another twenty minutes to the hut which we reached at ten to three. It's a tidy little hut built in 2007 and according to an item in the March 2022 Wilderness magazine at the hut it is frequented mostly by hunters and hut baggers. The hut has a wood burner which I'm sure would heat the place nicely but because of the dearth of firewood we decided to do without a fire, even though it was 3° C when we reached the hut. We'd all brought cheese and crackers for pre-dinner nibbles so we didn't have tea until about seven o'clock.

On the return journey on Sunday the ascent was quicker than the descent had been, in part because the snow had largely been washed away by rain. When we got to Hihitahi twenty minutes later all the snow was gone but there was still no view. We had about an hour of mostly flat stuff before we got to the steep descent. I was not as nimble-footed as the other two and probably took as long descending it as I had ascending it. From the stream at the bottom of the descent it was half an hour back to the car. We'd had intermittent rain all morning but thankfully it wasn't raining as we changed into dry gear at the car.

We stopped at Brown Sugar Café for lunch again and got equally good food and service. The drive home was uneventful. All up we spent more time in the car than on the track but it had been a worthwhile weekend.

*Andrew*



# A PERFECT DAY FOR A WALK

## Day trip to Turakirae Head, Sunday 30 July

Maarten Vink

As Sunday approached, it became clear that the weather was going to treat us to a calm, sunny winter's day. The list of people for the walk grew rapidly. In the end there were 36 of us. We gathered together at the carpark at the end of Coast Road, next to the Orongorongo River. The long-promised toilet there had finally been built and opened so a number of our group made use of it.

We headed over the bridge and along the Wild Coast cycle route. A few puddles reminded us of recent rain, but the trail was mostly dry. The few cyclists along the route were well outnumbered by people on foot. After a while we left the cycle route and walked over an old beach (uplifted by an earthquake many years ago). We enjoyed the rugged coastal scenery of large rocky outcrops and areas of flax and scrub. Across Cook Strait the snowy peaks of the Kaikoura Mountains stood out.

Closer to Turakirae Head we started to see seals. More and more of them, including mothers with pups. Many photographs were taken. There were some remains of dead seals, including a head displaying a formidable array of large, pointy teeth. A reminder, if one was needed, not to get too close to these wild animals. It was good to see that everyone kept a sensible distance away from the seals.

Our lunch spot was an open rocky area a bit inland from the seals. To get there we had to work our way through a maze of boulders, flax and scrub. The ground was rather uneven. It was slow progress for some, but we all made it safely through in the end. After lunch it was a leisurely walk back to the carpark.

Those on the walk were; Anja (leader), Maarten, Jo-Ann, Joanne, Bruce, Chriselda, Murray, Poonam, Vijay, Manoj, Bernice, Bob, Rob, Heather, Sandra, Michael, Marasigan, Jeannette, Debbie, Beverly, Marina, Claire, Louise, Nicholas, Jude, Leanne, Mel, Pauline, Vera, Emma, Patrick, Liz, David, Jim, Doreen and Doc.

(Apologies for any spelling errors, Maarten)



*Maarten*

*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.*