

Welcome to the Hutt Valley Tramping Club

So you think you might like to go tramping with us? A good choice! There are a few other things we do too, like skiing, mountaineering, rock climbing, mountain biking, caving and kayaking.

The club was formed in 1923 and has about two hundred and sixty members. We welcome anyone who is keen or just curious – you don't have to be a member to come tramping with us. We meet every Wednesday in our clubrooms in the Birch Street Reserve, Waterloo (just west of the railway station), at 7.45 pm. Come a bit earlier if you want to chat first. If you want to discuss any of the following information, ask the host on duty or trip leader.

The club goes tramping most weekends. We generally leave (from the clubrooms) on Friday night at six o'clock, and return on Sunday night. Our favourite areas in the Tararua and Ruahine Ranges are places you only get a glimpse of from the highways. They might involve a bit of a drive sometimes, but it's worth it just to get away from what ever it is you do during the week.

We run trips to more distant places on long weekends. At Christmas there are trips in remote and exciting parts of the South Island.

We also run shorter trips. There is a day trip most Sundays, and, if you are lucky enough to be free midweek, there are trips once a month on a Tuesday.

If you have small children, we run family trips during the summer. If you have bigger children, we are happy to see them on club trips as long as they bring a parent with them. If you are sixteen or older you can join in your own right.

Will it be hard?

That depends! There is only one thing that gets you fit for tramping and that's tramping! But if you walk regularly, or run or cycle a bit, or go to the gym, you should be able to handle at least a Grade One weekend trip. Even if you are fit already, just remember that carrying a pack and walking on bush tracks (and as often as not, off them) is a bit different from running

along the Hutt riverbank. We recommend that you try a Sunday trip or a Grade One trip first, just to gauge your fitness level.

Tramping trips are graded. The following is just a guide to what you might expect on an ordinary weekend. Times and distances vary according to the weather and the capabilities of the party. Our leaders try to make sure that everyone has a safe and enjoyable time: please listen to their advice and let them know if you are having problems.

Grade One: Relaxed pace with plenty of rest stops. All terrain types may be encountered and not always on track. Duration varies depending on time and conditions, but is usually for no more than 6 hours per day. Start here if you are a beginner.

Grade Two: Steady walking pace with regular snack and drink breaks. Terrain may vary from flat river valleys to trips above the bushline. Some off-track travel may be involved. Duration ca. 6-8 hours per day, depending on conditions.

Grade Three: Brisk pace with fewer drink or snack breaks. Terrain covered is similar to that described under Grade 2 but the distance covered is further. More than 8 hours travel per day.

We plan our trips six months in advance and publish a trip syllabus card that gives you a schedule of what's happening when. There will generally be three trips advertised for one weekend, all based at the same road-end. To sign up for a trip, put your name, address and telephone number on the clipboard provided in the clubroom. Get the trip leaders' help to choose the trip that will be the right one for you.

Okay, so what do you need to bring?

There is a comprehensive gear list on the trip card. You should be able to borrow things from a friendly club member if you haven't got them and are not sure whether you want to spend the money. Your trip leader will help. A good (waterproof) parka, clothes that stay warm when they're wet (wool or polypropylene), and strong footwear are the important things, plus a good pack to carry it all in, of course.

We bring individual breakfasts and lunches, but cook communally (either on a white spirit stove or a fire) on Saturday night. This meal is almost invariably pasta,

but the things that go with the pasta (cheese, vegetables, sauce etc.) are never the same two weekends in a row!

The club provides billies, first aid-kits and tents. The tents are rugged but basic. Bring a bit of plastic to lie on, as well as your foam mat, as some of the tents don't have floors. Sometimes a party will use a Department of Conservation hut. We helped build and are still partially responsible for Waitewaewae Hut (near Otaki Forks) and Powell Hut (under Mt Holdsworth). On presentation of their membership card, Club members get to stay in these huts free of charge.

Transport

The club owns a 2001 Ford Transit, 12 seater van. Private transport is used for ski trips to Ruapehu. Fares for tramping trips average around \$15 - \$20 for the weekend, depending on how far we travel. (There is a \$4 surcharge per trip for non-members). Once your name is on the list you are liable for the fare.

So what about skiing then?

The club built its first hut at Whakapapa in 1949. This building offered spartan comfort compared to the present modern lodge which resulted from expansion in 1974. The lodge is about a half-an-hour walk up from the Top of the Bruce, and is handy to the bottom of the second chair lift. As on-the-slope accommodation it is excellent value for money.

The lodge sleeps thirty-two, mostly in one large bunkroom. We welcome its use by large parties from non-member groups. The lodge is run by the Ruapehu committee, who organise bookings and coordinate each weekend's skiing. They are also responsible for maintenance of our home in the snows, and will be pleased to see you on a work-party or two.

Ask for a Ruapehu information sheet for more details.

Instruction courses

Navigation, fire-lighting, setting up camp, cooking with a white spirit stove, crossing rivers: you can learn quite a lot just by watching what happens on a tramping trip, but there is nothing like having a go yourself. Our bushcraft courses emphasise giving you hands-on practice in small groups under the eye of someone who can give a few pointers if need be. These courses will give you the basic skills you need to enjoy yourself ON the beaten track, and you will also gain the beginnings of the confidence that means you can leave the beaten track behind.

In the winter we run alpine instruction courses. If you fancy yourself in ice-axe and crampons (which are available from the gear room) rather than a ski-suit, then these weekends are an excellent way to learn how to get around safely on snow and ice. Even if you don't think you'll ever get up Mount Cook or Annapurna, if you can use an ice-axe then you will be able to cope with more adventurous tramping trips in alpine country.

Search and rescue

Trampers try to be self-rescuing! The national Search and Rescue organisation is coordinated by the police, but relies on tramping clubs for the leg-power in many actual searches. The club has a biannual training exercise of its own, and regularly participates, with other clubs, in the local police training programme.

Our own branch of the SAR system is in operation every weekend; a SAR contact (an experienced club member) will have a list of the members of all parties that are away, and their intended routes. If a party is late arriving back those at home should ring a SAR contact if they are concerned. SAR contacts are listed on the trip syllabus card.

How do I join the club?

We recommend that you to do *ca. two trips* with the club before you apply for membership ("a try before you buy ba- sis"). But it is also possible to join immediately if you wish. Just fill in the form (ask the host on club nights for one), and get someone you have met on a trip to sign it for you. Then give the form to

the membership officer or another committee member with your cheque. Your membership will be processed at the next General Committee meeting (2nd Tuesday in the month).

You will receive a copy of our *Hills and Valleys* newsletter each month, a copy of the trip card as it appears, and our annual publication *Hutt Valley Tramping*. You also receive a Federated Mountain Club card which offers substantial savings on things such as your annual DoC Hut Pass.

Are you tempted?

Trampers of all levels of fitness like throwing themselves at challenges be they in the bush, on rock, or on bikes. This might mean a grovel in a stream as an alternative to a well-used track, an epic adventure in the snow, or simply a climb up a hill behind the city to blow away the cobwebs. We like to explore the kinds of places that others might never get around to discovering. We depend on each other for encouragement, safety, and for friendship.

The club is an incorporated society: it is administered by various officers and committees (listed on the trip card) who are elected at our AGM (usually held in July). Alongside the administrative formalities (kept to a minimum) you will also discover a few informal traditions (e.g. Mid-winter solstice on Somes Island, quiz nights, gourmet nights, etc). The best way to get to know and meet club members is to partake in our activities. We look forward to meeting you somewhere in NZ's great outdoors...

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