



THE WAIKATO TRAMPER

Official Bulletin of

WAIKATO TRAMPING CLUB (INC)

PO Box 685, Hamilton 3240 • www.wtc.org.nz

May 2023



Pulling the chain photo by Allan Wickens

WAIKATO HUT

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Tongariro National Park



www.wtc.org.nz



Snowcraft practice
by Rizal Razak

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WAIKATO TRAMPING CLUB

P. O. Box 685, Hamilton 3240 • www.wtc.org.nz

Free to members

Member of: Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand Inc
Ruapehu Mountain Clubs Association

BULLETIN No 849

May 2023

General Committee

(Contact details listed below)

President: Judith Bogle 027 3810283
Secretary: Dorothy Cawdron 027 7424222
Treasurer: Guy Domett 027 2483008
Members: John McArthur (VP Tramp) Stephen Prendergast (VP Ski)
Stephen Phillips Allan Wickens Lois Rowell Mike Barker
Selwyn June 0274 978151

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**Tramping Subcommittee**

**Tramping email:** [waikatotrampingclub@gmail.com](mailto:waikatotrampingclub@gmail.com)

**Chairperson:** John McArthur [mcArthur@outlook.co.nz](mailto:mcArthur@outlook.co.nz) 021 2889641  
**Club Captain:** Les Warren 027 8644937  
**Membership:** Jocelyn Widmer 022 4165922  
**Member:** Selwyn June 027 4978151  
Rupert Craggs 027 6811926  
**Web & Facebook:** Rizal Razak 021 2676566  
**Transport:** Allan Wickens 027 9509546  
**Social convenor:** Jacqui Dick 021 1375201

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Ski Subcommittee

Ski email: waikatoski@gmail.com

Chairperson: Stephen Prendergast 021 466247
Ski VP: Stephen Phillips 021 1031436
Bookings: Stephen Prendergast 021 466247
Finance officer: Michael Barker 021 2463500
Members: Ashley Hoskin 027 4909545

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**Bulletin:** Lesley Kuggeleijn 027 4942414  
**Editor & Club Librarian:** Dianne June [djune@xtra.co.nz](mailto:djune@xtra.co.nz) 07 8433066  
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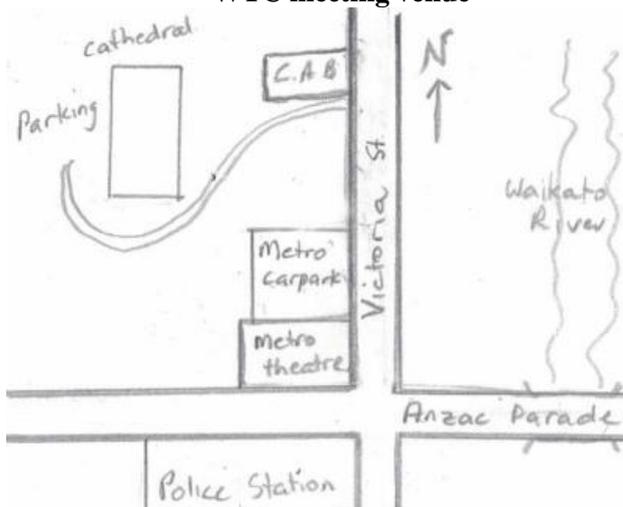
Waikato Tramping Club account: 03 1555 0091625 02 (include the trip no.)

Club night, Wednesday 7th June

We're going to have another attempt at getting former Club captain Allan Wickens, to talk about his recent adventures. He spent a few weeks travelling and doing some interesting walks. He will regale us with stories and photos, including how he was there when UK prime minister (Liz) was sworn in and left the day she resigned! He was also in Edinburgh when the Queen passed away.

The meeting will be at the new venue in Victoria street- see sketch below, and starts at 7.30pm

WTC meeting venue



Social activity: How would you like to sit back over a potluck dinner, sip your favoured tippie, enjoy the company of your tramping colleagues AND watch a movie? Came along to the club's movie night! There will be a 'half-time' interval for dessert and coffee too. The action will take place on **May 12th** at the Haines' place, starting at 6.30pm, at 11 Alison St, Hamilton. BYO your tippie, meat to BBQ, a dish to share & \$20. The function is open to all members and friends. For any more details contact Andrea & Graham on 0274822830.

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR 2023

	12 May		FILM NIGHT	Graham Haines
3063	13/14 May	E	Waitawheta Hut	Allan Wickens
3064	20/21 May	M	Tongariro crossing	Les Warren
3065	28 May	M	Kohatupiko plug	Selwyn June
3066	3-5 June	M/F	Waitotara Forest	Judith Bogle
	7 Jun		CLUB NIGHT	

3067	11 June	E/M	Hillary-Hope Reserve	Les Warren
3068	17/18 June	M & M/F	Crosbies Hut	Allan Wickens/ David Totman
3069	25 June	E/M	Lindeman track	Lois Rowell
3070	2 July	E/M	Auckland Coast to coast	Club captain
	5 July		CLUB NIGHT	
3071	8/9 July	M/F	Ruapehu traverse	Mike Peck
3072	14-16 July		tba	Les Warren
3073	22/23 July	M	Snowcraft I	Mike Peck
3074	30 July	M	Karioi	Lily Lye

Don't let a lack of equipment deter you from coming on a trip. Talk to the trip leader - who may be able to assist with lending or sharing gear.

TIME and FITNESS GUIDELINES

E = Easy. Up to 4 hours per day, pace slower than E/M.

E/M = Easy/Medium. Up to 5-6 hours/day, pace slower than M.

M = Medium. Up to 6-7 hours/day, at standard walking pace.

M/F = Medium/Fit. Up to 7-8 hours/day, pace faster than M.

F = Fit. Over 8 hours/day, pace faster than M/F.

Note that factors such as party size, fitness, weather, terrain and leadership will influence actual times, so the above are estimates only.

Bookings and Cancellations: no later than the WEDNESDAY before the trip.

Any person withdrawing after this day without good reason will be charged the full cost of the trip.

Departure Point: Trips depart from the river end of London Street. Cars can be parked, facing the road, in the car park on the right at the end of the cul de sac. If in doubt contact your trip leader.

Weekend Trips: leave on Friday nights at 7pm sharp unless otherwise stated.

Day Trips: leave Sunday mornings at 8am sharp.

If someone is concerned because a trip is late back, contact:

1) Club Captain; 2) President; 3) committee member.

Minimum equipment required:

Day Trips: A thermal layer (polypropylene, polyester etc or wool), an insulating layer of fleece (polartec etc) or wool and a water/wind-proof parka outer shell. Shorts or longjohns/over-trousers in cool or wet weather. Torch and sunscreen. Boots or strong shoes. Lunch, snacks and water bottle. First aid kit.

Weekend Trips: The above, plus pack with plastic liner bag, sleeping bag, tent, sleeping mat, cooker, billy, plate or bowl, spoon, food, spare dry clothes for evening, towel, toilet gear, light camp shoes. A water purifier can be useful. Plus, in extreme weather or country: additional warm top, over-trousers or woollen/

fleece trousers, warm outdoor mittens or gloves, over-mitts, warm hat or balaclava, sunglasses. Ice axe and crampons for snow.

Trip Descriptions

Remember: Click 'SUBMIT' to confirm your booking on the website

Trip 3063 **Waitawheta Hut in Kaimai Ranges** **13/14 May**

Staying overnight at this popular and often fully booked out hut, is a feature of this weekend trip. WTC have booked 10 places out of 26 bunks (all adult price). We will be taking the easy option of the Waitawheta Tramway route, following an old tramway (1898-1928) through the spectacular Waitawheta Gorge. This almost fully flat track takes 3-4 hours one way. Once at the hut, we will explore the surrounding area during the afternoon. If there is anyone keen to lead a fitter, more extensive route to the hut please contact the club captain.

The plan is to leave our normal departure site at London Street at 8.00 am on Saturday, returning late afternoon on Sunday.

Leaders: Allan Wickens – allanwickens@hotmail.com (**easier** option)

Transport: Senior member \$35-40 Senior non-member: member rate + \$10

Accommodation: Hut fee \$20.00 (senior price only).

Trip 3064 **Tongariro Crossing** **20/21 May**

We will travel to the Waikato Club Hut early Friday evening of 19th May. Saturday is the planned day for the Crossing, weather permitting. As the DoC estimated time for the Crossing is between 7 and 8hrs, we will need an early start from Mangatepopo carpark. It will be getting darker earlier and the weather most likely will be getting cooler, hence an early start. We will stay at the Waikato Hut on Saturday 20th and have a sleep in on the Sunday before considering another shorter walk (*Ed comment: perhaps the walk across (yes! across) the lagoon at Owhango*) and heading home.

Obviously, the weather will determine if it is safe to do the Crossing.

About the track – This challenging trip begins at 1120m, climbs the Mangatepopo valley to the saddle between Mt Tongariro and Mt Ngauruhoe, through South Crater before climbing again to Red Crater, the highest point on the crossing at 1868m. You will then descend a steep, loose volcanic rock (scree) slope to the vivid Emerald Lakes. After passing Blue Lake, the track sidles around the northern slope of Tongariro, then descends on a long zigzag track down to the road end at 760m. More details will come out closer to the time. We will need a very kind driver who can drop us off and pick us up. We already have one full van for this trip but are keen to take another van. We still will accept registrations for at least nine (9) further people to warrant taking a second van.

Leader: Les Warren

Ph: 027 8644937

Grade: F

Email: warrenlb2017@outlook.com

Transport: Senior member \$50-55

Senior non-member: member rate + \$10

Hut fees: Senior member: \$50.

Trip 3065**Kohatupiko plug****28 May**

The Kohatupiko peak is an old volcanic dome, seen as a prominent peak on Mt Pirongia when looking at the south-eastern slopes of the mountain. Our route is up the Hihikiwi Track to the junction with the old Te Tahī Track. We will follow this track to the south-east to the peak of Te Akeohikopiro (869m) and then navigate off track through the bush towards Kohatupiko 'crooked rock' (785m). To get on to the top of the peak we will go around to the south side - the other slopes are steep rock faces. A grand view it to be had from the top. Return is by the same route. Walking distance: 9 km. Estimated walking time: 5½ to 6 hours. It helps that we start on the Hihikiwi Track at an altitude of 500m!

Leader: Selwyn June**Ph:** 8433066 or 027 4978151**Grade:** M**Transport:** Senior member \$20-35

Senior non-member: member rate + \$10

Trip 3066**Waitotara forest train track****3-5 June**

The track is in the Waitotara Forest, between Wanganui and Taranaki. We will need to travel down on Friday, stay somewhere on the way and then travel to the beginning of the track on the Saturday morning.

We will do the track backwards from Puniwhakau to Tuamatatahi end. The huts only hold 6-8 people so some of us will need to take tents. On the first night we will stay at Puteore hut, second night Trains hut (will be a couple of 8 and 9 hr days). Then we come out on Monday from Trains hut which is approximately 4hrs, this part of the track has a couple of swing bridges and a pack horse track. There has been some tree fall around Puteore Hut so it may be a bit slower going in this area. From Puniwhakau to Trains hut there is beech forest, with kamahi and tawa. It is also the home to the North Island Brown Kiwi and Whio duck. Also be warned there will be streams to cross, so you will be able to use some of your river training this weekend.

Leader: Judith Bogle**Ph:** 027 3810283**Grade:** M/F**Transport:** Senior member \$45-75

Senior non-member: member rate + \$10

Trip 3067**Hillary- Hope Reserve****11 June**

This trip has replaced the original trip to the Wharekirauponga in the Coromandel as this track is closed.

The terrain for today's walk is very hilly but there are several loop tracks to consider of between 1.5 to 3hrs. We can do a 3hr loop or add another loop to make it a longer day. The area is a mix of bush and farmland. We will travel over the Raglan deviation and travel up Old Mountain Road to a carpark. There is a toilet close to the carpark.

Leader: Les Warren**Ph:** 027 8644937**Grade:** E/M**Transport:** Senior member \$20-35

Senior non-member: member rate + \$10

Trip 3068**Crosbies Hut****17/18 June**

This modern hut (built 2010) has proven very popular and is often heavily booked out on weekends. This hut is the third in a trilogy of huts where WTC have booked 10 places (Trip 3058 Pahautea on Pirongia in April and Trip 3063 Waitawheta in

we'll go peak bagging instead, returning to the club hut on Saturday. Sunday gives us a few options which will be discussed Saturday night but with the aim of leaving the mountain around 3pm to return back to Hamilton.

Leader: Mike Peck **Ph:** 021 369 256 **Grade:** M/F
Transport: Senior member \$50-55 Senior non-member: member rate + \$10
Hut fees: \$50

Trip 3072 **Where to ???** **14-16 July**

This trip is yet to have a couple of options confirmed so watch this space.

Leader: Les Warren **Ph:** 027 8644937 **Grade:** tba
Transport: Senior member \$ tba Senior non-member: member rate + \$10

Trip 3073 **Snowcraft I** **22/23 July**

This is one of the most popular trips we run each year and for good reason. The Basic Snowcraft Course is aimed at introducing you to the alpine environment in which you will learn valuable skills to safely enjoy it.

You must attend a gear assessment evening prior to the weekend (date tba). The basics of snowcraft will be taught on Saturday, including how to use crampons and ice axes, self-arrest, how to walk on icy slopes, navigation tips, basic avalanche awareness plus what to wear etc. This instruction will be done in areas close to the Club hut, but we will spend most of the day out, weather permitting. A full assessment will be done by the instructors on those learning the skills that are taught. If anyone is having difficulty, extra training will be given the next day if necessary. If the weather is too bad on Saturday, we will do instruction in our cosy lounge, as far as is practicable.

On Saturday evening there will be a sumptuous meal in our large dining area. Sunday's instruction depends on how much we managed to cover on Saturday. If all went well, then we have the chance to try out our new-found skills by walking up as far as the NZ Alpine Club Hut, the highest inhabited building on the mountain. We plan on being out for most of the day, returning to the Club hut by about 2.00 pm at the latest to clean up and get back to Hamilton at a reasonable time.

Given reasonable weather, by the end of the weekend you will understand the principles behind the rather complex concept of "snowcraft". It takes a lot of practice and a genuine understanding of what is real and perceived danger when entering the snow and ice heights of Ruapehu. Our leaders have been doing this sort of thing for years and yet they never fail to be fascinated by the world of ice and snow. On satisfying our instructors that you have completed this course with competence, you may attend our follow-up Snowcraft 2 which will be held over the weekend of 12-13 August.

The departure time will be early evening on Friday 21 July. Most will go in the vans from either London Street, or another designated departure point but we can pick up others enroute (main highways only via Te Awamutu and Te Kuiti please).

We will be based in our large and comfortable hut Friday-Saturday nights. All meals will be provided.

A full list of gear will be provided upon registration (get in early as you may miss out). Crampons and ice axes can be hired from the Club or Bivouac. Mike, who is Manager of Bivouac in Hamilton, is the principal instructor and he can answer any queries you may have pre-course.

Please note: To participate in this course you must be a member of the Waikato Tramping Club. Application details are on the Club website. Spaces for this course are limited and a deposit will be required to confirm your booking.

Leaders: Allan Wickens (Course Co-Ordinator) **Ph:** 027 9509546 **Grade: M**
Mike Peck (Principal Instructor) **Ph:** 021 369 256

Email *allanwickens@hotmail.com*

Cost: Approximately \$200 – includes transport, food, and hut fees

Overland Track & Walls of Jerusalem, Tasmania

When: September 2023 (possible dates 14 - 27 Sept. 23, 14 Days)

Departure & Finish: Launceston, Tasmania (People can choose to travel earlier or stay longer)

Trip Grade: Fit (need to carry all our gear/food for days on the track)

Draft Itinerary (will need more fine-tuning):

Day 1 – Fly Auckland to Launceston via Melbourne. Nite in Launceston.

Day 2 – Shuttle to Cradle Mountain (near start of track) to stay the night before so we can get an early start the next day.

Day 3 to Day 8 – Overland Track. Day 8 includes shuttle to Hobart.

Day 9 – Hobart

Day 10 – Shuttle to start of Walls of Jerusalem leg. May include a short walk.

Day 11 to Day 13 – Exploring the Walls of Jerusalem area.

Day 14 – Shuttle to Launceston (end of trip).

Some important notes to help make your decision when registering:

- Huts cannot be pre-booked and no bunk is guaranteed;
- Mattresses are not provided;
- Must take a tent (as bunk may not be available or may choose to tent)
- Camping only on Walls of Jerusalem section (a more wilderness trip)

There is much more information to share with you which I will send out when you register / express interest. The itinerary will probably change a wee bit once we make key bookings flights, the Track, Shuttle etc. This further information will include some estimated, costs. Ideally, I will need confirmed numbers by 15 June 2023. When registering, if the dates are not quite suitable, I am happy to consider some slight changes. September has been chosen as it fits in with my work situation.

Organiser: Les Warren **Email:** *warrenlb2017@outlook.com* **Ph:** 027 8644937

Mid-week Walks & Tramps

We are continuing with the current format, having a walk or tramp on the 2nd Tuesday and 4th Wednesday of the month. The activities have proven to be as varied as the group is and the communication via the Mid-week W & T s Group page on WhatsApp is working well. If you would like to be part of this communication, please download WhatsApp on your phone & text your request to Isla on 021 209 6539.

Editorial

What an interesting AGM we have just had. And none of it due to any contentious issue. The only committee change was that Lois has stepped down from her position as membership officer and Jocelyn has taken over. We wish her well. It felt like everyone was on the same page, understood the issues being discussed, and had some reasonable suggestions to put forward.

The discussions about costs for the bulletin took up more time than the financial status of the club (due to some good oversight by treasurer – thank you Guy).

John explained how the proposal was arrived at and asked for comment.

I took a few minutes to explain how the bulletin is compiled and what changes I could make to reduce the cost but the appeal of colour pictures, as well as the lure of a bulletin that appeals to advertisers and newcomers seems to have resulted in the continuation of them in preference to printed copies having fewer or only black & white pictures. (What began as a 1year trial of having coloured pictures has hit the right spot but also our pocket). Wordy trip reports that took up lots of space were also commented upon. The instigation of this change was mooted to start with the next financial year but one person suggested that, as it is not a constitutional matter, it could be started sooner. The general committee will make this decision.

I thank you for the support for the work I do to bring you a useful, interesting, and informative bulletin each month. It is a task I enjoy doing.

Dianne June

Presidential Blog

Since Gabrielle it has been a trying time to find places to lead tramps, but after the trip planning meeting great ideas still came forth. So, keep an eye on the calendar of trips coming up.

Kauaeranga Valley is closed till the end of May for maintenance. (*Ed comment: The campsite is open but Pinnacles hut and most tracks are closed*). Keep an eye out on trips because it looks like we maybe Island hopping.

Coming up too, is snowcraft, but this year there will be an emphasis on competency and we will be looking at making sure our own members come first to ensure their skill level is up to standard.

I would like to thank the leaders who are our backbone to ensuring that we have trips every weekend. These people regularly put their hand up but I think it is time that others should also put their hands up to help.

If we lose anyone of these leaders it will be a great loss and there will be a glaring hole in what can be available for trips. I would urge you to consider becoming a trip leader.

Judith Bogle

...from the Ski Club...

As we approach May I want to let you know what we've been doing to get the Lodge ready for the upcoming ski season.

Over 2 weekends in February and April the woodshed was restocked, the Lodge got a deep clean, a lot of exterior painting was completed and a start was made repainting around windows and in the dining area. Recently a smaller group continued with the internal work including some maintenance to deal with this season's forecast of more normal snow fall-I am looking forward to that.

A big thank you to everyone who came along to lend a hand and helped us. There's still some painting internally underway and this will be done as we can get people up to the Lodge.

Although there's still some uncertainty about who will run the 2023 season it's still more likely that the current management have sufficient momentum and support to feel more confident that this will happen.

In light of this, the committee recently decided to send out the 2023 subscription renewals. We have invested several thousand dollars getting the Lodge ready for this season and hope you will support our efforts by paying the subscription as soon as you are able to. With a small membership we rely on these payments ahead of any income from your stays at the Lodge. These will be sent in early May.

We also ask you to encourage your friends and family to join up, as well. Some of the best times are had on the mountain and it's a very affordable way to spend some time in a beautiful location. You are our best advert and we want you to share that experience with your friends too.

I expect that in the next fortnight season passes will go on sale as well. Why?

RAL, the operator is in voluntary administration. They have gone bust. PWC are running the ship under the RAL logo but MBIE are directing the way ahead at present. It's pretty clear that the holdup has been about MBIE wanting to keep a sale & transfer of the ski fields as simple as possible. There are 4 parties who have submitted proposals. However, even if a preferred bidder is identified, the work involved in getting the transfer complete will take months rather than weeks.

The best thing that RAL can do now is stay head down and bum up getting the season set up. I recently spoke to the CEO (benefits of going to working parties at the Lodge) who said they were all ready to go with Season passes, just waiting for signoff from MBIE. They need to get out of the way for this to happen. Fingers crossed.

I also want to remind you that the Ruapehu Skiers Stakeholder Association (RSSA) has been incorporated and is leading the crowdfunding effort to have the ski fields continue to operate as a not for profit (technically a not for dividend) - the model that recycles all profits back into ski field upgrades and equipment. You can join up on <https://www.savemtruapehu.org.nz/> . There are also active Facebook groups for interested parties.

Winter hut fees kick in soon. Watch this space next month for the details.

Looking forward to seeing you at the Lodge in the near future.

Stephen Prendergast

Trip Reports

Trip 3045

Mt. Ruapehu on Ohakune side

4-6 Feb

This trip, over Waitangi weekend, was originally meant to be to the Coromandel peninsula. However, due to great deluge that hit Auckland over the previous weekend we were forced to look elsewhere. The flooding caused major damage, some deaths and severe disruption to roads in the greater Auckland-Coromandel area. The obvious place to spend a long weekend was Tongariro National Park, using the Ohakune (southern) side as a base for day walks.

On Saturday, we drove to Ohakune township and continued up to the ski-field at the top of the mountain road. After walking for about 2 hours, we reached a high point of about 2100 metres, near the start of the Skyline Ridge that leads up to the true summit of Mount Ruapehu (Tahurangi -2797m). Allan had hoped to get the group to the base of the Mangaehuehu Glacier for a good look at what is normally a spectacular sight of vivid white ice at this time of year. Alas, this was not to be, as descending cloud blocked our view.



Lovely mountain walk

photo by Allan Wickens

The group then descended back down to the carpark and on the way down the mountain road we stopped off to check out the picturesque Mangawhero Falls. Satisfied with the day's efforts, we retired to our accommodation which is part of the original Ohakune pub.

The following day, in better weather, we made our way back up the Turoa Road and did a return walk to Mangaturuturu Hut. This tramp was done in brilliant weather. Some of the group found parts of the "Cascades" quite daunting, especially going down them in the morning. With plenty of black algae on the rocky surface, care had to be taken to avoid slips. By late morning however, the sun had made the walk back up them more "user-friendly" and we were back to our van by noon. After lunch in Ohakune, we then drove to the Tangiwai Railway Disaster memorial site. Some in the group were young, and at first admitted they did not appreciate the full extent this tragedy imposed on New Zealand on the night of Christmas Eve 1953. However, after seeing the excellent display and walking beside the river, everyone fully understood what had happened. On Sunday night we drove to Whakapapa and stayed at the Club hut.

On Monday, the weather gods dictated that we could not do any planned walks at Whakapapa, so the decision was made to have a leisurely drive back to Hamilton via Western Lake Taupo, doing a couple of short walks on the way. The first was the Pukawa to Omari Walk, which took about three quarters of an hour, through nice bush with occasional lake views. After lunch in Kuratau, we drove north and then east along Karangahape Road, where we started our walk down to Te Hapua Bay. This lovely walk of about an hour and a half return was made more pleasant when some of the group had a bathe in the lake and the hot walk down was much nicer on the return part. Although "boaties" frequent this beautiful bay, we had the place to ourselves. We returned to Hamilton following a short stop at Whakamaru on the way.

Those in the group were : Les W (leader), Allan W (co-leader and scribe), Erin M, Fiona A, Fiona G, Jocelyn W, Lois R, Max G, Jim S and Lydia W.

Trip 3046

Mount William Walkway

12 Feb

A small group of 3, led by Allan, made their way to the trailhead east of Pokeno at McMillan Road. The short (one hour/2.4 km up) walk starts through farmland and regenerating native bush, before emerging onto steepish open grassland and the trig on Mount William (373m). There were many people doing this popular walk, which offers expansive views of the southern Auckland area and northern Waikato. Distant haze limited the view, but we were pleased it was fine as bad weather threatened earlier. Allan left the other two and retraced his steps, while the other two carried on the walk, north and down across more farmland to Puketutu Road. After a small, inconsequential navigation error (heading towards Puketutu trig), Ramesh and Samantha were put right by fellow walkers, and they reached an awaiting Allan at the trailhead, a further 2 kms past the top of Mount William.



Those who enjoyed this half-day out, were Allan Wickens (leader, photographer, and scribe), Ramesh S and Samantha D.

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**Last excerpts from the Lewis Pass trip...**

**19-25 Feb**

Windy Point walk: Ferry crossings were playing havoc with any organising Les had in mind so patience was the name of the game for the first day in this beautiful area. Meeting place was Boyle village. This is a well-appointed education camp and we enjoyed the comfortable surroundings while waiting for the last 3 to arrive. It was not to be on the first day. So, on day 2 we waited for them to arrive and they made it by lunchtime but were still willing to go for an afternoon walk. Windy point it was to be. This walk begins a bit further along the road towards Hanmer Springs.

A short walk and down a gentle hill got us to a very sturdy swing bridge.



Then it was a gentle climb uphill to get onto a terrace. Interesting geology in this area. Another gentle rise saw us admiring some beautiful orchids either side of the pathway and gentians. A lovely warm day in the forest.

Over the Hope river  
Photos by Dianne June

Of course we had to stop and have a chat with the robins who popped their beaks in looking for food. After about 1.5 hours Les said we had gone far enough so a snack break was called in a sunny glade. And back we traipsed through the open forest, feeling quite relaxed. The 3 ladies were probably feeling a bit more jaded after their eventful journey across the strait the night before.

The evening was very sociable chatting with a couple of other Te Araroa walkers.

Scribe Dianne June



Nina Hut Walk Since we were staying at the deer stalkers Palmer lodge, which was a little way down from the start of the Nina valley walk, it made this an ideal day walk for us. Particularly as rain was forecast later in the day. The track is cared for by a local school group who monitor trap lines in the area to keep those nasty predators away. This is a very pretty walk and rated easy. After crossing the swing bridge across the Lewis river the track winds through the forest later joining the Nina River. The rest of the track to Nina Hut has more tree roots, bits of mud and tree fall but nothing too taxing. Visits from the South island robin were enjoyed at times, and we helped them try and find food in the leaf litter. There was a small accent up to the hut which overlooks the Nina river, but as we reached the hut the heavens opened, so there wasn't much to see. We hung our gear outside and tucked ourselves into the empty hut and enjoyed lunch and hot drinks. It rained the whole way back so three of us, Barb, Helen and myself with a plb, fast walked out (with permission of 'the boss' aka Les). Thoughts of the Maruia Hot pools were lingering in our mind as we traipsed through the rain. With the knowledge that there was no shower at the DSA Palmer lodge the decision was firmly made. In the car we went,

down the road to the Maruia hot pools and spa. After some negotiating with the somewhat very unfriendly receptionist we enjoyed the black algae water of the hot pools and a hot shower before joining the rest of the group at the lodge. We did feel some element of guilt. Just little bit..... maybe.... Scribe: Cathy Dickson

### **Trip 3051**

### **Canterbury Glaciers**

**26 Feb-3 Mar**

A small party of three of us gathered in Tekapo YHA on the Sunday ready to stroll up the Godley River bright and early the following morning. After all it is only 18km and pretty flat. We made contact with the station holder of Lilybank who gave us good info on the washout of the 4WD track and where we could cross the Godley high up the valley to get to the Eade Memorial Hut. And so we set off and the Leader's words of how easy it might be were soon lost. On and on we went, with "just round that next shingle slide" repeated a number of times. "Really!!". It was with some relief for all of us when the tiny little Red Stag Hut was found tucked into the side of a shingle slide - 24 km from start. Luckily there was a bath set up near the hut so we cleaned out the slimy stuff and refilled it - for a nice cold bath, with a fantastic view up the valley.

This might have been fine for seasoned trampers, but, hello, it's Lily's first overnight / long tramp. We elected to rest the next day and do short exploratory trips to find the best way across the Godley - as it was higher than expected, and being milk, difficult to feel your footing.

Day three was more fun. With day packs we set off across the wide braided river flats and picked a crossing of the Godley that was broad and safe. From there up to the Eade Memorial Hut was normal Canterbury rock hopping and we found the hut was cosy but smaller inside than the Red Stag, only three bunks. From there we climbed up and over a lump to get to the Classen glacier lake outfall in the hope we could get to a moraine wall that would allow good views up valley to the Classen and other glaciers.

Not so. The Classen river was running swift and milky and after trying several places, decided against the risk. We had some play time rolling rocks down moraine banks before crossing back to Red Stag.

As we knew we couldn't get onto the viewing spots we planned to, day four was walk out day, with 24km of rocky valley stretching ahead of us. Beautiful valley, beautiful weather but Tekapo was a long way off. After a lunch time swim in the clear waters of a side stream we were plodding along, watching the farm's trees get very very slowly closer when we heard a tractor coming up behind us. The station owner had been working upstream and caught up with us. Wow - an offer of a lift was music to our ears, and off we set back to the farm, then through the farm, and across the Macaulay river to be deposited at our car.... ! fantastic!

As we were out a day early - we used our free day to climb Mt John and walk back around the lake - another great day.

Well - that was a wonderful five days and great walking with Lily and Peter, and still some unfinished business up the top of the valley. Great big thank you to Johnny at Lilybank for his kindness. Scribe and pretend leader, John.  
Thanks Lily and Pete - a great tramp!!

### **Trip 3057**

### **Taranaki walks**

**6-10 April**

Early Friday morning we met at London Street in fine weather to set off toward Te Awamutu and Otorohanga to collect Jim and Beatrix en route. Traffic was almost non-existent and we made quiet progress to Piopio where we stopped for a comfort break. There looked to be several short-ish walks in the Piopio area, which could make for a good exploration another time.

Progress was good, with the exception of roadworks on SH3, following damage on the Awakino River. We stopped again at Mokau for coffee and second breakfast. The infrastructure in place for the Mount Messenger roadworks looked pretty spectacular and we were fortunate to get an update from one of the Traffic Supervisors.

We arrived in good time on the North Egmont access road where there was traffic control as the carpark at the Visitor Centre was full. Fortunately, Les had printed out the Camphouse booking, and we were waved through. Nicola joined us at The Camphouse and tramped with us for the afternoon before leaving for an evening at the cinema. Keys collected, we moved into our Camphouse dormitory room, checked out the kitchen and put food in the fridges. After some refreshment we walked up the steps of the Razorback track to the Lookout above the Ambury Memorial, and then around the Ngatoro Loop Track. Not quite 5km in total, but enough to shake the journey out of the system.

Appetisers appeared, tempting everyone to start an evening that included chess and card games.

A 9am departure from the Camphouse on Saturday was not too brutal, and definitely an advantage to staying on the Maunga for the weekend. Weather was dry with a brisk cold wind on the North side. Eight of us set out up the Translator Tower road, Allan stayed back to meet us with the van at the Stratford Plateau and then at Dawson Falls. The wind was cold and we left fully covered, except for Ross who seems to always burn hot! I found the constant climb of the Translator Road quite challenging and was quickly at the rear and last to arrive at the Alpine Club hut. Ying had picked up a pair of gloves on the track just below the Alpine Hut - to the joy of the man who had dropped them, Ross had the energy to run the gloves down the hill to return them to him! There were so many people on the tracks and we could see many different coloured dots moving across the scree slopes up to the summit. It seemed a very cold and windy day to be going up to the summit, but in the evening we were told that the wind had not been so bracing on the Summit track. After morning tea, surrounded by children searching for Easter Eggs, we continued clockwise around the Maunga toward the ski field and Stratford Plateau. We were passed by trampers travelling anti-clockwise, wearing far less than most

of us. We were soon taking layers off as we got warmer and warmer without the cold wind. We reached the Manganui ski field, and as Allan had walked in to find us, we had lunch at the shelter, surrounded by families out for a picnic.

After lunch we headed down the Manganui Gorge Track, further around to the Wilkies Pools Loop Track, down to the DoC Visitor Centre at Dawson Falls and then to Dawson Falls itself. Just over 12km walked, Allan drove us into Stratford where we admired the Glockenspiel clock tower at 3pm and had a coffee. The evening at the Camphouse was as before, appetisers, chess, cards and dinner before bed.

Sunday the weather was dry but the cloud level was much lower, we didn't see the summit all day. Having held the group back on the ascent on Saturday, and with the Trip Leader's agreement, I set out early up Razorback to the Holly Hut track, then down Kokowai to the Ram track, finishing up the Veronica Loop and finally back down the Razorback. A 14km loop of varied terrain. The Razorback and Holly tracks are very well maintained and clearly well used. The Kokowai is fully accessible but not as well maintained. A couple of significant treefall have been moved or cleared so that you can navigate them safely. Birdsong was more noticeable than the North and East tracks we covered on Saturday. Starting up the Ram track toward the Visitor Centre there is an immediate, significant descent, which is disappointing as your head knows that the Visitor Centre is uphill and so any downhill means even more uphill! Allan joined the group at the bottom of the Kokowai track and returned to the Camphouse in the van with some weary trampers. The remainder of the group returned just before the rain started at about 3pm.

Sunday evening brought more appetisers, chess, cards and dinner before bed.

During the night the forecast heavy rainfall arrived and beat loudly on the Camphouse corrugated iron structure. Many of us were grateful not to be tenting.

Monday dawned grey and wet, we had definitely had the best of the weather for our plans, we wondered if this was the end of the Summer Summit attempts. With first breakfast over, we packed the van and drove in to New Plymouth for a choice of activities; a boardwalk stroll, coffee or second breakfast. Allan convinced most of us to visit the exhibition of NZ flora oil paintings and we enjoyed an additional 30 minutes before heading home via Mokau, Otorohanga and Te Awamutu.

Thanks to all for a great weekend, especially to Les for the organisation, Allan for driving, Jim, Ross, Judith, Ying, Beatrix, Sarah and Amanda (scribe).

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Trip 3058

Pahautea Hut on Mt Pirongia

15-16 April

This hut-based tramp is the first in a trilogy of pre-booked huts (Waitawheta in May and Crosbies in June to follow). Due to the pressure on getting spaces in huts on a Saturday night, ten beds were booked several months in advance. On Saturday morning, 8 of the group gathered at Grey Road, intent on doing the tramp up to the hut via Ruapane Trig and the Tirohanga Track. Allan whimsically suggested the

walk up would take somewhere between 3-4 hours. How wrong he proved to be (for this group anyway).

Taking ample stops and negotiating around several large fallen trees (the legacy of Cyclone Gabrielle which devastated much of the North Island between 6-11 Feb),



A keen team

photo by Allan Wickens,

the group reached Ruapane where the usual crowds gathered. Being such a nice day, it was a popular place to be. However, the number of fellow trampers soon diminished as we made our way up the Tirohanga Track. We finally reached the hut after six and a half hours. So much for Allan's timing! The summit view was expansive and included the Ruapehu-Tongariro massif and the top of Mount Taranaki. Les and Dawn arrived not long after. We were treated to a nice sunset as night fell. The hut was full as predicted. With no heating, some felt the chill, even for this time of year.

During the following day the weather remained fine but a bit too hazy to see beyond the farmland and towns of the Waikato below. Again, Allan had egg on his face when the predicted 5 hours down via the Mahaukura Ridge, returning to our starting point, turned into seven and a half hours. In his defence, Allan said that the tracks seem to be deteriorating every time he goes on Pirongia. In his words, it's a "gnarly and tough little mountain" that anywhere else would be easier given there is only a 750-metre difference between the trail head and summit. One member of the group didn't know the meaning of the word "gnarly", but he soon found out.

Basically, these mountain tracks are “rooty, rocky and muddy”. And you can throw in “steppy” too, as there are so many ups and downs among the gnarly stuff. Overall, not a mountain underestimated when it comes to track times. Having said that, those in the Club who have done the Pirongia part of “Mountain Madness”(3 mountains in one day!) usually take about 4-5 hours return at most. Of the group of 10, three opted to go with Les down the “easier” Tahuanui Track. Despite the arduous nature of this tramp all agreed it was worthwhile. Asked if they’d do it again, one or two were a bit hesitant. Those in the group were:- Allan Ws (leader & scribe), Les W, Prativa S, Julia L, Stephen O”B, Beatrix M, Brian P, Isaac N , Etienne de V, and Dawn A.

And the second report for this trip...

Ah Pirongia, what can I say that hasn’t been said already, you’re a pretty gnarly mountain. The trip was advertised as three hours up and the same number down but Pirongia in all its wisdom decided to extend our stay by quite a few hours both ways... Not that I’m complaining it was a lovely experience. We went up the Ruapane track on Saturday the 15th of April. After we crested on the Ruapane summit Pirongia showed its true colours and seemed to invert physics. I had always been led to believe in the old adage that “what goes up must come down.” I learned quickly on Pirongia that the world is a bit more complex than that. What followed was a series of scrambles to some peak or other followed by a much more rapid decline back into the jungled bushline, ultimately concluding in the climb to the summit. Amazing views of the surrounding landscape followed courtesy of a remarkably clear day with Ruapehu and Tongariro visible in the distance. The climb down to the hut was a leisurely experience and a nice change of pace from the climb up. The hut itself was tidy and bustling with activity as people cooked, sat down to eat and conversed after a good days walk. The next morning was much the same as everyone had breakfast and got ready for the trek down. Allan and Les led separate groups down. As I went down with Allan, I can only speak to my own experience so I will discuss that. We took the Mahaukura track down and I’ve got to say for going downhill it didn’t feel much different from the previous day, uphill once again abounded. Something that became very evident to me on the return journey was the constant change in ecosystems at different altitudes. We started in the goblin forest that is the upper reaches of Pirongia with its moss covered Pāhautea trees before descending into the ferned and root covered middle belt which was often extremely muddy and had seen its fair share of windfall recently. Finally, we descended to the leaf strewn base of Pirongia which was filled with the calls of tui, though I didn’t get to see one. All in all, it was a great trip enjoyed by all.

Those on the trip were: Allan W (Leader), Les W, Julia L, Lisa C, Fiona A, Cathay D, Brian P, Beatrix M, Kerstin P, Stephen O, Prativa S, Etienne D (Scribe).

Looking back is interesting but moving forward is way more fun

Trip 3059B**Turangi walks****22/23 April**

Only 3 people ventured to Turangi which ended up as a casual weekend. We drove down on Friday night and stayed 2 nights at the Tokannu Motel Lodge. The accommodation was lovely and comfortable and priced reasonably.

Unfortunately, we woke to a wet Saturday morning and the rain remained persistent for most of the day. A couple of us did venture out for a look around Tokannu around mid-afternoon, while the other person spent the day catching up on their Netflix series. Probably the weather wasn't suitable to christen their new boots! We went to a local Pub for dinner.

Sunday arrived and the weather was much improved – ended as a lovely fine/warm day. With fine weather, we walked the 15km Tongariro Loop Track. Overall, the track was a very pleasant walk which we did in about 4.5hrs. The weekend ended with a leisurely drive home.

Group was – Les W (leader & scribe), Judith B and Jim S.

Trip 3060**Waitomo to Te Kuiti****25 April**

A nice new van met us at London Street for our Anzac day walk from Waitomo to Te Kuiti (part of Te Araroa trail) - the original tramp had to be postponed due to bad slips on the Mangaokewa Track down to the river. We made our way down to Pirongia where we picked up Jim & Julia & got down to Waitomo village for a quick toilet stop before we were dropped off by Dianne J at Fullerton Road to start our walk. We were met in the first paddock by a very friendly horse who took a liking to Jim & 'Mr Ed' followed Jim very closely behind until we reached a gate. We then made our way over farmland & climbed a hand-formed track. We passed some enormous boulders - these are thought to have come from the Mangakino explosion - some 60kms away, then descended steeply through bush. We could see the damage of the bad weather we had experienced during the Auckland floods & Cyclone Gabrielle with a couple of very big slips which we had to try & navigate around. The track was quite muddy in parts & we had to be careful going downhill. We walked over more farmland & then up into a tunnel of gorse with some parts still quite overgrown, out into more farmland & down onto a farm track to a suspension bridge & walked through Pehitawa Forest (Queen Elizabeth II Trust-covenanted land and one of the finest remaining stands of Kahikatea trees) We came onto more farmland with quite big hills & walked through a big herd of cows with very big cow paddies ! Across a tar-sealed road & hiked up a large hill where we all had lunch sitting by a farm fence and we could see the main road. Once fed & happy we walked across more farmland, up & down a farm race & up more hills and farmland to trig point 263 Yah to that ! We finished the tramp walking down through Brook Park Reserve trails, ending up at Bosco's cafe in Te Kuiti where all of us had nice hot drinks & were all very jealous of Jim's Denheath custard square! We got picked up by Uber van driver Dianne at 5pm & got back to the Tron at 6.15pm. Many thanks for Selwyn leading this trip & it was a good idea to

go into nature on Anzac day. Crew: Selwyn, Julia, Kim, Les, Judith, Jim, Lynley, Annalia, Monique, & scribe Nette

Driver comment: they walked too fast and passed the first intended meeting point before I got there. Being the patient person I am, I waited...& waited...& waited. A few passing ute drivers stopped to check that I wasn't parked on the roadside with a problem. Late in the afternoon, after I had explained to yet another that I was waiting for a group of trampers, he said he had seen a group down at the café. Oh-oh. Time to move. Sure enough, they were my passengers. Both I and the trip leader were concerned that there might have been an injury in each others' party (not helped by a fatal accident which had occurred near the turnoff to Waitomo). Moral of the story- make sure there is so some form of communication between the driver and the party if at all possible, All's well that ends well, fortunately.

From the committee table:

New members: Welcome to Sophie Wakelin, Hadley Craig, and Kim Pickering.

Resignations: Alpana Roy, Allen Geck, Stu Kneebone & Hine Bailey, Mitchell Thomas & Megan Brown, Alana Rowe, Isobel Edwards, Patricia Cuncliffe, Amanda Singh, Brodie Manson, Maree Drury. 2 other members have been struck off.

Membership: The club has 179 tramping members. Those who have not responded to their membership notification will also be struck off.

From Waikato Hut: The telephone and wifi connections have been removed.

Snippets from here and there...

- **Pest control in the Hakarimatas.** Stevenson Aggregates Ltd (Waingaro Quarry) are going to undertake animal pest control of rats and possums into the Hakarimata reserve, covering 106.7ha. The bait types being used will be Cholecalciferol (Feracol) and Diphacinone (Ratabate & Pestoff 50D) in bait bags. The operation will run from 1st July 2023 to 30th June 2024 and warning signs will be at the southern entrance of the main Hakarimata walkway at Firewood Creek, the Christian Youth Camp track entrance at CYC camp, the entrance to rail trail on Waingaro road, and the junction of main ridge track and Waterworks track.
- A new 64-metre bridge is planned for the St James Cycle Trail, near Hanmer Springs, meaning the Great Ride will once again be rideable from Maling Pass to the St James Homestead.
- Message from the DoC team about **booking Great walks:** We are very sorry for the frustrations people have met with when using our booking system recently, and the delay of Great Walk openings until mid-June. The 2023/24 bookings for Great Walks, huts and campsites will now open around mid-June. We will confirm the new opening dates on the DoC website on 31 May.

- The stoat at the centre of a major biosecurity response on predator free Chalky Island/Te Kākahu-O-Tamatea has been caught e Kākahu-O-Tamatea has been predator free since 1999 and is home to a range of threatened species including the endemic Te Kākahu skink, kākāpō, mohua, tīeke, and little spotted kiwi. The stoat, first identified in August 2022, was found dead in a trap in mid-April.
- On behalf of the Pirongia Restoration, I would like to thank all the club members who have assisted on 2 recent days with putting in plants at Lake Whangapae near Huntly, and the Whangamarino wetland. We haven't managed to complete the Lake Whangapae planting yet due to the discovery of a pest weed there but it will be sprayed and we can return in about a months' time. At the Whangamarino site we had too many plants for the prepared area so we are being invited to put them in at another site when a suitable one is identified. This effort is a fundraising project for the Society and will raise approximately \$20,000 so your help provides a major boost to the Societys' conservation efforts. Dianne June
- **Increase to DoC hut fees.** Standard hut fees will increase from \$5 to \$10 and serviced hut fees from \$15 to \$25. This is the first adjustment to hut fees for 15 years and will take effect on 1 July. Paparoa Track Hut prices will increase to a level similar to other popular Great Walks. Different fees for international visitors will also be applied during the summer period, which will be at a rate of 1.5 x the domestic hut fees. DoC say they are operating under increased budget pressures from rising construction and maintenance costs, reduced revenue due to the impacts of COVID-19, and extreme weather events such as Cyclone Gabrielle.
- Taranaki Maunga's Around the Mountain Circuit has been closed until further notice due to severe storm damage and constant erosion. Sections of track have been wiped out in recent weeks.
- The mystery of Manaia's wayward weka has deepened with the capture of a second weka discovered in the South Taranaki township. A second weka, seen by a Manaia farming couple on their farmlot in late March, has been caught. Both birds are being looked after at Brooklands zoo.
- Due to the recent weather conditions, only three wild tara iti / **NZ fairy tern chicks** have fledged, two of which were lost in the cyclone. A further seven chicks were released from the captive rearing trial undertaken in partnership with Auckland Zoo. During the season there were ten breeding females active at tara iti breeding sites, with two of these females breeding for the first time this season. From these females, a total of five chicks hatched in the wild, but only one chick survived through the cyclone and has been seen with the post-breeding flock. A further eight chicks were hatched at Auckland Zoo, then transferred to a captive facility. Of these, seven were subsequently released on an island in the Kaipara Harbour. Rangers and volunteers are still undertaking post-release monitoring of

the site. With fewer than 40 birds, the tara iti is listed as nationally critical and has teetered on the brink of extinction since the 1970s.

Tara iti nest on shell and sand banks just above the high tide mark. This makes them vulnerable to rats, stoats and other predators, disturbance by people, 4WD vehicles and dogs. They are also at risk from stormy weather and very high tides.

✓ It is that time of the year again when we ask all our member clubs to think about **nominating someone for the Executive**. It is a stimulating body to work with, bringing together people from right around NZ and dealing with a wide range of outdoor recreation related issues. Likewise, if you are passionate about outdoor recreation and you support the work we do, if you have time and skills you'd like to contribute – especially in policy, planning, law, or administration – FMC would love to have you on board. Since FMC President Robin McNeill has decided not to lead our organization in the coming year, a new President will also be elected.

,,,*from Forest & Bird*....

➤ An Environment Court decision against a new proposed West Coast coal mine is a massive win for the climate and biodiversity, says Forest & Bird.

The pivotal ruling is against a new opencast coal mine on a pristine mountaintop at Te Kuha near Westport. "This is also a victory for New Zealand's rarest butterfly, the forest ringlet, which has its largest known population at Te Kuha," says Forest & Bird Chief Executive Nicola Toki. (*Ed comment: there are moves afoot by the Pirongia Restoration Society to look after this butterfly on Mt. Pirongia too*).

"The ruling shows that environmental bottom lines are so important – you can't offset or compensate your way out of destroying unique landscapes, plants or animals." The proposed 150-hectare mine site at Te Kuha on the West Coast contains incredibly rare and important ecosystems and is home to numerous plants and animals at risk or threatened with extinction, such as roroa great spotted kiwi, South Island fernbird, geckos, and 17 plant species including native eyebright.

➤ Recently, Bushy Park/Tarapurui near Whanganui has welcomed 60 tiny new residents from Taranaki Maunga, thanks to the generosity of local hapū Puketapu, Pukerangiora and Ngāti Tawhirikura, all of the iwi Te Atiawa. The predator-free sanctuary, a partnership between Forest & Bird, Bushy Park Trust, and members of local iwi Ngaa Rauru Kaitahi (Tamahereroto, Ngāti Pukeko, and Ngāti Maika hapū), is honoured to provide a new home for titipounamu rifleman, an ancient species of wren found only in Aotearoa New Zealand.

➤ Let's not forget about mice. Wildlife will flourish once again if we eradicate possums, mustelids, and rats from Aotearoa, according to Predator Free 2050, the Crown owned company tasked with delivering this ambitious goal. However, there is a furry roadblock in the way – the house mouse (*Mus musculus*). This small rodent can have a devastating impact on New Zealand nature but is not currently on PF2050's species list for eradication. Mice may look harmless, but

they predate on birds' eggs and can kill a seabird chick several times larger than themselves, as a Birdlife team working on the Mouse-free Marion Island project in the sub-Antarctic Indian Ocean discovered in 2015. (*Ed comment: look up Marion Island on the internet*). They documented mice eating the rumps and heads of defenceless seabird chicks while they were still alive. It could take up to four days for chicks on the island to die. House mice are omnivorous and are known to take advantage of whatever food sources become available to them, including invertebrates and lizards. A study on the impact of mice on lizards at Mana Island, published by Donald Newman in 1994, showed that more than 20% of a mouse's diet per month can be made up of native skinks.

When millions of mice were removed from Mana Island during 1989–91, in a project led by Forest & Bird stalwart the late Colin Ryder, populations of McGregor's skink, the common gecko, and the Cook Strait giant wētā "increased significantly".

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*....from the FMC website....*

Our esteemed President has put her hand up to be nominated on to the FMC executive. Judith is one of 15 nominees and there are just 13 positions open so there will be an election. Voting is open only to clubs, not individuals. Other nominees are Tony Walton from Auckland (of the Kaimai Ridgeway Trust) and Jan Finlayson – a past president of FMC

~~~~~  
RAIN

*It rained and rained and rained,
The average fall was well-maintained,
And when the tracks were dimply bogs,
It started raining cats and dogs.
After a drought of half an hour,
We had a most refreshing shower,
-and then most curious thing of all-
a gentle rain began to fall.
Next day but one was fairly dry,
Save for deluge from the sky,
Which wetted the party to the skin,
And then at last, the rain set in. Anonymous*

Source: From a poster in the DoC Visitors' Centre, Haast.



River trails troupe

Photos by Allan Wickens

Ohakune wanderers



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