



THE WAIKATO TRAMPER

Official Bulletin of

WAIKATO TRAMPING CLUB (INC)

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

April 2020



Photo by Kathy Tao

Waterfall on the Kaimais



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Tongariro National Park



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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 816

April 2020

General Committee

(Contact details listed below)

President: Selwyn June **Secretary:** Judith Bogle **Treasurer:** Guy Domett
Members: John McArthur (VP Tramp) Stephen Prendergast (VP Ski)
Stephen Phillips Allan Wickens Russell King Stacey Thompson
Peter Lye
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Tramping Subcommittee

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Ski Subcommittee

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Editor & Club Librarian: Dianne June djune@xtra.co.nz 8433066

Waikato Tramping Club account: 03 1555 0091625 02 (include the trip no.)

There will be no club meetings or activities planned for the period of the Covid 19 lockdown. This is currently planned to end on April 23rd but may also be extended for further periods if necessary. Please keep an eye on the MOH guidelines and club messages.

70th Reunion: This has been postponed until a similar date next year so keep the approximate pencilled in. However, you can still submit your anecdotes, memories and stories. Put your memory caps on and grab a pen and paper.

TRAMPING COMMITTEE NOTICE

Dear Waikato Tramping Club member,

The joint committees of the club have considered the Ministry of Health advice and Prime Minister's advice regarding community moves to limit the onset of the Covid 19 virus and have taken several decisions to limit the opportunity of transmission of the virus to you all.

WTC is postponing the AGM due on the 1st April until either the infection danger passes as per Ministry of Health advice, or we can institute a remote meeting style that would satisfactorily allow our members to participate in the democratic process of the AGM. (Some experiments will be carried out to attempt this). Subsequent meetings such as the Trip Planning meeting of 22nd April, and following club nights are cancelled until further notice.

WTC is cancelling all tramping trips on the programme until further notice. The tramping activities will be reinstated subject to Ministry of Health advice as the danger of virus transmission dissipates. This action is primarily related to eliminating the close contact of people in the transport to and from the tramp. An email from DoC follows identifying the actions they are taking.

For further information, the NZ Ministry of Health advisory notices can be found here:

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>

Stay Healthy and take care of your family, friends and strangers,

John McArthur, VP Tramping

Editorial

What an amazing time we are going through. Who would have thought that one virus could have such far-reaching effects?

It is currently intended that the current lockdown period terminate on April 23rd but it may also be extended so let's not expect that we can get out into the bush from this time either. Just in case we can, I have left the activities calendar in this edition of the bulletin. It will depend on MOH guidelines and restrictions,

and the committee's decisions as to when things start up again. Watch these spaces for the date changes.

I hope you are able to keep yourselves amused at home – perhaps thinking up a wee story or anecdote for the reunion bulletin. Amazing to think that we could actually have the bulletin finished except for the photos a year before the event happens. Assuming of course that we can get together in a years' time too. I'm enjoying being able to have so much time on hand to write my bit without all the other distractions of meetings and commitments I usually have.

Please continue to send your outstanding trip reports to me and I will hold them until we begin tramping again and need to produce another bulletin.

Presidents' Blog

Unprecedented times with all club activities curtailed for the foreseeable future. Before the government's Level 4 Covid-19 lockdown, the club's committees had considered planned club activities and decided to cancel, firstly the 70th Reunion in May, then all meetings and trips, and then to close Waikato Hut. We may not be able to meet, but the bonds within the club remain, hopefully strengthened. It is a time to look after each other, even if it is just keeping in touch via phone and email. I've had several phone calls to see how we got on in the South Island. Our Nelson members immediately offered help in case we were stranded down there. Dave White is keeping us on our toes with his photographic quizzes of tramping locations.

The current intention is to postpone the 70th Reunion celebrations until the same time next year, in May. The preparations won't be wasted. Many great stories have been collected for the reunion booklet; cartoons have been received from Isla Trapski and Bob Brockie. We have heard from a number of far flung past members. About 600 past members have been contacted by email and letter. Good progress was made with electoral roll searches, thanks to Debbie White, Barbara Cahalane, Margaret Cameron, Anatheia Albert, Annemarie and Russell Lamb, Allan and Pamela Hughes and Dianne June.

Let's look forward to the resumption of those trips and activities on our calendar. If you need help or company, let someone know.

~~~~~

### **ACTIVITIES CALENDAR 2020**

|             |  |            |                                      |                                      |
|-------------|--|------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>2885</b> |  | <b>E/M</b> | <b>Rats' tooth</b>                   | <b>Selwyn June</b>                   |
| <b>2886</b> |  | <b>E-F</b> | <b>Egmont</b>                        | <b>Allan Wickens</b>                 |
| <b>2887</b> |  | <b>E/M</b> | <b>Omokoroa</b>                      | <b>Allan &amp; Pamela<br/>Hughes</b> |
|             |  |            | <b>CLUB NIGHT</b>                    | <b>Committee</b>                     |
| <b>2888</b> |  | <b>M/F</b> | <b>Moerangi Track,<br/>Whirinaki</b> | <b>Les Warren</b>                    |

|      |  |     |                    |               |
|------|--|-----|--------------------|---------------|
| 2889 |  | E/M | Waiorongomai       | Allan Wickens |
| 2890 |  | E   | Waikato Hut        | Allan Wickens |
| 2891 |  | M   | Pakihi/ Motu track | Merlyn Warren |
| 2892 |  | E   | Taupiri            | Lesley        |
| 2893 |  | M   | Okioki Hut         | Club captain  |
| 2894 |  | E   | Pukekohe tracks    | Selwyn        |
| 2895 |  | M   | Snowcraft basic    | Allan Wickens |

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.

**DONT FORGET: You can book online from our website too. Please give your landline when making a booking.**

**Departure Point:** Trips depart from the river end of London Street. Cars can be parked, facing the road, in the Rabo Bank 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

### **Trip 2885**

### **Rats' tooth, Onetai road**

We leave from the end of Onetai Rd between Paeroa and Thames, follow a stream up, viewing a cave and waterfall on the way, then climb steeply up a spur and along the ridge to the Rats' tooth which is one of many rocky outcrops on top of the range. There are views out to the Firth of Thames one side and the Maratoto valley on the other. We come back via a slightly different route which takes us through regenerating Kauri forest.

**Leader:** Selwyn June

**Ph:** 8433066

**Grade:** E/M

**Transport:** Senior mem \$25-30

Senior non-mem \$30-35

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### **Trip 2886**

### **Egmont Nat. Park walks**

On Friday night (24th) we will leave London Street and travel to New Plymouth where we will stay the night. Over the next 3 days, the plan is to do as many walks as we can fit in - with weather permitting - in Egmont National Park. There are 3 main entry points for these walks, at North Egmont, Stratford Plateau and Dawson Falls. For those who have yet to do any walking in this beautiful National Park, this will be the opportunity to cover much of what is on offer. For Saturday and Sunday nights we will stay either on the mountain where there is accommodation of different levels, or in the town of Stratford which is closest to Stratford Plateau and Dawson Falls. Because it will be cooler, we will stay in comfortable lodgings. The trip gradings will be from easy to moderate and we will probably have two separate groups that meet up each night. One suggested walk was a 1-day Pouakai Crossing, for the fitter people. On the eastern and south sides we can do parts of the Round-the-Mountain trip. Please note: If a van is used we must pay for 3 days of hire. The cost is lower per person if the van is full. If you want to go we must have all accommodation sorted a week prior to the cut-off enrolment date.

**Leader:** Allan Wickens

**Ph:** 02709546

**Grades:** E-M

**Email:** [allanwickens@hotmail.com](mailto:allanwickens@hotmail.com)

**Transport:** Senior member \$50-75

Senior Non-Member \$55-80

**Accommodation:** tba

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### **Trip 2887**

### **Otanewainuku Forest walk**

This is an enjoyable walk/tramp. Otanewainuku Forest is a great place to see original forest with giant trees and healthy bird life. Large emergent rimu trees are common. Tawa, Kamahi, and Rewarewa form a high canopy and bird species such as robin & bellbird are readily seen and heard. We will walk three short tracks: Rimu Loop Walk; Lookout Track; and Mountain Rd to Whataroa Falls and return.

**Leader:** Allan Hughes

**Ph:** 027 757 7109

**Grades:** E/M

**Email:** [54days@gmail.com](mailto:54days@gmail.com)

**Transport:** Senior member \$20-30

Senior Non-Member \$25-35

**Trip 2888****Moerangi Track**

WE NEED TO TRY AND LEAVE HAMILTON AROUND 4PM. Those registering for this trip, can you please indicate whether this is a problem. From a very recent field visit to check out Okahu Valley Road and track to Skips Hut, I found a small problem – about 1km from the Okahu Valley Road carpark, the road has been washed due to some severe weather several months earlier. This will mean we have an extra 15-20min walk to the carpark from the washout. The stream is easy to cross as long as it remains low. Will also need to bear in mind, that daylight saving will be over, so will be getting darker quicker. The new plan for the weekend is.

Friday: It is at least a 3hr drive to Okahu Valley Road ‘washout’ point, then a 15-20min walk to the carpark. Here we can camp and use toilets.

Saturday: We will walk from the carpark to Moerangi Hut via Skips Hut (1.5hr) and Rogers Hut (3.5hrs from carpark). It is another 3hrs from Rogers Hut to Moerangi Hut. The track is undulating with a gradual climb to Moerangi Hut. This will make it a 7-8hr day. The track is well graded and is also a mountain bike track. Moerangi Hut sleeps 9 people.

Sunday: We walk out to the River Road carpark, which is 5-6hrs. From the Hut, there is a stiff gradual climb to cross over Moerangi Saddle, then it is downhill to the River Road carpark. Then, we have the 3hr drive back to Hamilton. Further details will be sent to those registering closer to the time of departure.

**Leader:** Les Warren

**Ph:** 027 8644937

**Grade:** M/F

**Email:** warrenlb2017@outlook.com

**Transport:** Senior member \$40-60

Senior Non-member \$45-65

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**Trip 2889****Reunion walk in Waiorongomai**

As part of the Waikato Tramping Club 70th anniversary celebrations, we will head back to where it all started. On Sunday (the day after the formal function), the plan is to meet up at Waiorongomai and do a pleasant and easy half day trip or longer (if there are some energetic people). This event can be held regardless of the weather - after all we are all hardy trampers! Unless we have a particularly bad weather forecast that is. We'd like to keep up the excellent safety record. It's not long till we record our 3000th tramp - amazing really.

**Leader:** Allan Wickens (Current Club Captain). We will have several past Club Captains along as well.

**Ph** 027 9509546

**Grade:** E

**Email:** allanwickens@hotmail.com

**Transport:** Senior member \$20-30

Senior Non-member \$25-35

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**Trip 2890****Reunion (Pt 2) at Waikato hut**

Not long after the Club started, interest grew among members who wanted to go further afield, beyond the Waikato. In 1956 a hut was built at Whakapapa, alongside other Club huts. The primary interest was in skiing but walking up to the crater and other walks became a major attraction as well. Some members



have spent many decades renovating and enlarging the hut since it was first opened. Nowadays, we have separate ski and tramping sections, but we often get together at the hut, which is central to our existence as a Club. As we normally do, we will leave Hamilton on Friday night (22nd) and travel to Whakapapa. What we do for the remainder of the weekend is entirely up to the group's wishes. We can have leaders available to run whatever walk you wish. Please let us know what you would like to do so we can make the weekend a great one for you. We will be having a swept-up dinner Saturday night. All meals will be included in the cost.

Please note: Our Hut can only hold 32 people so any overflow will be at a neighbouring Club Hut. If you want to stay at our hut you **MUST** enrol early.

**Leader:** Allan Wickens                      **Bookings:** via the reunion on the website

**Accommodation:** \$30 per night for members.

**Food:** Dinner \$25/person (Saturday night only), Full catering: \$40. BYO drinks/nibbles

**Transport:** Senior member \$40-60                      Senior Non-member \$45-65

Mixture of van and private vehicles. Get in early please - when you register for the Reunion weekend events or separately for the Ruapehu weekend if you cannot make the re-union itself.

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### **Trip 2891                      Pakihi & Motu tracks**

Leave Hamilton Sat morn, 7.30am. Arrive at Bushaven car park, Te Waiti Stream Road for shuttle to Pakihi Rd, approx 12.00pm Tramp along the beautiful Pakihi Stream to the hut. 3hrs.

Sun: make our way to Te Waiti hut, along a mostly unmarked track, but well-travelled. 8hrs

Mon: back out along the Te Waiti Track to Bushaven car park, 2 hrs, drive home

**Leader:** Merlyn Warren

**Ph:** 0275249926

**Grade:** M

**Email:** *mylwarren@gmail.com*

**Transport:** Senior member \$60-90

Senior Non-member \$65-95

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### **Trip 2892                      Taupiri**

**9am start** from London Street. It's about a 40-minute continual climb to the top. And you are rewarded with a great view. It's a loop track, so we will come down another way which is just a steep, but not too difficult. Then off to Huntly's Lake Hakanoa where we will have lunch, and walk around the lake. The Council has done a lot of work in this area & it is a lovely walk.

**Leader:** Lesley Kuggeleijn

**Ph:** 027 4942414

**Grade:** E/M

**Email:** *Lesley.kugg@gmail.com*

**Transport:** Senior member \$20-30

Senior Non-member \$25-35

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### **Trip 2893    Te Whare Okioki & Kaimai ridge track**

This will be a first for the Club, staying a weekend at the newly built Te Whare Okioki (hut). The hut was built in 2019 by the Kaimai Ridgeway Trust hunting and tramping volunteers. It is a 3 hour walk into the hut which makes for a pleasant Saturday. There is scope for walking more of the North-South Track if people want to. Return the same way on Sunday. Please note: This hut must be booked. It holds 12 people and is built to serviced standard. As a rule, we do not block book out an entire hut so some of the group will need to camp out adjacent to the hut.

**Leader:** Club captain                      **Ph:** 0279509546                      **Grade:** M  
**Transport:** Senior member \$40-60                      Senior Non-member \$45-65

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**Trip 2894                      Pukekohe walks**

A gift to the community from the Pukekohe Tramping Club for its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the Five Summits Trail is a loop track linking the five main summits of the town. The trail utilizes off road walking paths and passes through parks and reserves, including the bush reserve of Roosevelt Park. We will see interesting geological features and have good views of the urban area and rural surrounds.

The trail starts and finishes at Pukekohe Train Station. It heads west to Bledisloe Park and thence to the top of Pukekohe Hill, which is 222 metres above sea level, the highest point in the immediate area. We won't do the whole 21 km loop unless you want to run. There's a lot of hard surface walking so bring walking shoes.

**Leader:** Selwyn June                      **Ph:** 8433066 or 0274978151                      **Grade:** E/M  
**Transport:** Senior member \$20-30                      Senior Non-member \$25-35

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... from the ski Club.....

**Waikato Hut, our Lodge, is closed**

On Monday 23/03, the Ski Club committee decided to close Waikato Hut immediately.

Like all New Zealanders we understand the importance of acting together to keep our country safe. We can do this by observing the Ministry of Health guidance announced by the Prime Minister, including avoiding unnecessary travel and undertaking appropriate self-isolation.

We will be closed for the next 4 weeks, and for any extended period identified by the Ministry of Health as we work together to save lives, including some of our members, friends and families. You have heard the Prime Minister say this will not be "life as normal".

We are also thinking of the small communities in the Ruapehu region who have limited healthcare, and are already reeling from the loss of the tourist economy. The last thing they need is an outbreak of this virus, imported from other regions.

This means the Hut will remain closed for the upcoming Easter Weekend. The

following Anzac weekend in April is also likely to be affected.

As we emerge from this event we will undertake a full cleaning and hygiene regime to ensure the Lodge is spic and span for your return. We are planning to open up again as soon as we can, and it is safe to do so. You won't miss that news. It is too soon to predict what shape the ski season will take. All of the clubs and the ski field operator, Ruapehu Alpine Lifts (RAL), want to provide the best possible 2020 season that we can. We can only do this if everyone works together over the next 4 weeks and beyond.

Please keep yourself and your family safe, find ways to stay in shape and look after your community.

If you have any questions please email them to [waiatoski@gmail.com](mailto:waiatoski@gmail.com).

The government's COVID-19 website has information and advice on staying safe .

Stephen Prendergast, Ski Club Team Leader

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## Trip reports

### **Trip 2873                      Wairere Falls-Thompson's Track                      29 Feb/1Mar**

It was a cruisy 8.30 Saturday morning start with a total of seven people heading off from London Street and after a bit of a mechanical incident along the way we limped into the new HUGE Falls carpark.

Packs on, boot laces tied, and it was up we went, being greeted and overtaken by fitness runners and knee-high children on the track. Up and up into the clouds we went and I was happy when we reached the top for the compulsory photo shoot. Along the next part of the tramp was by the river and is very enjoyable and scenic - well worth the climb up. The clouds started to burn off and the bush soon became hot and humid. Lunch was eaten by a beautiful mini waterfall (thanks to a handwritten sign). The water looked very inviting but no time for swimming. The track joins up with the North South track dropping down and crossing over the Hamilton-Tauranga rail tunnel then along to the Aongatete Lodge turn-off.

Being at the back of the group can be more fun like being stung by bees disturbed by the front people and rotten logs giving way all part of the experience After another four plus hours we came across the campsite that Allan had used before. This was just large enough to take all our tents and well laid out with a fire site and seating, The river, now really only a stream, which was a little disappointing after passing some glorious swimming holes, we only had a large bath size soak, but still enjoyable to have a wash after the hot day. It didn't take long to get horizontal with interesting comments next morning on what was heard during the night ranging from Snoring, Moreporks, trains and a Kiwi. Sunday was a steady climb up to and then along the ridge line till we met up with Thompsons track. This part of the tramp I was not looking forward to as I had done it a couple of times years ago but what a change. The top part is a wide well-formed forestry road for trucking out the pine trees but we soon came to

the old track with its huge ruts and mud (even in this dry summer). We met a few four-wheel vehicles driven by males mostly sporting mullet style hairstyles and an “extreme” trail bike rider who told us that the bottom of the track had a digger rebuilding the bottom part of the road. He was right.



The team - who took the picture as all participants are in it?!

After many corners and a few footsore kms we reached farm land and the rest of the group. Leslie had kindly driven from Hamilton to ferry the driver back to the Wairere carpark to collect the now replaced van. Soon it was on to Morrinville for the compulsory ice-cream and then home. Great trip totally enjoyable an expertly planned and lead by Alan W.

### **Things I learnt or observed:**

- Check your boots that they have their innersoles fitted before going tramping
- Although the rental Mercedes van looks flash the seats are very “Germanic”
- If you have borrowed a new tent you should practice erecting it at home
- When being stung by bees/wasps keep moving away before applying first aid
- You can still go tramping in your 80th year
- *Always remember to take anti rash cream or pay the price*

My photos have been uploaded to my Face Book page and also Tramping in the New Zealand page. Participant's were Tameen S, Amanda C, Merlyn W, Debbie & Dave W, Allan W (driver and rear end Charlie) Alan W (leader), Peter A (scribe).

**Trip 2874**

**Leathem Molesworth Circuit**

**1-6 Mar**

Group – The final group was Les Warren (Leader & Scribe) and David Payne.

Pre-Trip Checks & Planning – Walking up stream from Saxton Hut between 01 January and 30 April, requires an Activity Permit. The Permit only allows one direction of travel from Saxton Hut so not to move the stock back down stream. With regular checks of the DoC websites for any impending alerts, prior to leaving Hamilton, we found an alert that Acheron Road was closed due to the fire danger in the area. Damn; this would make our first day's walk to Saxton Hut at least 5hrs or more, than the planned 1hr 30. With Acheron Road starting at Molesworth Cob Cottage and Campsite, we could still drive along the Awatere Valley Road to this point. I opted to drive to Blenheim in my car and left around 6am Friday to reach Wellington in time for my afternoon ferry across to Picton, then onto a Holiday Park at Spring Town, just before Blenheim.

Sat 29 Feb: Time to head to Molesworth Campsite for the night, but, before driving south, had to pick up David from the airport, buy some gas for cooking and fuel up the car, before hitting the road. It is mainly a long dusty 2hr drive on the Awatere Road before reaching our campsite for the night.



In the late-afternoon, Jim, the Molesworth Farm Manager passed thru and we had a chat with him. He confirmed that we could not drive down Acheron Road, and we mention to him our 2 options on getting to the Saxton Hut – one was to follow a 4WD track along the Molesworth River around the back of Mt Chisholm or walk along Acheron Road, which was David's choice, as he thought it would be the shortest and easiest option. Jim said the 4WD track was the shortest route but, they would be mustering in this area tomorrow and



Monday, and he was a little concerned that if we went this way, we would chase the cattle away from where they wanted them.

Sun 01 March: Our first day of tramping arrived. After having breakfast, packing up, I quickly went to the Lookout point to see if I had any new messages from Keith, who we were expecting last night. While away, a farm worker passed thru the Campsite and told David that we could, now drive to the Saxton Bridge to start our tramp as originally had planned. Phew! This was great news; I was not looking forward to a 13km walk along the Road. The drive to the DoC sign just before the bridge took about 40min. I parked the car here and we set off on the 1.5hr walk to Saxton Hut. It was easy going and used 4WD tracks and cattle tracks with some easy river crossings. We had the Hut to ourselves; in fact, all the Huts we stayed at, we were on our own.

Mon 02 March: Today's trek was an 18.5km / 7-9hr trip according to DoC information. We left Saxton Hut at 0725 and headed up stream with our destination Top Gordon Hut via Saxton Saddle (1419m).

We stuck mainly to the right (true left) of the Saxton River using a mixture of 4WD tracks and cattle tracks. After about 1hr 30 you pass Team Hut, which was



on the opposite side of the River that we were walking, so did not bother checking it out. Team Hut is not open to the general public to use. Approximately halfway between Team Hut and the foot of the climb to Saxton Saddle, we encountered a small gorge. After exploring as to whether we could walk thru, we found it was not possible. Had to clamber up a short steep gully to

get around. Between Team Hut and the foot of the climb to Saxton Saddle, I used my TOPO GPS map to ensure we took the correct route up to the Saddle. When not walking thru forest, there are no markers or poles to help you. We easily found the right hill to climb to Saxton Saddle; need to walk thru a gate before sidling up towards the Saddle. The route we took was quite slow as the grass was quite thick most of the way. When we came back, I looked for an easier way down by aiming to a fence line, then following this down to the gate. I found coming back quite a bit easier. We took about 1hr to climb to the Saddle (1419m). After a short rest, we descended thru some easy grass scree to Gordon Stream; there are a few cairns to use. Soon after hitting the Stream, there is a short section to negotiate some slips, which weren't too difficult, then you enter some beech forest and the usual orange markers. After a short time, you come to a side-track which takes you to Top Gordon Hut, which we arrived at 1500; a 7hr 30 day, which was comfortably within the estimated 7-9hrs by DoC.

Tue 03 March: Today's destination was Top Leatham Hut, via Bottom Gordon Hut. Today's walk was thru mostly either beech or pine Forest, and another longish day. We left the Hut at 0755 and arrived at Bottom Gordon Hut at 1025. The walk was mainly downhill thru beech Forest and some open areas. A short while after leaving Top Gordon Hut, the "track" follows Gordon River for about 300-500m, but with very little water in the Stream, one just walks along the riverbed. The exit / entry points are identified by a large orange marker. You walk across a wire bridge to reach Bottom Gordon Hut. Bottom Gordon Hut is the end of the 4WD track into this area from the main road between Blenheim and St Arnaud.

After a short break at Bottom Gordon Hut, we left at 1050 and arrived at Top Leatham Hut at 1425. 80% of this section is thru pine forest, with a small section crossing river flats soon after leaving Bottom Gordon Hut. The pine forest section after crossing Flat Stream and Leatham River, is a gradual ascent when heading south and you follow an old bulldozed track while in the pines. However, there are quite a few fallen trees to crawl under, climb over, or walk around. Today was overcast and our first wet weather. Upon arrival at the hut, after changing into some dry clothes, it was time to light our first fire on the trip.

Wed 04 March: I didn't get much sleep as David was tossing and turning all night and made several toilet visits; so, I was thinking that I would check with him in the morning as to whether he was OK. When we woke, David pre-empted my questions and said he felt he was not fit enough to continue, especially with two big climbs over the next two days. We had a "democratic" discussion on the matter and we, agreed our best option was to return the way we came, as we were familiar with the route and David was comfortable with this. I was a bit disappointed in not completing the circuit, but at the end of the day, as a Leader, it is our responsibility to look after our group and explore options that make the person or group comfortable with the outcome.

So, Wednesday and Thursday we re-traced our steps back to Saxton Hut. The weather was starting to get cooler in the evenings and the mornings.

Fri 06 March: Final day of our trip and an easy 1hr 30 walk back to the car. We drove back to the Molesworth Campsite, changed clothes and had a hot drink before the long drive back to Blenheim. The End.

### **Trip 2875      Dubbo 96 Track and Mount Karangahake      8 Mar**

After driving to Dickey Flat and its' busy camp-site, our group walked for a while downstream on the Waitawheta Pipeline Walk before branching off onto the Dubbo 96 Track - just before the swing- bridge over the river. This track winds for about an hour, with numerous nikau palms among the bush, before becoming a benched track, formed when gold mining activity started in 1895. We soon met Sheryl, our driver who made fast time shuttling the van to the Karangahake Gorge car-park. For about another half an hour there is the occasional view into the Waitawheta River below.

Several old mining shafts enter the hillside on the left side of the track. After reaching the main summit track, we continued for a while before branching left



The view below

Photo by Julie Battley

on the "un-official" summit track that takes a more direct and shorter route to the summit. There are no signs to indicate the track's status as a route. However, for those with GPS it is now marked on the map. Scattered scrub with some sections quite hot in the open, soon gave way to cool bush and after about an hour we reached the main track. A short section of downhill between the transmitter summit and the top was followed by some uphill and the trig at 544 metres. From here, we had an excellent view with the air nice and clear so we could see all of the main features in the distance. This included the Firth of Thames, Coromandel and Waihi areas in particular. After lunch, we carried on

down the main track to the busy area of the gorge. As the cafe was shut, we carried on to Paeroa and a welcome ice-cream before heading back to Hamilton. Those on this lovely day out were Allan Wickens (leader and scribe), Sheryl T who drove, Joanna G, Marianne L, Kathy T, Allen G, Steve M, Veronica W, Mitchel B, Julie B, Margaret C and Noeleen C.

### **Trip 2877**

### **Ruapehu Weekend**

**14/15 Mar**

Day 1: Nine people departed for Mount Ruapehu on Friday night, staying in the Waikato Tramping club's hut for the weekend. On Saturday we began our walk from the hut, heading to Meads Wall. From here we went cross-country heading for the main Tama Lakes track. This involved tramping through multiple valleys before eventually ending up on a plateau as we approached the main Tama Lakes Track. We then followed the main track to the Lower Tama Lake and a few continued on to reach the Upper Tama Lakes. We then walked out to the Chateau, heading past the Taranaki Falls.



#### Day 2:

After a big day yesterday, we set off for a for a walk on the upper slopes of Mt Ruapehu at the rather late time of 10am (after cleaning the hut). Some of us seeking a more

leisurely day opted to stay around the hut or visit the Whakapapa visitor centre. The rest of us rode the Sky Waka gondola to the Knoll Ridge Chalet (2,020 m). From here we split into two parties with one group completing the Skyline Ridge walk. This walk follows the skyline ridge up steep rocky slopes and loose scree for excellent views over Mt Ngauruhoe and Lake Taupo. The second party headed up the mountain to reach the crater rim. We headed up the scree slopes to reach Tukino peak (2720 m). From here we descended down Pinnacle ridge to join the Skyline Ridge track back to the Knoll Ridge Chalet for a return trip on the gondola.

On this trip was Allan W, Alan W, Lesley, Chloe, Jacqui, Veronica, Dorothy, Jacob and Carlin.

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### **Trip 2881**

### **Victoria Forest Park Walks**

**22-23 March**



Registration for this trip began slowly, picked up a bit, Covid 19 stuck its' nosy beak in, the number dropped by a couple and finally, 5 of us met in Reefton on the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

All around us Covid 19 declarations from the government were being proclaimed but we thought we would be OK as we would be in the bush away from most people.

So day 1 began with a 4WD trip into Big River Hut. Dawn checked the local information and this proved to be helpful. We fitted into Crabbie's 4WD vehicle and headed into the bush south of Reefton. There were some tricky sections where Crabbie very cleverly negotiated our way through, albeit with a few bumps, under-body scrapes on the vehicle, and some interesting looking adits we thought we would peek into onto our way home. About halfway we came to a 'lookout' spot with a view up a wide valley before continuing on to the Big River Hut. Also passed 1 cyclist doing the 'Aotearoa' ride from North Cape to Bluff. What a ride!

We parked beside the river and walked up the track to the hut perched high on the knob above us. Wee bit muddy but completed in just a few minutes. The view from the dining table was broad – beech trees, more beech trees, and the poppet from the gold mining site on the other side of the valley.



The poppet head

Photo by Dianne June



A very short crossing of the stream in the vehicle ensured our boots stayed dry and off we went for the short walk to the winding shed at the base of the poppet. The rock makes for a comparatively dry i.e. not muddy, walking surface so progress was quick. Dawn, Crabbie, and Ray diverted for a peak at the Tin Town, while Selwyn and I continued on to the winding shed for the Big River Quartz mine which operated from 1882 to 1942. A further 25 minutes on got us to the 5 minute uphill climb to the poppet and Ray caught us up. What a great view back over the valley to the hut. Great signage explained how the system worked. A few pictures were taken and it was time to go back to the shed where



Looking across to Big River Hut (in the distance on the right)

Photo Dianne June

Dawn and Crabbie were waiting for us.

DoC has spent a lot of money in constructing a suitable shed i.e. cover for the enormous machinery used to transport the cables up to the poppet head and raise and lower the cages inside which went down to a depth of 602m. Interesting facts: during the restoration a truck travelled 6000km up the 'road' to deliver material, use 1.5 sets of tyres, suffered 17 punctures, and needed to replace 5 wing mirrors. The mullion (excavated material) was dumped around the poppet and the quartz trucks transported further via an aerial cableway to the battery 1km away below the Big River hut where one can still see the huge cyanide tanks but not much else with regards to machinery.

Eventually it was a quick walk back to our vehicle so we could get out before the predicted rain made the route too slippery for safe driving. No time to stop and visit the adits along the way but we did stop to peek into a large bucket hanging off a post with the sign 'Snack bar'. I just had to peek inside. What a surprise I was in for. Couldn't stop laughing as I showed the others. From here



Note Dawn's wine glass in the foreground

Photo by Dianne June



The cook and taster

Photo by Dianne June

on it was 'let's get out of here before this light drizzle becomes serious rain'. And we made it to the end of Soldiers road just as it began. Home to our accommodation and time to face reality. Next day the government had issued an advisory that everyone should head home in preparation for a lockdown in 2 days' time. Ray headed off at 8am, Dawn at 9.30, and Selwyn & I at 10am, while Crabbie had a lonely drive back southwards to his home. We managed to make use of our grey hair and got tickets on the 2.30am ferry back to the north island on Wednesday morning. Our waiting time involved cooking our dinner (trampers are always able to self-cater) by cooking our evening meal in the ferry carpark. Very long 36 hours before we were home. What an adventure that wasn't what we had planned but interesting nevertheless.

Highlight – the expert driving by Crabbie up the Big River track.  
Participants: Selwyn (leader) & Dianne J (scribe), Dawn A, Ray H and Colin C (aka Crabbie).

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## **Mid-week Walks & Tramps have been postponed for the meantime**

We are going to trial a new format for these having a walk or tramp on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month. These will be as varied as the group is and we will communicate ideas & the up-coming activity via a Mid-week W & T s Group page on WhatsApp. If you would like to be part of this communication please text your request to John, 021 2889 641 and download WhatsApp on your phone.

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**Waikato Tramping Club  
and  
Waikato Ski Club**

Have a look at the club facebook site for more pictures and comments.  
Have a look for our 70<sup>th</sup> reunion information here too!

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### **From the committee table:**

**New members:** Joanna Greig, Veronica Worters, Karen Rayner, Steve McLean, and welcome back to Paul Quinn (who never got to leave).

**Resignations:** Doug Pagel. Robert de Jong, Angela & Mario Crivelli, Angie An..

**Membership:** We have 181 tramping members. Invoices for annual subscriptions and hut lockers etc have been emailed or posted to all members. Payment were due by 20 February. Please ensure you are paid up soon.

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*Birthdays are good for you. The more you have, the longer you live.*

*Best wishes to all those in the club who are turning 70 this year too.*

## *Snippets from here 'n there*

- **70<sup>th</sup> reunion.** Allan is progressing well with getting his thoughts and stories together. If you have been shoulder-tapped to put pen to paper please get on to it soon. And if you haven't been shoulder-tapped, how about volunteering something? The registration form is now ready to use and will have been available at club night. Many thanks to those who have helped with the electoral roll searching – you have rendered an invaluable service here!
- **70<sup>th</sup> reunion registrations.** Dianne has been receiving lots of feedback from messages sent to past members who are still in contact with other past members. This is making it possible to expand our network and membership list. Well done to you all. Keep it up please. One problem we have is that a very nice person by the name of L Isaac has paid some money for registration but he/she is not known to us. Does anyone know who this person is? Is 'Isaac' perhaps a maiden name? what are the contact details for this person please? If you can assist in identifying this person please contact Dianne [djune@xtra.co.nz](mailto:djune@xtra.co.nz)
- **Accidents.** A couple of accidents occurred during the club's biking/tramping trip in the northern south island over New Year. We regret these happened – especially the very long recuperation time that one of the injuries is requiring. It is hard to distil underlying lessons from the incidents other than that each occurred late in long days of exertion, so tiredness may have contributed. But there is often some risk in the activities we plan, undertake, and enjoy! However, the accidents do underline the value of carrying a good first aid kit in a party – and for each person to carry a whistle in their personal kit. A whistle was a much better device for attracting attention from group members than shouting. So – carry a whistle, along with your map and compass – always!
- **First stage of Taranaki Crossing upgrade underway.** A recent \$13.3m funding boost has enabled the first stage of the Taranaki Crossing between Mangorei Track and Dawson Falls to begin. This will include a new 80m long swing bridge across an avalanche-prone gorge near the Mangonui skifield, expansion of Pouakai Hut, removing rocks and boulder hazards, and installing more boardwalks around wetlands. A team of track builders have started installing slatted wooden rafting on muddy sections from the entrance of the 100-year-old Mangorei Track, near New Plymouth. The track, used by up to 17,000 walkers a year, leads to Pouakai Hut and gives

access to more huts and tracks on the round-the-mountain circuit. Source: Stuff  
12 March

➤ Raetihi restores historic walkway. Ameku Road Walkway is an under-used 'paper' road and farm track. It was once the road up to two farm homesteads which are now disused. Now some Raetihi residents are going restore and reopen it. The Walkway will be an easy track taking about an hour up and an hour back. It was once a metalled, formed road, steep in places. There are splendid views across to the Central Plateau mountains. The Walking Access Commission has granted \$5,700 for a centre line survey. It has also granted \$6,400 for easement costs, signage, a stile and track markers.

➤ Want to help with some community planting days in the Taupo area? On May 2<sup>nd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, June 20<sup>th</sup>, September 20<sup>th</sup>, October 3<sup>rd</sup>. For more information check out the Project Tongariro website: [www.tongariro.org](http://www.tongariro.org)

➤ Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) in the central North Island has been more extensively attacked by the heather beetle (*Lochmea suturalis*) than was estimated last year. The outbreak has been extensive over the last two or three years and the area of heather affected is probably more like 10,000+ ha, compared with the 5,000 ha mentioned in the last issue of the Project Tongariro magazine. This is because it has been difficult to track the extent of the outbreak and new areas are being found where the beetle has spread to. But heather is still threatening about half of Tongariro National Park and the battle against it is far from over. (*Ed comment: the heather beetle was introduced some years ago to combat the spread of the heather*).

➤ The Auckland Tramping club recently spent quite a bit of time in various parts of the South Island. Reports from several of their expeditions noted the presence of (large) rats and mice. Quite a few of their members had damage to their tents, packs, etc as well as loss of provisions in the vermins' successful searches for food. (*Ed comment: Should one not take food to prevent damage to one's gear, or take extra food and leave that out for the pests in the hope they'll leave your supply alone?*)

.....*from the DoC website*.....

✓ The new booking system for DoC huts and campgrounds is going live in Autumn this year, accepting booking dates from 1 July onwards. The existing booking system will only accept bookings for dates up to and including 30 June. You will have the opportunity to create an account in preparation to add bookings for your services to our system. An online application will be available on our website. Latest track info: The **Routeburn** experience is now a return trip which can only be accessed from the Glenorchy side of the track. The track



from Lake Mackenzie hut to the Divide carpark is closed. Anyone entering the Mt Aspiring and Fiordland National Parks need to be vigilant and careful about the conditions. While repairs have been made and the tracks are assessed as safe, bad weather could continue to impact the landscape. On the **Milford track**: partially reopened as a three-day return journey now called the Southern Milford-Mackinnon Experience. Note that the final 7km of the Milford Track is impassable at the northern end.

✓ The south-east coast of the South Island stands out as being the only large coastal region in New Zealand without any marine protected areas... yet.



The proposed network includes: 6 marine reserves (where marine life would be fully protected and fishing banned), 5 marine protected areas (which would impose a range of restrictions to fishing), 1 kelp protection area (where commercial harvest of bladder kelp would be prohibited). The proposed network covers almost 1.300km<sup>2</sup> between Timaru

and Southland – an area that is home to some of our most endangered species such as hoiho/yellow-eyed penguin, toroa/northern royal albatross, and rāpoka/New Zealand sea lion.

✓ A record-breaking 87 blue duck have been found in eight rivers on Mount Taranaki. These incredible results are due to the increased predator control mahi on the mountain/maunga and neighbouring farmland. 75 years ago, there weren't enough remaining birds to recover a healthy population and local who were classified as "Functionally extinct", due to predation by stoats and rats. Now there are 31 breeding pairs and this boost of ducklings takes them one step closer to a self-sustaining population.

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... from the FMC website...

✓ With the years' focus on family tramping ongoing, FMC are very pleased that "Monster Merinos" is offering discounts to FMC members. This family-owned business specializes in kids' merino clothes which are made in NZ. Their website is: www.monstermerinos.co.nz .

✓ FMC is calling on NZSki to consider alternatives to charging for vehicle access to the Remarkables. In conjunction with the Queenstown climbing Club, it has started a petition asking NZSki, Minister for Conservation, and Director -General of DoC to ensure the long term future of the iconic Remarkables landscape, FMC is seeking your support and signature for guaranteed year-

round free vehicle access to the Remarkables Conservation Area, and asking DoC to urgently re-classify this area to give it the environmental protection it deserves, You can read more background information on the website and sign the petition there too.

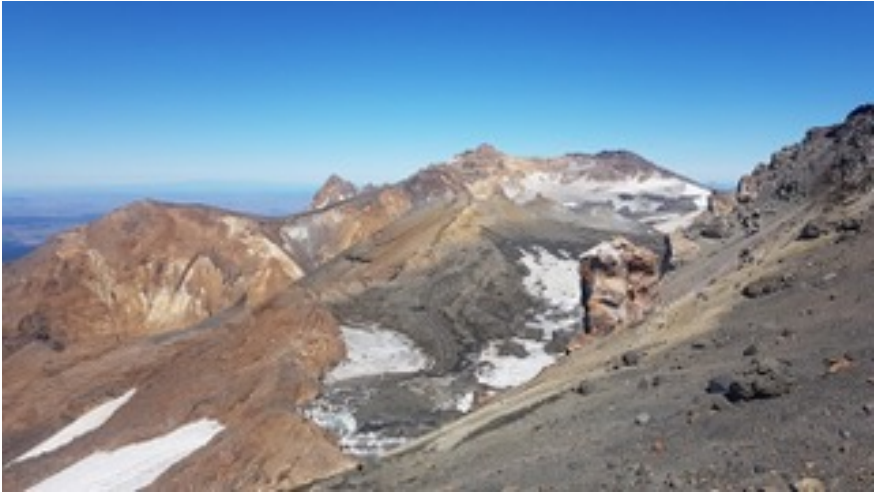
✓ As of 16 March 2020, the **Milford road** is reopening to all vehicles, at night only (5pm to 7.30am). During the day it will be bus convoys only while road repairs continue. The situation can change at short notice depending on weather and conditions. The **Hollyford Road** (not managed by NZTA) remains non-driveable.

✓ Updating Moir's guide South. The editor, Robin McNeill, would love to hear from anyone who has track updates, route descriptions or comments from expeditions in the wilds of Fiordland. The guidebook has long been out of print so Robin is working on a fully revised edition. Please email your contributions to robin@greatsouth.nz before June 2020 please.



River terraces in the Molesworth

Photo by Les Warren



Ruapehu roamings

Photo by Jacob Hamill



William Wright Falls at Orokawa Bay

Photo by Dianne June

Hakarimata Lookout

Photo by Dave



The sawtooth ridge is finally revealed

Photo by Allan Wickens





Official bulletin of
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PO Box 685, Hamilton 3240

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