



Motueka Tramping Club

Newsletter

January 2021

Email: secretary.motuekatc@gmail.com
Web site: www.motuekatrampingclub.org



Dear fellow trampers.

First of all, Gerda and I would like to wish you all a very happy New Year in good health and in Covid-free circumstances! Secondly, I wish you all lots of fun in our backyard and in the good company of family and friends.

The year 2020 was a very challenging one for all of us; but it was also very hard for a lot of people. And now, unfortunately, we again have a few Covid cases in our community. From this position all I can do is to advise you to stay put and ask for help if you need it. We will recover from this pandemic blast.

Once again New Zealand has proven to be a very special country and New Zealanders are very special people. Thanks to strong leadership and strong commitment of our population we managed in the first wave to kick Covid out of the country as soon as we did, and ended the second eruption of community spreading in a blink. Well done all of you!!!!.

In this newsletter there will be 2 other contributions of mine. (see page 26)

The first one is an impression of how I experienced Covid in the Netherlands, compared to New Zealand.

The second some impressions of our time in MIQ.

Rob Bruinsma,
President

Trip Reports



4-5 September Nydia

Track (instead of Sylvester hut)

It is a hard decision to make when snow falls, considering the wind chill and maybe rain coming in, safety comes first. And on top of that - Covid. BUT.... it was decided with a lot of help from walks committee to go to Nydia Lodge.



Yvonne, Yvonne, Ann, Birgit, Moppie, Sarah and I headed off on Friday morning for an overnigher to Nydia.

We had a lovely day, weatherwise, knowing the weather may close in on Saturday. At the start of the track we came across a DOC worker clearing the track, followed by two more workers further along - so there was no worry of getting seeds stuck in your socks.

We saw a few bunches of clematis flowering, which was a lovely surprise and a few flowers on the red rata vine. Some had finished flowering. Yvonne J spied a green hooded orchid. The gullies on the Nydia side had some big areas of beautiful punga.



There were quite a few aching legs after our 6 hour tramp, specially as we were only planning on doing a 3 hour trip to Sylvester. This was the first away tramp since the start of Covid. A hot shower was very nice. We spent a lovely evening chatting. We shared the lodge with a mother and her two sons. As there is no heating in the lodge, we were expecting it to be quite cold, but that wasn't the case.

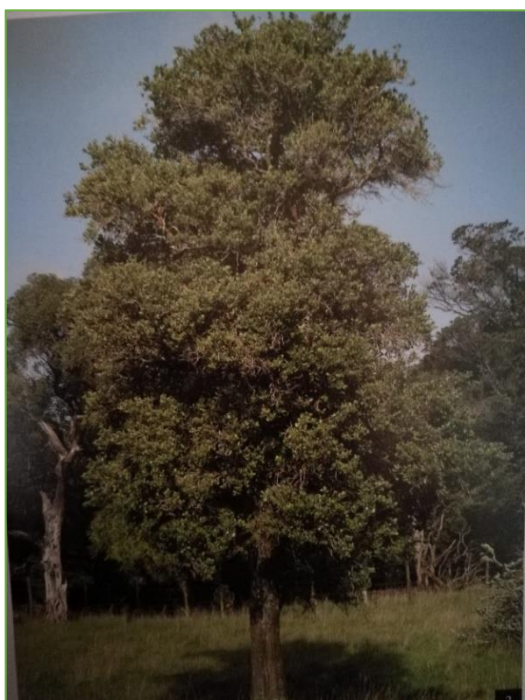
Next morning we could see mist around the tops, so cleaned the lodge, packed up and headed off, not looking forward to crossing the small stream which isn't far from the lodge. We saw the eel ** in the pool and tempted him with some salami, which it seemed to like.

At the top of the saddle where we had lunch, the wind was a bit cool and we had big drops of water landing on us from off the trees. We didn't need raincoats throughout the day though. It stayed misty until getting closer to Duncan Bay, which made the views 'moody'. We heard more bird life on Saturday. It was a lovely tramp with lovely company.

Wendy

(Photos above: Moppie)

***The other matter seriously discussed was the “new” eel. Last journey (December 2017) we named him (or perhaps her) Eddie.*



*(Above) The “Dave” tree at the summit of Nydia Saddle is called *Pennantia corymbosa* Kaikomako, introduced to us several walks back. Pictures above were photographed from Dawson & Lucas “New Zealand Native Trees”. As for location, it is indeed the smaller tree growing in front of the old Rata with its many and varied epiphytes.*

The height of Nydia Saddle is 374 metres

13 September Grampians, Tantragee Saddle, Maitai Valley

Prologue: This was a repeat of an MTC day trip 2 years ago (Sept 2018), but with a couple of new organisational twists. Emphasis both times was an end-to-end tramp over some Nelson geography from Bishopdale, over the Grampians, down to the Brook, up over Tantragee Saddle, down to the Maitai Valley, to finish at Nelson Botanics sports field.

On the day, doing real stuff, getting started ... From Motueka and Mapua ... nine MTC’ers departed Motueka (8:00am) and Mapua (8:15am) in two vehicles to meet at our starting place at Grampians Reserve carpark beside Market Road, Bishopdale, Nelson. Meanwhile leader Ken (also MTC, from Richmond) dropped off a car in Nelson along Hardy Street East beside Nelson Botanics sports field about 8:30am and was then chauffeured by his wonderful wife in another vehicle from there around to the trip starting place on Market Road to meet up with the others. **Grampians:** 9am – Started at the Grampians Market Road carpark. Walked up the Kahikatea track & Tawa track, stopping for morning tea at the viewing platform overlooking Nelson. The Kahikatea track is for walkers only and goes up through some lovely native bush remnants including a huge 400 year old heritage kahikatea tree and a few other nearby large relatives. The viewing platform offers views over Nelson, Richmond and across to Mount Arthur range, but cloudy conditions and focus

this year seemed to be the clear view of the Boulder Bank in its entirety which some members had walked recently from left to right, including a very tiny lighthouse when viewed from afar. From here we continued northerly along the Grampians walkway to the Kanuka track, and followed the Kanuka track zig-zag down to Blick Terrace (The Brook) entrance to the Grampians. *From Market Road to The Brook total time 2hours 15minutes; est 6.2km.*

Link to current Nelson City Council website Grampians tracks map (2 page pdf file):

<http://www.nelson.govt.nz/assets/Leisure/Downloads/walks/grampians/The-Grampian-Tracks-Brochure.pdf>

The Brook: Crossed Blick Terrace bridge over Brook Stream, to the adjacent Brook Street start of the Dun Mountain trail. Still much too early for lunch, we continued on up the Dun Mountain trail to Tantragee saddle. There were not too many cyclists to avoid, except being extra careful where a bike track crossed over Dun Mountain Trail, and we had the track almost to ourselves. A few families were out cycling, including fathers with young sons. We noted a lot of 'recent' planting beside and below Dun Mountain track as we walked up to Tantragee saddle. *From The Brook to Tantragee saddle, 45 minutes, est 2.3km.*



Maitai Valley: We stopped for a leisurely lunch (and nap for one) just below Tantragee saddle on the Maitai valley side, out of the wind. Then it was down towards the Maitai valley walkway, initially taking the 4WD road branching to the right just below the water storage ponds, then keeping further right (towards the secondary power lines and an obvious water pipeline running down a long steep slope ahead on the far side of the Maitai valley), walking along this track down through the Tantragee arboretum. Then another right turn near the bottom before the fence line, following a grassy track through to the Arboretum entrance stile near the Pipeline bridge. *From Tantragee saddle to Maitai walkway 45minutes walking time; est 1.5km.*

History of the Tantragee Arboretum is documented in the attached reconstructed, edited and



enhanced image (below) of an old weathered sign still standing across the Maitai river on the true right bank, beside the far end of the Pipeline bridge, from photos taken by the leader a few weeks later. Note the actual MTC daytrip route did not across the Pipeline bridge.

Before crossing the stile onto the Maitai Valley walkway, Ken recalled what he had learned 3 years ago (another MTC trip) about the large boulder with an interesting art design just before the fenceline. This boulder was placed there by local Iwi (Ngati Koata) on private land owned by the Iwi. The graphic on the boulder is the Ngati Koata symbol/logo and was installed to celebrate the cultural significance to the local Iwi of the then recently completed pipeline upgrade (2015). *For a photo of this boulder, the Ngati Koata graphic and several younger members of MTC, refer to MTC Newsletter Sept 2017 pages 5-6.*

Over the fence, some of our group briefly explored the Pipeline bridge, then together we all followed the Maitai valley walkway downstream, along the true left of the river back to Nile Street bridge and Nelson. Along the way, just before the intersection with Broom (forestry) Road, an interpretive sign on the right describes the *Tipuna awa* (ancestral river) significance of the Maitai (or Mahitahi or Maitahi) River to several Top of the South Island Maori Iwi. *For those who missed it, photos of this interpretive sign are included in MTC Newsletter (January 2019) page 18 'Bits of History'.*

We carried along the walking track, and eventually under several road bridges until we surfaced on Nile Street Bridge and walked up Tory Street to the Nelson Botanics sports field (Hardy Street East). On the way along the walkway, more individuals and families were out walking or on their bikes. Finish 2:45pm. *From Pipeline Bridge, down Maitai Valley to Tory Street Nelson finish est 1hour 30 minutes; 6km.*

Trip summary: Another good traverse, and a practical geography lesson for part of our landscape close to Nelson (Grampians, The Brook, Maitai Valley). A very pleasant day with a very pleasant group. The ten happy participants were Yvonne J, Ann G, Yvonne H, Wendy, Eddie, Graham, Ian, Sarah Sme, Margaret and Ken (leader & scribe). Total walking time (including stops) from Bishopdale carpark start to Tory Street Nelson finish 5hours 45minutes; distance 16km.

Epilogue: Recall, early this same morning, the leader had strategically left a car parked in Nelson by the Botanics Reserve sports field. At the end of our walk, he ferried the other drivers (2) back to their cars parked at the Bishopdale / Grampians starting place; drivers then returned to the Botanics Reserve sports field to pick up their passengers and return them to Mapua & Motueka.

Organisational twists: Most of this current trip between Market Road and up to Tantragee Saddle, and then along the Maitai Valley Walkway crosses land in the domain of Nelson City Council (**NCC**), without any access issues apart from occasional closure for maintenance or fire risk. However, tracks across land between Tantragee Saddle and Maitai Valley Walkway (across the river from the Maitai Motor Camp) are outside NCC jurisdiction, instead belonging to forest companies and local Ngati Koata iwi. Nelson Mountain Bike Club (**NMTBC**) have their own permit arrangements with Tasman Pine and local iwi.

Since 2016 the need for permits and from whom has been changing and rules sometimes seemed confused, even for weekend day-trips. This strip of land seems to have undergone several changes (with evolving local arrangements between **NCC**, Tasman Pine Forest Land (**TPFL**) management practices (controlling access), Nelson Mountain Bike Club (**NMTBC**) and local **Ngati Koata iwi** (land owners). More information at the end of this report....

Ken *(and thank you Gail for your assistance with car relocations)*

(See page 25 for more of this story)

20 September - Flora/Cobb Crossover

Phil's Story – Flora to Cobb

The day dawned clear and warm. 14 walkers assembled in Motueka and we split into 2 groups with 7 travelling to Upper Takaka to start from the Cobb Dam Road led by Arif, while the remaining 7 drove to Flora Carpark. On the drive up Graham Valley a karearea was spotted with its prey on the road verge...a harbinger of later bird sightings.

We set off just before 9am and after passing Flora hut while following Flora Stream, some of the group investigated Gridiron hut and rock shelter. While crossing the Upper Junction swingbridge a whio was spotted swimming in the Takaka River and then flew right below us ...a glorious sight. There were many nice swimming holes and the river was reasonably full after recent rain.

At Lower Junction we stopped for lunch and 2 minutes later the group from the Cobb arrived...excellent timing by all!!



After lunch our group crossed another swing bridge and began the walk up to Asbestos cottage. There were many toutouwai (bush robins) along the way all looking well fed and chirpy. Also along here the sharp-eyed ladies spotted many interesting examples of native flora and colourful fungi and we stopped to be entertained by a tame and beautiful kaka who was perched just above the track. A little time after the kaka sighting, a plump kereru sat in the top

branches happily feeding.

At Asbestos cottage there was a patch of daffodils and snowdrops, remnants of past domestic occupancy, which provided a pleasant scene as we had afternoon tea.

We descended from here to the old open-cast asbestos works and on over challenging tree roots to reach the last easy section before Cobb Road and the cars, reaching there at about 5pm.

Thanks to Moppie, Sarah, Serene, Wendy, Yvonne J and Richard for making it such a good day out in the bush.

Phil

(Photos: Phil)

Arif's Story – Cobb to Flora



Seven of us headed to the beginning of asbestos track, arriving at around 9.30. We went past the asbestos works with all its relics and then to Asbestos cottage where we had our morning tea. Brian had just read a very informed update about the history of the the Chaffeys, who lived a very reclusive life there for almost 40 years. Apparently Henry Chaffey lost his life coming back from Motueka and was found in the snow on the track, having been struck by a blizzard.

We moved onto Lower Junction where we met the other 7 who had just settled down for lunch. We then went on to the Gridiron shelter, a very impressive structure, where some of us noticed the area had just been cleared of trees which gave us a better perspective of the river and surroundings.

Then onto Flora hut over Flora saddle and back to the cars, with the tramp taking about 6 and a half hours.

When I then looked at my phone and checked the height we had gained, I realised why the others seemed so relaxed and preferred to do it in the opposite direction. We had gained more than 700 meters in height!

A great day out. Members of this group were Brian, Rob, Ann, Margaret, Barbara and Christine.



Arif.

(Photos: Arif)

27 September North Branch of Graham – cancelled due weather

1-3 October Not Fenella Trip – but Sylvester



Having set off early we got to the turnoff to the Cobb Road to find the road to the power station open, but closed to the dam. Oh dear! After some discussion it was decided to continue on to the power station to see what the problem was - which was a large tree that had come down overnight and was being removed and, hopefully, the road would be open by midday.

Taking our morning tea with us, we chose to explore where the settlement had been which housed the families building the power station. We continued up the four wheel drive track to see how far the road went - not far - it is used for checking the pylons.



On coming down there was much discussion about our options if the road did not open by 1pm. So we had lunch and just in time at 12.50 the road opened - hurray. Now what to do as it was not leaving much time to get to Fenella. We checked out Sylvester carpark and intentions book and decided that was our best option. It took us quite some time to get to the hut as we were having to walk through some very deep snow, sometimes falling over or stepping into deep holes.

The hut was surrounded by snow so we made paths to the toilet, woodshed and tank. More firewood was cut by Wendy after which we walked part way up the ridge past the hut. This was slow going also as there was quite deep snow everywhere. Back at the hut, the fire was lit and we had a nice evening with the hut to ourselves. The full moon made the snow scene magical.

Next day dawned fine but cold so we enjoyed a slow walk down to Lake Sylvester and Little Sylvester for morning tea with stunning views of the snow on the mountains. After lunch we made a snowman and then did a longer walk up the ridge to the rocks. Some ventured further and one returned to the hut. A kea was spotted up there also.

On returning to the hut a family of four and a young couple had arrived so the hut was full. A lively evening was had with the fire keeping us very warm, but the snow was fast melting by now.

The wind blew at gale force overnight, but was mostly behind us as we walked out through the snow.

A good trip and Sylvester was a winter wonderland for us. Thanks to Sarah Sm, Wendy, Moppie, Margaret and Heather for making our trip to Sylvester fun.

Scribe Ann.



(Photos: Ann)

11 October Cloustons Mine – cancelled

16-18 October Salisbury/Balloon Hut - cancelled

23-26 October – Cobb Hostel

There were six ladies on this trip – Yvonne H, Wendy, Muriel, Christine H, Moppie and me, Yvonne J in the hot seat. The weather forecast a few days out was a bit dire, but it turned out ok, just a bit of drizzle.

Friday we travelled to Cobb hostel. It was a lovely clear sunny day, so we dropped off our bags and provisions, and headed into the hills.



Day 1 Friday - Cobb Ridge to Bullock Track

We made an early afternoon start from the information site and headed south towards the Bullock Track exit. It was a warm and windless afternoon and the views over the reservoir were stunning. It soon became apparent that the walk would be enhanced by close observations of the plants we were walking past. A mistletoe created



discussion about how many varieties were there? (three). All native? (yes). And how well were the ones we saw caged in netting surviving? In one cage there was no sign of mistletoe. In another cage many small plants were coming from the trunk and we mused on whether they had some



connection internally (no). A patch of *Griselinia* had us learning the difference between *lucida* (larger and uneven leaves) and *littoralis*. It was the latter that we saw.

The very distinctive stringy bark of the mountain cedar, *Libocedrus bidwillii*, also caught our attention. These were old trees and were sadly mostly dying. Their distinctive tops which narrowed to a conical point were far above us.

The track meanders up and down and sometimes in the open and then into shrubby forest which was eaten out. After crossing a wide open grassland we took the steeply descending Bullock track to the valley road and then by vehicle back to our very comfortable Hostel accommodation. Muriel.

(Photo: Muriel)

Saturday –Lake Peel Track

The second day involved driving the seriously pot-holed road around the edge of Cobb Reservoir.

We started the route to Lake Peel track at 8.45am for the advertised 5km and 2hr walk to Lake Peel. We obviously spent more time looking at the sights than the sign-writers expected, arriving at the top about 11am and at the Lake at 12noon.

Some of us stayed to botanise around Lake Peel and others walked toward Balloon and then up onto Peel Ridge above the lake.



The day was perfect. A rich blue sky, warm, and the only wind was on the edge of the ridge for a very short time.

We saw kaka, and those with better eyes than me saw a New Zealand falcon/karearea flying high as we watched from the ridge.

There were a lot of people about - a large group from Waimea Tramping Club on Peel ridge and a range of people going to

Balloon hut and beyond for day walks from the Cobb.

We visited the very well kept Myttons hut on the way back.

A great day.

Yvonne H (Photos: YH, YJ)

Day 3 - Sunday – Fenella

On this day of our Cobb stay there was typical



spring weather with sunshine and showers and it was raincoats on and off all day! We left the cars at Trilobite car park and started walking up the Cobb valley. This is a lovely glacial valley going through areas of beech forest and across grassy flats.

After one and a half hours we arrived at Chaffey's hut which was made of beech slabs and had been beautifully restored. It was built in the 1950's by Jack McBurney, the first ranger at the Cobb, apparently to get away from the noise of the construction of the dam. We had a break here exploring the area and then we carried on up the valley to Tent camp . At this stage two members decided to return.

Tent camp was restored in 2017 and it was set in a lovely location under the trees and near the river. We had lunch here and then retraced our steps.

On arrival back at Cobb hostel we found our two members entertaining Laurie who had come over on a visit from Motueka on his bright yellow motorbike! He had brought with him delicious afternoon tea pastries, which was very welcome.

We finished our excellent day with a stretching session on the verandah, ably led by Yvonne H .

Moppie

(photos YJ)



Day 4 - Monday

We gave the hut a good clean and came home, via a coffee stop in Riwaka, having been thwarted at the top of the hill – it was closed!!

We had a lovely four days. The temperature was mild, so no need to stoke up the very efficient little fire box. The walks were taken at a leisurely pace, there was quite a lot of botanising, and lots of photos taken of beautiful views (and ourselves). We had very entertaining evenings discussing a wide and varied number of topics. A lot of people were wandering around the area, including a big group from Waimea Tramping Club who camped on the grassed area around Trilobite hut. We crossed paths with them a few times during our walks. The hostel is very comfortable, and the armchairs very enveloping. The crew made very efficient work of taking the plumbing out of “winter mode” into “summer mode” – well, two of us were better plumbers than the other four. At the end of our stay, the plumbing was converted back to “winter” just in case. The toilet seat fell off, causing a little embarrassed discomfort. All reported to DoC. YJ.

1 November – Robin’s Nest

We were lucky with the weather with this one, as it changed to rain over the next few days. Arriving at Flora car park around 8.40 in 2 cars, we soon readied ourselves and the seven of us set out into a cold wind and 7 degrees. Straight down to Gridiron we went and stopped for a morning cuppa and muesli bar. This area has opened up a bit with the recent felling of a couple of trees.





Further down Flora track we turned off at the appointed place and dropped down to Flora stream for a quick wade. The following part is a bit of a climb combined with a constant lookout for white markers..

There is a special marker at the turn off point and straight away you are walking under what resembles a large standing stone wave. We made our

way along this, dodging nettles and bush lawyer and pushing through regenerating undergrowth. Most of us had been here before but there were several remarks about how it has changed over the years with slips, regrowth, and probably some route variations.

We reached the biv at 12 o'clock i.e. lunchtime and parked ourselves on a log, and promptly the sun came out. Leaving the area through a gap in the rocks we joined the trap line that runs behind Robin's biv and weaves its way up and down in a route that runs round and about and with some very steep and slippery places, and past more amazing rock formations. Most of us fell or slipped at some point.



Following the markers called for some searching around. Eventually a steep descent marked the place where we met a small creek which is the point of dropping down to the Flora Stream, knee deep at this crossing, and then back up to the main valley track. We walked back to the cars with a couple of stops on the way.

Thanks to Ann, Yvonne H, Bob, Yvonne J, Wendy and Christine for their company.

Brian (Photos: Bob)

6-8 November Wangapeka Track – closed due weather and flooding/road access issues - and replaced with

8 November Abel Tasman Coastal Track

Only two of us, Ann and I, walked to Ackersten Bay on Saturday as a poor replacement for Wangapeka. but the weather was good, the track very quiet, and Ackersten deserted.

There was an unattended egg on the beach, and after a bit of surmising about what bird such a large egg came from, a pair of oystercatchers casually arrived and claimed it. We did a bit of botanising, a fair bit of sitting on the beach, and a stop each way at Tinline camp.

A very pleasant outing.

Yvonne J (photo: yj)



Photos left taken 6 weeks later of male and female spinifex (kowhangatara) at Porters Beach (editor just filling in space...)

15 November Canaan to Wainui Hut via Evans Ridge Loop

After some very heavy rainfall the weekend before, and some changeable spring weather through the week, we had a gorgeous hot day for our Evans ridge-Wainui loop walk. So rather than being an obstacle, fording the low-running Wainui Stream was refreshing and pleasant on the toes.

Starting with a chat to a group of Christchurch youth who had all the gear – mountain bikes, wetsuits, caving equipment and tents – we proceeded to a lookout just short of the Evans Ridge turnoff with a panoramic view of various ranges and ridges where we discussed where Sylvester hut was.

The rugged terrain on the walk along the ridge meant our eyes were often pointed downward, but there was plenty of flora to entertain us including baby dracophyllum, mosses and cute little white flowers that I couldn't find on the internet, but look like tiny *Libertia*.

Thank you to Arif and Ann who identified and located a small group of kaka chattering melodically in the trees, just after our lunch break at Wainui hut. In fact, thanks to Arif for leading the way on this trip, and to each member of the trip for their input and support. We - Arif, Ann, Sarah Sm, Sonya and myself - had a lovely day

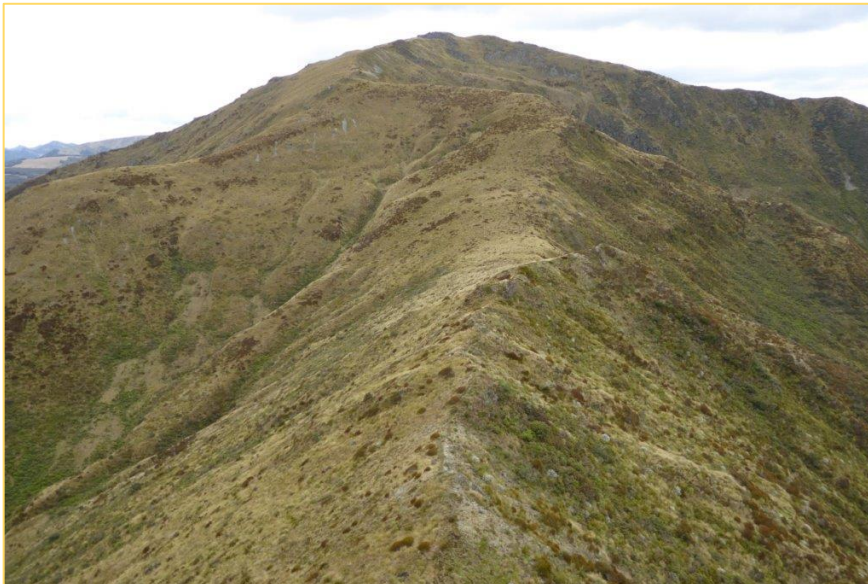
Heather

22 November Cloustons Mine

Nine of us walked from Flora carpark, climbed to Gordon's pyramid and then downward to Clouston's mine and further down to meet Flora track/road.

It was great to see another "feature" of the Flora area having visited Robin's Nest a couple of week's earlier. Thank you Bob for getting us all there and back.

It was a magnificent day and the view from the top, of mountain



range on mountain range, was stunning. The mine entrance is not very impressive and it looked a bit wet to enter, but the walk was most enjoyable, if somewhat steep and long. Some of us saw a couple of whio in Flora Stream on the way back.

Yvonne H for Ann, Margaret, Chrissy, Sarah, Sonya, Birgit, Wendy, Bob.

(Photos: Sonya, Bob, YH)

Information about the gold mine.

The Kirkcaldie brothers erected a hut and flume, but abandoned the project to return to Wellington in 1911 to take over their father's business, Kirkcaldie and Stains. Takaka Council immediately took over, appointing Robert Clouston to undertake



mining. A tunnel was driven 126 metres with a railway line for ore wagons.

By June that year the council had already built 4 km of Upper Takaka house track towards the "Mountain of Gold"

Mine workers were housed in a log cabin with a rubberoid roof built in the beech forest just below.



Godfrey Grooby (16) was working at the mine when it was operational in 1912, and stated it was a swindle: 'miners would fire fine gold into the walls with shotguns before officials and investors arrived'. Clouston's descendants have disputed this claim.

The mine is just below the bush line, below Gordon's Pyramid (1489m). The tunnel, with much vegetation and railway tracks within, remains, but is flooded and not accessible.

No minerals are currently recorded for this locality.

References

Mindat.org

New Zealand Gold Prospecting & Metal Detecting Forums Archive

29 November Lodestone – Cancelled due weather

4-6 December St Arnaud

This was a 3 day event based at Red Deer Lodge. There was a bit of ebb and flow of participants and some concern about weather. But in the end most of the bad weather went through at night. Participants were Ann, Eddie, Graeme, Ian, Joyce, Judy, Phil, Richard, Serene, Sonya, Yvonne H, Yvonne J and Wendy.

The evenings were spent in the comfortable living room, sharing with about 15 deer heads complete with impressive antlers. The “rules” for staying at the lodge included that we should not decorate or hang things on the heads or antlers. That was a shame as they would have made excellent coat hangers for our wet outdoor gear. We had happy hours, and shared a meal on our first night, and enjoyed the left-overs on our second night.

We took a walk after dinner each evening down to the lake. Being aware of the TDC web cam and its location, and the frequency of it taking shots, we did several very impressive dances– which failed to record, though we did manage to capture ourselves on the wharf. There was a second attempt on night 2, when we had the location and timing right, and managed to get the whole party recorded. We enjoyed a very rumbunctious game at the lake edge organised by Serene and ably led by Wendy and Graeme (somewhat akin to bull-rush)

Day 1 Peninsula, Anglers, Black Hill walk

Eddie, Richard and I decided on the easy option for the afternoon and explored the Brunner Peninsula nature walk to West Bay, onto the Anglers walk along the Buller River and back from the road end, onto Black Hill walk to find the upgraded Rotoiti Lodge - Education Centre, and back to our lodge. A pleasant 3 hours of gentle walking and chatting. Yvonne H

Day 1 Mt Robert Circuit



Mt Robert Group: We set off from the car park to tramp the Pinchgut and Paddy - Mt Robert circuit. Taking a steady pace through the beech forest and stopping for rests on some of the zags, we made our way up, also stopping at viewpoints to check our progress. Weather was good at that stage.



We stopped for lunch in the beech forest just before the track opened out onto the alpine tundra. Coffees and teas were produced with tasty snacks. As a few of us sat perched on a fallen down beech tree, Ian eventually balanced his coffee and all was well. It's quite interesting to see what people have for their sustenance on a tramp. I've developed a love for a fresh cuppa in special places and it was so nice that my fellow tramping

mates did the same! I listened to their banter as I got to know them all, being a newbie to the club.

After refueling our engines, we were off again and came out on the tops, a whole new world of the alpine landscape. We came upon a perfectly erected seat overlooking the lake and the surrounding mountains, a perfect spot for future morning teas that was put in the memory bank. We trampers get to eat in the most beautiful surroundings, no matter the weather.



Yvonne J and Wendy shared with me their love of all things botany as I was given info on plants and lichens adorning the patchwork of alpine tundra with beautiful plants clinging to rocks or growing in crevices.

We quickened our pace to head for the tin shed as a squall came over, which I'm sure was laced with sleet. We sat in the shed and rested for a short time then headed out again onto the tundra, all new territory for me. I could see the track up to Angelus which would have been a mission in the windy conditions.

And back to botanizing. We found eyebright, and others that I can't remember their names, growing along the track - the wonderful colours of the alpine zone. We took lots of pics and

Judy and I watched as the botanists gave them names. The others in our group went on and we spent a bit of time up there, none of us really wanting to hurry being on the alpine tundra. But finally we journeyed on down to Bushline for a peek inside the hut, a pic on the veranda then off down the track to try catchup with the others.

Ann pointed out the fault line to me, which I could see where it sliced the track in two with a big scar over top of the hill. Wispy clouds floated by us on our descent down. The water of the lake below a deep beautiful blue. Selfies and pics were taken on a viewpoint halfway down. Beautiful



orchids, such tiny creations, were growing on the side of the track which Yvonne J, Wendy and Ann had great delight in showing me. Unusual bluey grey fungi like faery trumpets grew on the edges of rocks in damp patches, fascinating!

The lake became closer and closer as we chirped our way down and finally to the cars, with team high fives.

Great walk, great day.

Sonya for Ann, Ian, Judy, Phil, Serene, Yvonne J, Yvonne H and Wendy

(Photo Robert Ridge – Ann) (group, *euphrasia langii*, *celmisia sessiliflora* – Sonya)

Day 2 Lakeside Walk



After the exertions of the previous day a choice of lakeside walks seemed a good idea, although the weather report was unfavourable. Some chose to walk from our base, whilst the rest of us

took the water taxi up to Lakehead hut, Graham, Ian and Joyce coming along for the ride.

After checking out Lakehead hut for morning tea and noting the fresh snow on the top of the Travers Range, five of us (Yvonne J, Yvonne H, Eddie, Judy, Sonya), set off to walk Lakehead track back down the lake.

The beech forest provided a magical setting for our walk with its cloak of mosses and lichens. On close examination these revealed great diversification in colour and texture and much time was spent botanising.

Our skipper had told us all five species of native Beech grew around the lake and our mission was to identify all of them. (Our walk gradually became the Hunt for the Elusive Red beech!) We were very lucky that the predicted rain only yielded a few spits as we returned to spend an enjoyable evening around the wood-burner at Red Deer lodge under the rather unsettling gaze of its trophy inmates.



Judy (photo: Judy)

Day 3 Parachute Rock

On Sunday a group of us went up to Parachute rock. I had in my mind that if it was fine I wanted to try and go up to the tops. When we got to Parachute rock it was great to sit and have a cuppa and look at the views but the tops were calling some of us. Phil, Serene, Richard and I decided to head up. A steep climb up up and up for about 20 minutes but it was do-able. I noticed ice on the rough track, so was wary when deciding on my next step, with a few stops along the way to catch a breath. Lots of scree and tussock on the track. I wondered how many feet had gone this way.



Finally the top! Just breath-taking, yea literally. There was no wind or clouds and it was perfect - a 360 degree magnificent view. One just had to sit and take it all in. We could see down into Rainbow valley. Beautiful tarns below looked quite inviting for a swim. We sat and munched on lunch; Serene shared some water with me, as I had decided to leave my day pack below at Parachute rock, and my poles! I was so stoked to have persevered and got to the top!

Sonya



(Photos: Mountains & tarn: Sonya; Panorama: Yvonne H)

Day 3 Anglers/Peninsula

Those that didn't go to Parachute Rock walked Anglers/Black Mountain/Peninsula walk and on returning via Rotoiti lodge, managed to participate in the opening of the newly refurbished lodge, complete with speeches and dignitaries and the national anthem. We missed out on the bar-b-q though.

13 December Nelson City bike ride - cancelled

20 December – Christmas function at Rabbit Island

We had about 15 people present. It was a very pleasant, sunny day. I had arrived early to select us a sheltered "spot", and YH arrived soon after to reinforce our occupancy. We were soon surrounded by other groups. We set out our tables and chairs in the shade, mingled and chatted until all had arrived. Then out came a most delicious array of food and there was silence for a little while.

But the peace was not to last. Serene soon had us up and participating in two amazingly strenuous games. Some of us had had a practice run for one of these at St Arnaud. Graeme was selected for the "ogre", having had experience of the job at St Arnaud. He does a remarkably good job in this role. The second bit of activity involved groups of 4 people, and 4 very tiny sheets of newspaper. It started off well – each person had their own piece of paper to stand on, but with great determination, Serene removed all but one piece of paper, on which all four people had to be accommodated. The result was personally very friendly. The prize, however, went to Barbara and her daughter and grandchildren. They built a very nice people tower, perched daintily on their piece of newsprint.



It was a very nice day – rather like the teddy bear's picnic where we all went home hot, tired and somewhat over-fed.

Thank you all for coming along. We hope you all had a very happy Christmas time.

Yvonne J

27 December – end of year walk/swim/picnic ATNP – Cancelled, no takers

3 January 2021 Holyoakes – ATNP circuit

This trip that marked “nearly the end of the festive season” was along ATNP coastal track to about Observation Beach turnoff, then headed uphill to the intersection with the Inland track, then turned left (ignoring Holyoakes) and headed downhill (with a few more up-hills) to Tinline Bay and out. The journey took us 7 hours 50 minutes and 23 km. It seems to me this journey gets steeper and longer every time I do it.



Participants were Brian, Phil, Serene, Ann and me, Yvonne J.

The weather was pretty kind, not too hot, with just a bit of drizzle about midday. We enjoyed lovely views down to Anchorage and other parts of the coast, meeting quite a few people on the coastal track, and maybe 10 on the inland sections.

It was interesting that everyone was walking on the left side of the track – indicating the walkers were mainly kiwi’s or perhaps from

other countries where they drive and walk on the left!

This walk certainly reminded us that too much Christmas celebration isn’t helpful on a long, steep and slippery track.

Yvonne J

(Photo: YJ)

10 January Mt Arthur Summit

Five of us set off to conquer Mt Arthur, two of the party not having been up there before. The sun was shining but a cool wind was blowing as we left the carpark. However once in the bush we warmed up. Morning tea was at Arthur hut.

Further up the mountain, lots of photos were taken of flowers with much discussion of identification. What we spotted included celmisia, eyebright, hebe macrantha, helicrysum and

edelweiss. The ranuncula had mostly finished but there were a few orchids still flowering. A couple of flowering anisotome were also spotted. Vegetable sheep were a novelty to some.





We all summited Mt Arthur much to the delight of Judy and Debbie, our first timers. As there was a very cold wind blowing, though good views, and after many photos to prove our success, we high tailed down to find a sheltered spot for lunch.

A kea joined us for our break back at Arthur hut, much to the delight of the many people there.

It was a very pleasant day and thanks to Judy, Debbie, Yvonne H and Ian for their company on a fine but long day.

Ann
(Photos: Judy)

17 January NOT Maungatapu Track, due weather but

17 January Abel Tasman Coastal track

The day dawned with unsettled sky and an unpleasant forecast for Nelson Ranges so the planned trip to Maungatapu was aborted and a 9am walk in ATNP was proposed. Four of us left Marahau carpark at 9.30am.....Yvonne H, Yvonne J, Serene and myself.



Light rain was falling as the 2 Yvonnies took the track, and Serene and Phil walked the first part of the low tide



route. We stopped for morning tea at Tinline, sheltering under the trees as the rain had got steadier. Yvonne J gave an energetic rendition of Gene Kelly's "Singing in the Rain" to keep our spirits up. There were quite a few walkers on the track and a number of children who mostly were enjoying the experience.

Although the rain was persistent and thunder was booming, we decided to walk on to Stillwell Bay for

lunch; a patch of white rata was spotted on the way. On the beach Yvonne J encountered a ravenous seagull that devoured her best sandwich! Serene and Phil had a short swim in the rain and then we high-tailed it back towards Marahau.

While walking back the weather cleared, the small waterfalls bounced with vigour, and a glorious sight to the south of royal blue sea with black clouds above was unreal as the colour tones of sea and sky were reversed.

Several weka and their young were seen, and as we finally managed to divest ourselves of rain jackets and hats and enjoy the warmth arriving back at the carpark at 2pm.

An interesting day in good company, thanks to my companions for a worthwhile walk. Phil
(photos: YJ – it is Phil in the water)

21 January Adele Island



We were a bit reticent about the weather forecast for the day, but we went ahead. It was raining heavily in Motueka but by the time everyone got to Marahau it had stopped. A group of 16 set off on AquaTaxi to Adele island stopping briefly at a small seal colony at the northern end of the island.

We disembarked to the beach on the western side of the island and made our way steeply up to the ridge where we had wonderful views of the beaches on Abel Tasman coastal track.

There were not as many birds as we were expecting

but we saw robin, fantail, brown creeper and a keruru. We made our way round the northern part of the island, and since our last visit, we noticed a lot more undergrowth. We also saw some Easter orchids in flower.

At Stream Cove we had a break and as the tide was out, we explored and found a seal who was very well concealed! We came steeply up from the beach and found a detour round the coast which was quite challenging!! After a while Pete made the call to turn back and Aqua Taxi was phoned to say we would be late (they were very obliging). Since we were last on the island there are a lot more trap lines but we found the original track and made our way back, stopping briefly at a small beach which had a cormorant colony and some seal pups hidden beneath the rocks by the beach.



The water taxi was waiting for us and we had a short ride over to Appletree Bay. By this time the weather was drizzly so no one was keen to have a swim. Instead, we had a late lunch and made our way back to Marahau .

An enjoyable and challenging day.



Participants - Rob, Gerda, Yvonne's H and J , Laurie , Judy , Ian, Jean W, Debbie, Ann, Barbara, Sonya L, Carole, guest Sonya A, Pete and myself , Moppie. (Photos: Wildlife Laurie, others (humans) Ian)

Continued from page 5

13 September Grampians

Ironically, the current NCC Track Closure website map includes some permit jurisdiction information (if required) for these same non NCC tracks when you click on a particular track. Online application to Tasman Pine was made by MTC for an EVENT permit 4 weeks ahead of time for Hira Forest for one specified weekend day (no charge for walkers). However, for our EVENT permit, even though we only needed cover between Tantragee Saddle and Maitai Valley walkway on a Sunday and were keeping off vehicle roads as much as possible, as an EVENT we also needed to have or hire a compatible 2-way radio (we hired one commercially \$35/day ... for one day). There were no nearby major NMTBC events on our MTC trip day, and we never saw a vehicle though our radio burst into life 3 very brief times from some more distant activities. Ken

From Rob – Covid in the Netherlands, and Managed Quarantine

Covid-19 at home in the Netherlands

You all know that a part of Gerda's and my heart is in The Netherlands where our children and grandchildren live. That is why we decided to travel back 'home' as soon as it was possible. The 'command' of our granddaughter to be there on her birthday in the beginning of September made it even more

impossible for us not to try to. So we left our safe haven (or should I say safe heaven?) to step on Dutch soil the 19th of August.

The numbers of Covid-cases were gradually going down and you could feel the growing optimism of the Dutch people. However, we were surprised that the first time we went out shopping we were the only ones wearing a mask. Of course, there were rules in place, but in general Dutch people believe that rules only apply to OTHER people, not themselves. So, the social distancing of 1.5 meters (overpopulation makes 2 meters impossible?) was flexible and you could do almost anything you want. The message of the government was that we were in control because the numbers were going down. Although other countries in the EU were entering a second wave, the rules in The Netherlands became more relaxed.

From the beginning the policy of the government in The Netherlands, given the information how southern Europe was coping, was one of first trying to protect the economy and preventing the health care system to collapse. The PM called it a 'smart lockdown', whatever that might be. The policy was 'herd immunity' and that policy was quickly left. As you all know most countries changed their policy on weekly bases and for the Dutch people there was a lot of unclarity and a lot of room for different interpretation.

And there, I believe, is the most important difference between The Netherlands and other countries, and New Zealand: NZ developed instantly a clear path, of course based on information from what had happened all over the world, and, most importantly, NZ had crystal clear communication. Alert levels that only change in small details and clear cuts between the levels. On a daily base the path and the alert levels were explained. From the beginning there was an easily accessible website for Covid. In the Netherlands there was and still is no clear pathway. It is changing frequently. There is information that leaves a lot of room for interpretation. For example: the alert levels are called "watchful", "worried", "serious" and "extremely serious", which terms are subjective and don't have the clear cuts that 1, 2, 3 and 4 have. There is not enough public repetition of the information and very few television spots, which are also a bit vague and not annoying repetitive as they should be. The fines for breaches were high (\$650 for individuals, \$6500 for businesses and organizers of a party), but when it became known that the minister of justice organised a big wedding party without social distancing the fine dropped 75% and he was not sent away, as happened in NZ. The brittle commitment of a lot of Dutch people broke apart from this event. Although probably most people were very committed and just upset about this.

Another aspect is that the Dutch government believed that there should not be a top-down ruling for Covid putting a lot of responsibility on the shoulders of local government. As a result, the pathway became even more unclear. I believe that events like this, pandemics, demand for central, top-down ruling in the biggest scale possible.

When it was clear that the numbers were again rising a 'soft' lockdown was put in place. The aim was to bring numbers down so we could have more freedom at Christmas time. This was a mistake. The Dutch 'Sinterklaas' happening, and 'Black Friday' made the numbers quickly rising. Finally, after a lot of hesitation and discussion we went into stricter lockdown before Christmas.

So how did Covid in The Netherlands affect our stay? Well, a lot.

Beforehand we had made a decision. We would consider our children and grandchildren as if they were living in our bubble and we were accepting the risk. Also, our main focus was to our kin.

For our granddaughter Olivia's 5th birthday in the beginning of September we had organised a stay of 3 days and 2 nights in 'De Efteling', a fairy-tale and adventure park. At that time restrictions were mainly social distancing and limiting crowds. That trip was the best time ever!! Spending all the time with our 2 grandchildren and daughter and son in law was unforgettable.

In the first period we managed to see our close friends and did do a lot of running with our running mates. During our stay, due to the pandemic, running with friends became less frequent and less a social event with drinking coffee together.

In September my family (brothers and sisters) had a more or less Covid-proof meeting to discuss some family matters and of course to catch up. Shortly after, the ruling was that you were only allowed to have 4 visitors a day and later on only 3. During our stay we managed to have a day, evening or overnight with most of them.

As we arrived it was allowed to play golf in flights of 3 and later even 4 golfers. We tried to play as much as possible but more and more it was hard to get a tee-time because the numbers of the flights had to come down. So, in the last weeks it was reduced from 3 times to 2 and eventually once. Competitions went on in big fields and due to restrictions and lockdown in flights of 2, all starting on the first hole and without 'playing the 19th'. The short days made it harder. Specially if you had to play the last hole in the dark, before 5pm!

In September restaurants and bars were open but had to close in the 'soft' lockdown leaving us not many possibilities for going out. We were only able to go out for dinner with our son once when we were just there. And not having a drink or a meal after a round of golf is boring!

The moment bars and restaurants were forced to close, hotels (most hotels in NL have a restaurant) were allowed to stay open. Quickly it was decided that hotels were not allowed to serve alcohol after 8pm, nor were supermarkets allowed to sell it after that time. Hotels had good times. They were fully booked. A lot of people took the opportunity to book an overnight stay in a hotel to have a nice diner. You can imagine public disapproval of the unfairness for bars and restaurants and finally the hotels were forced to close their restaurants also for guests.

Closing down in 'soft' lockdown was very tough for the suffering cinemas, theatres and museums which were having hard times anyhow dealing with the restrictions of social distancing. Of course, there was a lot of discussion: why is a large theatre allowed to host the same number of spectators as small ones? The same discussion with churches. Sometimes they had a point being able to host 1500, while they were restricted to 30 visitors as all churches.

So, social life was boring. We had to rely on family time.

When the tougher lockdown was announced and schools and day-care facilities closed, we took our grandchildren to our home and had a fantastic but very tiring 8 days. What a blessing!

The hardest thing for us outdoor people was the weather. It was often dreadful in November and even more in December. We missed the sunshine. It was really 'the dark days before Christmas' for which The Netherlands are famous as is the UK. Sunset at 4:30pm does not help either. We knew we would enter another autumn and winter leaving NZ and we had done it before coming from Europe to New Zealand, but now it was harder. In this time of the year the Dutch days don't deserve the name "day" because there is hardly any day left and what is supposed to be a day is grey and miserably unlike it is in NZ winter. So, you can imagine that we are looking forward to coming back to NZ's summer.

Staying in Managed Isolation Quarantine

And then we came 'home' in New Zealand.

We were gently but firmly guided from our airplane into a bus and a fenced hotel in CBD Auckland. Until the result of day 3 Covid-test is known you have to stay in your room and are only allowed to spend some time in the 60 square meters in front of the hotel, if it is not too crowded. If you are lucky you can book 45 min to have a seat on the roof terrace or 30 minutes walking on the ramp to the parking garage. However,

if one person is tested positive the hotel needs a thorough cleaning that lasts almost a day and confines you to your room. Off course as asthmatic Gerda had blocked nose and sinuses due to the aircon and these symptoms demanded testing and strict confinement to our room.

After a negative day 3 test the world opens a bit (don't get carried away now) more: if places in the bus available you are allowed every other day to go guided by the army to a big lawn somewhere in Auckland at a forensic facility and walk outside in the quart that is dedicated to your hotel. To be honest it is a treat, and that is a matter of perspective!

Food is OK and 3 times a day there is a knock on the door. The paper bag containing food is in the hallway. Another knock is the daily medical check and for me the most important knock of the day is the coffee-knock, at least if I ordered one. The coffee is standing there on the threshold, seductive and smelling great....

On the seventh day we got a text from the Ministry of Health that they would call, and they did. We had been close contact of a newly diagnosed Covid patient in the airplane and we need re-testing and are not allowed to leave our room, again.....no walking on the field, cancelled again..... just sitting in your room.

Eleventh day test was also negative. So, survived and were released from our little prison without fires and riots as were in real prison-life on Tuesday January 12th at 11:49am. I feel pity for all those people in the Pullman Hotel almost finishing MIQ and having to stay another 14 days.....

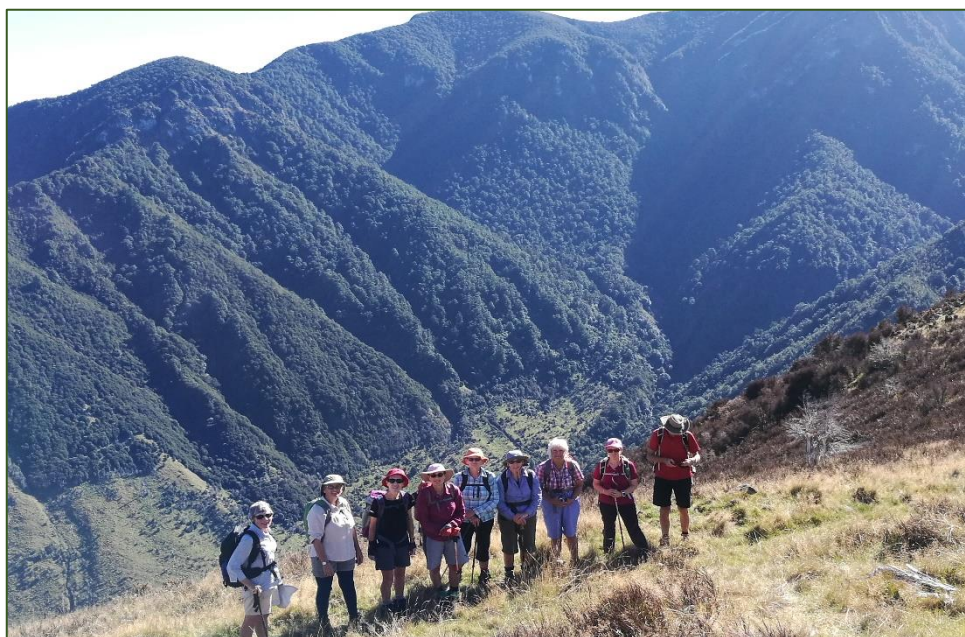
See you all soon

Rob Bruinsma

New Meeting Place for Trips

From now on all trips will start from the Rec Centre in Motueka, unless otherwise advised. We will no longer be leaving vehicles in Liquorland's carpark.

A bit of history, this time 2017 North Branch of Graham which trip has been cancelled a few times since then due to weather considerations.



Bits of history and bio-diversity:



Raoulia, vegetable sheep Mt Arthur
(Ann)



Eidelweiss Mt Arthur Jan 21 (Judy)



Libocedrus bidwillii Cobb Ridge
(Muriel)



Kea, Mt Arthur Jan 21 (Ian)

Editor Yvonne J (yvonnejay@xtra.co.nz) who thanks scribes for their written contributions and photographers for lovely photos