



# Newsletter

September 2018

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*From our President:*

***In July the Mountain Safety Council released its latest report - A Walk in the Park. It summarises accidents, injuries and deaths from tramping activity.***

***It is available on <https://www.mountainsafety.org.nz/insights/a-walk-in-the-park/> and is an interesting read.***

***Our region, as we know, has some of the most diverse landscapes in the country so it is not surprising that it is one of the most popular tramping areas in the country and also high on the accident count.***

***Our region was second among the nine hotspots for all 3 incident categories - injuries, fatalities and search and rescue operations. We also had a high proportion of solo trampers, and of the 10 people who died in the region, 7 had been alone. Of the people who died 5 were from falls, 2 from drownings and 3 were never found.***

***The report notes it is not just tourists who are being injured so we locals have to take more care too. Nationally 1.5 million people tramped in 2017 and 900,000 were New Zealanders. 1 in 279 trampers needed some sort of medical care.***

***There were also stats confirming what we are experiencing about tramping clubs. 70% of tramping club members are over 50 years old and tramping club members made up only 2% of domestic trampers.***

***I guess the report confirms good tramping practice - be as prepared as you can - competence, weather, gear, etc. Tramping with others is a very good idea and having an accessible PLB and cellphone really helps. Remember the club has a PLB that can be hired, so please make use of it.***

***Stay as safe as you can, but don't stop getting out there.***

***Yvonne Hope***

## Mike was present for the release of Whio at Wainui Hut:



Wednesday 19 September, about 20 people made their way to Wainui Hut, to await the arrival of two Iwi representatives, Project Janszoon's General Manager and four whio who were helicoptered in.

There should have been six whio, three of each gender. However, before the birds left their captive breeding home, two of the males paired up with females from outside their little group. No further comment!



After a short, pleasant, ceremony on the river's edge the boxes were opened by an excited bunch of small boys. The ducks headed upstream, totally ignoring us, and commenced feeding while we stumbled around on slippery boulders with our cameras.

Apparently, females hold the territories, so it is interesting to speculate which gets that area and the male. Two days later it was reported that all was peaceful on the Wainui.

Mike

# Trip Reports



**29 April Ben Nevis** – Cancelled due weather

## **3-6 May Kaihoka Lakes**

Day 1 - After settling in the Kaihoka farmhouse we set off down to the sandhills. It was a lovely autumn day and we enjoyed lunch overlooking the Nikau palms and Kaihoka beach. We explored some lovely coastal areas with amazing ribs of limestone rocks which had weathered over the years.

The only downside was a plane doing top dressing which zoomed over every few minutes. Luckily we were not in the fertiliser pathway!

Day 2 dawned cloudy but no rain. We set off through the paddocks and steeply uphill to the lunar cliffs. There are some incredible rock formations and



we were amazed how the plants managed to survive in the tiny crevices. We did a circuit of the area and an extra loop towards the beach.

Day 3 - Walking up the road to Kaihoka lakes, we enjoyed the lovely reflections on the water. Wendy and Joyce joined us for morning tea, and then we continued on up the road to see the lakes from above. The only traffic we saw was a large calm Aberdeen Angus bull.

Returning to the homestead we had a delicious early lunch of whitebait very ably cooked by Wendy, which the farm manager had given us the previous evening.



A very successful weekend and thanks to Jean, John, Eddie, Joyce, Muriel, Yvonne J and Wendy.

Moppie.

**13 May Waiwhero Forest Walk** – Cancelled



## 19-20 May Pohara Based day walks

(NOT Nelson Lakes National Park)

Weather forecast for Nelson Lakes National Park, yet again, was for high wind, low snow, copious rain – so we ditched that, and the would-be participants chose to head over the hill to Pohara for two days of walking - about the only near-by destination where the weather forecast was good.



Off to a good start, up and over the hill, amazed yet again at the scope of the road damage, scooting along well when our two vehicles came to a halt all by themselves outside Wholemeal Café. Never one to fight against the odds, we trooped in and enjoyed coffee and buns/muffins/scones to taste, before heading for Te Waikoropupu Springs walkway. Very quiet there. We mooched along, botanizing and birding, chatting and looking at several quite large Koura in the water races that feed the power station. A nice lunch in the sun, more botanizing and we arrived back at the vehicles. Our 1.5 hour

route took us 3 hours to complete. Collectively, we did learn and share knowledge about the district, though.

Then onto Pohara to settle into our cabin and motel. Some had indoor ablutions, some didn't. Those that didn't enjoyed having the huge kitchen and ablution block almost to ourselves (oops themselves). We (except one) watched some of "the wedding". Oh, wasn't it lovely....

Sunday we were packed up and out early to Wainui Inlet carpark. Today we made up for the sloth of yesterday, and kept up a goodly pace all day.

Morning tea was at Whariwharangi Hut. We had considered staying at Whariwharangi and wondered why the hut had loads of bunk space available. The reason, of course, is that ATNP coast track is closed from Totarunui to Mutton Cove. The hut book disclosed that just a few people making the journey from Totarunui to Wainui via Gibbs Hill did go backwards to stay at Whariwharangi.



As a matter of interest, there were 8 separate notices in DOC Takaka window, giving details of track closures in their area.

We stopped at the top of the cliff at Separation Point, sighting some seals and a shag nest with four or five occupants. Bit late in the season, we thought. Think they might have been Spotted Shag. The fibre glass gannets were calling away happily, the sound booming off the cliffs in the brisk wind. We decided not to go down as lunch there would have been chilly and “perhaps we shouldn’t go down” anyway.

Back to the carpark, the wind had risen, sea had become choppy, and we were glad to retreat into cars and wend our way home. Wendy and Moppie took a diversion to have a peek at the bridge over Takaka River at the entrance to the Cobb.

The women’s division of MTC enjoyed a very informative weekend, good walks and company. Participants were Yvonne H, Wendy, Marie, Moppie and me, Yvonne J.

*(Photos: Moppie)*

**27 May - Cable Bay Walkway** (not North Branch of the Graham)

As the mountain forecast was bad, instead of the North Branch of the Graham, we opted for Cable Bay. Yvonne H, Yvonne J, Debbie and myself made our way to Glenduan. We were amazed at the damage from the cyclones. When we eventually found the track we went up the 4wd track in the shade until we came to a sunny spot, to enjoy a short break.



Continuing up, we joined the main track and were rewarded with lovely views over Tasman Bay, the Richmond Ranges and Mount Arthur - with plenty of early snow.

Entering the bush, it was pleasing to see how much the trees had grown since I last visited, and we enjoyed the fantails in the native part of the forest before emerging onto the open coastline once more. Lunch was in the Autumn sun, overlooking Cable Bay and Pepin Island.

We then retraced our steps, but headed down the steep track back to the (very eroded) access road. Many thanks to the participants for a great day out.



Moppie

*(photos: Moppie, YvonneJ)*

## 6 June Pepin Island

On a very chilly and slightly damp Wednesday morning, four of us set off to circle and ascend to the trig of Pepin Island. When we arrived on the connecting road (a tombolo), we were greeted by a very strong, chilly southerly wind. Soon we were putting on our extra clothes.

We headed off on the road going right and were greeted by a woman with several buckets who had stopped to feed some calves. She warned us about the wind and that it would be very cold on the tops.

Having been introduced to a patch of bush with a walking track, I led the party through that bush. At the other end, being under some cover and having warmed up, we began shedding clothes.

We had a very pleasant stop at the Passage Hut for morning tea. The sun made an appearance and we took off hats and gloves. However further around the island we were again exposed to the cold southerly, my weather app said could be at a speed of 30kms, and clothes went back on.



I began to study the fence lines leading up to the trig and finally felt I had found the right one. As we climbed the steep hill we found the fence line very helpful as we could use it to pull up on. On reflection I think I chose the steepest possible fence line, so we were very relieved to come to a flattish area - but not the top. The other three valiantly continued to the top while I their leader?! decided to sidle around the hill and check out the fence line of trees



as a possible stopping place for lunch. The wind whistling between the trees was so strong and cold I quickly moved back onto the hillside and huddled beside a rock as the other three came back down from the top looking exceedingly cold. We lunched out of the wind, looking north west towards D'Urville Island. A boat moving across the sea was an added diversion.

The descent was slightly less steep and soon saw us back onto the circuit track, taking us back around to the southern side of the island with a good view of the Bay and the tombolo.

As the cafe was closed we traveled back to Mapua where Petra gave us a cup of tea and a lovely spicy Dutch biscuit.

An enjoyable day out was enjoyed by us all, despite the low temperatures and southerly wind. And we all caught up on lots of news about one another!

Yvonne J, Barbara, Petra (visitor) and myself Muriel. *(Photos: Yvonne J)*

### Tombolo definition (from Wikipedia – with grateful thanks)

A tombolo, from the Italian tombolo, derived from the Latin tumulus, meaning 'mound', and sometimes translated as ayre, is a deposition landform in which an island is attached to the mainland by a narrow piece of land such as a spit or bar. Once attached, the island is then known as a tied island. A tombolo is a sandy isthmus. Several islands tied together by bars which rise above the water

level are called a tombolo cluster. Two or more tombolos may form an enclosure (called a lagoon)

### **10 June Tasman Great Taste Trail** (not 8-10 June Blenheim Biking)

The scheduled trip to Blenheim for 8, 9 and 10 June had low numbers and the weather was looking suspect. We decided on a one day event and checked with the membership to see if there was interest. We got seven participants.



Mary, Moppie, Dave, Barbara, Yvonne J, Laurie and Yvonne H drove our bikes to Rabbit Island. We met at 10am to avoid frost and it turned out to be a perfect Tasman day.

We took the Great Taste Trail to Richmond joining a great number of older (our age) walkers and cyclists, and some younger ones as well. It was great to see so many people using the trail. It had been damaged in recent weeks but repaired to a good surface.

From Richmond we continued on the Great Taste Trail splitting into two groups for some to explore the steep bits and others to check out the local Sunday car boot sale.

In the spirit of the “Great Taste” concept we had morning tea at Head Quarters in Brightwater and lunch at the Villa in Wakefield. On our return trip we explored local valleys and roads as a bit of variety.

An enjoyable local day.

Yvonne H

*(Photo: Laurie)*

**17 June Waitui** - Cancelled

**23-24 June Canaan to Marahau Cross-over**

### **The Ups and the Downs**

In the Trip Programme we noted that Dave had offered to do the uphill from Marahau with or without companions, and indeed Muriel, Debbie and I were happy to do the Canaan downhill to meet Dave at Castle Rocks Hut.



The days before the trip had heavy morning frosts so the downhill group decided that as the walk was not a long one, we should try to miss the frost

and not leave Motueka until 10am. Everyone agreed and then Debbie upped the anti by suggesting coffee and doughnuts at The Smoking Barrel. So it was a leisurely, very late morning before we parked at Canaan and set out on the walk.

Again avoiding frost we walked up the centre of the valley, making a right turn a bit early and thus a little extra exploration before we found the well appointed signs - hiding from our view by a little rise earlier on. A pleasant downhill

tramp, stopping off at Moa Park Hut for lunch and escaping severe injury when the outside table collapsed - even after we had had a conversation



about the poor design of the table, so should have been forewarned.

We arrived at Castle Rocks Hut to find Dave getting firewood ready and on his second billy/bucket of tea. The saw was rusted and useless and there was no axe so Dave was being very inventive in producing the fuel for the night. We had a very cosy hut for the night. The intentions book recommended sunrise at Castle Rocks, so given that the timing for that event was at a very moderate time, we decided it was definitely the way to start the day - with breakfast afterwards. How's that for winter tramping?

The downhill to Holyoakes Clearing had more ups than any of us remembered but it was a great walk through the regenerating forest. It was a bit damp at the clearing so we had lunch inside. The heavier rain held off until we reached the Coastal Track but we decided against giving our rain coats an outing and arrived back at Dave's car only a little damp. Dave for his part strode up Canaan and was at home, again drinking tea, when we delivered his car to him.

Yvonne H

*(Photos: Muriel)*

## 1 July Killdevil

After checking the weather for Sunday, it was decided to walk up the Killdevil Track on Saturday instead, rather than miss out on the walk for the weekend. The day started without a cloud in the sky, but it was frosty, so we left Motueka a bit later in the morning.

It was a very leisurely walk up the track. I had forgotten that there were quite a few viewing points of Takaka Valley. Part way up the track we heard the Upper Takaka Fire siren very clearly. Then in the distance we heard the Takaka siren too. It was such a still day.

We had a robin stop and check on us and also a few fantails followed us up the track.

We didn't get up to the top, but we were able to find a sunny area to have our lunch. After lunch we enjoyed a chorus of bellbirds down in the gully singing to us.



The track wasn't too frosty. A couple of corners a bit icy, but overall reasonable walking. Some of the mosses along the track were lovely and they required a photo stop.

A bit later in the afternoon the sky began to cloud over. It didn't cool off too much though.

We arrived back in Motueka about 5 o'clock. It was a lovely day out. Thank you to the fellow trampers Yvonne H, Ken, Una, Christine (new member).

Wendy (who notes: Thank goodness it DID rain on Sunday)

*(Editors note: For those who lead trips and have watched the weather forecast for the whole week prior, and then finally decide to cancel/change the route/change the date, always have their finger's crossed that their weather forecasting abilities are indeed validated. It is never an easy call)*

*(Photo: Ken) who says: "I took these photos as an artistic appreciation of nature's fine abstract scenes of texture and colour". We couldn't agree more Ken.*

**6-7-8 July Pohara based biking and walking** – Cancelled due weather

**15 July Holyoakes Triangle** – Cancelled

**21-22 July Salisbury Lodge** – Cancelled due weather



**29 July Canaan/Moa Park** (not Takaka Hill)



After what had seemed a prolonged spell of wet weather, the forecast was looking good for a Sunday outing. The initial plan was to walk from Canaan via Wainui Saddle to Evans Ridge, then complete the circuit down to Wainui Hut and back up to Wainui Saddle. However, after all the previous wet weather and further heavy overnight rain the night before, I decided that the potentially treacherous under-foot conditions on the steep descent down to Wainui Hut and the likely high level of Wainui Stream could be daunting for the prospective club members that were to accompany us. We therefore decided to shorten the trip to Moa Park and return.

The day dawned clear after early morning rain and we arrived at Canaan carpark with not a soul in sight and the carpark empty. It was, however, very wet underfoot as we headed off up to Wainui Saddle. There is always something refreshing about walking in native forest on a clearing forecast after overnight rain, although the temperature was still rather cool. We made good progress to Wainui Saddle and were soon puffing our way up the hill to the ridge top where

we took the side track to the lookout over Canaan. By this time, morning tea was called for and after scouting around, found a sheltered spot out of the wind tucked in amongst the shrubby vegetation.



I always enjoy the next section of forest through the Moa Park. At around 1000 metres elevation the forest is diverse with a good mixture of both podocarp and beech trees forming the forest canopy, along with the impressive pahautea (mountain cedar) with its distinctive conical form and thick papery bark. Another highlight is the profuse mountain neninei (*Dracophyllum traversii*) with its discarded dead leaves littering the forest floor. There is also a good range of other less common native species including mountain toatoa (*Phyllocladus alpinus*) related to our celery pine (tanekaha).

This section of track, however, is rather rough going with numerous exposed roots plus surface water and mud holes and requires considerable concentration. It needs to be negotiated carefully to avoid potential mishaps. Before long, we arrived at Moa Park clearing and stopped to check out the old shelter, previously a 4 bunk hut on the Abel Tasman inland track. I managed to coax the rest of the party onwards a short distance to the lookout rocks overlooking the distinctive Moa Park clearing where we stopped for lunch in the sun. It is always a favourite spot of mine.

Although I suggested we might like to continue on to Porters Rocks, there wasn't much enthusiasm from the others, so we cautiously made the return journey back to Wainui Saddle. After stopping for a break and snack at the saddle, I headed off down, only to inadvertently take a side track and flounder around in the tall manuka, much to the amusement of the others, before we relocated the main track. A great day out in the middle of winter, and always a pleasure to introduce prospective members to a unique and fascinating part of Abel Tasman National Park. Thanks to Petra, Jan and Barbara for the great company on the day.

Dave

*(photos: new members Petra and Jan, including themselves having a snow fight in the snow)*

## **5 August Fringed Hill**

Five of us showed up for this walk, including Yvonne H, Muriel and two new members David and Beth who have just moved to the area. The weather was a bit uncertain but we put faith in the forecast which said the rain would not come in until the afternoon.

When we arrived at the end of the track in Brooke Street a young man informed us the route that we had planned to take via Third House was closed due to a slip, so instead we decided to go via the Cummins Spur. This route is shorter but a lot steeper and Beth and David put the rest of us to the test by setting a cracking pace. The views over Nelson and the bay are spectacular



from here, and we found a good spot to enjoy this at morning tea break, despite the fact that finding a patch without gorse to sit on was a challenge. We made it to the trig before lunch so decided to take a quick dodge through the bush to the

communication mast where we found a nice bench to sit on for lunch.

Retracing our steps down the hill we turned off down the Bullock track and as we had plenty of time, returned to Brooke Street via the Dun Mountain walkway and arrived back at the cars just as the rain started to set in.

Helen

*(Photo: Helen)*

## **12 August Whariwharangi**

We had scheduled a 2 day event staying over at Whariwharangi Hut for the night while doing a leisurely cross-over from Wainui to Totaranui. Wednesday night came and there were few takers so at the committee meeting we decided to turn it into a day cross-over, and this change meant we had a respectable 6 participants. Although I had been keeping an eye on the Wharawharangi Hut bookings and they were light, when we got to the hut for lunch there were a lot of young people apparently staying - so our day excursion was reinforced.

There was an event (biking from Takaka to Wainui, run to Totaranui and back via Gibbs Hill) so we had about 70 runners behind us on our way down from the turnoff to Gibbs Track. It was a busy time for TEC calling "runner" on a frequent basis as we stayed single file, on the left and with our sticks well out of the way of passing runners. Part way down the hill we came across a young

man who had fallen on the track. He asked for pain killers and after taking two from Muriel's stash he hobbled off up hill clutching his shoulder. As there were many runners still coming down and we knew the people at the turn off to Gibbs Hill were there, we felt OK about his decision. We checked in at Whariwharangi Hut and got feedback that he had arrived back.

Still no real takapu/gannets at Separation Point. According to Project Janszoon 2017 Annual Report, it is still a work in progress and not just for the joy of having the gannets there, but perhaps reduce pressure on the overcrowded



Farewell Spit colony. If gannets and a few of the penguin mates would take up residency they might help the return of the very endangered coastal peppergrass - *lepidium banksii* to the area. We did wonder if the recorded squawks are really saying "stay away - this point is inhospitable to gannets" but apparently there are visual recordings of some gannets landing, and even displaying to the decoys. We also wondered if those fibreglass versions should move a bit to be more encouraging.

We passed Dave and Phil coming up from Separation Point as we went down. Guess they were moving a bit faster than us.



There is a new bit of track after the slip that fell down some weeks after, and probably a result of Fehi and Gita in February. The new track is pretty high up to get over the slip but walkers still experience the beaches of Mutton Cove and Anapai and we were pleased not to have to do the bypass via Gibbs Hill.

The boys missed their coffee, the machine had been turned off before they got to Takaka and they had to have tea! Guess they weren't moving fast enough! The girls went to Toto for the most excellent coffee and we think we will plan for

pizza on the next trip over that way.

The weather was perfect, sunny but not too hot, no wind and with stunning views down through the bush to the golden sands and blue/green waters beyond. A good reminder that winter is such a great time to do a trip in our very own local park.

For Dave, Phil, Marie, Margaret, Muriel and me - Yvonne H  
(photos: Yvonne H)

**19 August Janet's Mystery Tour** – Cancelled (the suspense was too great!)

## 25-26 August Balloon Hut

On an overcast and cooler than expected Saturday, three of us set off from Flora car park at around 9.15am for Balloon Hut.



We met some walkers coming out and were passed by one cyclist heading over the Lower Junction track. A patch of sun just past the swing bridge became our morning tea stop and a burst of energy took us beyond the shelters and out through the tussocks to pass the old Salisbury hut site, to get to the new Salisbury hut for lunch, just in time to avoid a heavy rain shower.

Snow was on the ground around the hut and thickly coated the toilet steps. We were delighted to see the rain go and sun come out so set off again for Balloon. The views were striking, the snow crunchy but by then the track had thawed in the sun and was more like a stream. In spite of the sun, the cold seeped into us and as soon as we arrived at the hut I was on my knees lighting the fire. Leslie and Paula (trap minders) had left a pile of kindling and soon heat was radiating from the chimney.

As a remembrance to Jenny Miller and her love for Balloon Hut I took a Rummikub game (also a Jenny favourite) and taught Yvonne H and Marie how to play it. They were fast learners. I don't think that we were strict rule followers though.



Sunday was sunny and the ground was still frozen when we left at 8.30am. We walked out over frosted ground which was much easier than the “stream” track.

We lunched near the swing bridge and were back at the

car park just before 3pm where Laurie was ready to take us out. A very happy weekend and no boots fell apart as one of the other walkers we met had experienced.

Muriel

*(photos) Muriel*

### 1 September Takaka Hill Farm

The first obstacle that we encountered after parking was a stockyard full of sheep.

After climbing the gate we got through them easily enough and made our way down the airstrip.



It was a glorious day and we had amazing views down to Marahau and the coastline. We made our way down to the quarry and Parliament Hole to have a look at the remainder of the machinery, and the trolleys that were used to cart the marble to Sandy Bay. The miners and their families used to walk to Marahau

for their days off. We continued up through the farm admiring the lovely marble formations.

When we got to the saddle, the members decided not to take Round Hill but instead to follow the track on the true right of the river to the musterer's hut. We had lunch by the hut at the bush line and then retraced our steps to the tramline. The final leg was uphill past the cottages and the now empty stockyard, and we were delighted to catch sight of a kea on the way up. A lovely walk on the first day of spring.

Thanks to Mary, Muriel and Yvonne H. Moppie (Photos: Moppie)

## 7-8-9 September Collingwood

### Knuckle Hill, Friday



Four of us set off from Whanganui Inlet entrance to Knuckle Hill (506m) on a mild sunny day. The track rises gently

from the parking spot through bush with some lookout places. It follows the Kaituna, and to begin with is like being on a grassy road. The vegetation was diverse and there were lots of young rimu. The track up to the top of Knuckle Hill branches off the main track rising up over a rocky base and through tussocks to a magnificent view out to the west coast and taking in all of the inlet. There was very little wind and as the view was magnificent we were happy to have a leisurely lunch there. A young German visitor to NZ joined us after running from the car park to the top in an hour! He said there was nothing in Germany to compare with the landscape that surrounded us.

Eventually we headed down. Slope and slippery spots needed close attention. We continued further along the main track for a while until Dave and Phil



headed off more quickly and Yvonne and I did some botanising and picture taking. We were especially interested in the variety of ferns present.

All four of us joined back together at the Knuckle Hill turn off and walked back to the car. Dave drove us to the house and we had a relaxed and chatty evening with a toasty fire, pre-dinner nibbles and our own food dinners.

Dave (leader), Phil, Yvonne H and Muriel (scribe and photograph).

### **Saturday – Collingwood and Milnethorpe**

The lack of enthusiasm to climb the 1100mtres of Mt Stevens brought about a change of plan for some of us. At first it was going to be a bike ride to the spit but no one was available to talk about the hire bikes so it became a Collingwood amble, checking out the historic cemetery and a house with an industrial design which we got to have a look through. The cabinetry was stainless steel and on wheels such as is used in workshops. It suited the building style which had a corrugated ceiling. And of course a coffee stop on the way back to the house, which had us scrambling for a table as a group of bikies, and maybe many of the local population, seemed to be there.

Yvonne and Moppie took their lunches to stroll along to the Milnethorpe end of the beach and search out the carved tree furniture that I told them about while I lay about in a beautifully sun drenched spot. Bliss! Later I met them as

they returned and I too went to the end of the beach where I was entertained by a variety of animal, wind and paraphernalia experiences which I inflicted on the others when I got back.

After pre dinner nibbles and drinks the “boys” went to the pub for food and the All Blacks game and the “girls” went to the cafe for pizza and then home to read. A perfect day for us all.

Muriel for Moppie, Yvonne

### **Saturday – Mt Stevens**

It has been some time since the club has tackled Mt Stevens on the Wakamarama Range within Kahurangi National Park. It requires a full day so an overnight stay in Collingwood is a good idea.

Unfortunately I couldn't tempt the three female members of our group to join us, so Phil and I got away to an early start, and set off from Collingwood on a glorious spring morning. It is a 45 minute drive inland from Collingwood up the Aorere Valley to the start of the track, and there was a good frost at the carpark when we arrived. The DOC sign indicates that it is a 6-8 hour return trip to Mt Stevens.

We headed off through regenerating manuka shrublands on what looks to be fairly impoverished soils from past early fires and farming attempts dating back from the gold mining days of the 1860's. The first 30 minutes or so is over undulating terrain which is a good warm up before the real steep stuff begins. It is an 1100 metre climb from the carpark at 100m a.s.l. to the Mt Stevens summit at 1213 metres.

The attraction of Mt Stevens is that it has the most northern sub-alpine and tussock vegetation in the South Island. It has a most diverse and varied flora once you enter the forest, with both podocarps and four of the five species of beech trees, as well as a good range of sub-canopy trees and shrubs.

We had feared that we might encounter significant windfalls and track damage from the cyclones back in February that forced the closure of the Kaituna track further east, but were pleasantly surprised. There was just the occasional windfall to negotiate. Although the route is very steep in sections, it does ease off now and then giving some respite from the constant up and up.

The diverse vegetation is a highlight with different species encountered as we gained altitude. The podocarps included rimu, miro and Halls totara, and even kahikatea at lower elevations. We also noted a



superb specimen of a native mountain cedar (pahautea) right beside the track. I was able to identify red, hard, silver and mountain beech with the latter two more prevalent at higher elevations. We also noted mountain toatoa (also a podocarp of the *Phyllocladus* genus) and *Archeria traversii* and mountain neinei as we gained altitude.

We seemed to make good progress and stopped for a break at around 10.30am, and 1  $\frac{3}{4}$  hours after setting off, but the top still seemed a long way off. At one stage we heard a mohua (yellowhead) and I thought I may have also heard a kea earlier on. There was a good range of small forest birds including grey warbler, tomtit and fantails but no bush robins were encountered.

The track steepened as we got closer to the treeline with the vegetation now much more stunted, till we finally broke out onto the tussock just before midday. We were, however, disappointed to see cloud rolling in from the coast obscuring our views northward and eastward. We continued on to the summit of Mt Stevens and tucked ourselves in beneath some shrubby vegetation and out of the cool breeze, where we enjoyed a well earned lunch break. We were hoping for a clearance in the cloud to tackle the other summit of Mt Stevens at 1208 metres (.5 metre lower) for better views out to Whanganui Inlet and Farewell Spit but it wasn't to be as the cloud persisted.

Reluctantly we retraced our steps back down through the bush edge and commenced the long descent back down through the forest. We took our time

and made a cautious descent over the steeper sections to finally arrive back at our vehicle around 3.30pm.

We both agreed it had been a most enjoyable day out in an area of Kahurangi National Park not often visited.

Dave - for himself and Phil

*Photo: (mountain cedar Libocedrus bidwillii or Pahautea photo from "NZ Native Trees" John Dawson & Rob Lucas – with thanks*

*Dave mentions this beautiful tree in two separate reports. Thought you might like to see one (or two). Ed.*

### Sunday – Hilltop Track



Sunday morning dawned milder, so we were soon off to the carpark at Farewell Spit. Muriel, Yvonne H, Moppy and I started for Fossil Point while Dave took his car to Wharariki carpark and cycled back to the start of the Hilltop Track, to catch us up a little way after Pillar Point. There were many lambs on the Lands and Survey farm but only nondescript shell fossils in the rocks at the beach.

Back on the Hilltop track it was amazingly almost windless with great visibility to Separation Point and Farewell Spit. As we approached the farm end of the

track, a NZ falcon cruised past and a gannet was seen far below. At the beach the wind began to get up and terns chased themselves in the sky while a young seal chased its tail in a tidal pond. It was a good low tide (well planned by Dave so we could easily cross the Wharariki stream earlier) so we were able to explore caves and get close to seals sunning themselves sheltered by one of the islands.

The walk to the car left us with feelings of appreciation of a beautiful walk on a perfect spring day

Phil

*(Photos: Muriel)*

### **16 September Barron Flat** (not Mt Malita, due forestry access)

The trip to Barron Flat on 16 September was made by Heather, Yvonne H , Yvonne J and Chrissy, with apologies from Annette and Pam.

The journey over Takaka Hill did not bode well with thick fog at the top. However, our walk was not impeded by fog for the distance we went, but did



impact on our decision about which route to return by.

We parked at the end of a farm track which is the current access point after flood damage to the Waitui Stream DOC carpark and headed upward on the 4-WD track that is access to the end of the Old Upper Takaka Track, armed with two topo Maps of different ages, an annotated map from a Motueka 50+ walkers outing and an awesome app on Yvonne J's phone. Our view of the scenery was limited by the fog but we enjoyed, admired and botanically discussed the manuka bush, beehives and beech bush and

debated many other topics until finally emerging onto dracophyllum scrubland and a flatter gradient on the edge of Barron Flat.

Being a little footsore from the rocky track (and having spent a generous amount of time on morning tea) we stopped for lunch well before our goal of a private hut belonging to an acquaintance. The next part of the trip - had we decided to do it - would have taken us up onto the ridge above the Cobb Valley where the power pylons sit to loop back to a junction in the track. But given that we could barely see the power pylons in the mist in the distance we decided to leave this for another day when we could better appreciate the view.



We were away from the car for 6hrs and did not complete the loop so an earlier start (7.30am?) and stricter time-keeping (which will come with experience) is suggested for our next attempt at this enticing outing.

Heather

*(photos Yvonne H, Heather)*

## **22-23-24 September Croesus Track**

Not yet available. Participants still drying out, perhaps.

## 29 September Grampians Walks

**Introduction:** The originally listed Grampians day trip seemed potentially a bit short. With some planning, this evolved into a longer trip, to take in Nelson geography from Bishopdale, over the Grampians, down to the Brook, up over Tantragee Saddle, down to the Maitai Valley and out to finish at Nelson Botanics sports field.

And still more evolution. Both NZ Met Service and MetVUW weather forecasts for the advertised Sunday were looking wet and much better for the previous day. The trip was moved to Saturday, after discussion with MTC members who had already expressed interest in the trip. The silver lining in this change, pointed out later, was clocks changed to Daylight Saving on Sunday, so no extra early start for the trip was required.

**On the day ... Grampians:** 9am – Met and started at Grampians (Bishopdale,



Market Road) carpark:  
Walked up the Kahikatea and Tawa tracks – and stopped 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 view from the top on a clear sunny morning over Nelson, Richmond and across to the Mount Arthur Range from the top was spectacular; the Waimea estuary even had water in it! From here we continued north along the Grampians

walkway to the Kanuka track, and followed the Kanuka track zig-zag down to Blick Terrace (The Brook) entrance to Grampians.

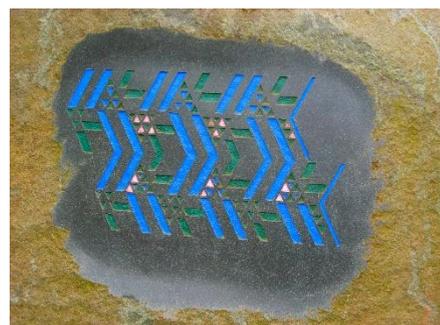
**The Brook:** Crossed the Blick Terrace Bridge over the Brook Stream, to the adjacent Brook Street start of the Dun Mountain Trail. It was still much too early for lunch, so we carried on up the Dun Mountain trail to Tantragee Saddle. Except for the start up this track, there were not too many cyclists to avoid, and we very soon had the track almost to ourselves. One of our group recalled when this track was through forest rather than totally open as it is now.



Right behind us at Tantragee Saddle arrived a cyclist on a unicycle accompanied by a very intelligent black gun-dog carrying its own two pouch backpack with special harness ... but no gun. A few minutes of fascinating conversation followed with the cyclist showing off his well-trained dog ... and one member of our little group so interested and focused on the dog that she never noticed the cyclist's "bike" only had one wheel!

**Maitai Valley:** Stopped for a long leisurely lunch in the sun, just below Tantragee Saddle on the Maitai Valley side out of

the wind. Then it was down towards the Maitai Valley walkway, taking the 4WD road branching to the right just below the water storage ponds, and heading towards the secondary power lines and the water pipeline running down a long steep slope on the far side of the valley. Then another right turn near the bottom to follow a grassy track through to the Arboretum entrance near the Pipeline Bridge. Our leader recalled what we had learned 18 months ago about the artistic graphic on a large boulder just before the fenceline ... this boulder is on Ngati Koata Iwi land and the



graphic celebrated the cultural significance to the local Iwi of the then recently completed pipeline upgrade (2015). Next, over the fence and we followed the Maitai Valley walkway along the true left of the river back to Nile Street bridge and Nelson.

Along the way we took time just before the intersection with Broom Creek 4WD forestry road to study an interpretive sign describing the **Tipuna awa** (ancestral river) significance of the Maitai (or Mahitahi or Maitahi) River to several top of the south Island Maori Iwi. Further along there was an (unresolved) mystery expressed by all of us (no golfers) about the terrestrial or extra-terrestrial significance of large round coloured globes on the local golf course apparently positioned with care on the tee-off area beside our walking track. We continued to walk under several road bridges until we surfaced on Nile Street Bridge and walked up Tory Street to the Nelson Botanic sports field (Hardy Street East). Finish 3pm.

**Epilogue:** Early this same morning, our leader strategically left a car parked by the Botanic Reserve Sports Field so he could ferry any other driver(s) back to their car(s) parked at the Bishopdale / Grampians starting place; they in turn returned to the Botanic Reserve Sports Field to pick up their passengers and return to Motueka.

**Summary:** Six MTC participants: YvonneJ, Ann, Bill, YvonneH, Birgit and Ken (leader and scribe). Total walking time (including stops) 6 hours; distance 15km. An interesting traverse and a very pleasant day.

**A pretty impressive number of trips were enjoyed by club members this past winter. Participation by women members was outstanding.....**

*The End*

## Bits of history and bio-diversity:

### Editor seeks contributions to this new section.



Dawsonia superba is found in NZ, Australia and New Guinea growing to a height of 60 cm making it the largest moss in the world. The botanical name Dawsonia is a tribute to the English botanist Dawson Turner (1775-1858). The specific name superba comes from Latin and means “great”.

Each Dawsonia superba stands alone and has 1.5mm stems which are densely leafy with flat stem leaves.

The spores are only 6 to 10 micrometers, and are among the smallest among moss spores. They are spread by raindrops falling on the moss.

(With thanks to TERRAIN – Taranaki Education Resource)

There are lots of these on the hydro track at Te

Waikoropupu Springs.

From north Queensland –  
Ornethorhynchus anatinus (platypus) (

Photo: YJ



**Newsletter Editor: Yvonne J ([yvonnejay@xtra.co.nz](mailto:yvonnejay@xtra.co.nz)) who thanks scribes for their written contributions and photographers for lovely photos**