

Motueka Tramping Club



Newsletter January to April 2024

Email: secretary.motuekafc@gmail.com

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As you all know, Moppie Sharples died peacefully at home last month. She was a stalwart of the Club, coming on many trips and often leading them. She was always positive, fun and accommodating and will be very sorely missed. Our condolences to her family.



Committee



President:

Vice President:

Secretary: Lynne Flood

Treasurer: Heather Adams

Membership Officer: Kathy Chandler

Committee Member: Ann Giggs

Committee Member: Kathleen Famularo

Walks Committee: Maggie Pidgeon and Sonya Lloyd



New Member

A big welcome to:

Rebecca Johns



Trip Reports



Lees Creek

12 - 14 December 2023

Leader and Scribe: Kathy



Day 1

We set out in two high clearance vehicles to negotiate the notoriously rough Rainbow Road on a visit to Lees Creek Hut first accessing the Rainbow Station Road (after a small navigational glitch) to collect the key for the toll road.

There were four fords to cross, one aptly named Rough Creek, but Alan and Sonya negotiated them perfectly. We also had to disturb some sheep and cattle who were very reluctant to share the road.

After regrouping at the carpark, Alan, Sonya, Marie, Lynne and John provided the forward party and Yvonne and Kathy brought up the rear. It was initially a bit cloudy but turned out to be a perfect day for walking.

The track began with a spectacular crossing by swing bridge over the raging turquoise Wairau with an interesting staircase up the bank on the far side. The track then ambled through beech forest, a bit of bog, stones and a bit of river sidling. It was very pleasant with a lot of bird song. We then crossed Lees Creek by a single person swing bridge and remained on the true left of the river until we reached the hut. After an hour or so, we all met up at a pleasant picnic spot under a huge rock wall.

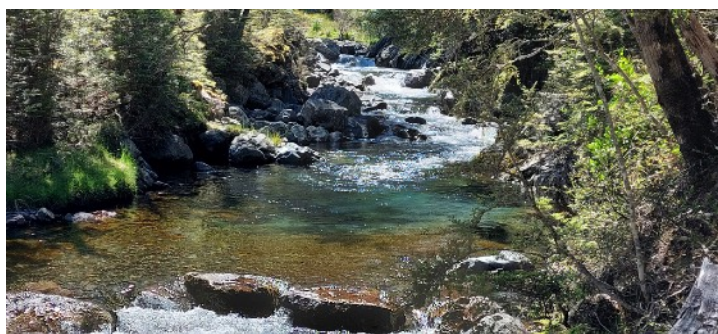
The walk reminded us of other river walks through beech forest but was more varied:



there were rocky sections, calm tranquil sections and undulating rocky and rooty tracks through the forest as well as some easy grassy flats. It was really beautiful and every so often we would have a spectacular mountain view. But then.....the GNARLY SECTION!!! After a weather event a couple of years ago, the track which probably had innocently followed a benign route along the side of the river, had been washed away in floods and was now clinging precariously to a ledge along the rocks above the raging torrent of

a river. John, the knight in shining armour, stayed back to help Yvonne and Kathy over this scary part and held our poles to enable us to have two hands for clinging on! With great relief we continued, and were delighted by some beautiful mossy sections in the forest and some huge boulders in the river with beautiful pools and little water falls. This alternated with lovely calm grassy flats and the rest of the walk to the hut was very pleasant.

It took us between 4 and 4 and a half hours to reach the hut (3 hours on the sign) but we still had lots of daylight hours left and Alan and Sonya explored across the river up to a grassy slope below a waterfall where they saw two deer. Water was collected in pans from the creek, although the following day, a waterfall 30 metres from the toilet was discovered with a handy pool at the bottom before it disappeared underground.



The hut was well kept with some hunters' mementoes and a porch area. Yvonne, Marie and Kathy stayed here whilst the others camped near the "ensuite". It was a chilly night but the stars were spectacular, as was the dawn chorus in the morning.



Day 2

We had a leisurely start to the day, dressed warmly as the valley took a while to get the sun. The plan was to explore further up the river. The main branch appeared to veer round to the right after an unnamed tributary (or the north branch) entered the river. An orange triangle was spied at the entrance to the bush on the true left of the river and we found a track to follow, quite obscured by windfall in places. It was variable progress as we lost the track several times. We eventually reached a beautiful fantail shaped waterfall with emerald green moss covered boulders below and stunning pools. This appeared to be a tributary joining the river but we later realised that this was actually Lees Creek reemerging after time underground. The river we had been following became completely dry and strewn with boulders. We missed the track and ended up climbing over boulders and regaining height again up a slippery scree covered slope to our morning tea spot. One clever person rediscovered the track a few metres above where we had been sitting and it was much easier progress after this! We emerged from the bush at several points to grassy flats with magnificent mountain views, with the scenery getting better and better the higher we went.

There was a great photo opportunity of a waterfall across the valley and we were then finding our way guided by cairns which involved crossing the dry river several times. We had a pleasant grassy lunch spot with a few small pools of water reappearing in the river and Alan explored ahead a little way to see if all the water returned to the river which it did. We continued on up the valley to a wet river again and could see in the distance the point at which the last tributary to enter the river would be before the river branched near the top.

Some people felt we had gone far enough as we had taken four hours to get to this point so we decided to have a rest in the sun before turning back. It was so pleasant and relaxing lying on a grassy bed feeling the warmth of the sun and dozing off. We thought it was wonderful to be in such a wild place until an aircraft vapour trail appeared above us!

Kathy and Sonya left after the others to have a refreshing dip in a pool we had spied on the way up. Wonderful!

We got back easily and quickly in half the time it had taken on the way up. Amazing what the difference following a track makes!! There was plenty of time to have another dip in the river by the hut, relax or explore before dinner. We all agreed it had been a special day.

Day 3

Another very cold night with frost on the grass. Alan and Sonya waited for their tents to dry out a bit longer and the rest of the group were led by John at a very pleasant pace. It was a stunning sunny day. We were in some trepidation about the “gnarly” bit, but once we were safely over this and could relax, had morning tea in a pleasant spot by the river. Meanwhile, A and S had chosen to find a high route and looked down on us from above. It was very strenuous so they managed to find a lovely deep pool in which to cool off, while K dipped in a smaller pool below.

We made good progress back to the cars and Sonya, Kathy and Yvonne tried to find St Ronan’s Well. We looked down over a bridge into a very deep gorge, but weren’t sure if that was it!

A very pleasant and varied trip. Thanks to Sonya and Alan for driving and Yvonne, Marie, John and Lynne for all your excellent company.

Photos: Kathy

Trampers: Alan, John, Kathy, Lynne, Sonya, Marie and Yvonne H





Mt Arthur

14 January 2024

Leaders: Alan and Ann

Non-Summiteers. Leader and Scribe: Ann

As the forecast for Sunday was for the much needed rain, it was decided to do the walk on Saturday. It was an early start so we could take our time getting up as far as we wanted. We caught up with group 1 at Arthur Hut who were on their way to the summit. After our morning tea stop we continued on and further up the track it became rather windy so a stop for an extra layer was called for. There were many stops to identify flowers - celmisia (various varieties); gentian; native violet; snowberry (yum); dracophyllum longifolium; vegetable sheep; edelweiss; helichrysum; wahlenbergia; eyebright; parahebe; hebe macrantha; astelia - such a good time of year for flower spotting.

We stopped at the tarn for lunch and a wee kip before heading back down. Group 1 caught us up at the hut and we all walked out together.

Trampers: Ann, Dave, Heather, Kathleen and Lynne



Photo: Alan

Summiteers. Leader and Scribe: Alan

We left Mot at 7 to get ahead of the heat and enjoyed a cool misty start to the walk.

Morning tea at the hut where the meandering group caught up. Once above the bush line the cloud had all burned away and there was a nice fresh westerly wind to keep things pleasant. As usual for a weekend the track was very busy. We summited for an early lunch and views forever. Descending, the two parties met up again at the hut and walked out to the car park together. A lovely day out with great company and perfect weather.

Trampers: Alan, Sarah, Sjors and Sonya



Photo: Sarah





28 January 2024

Pearse Resurgence

Leader and Scribe: Lynne

The consensus was that there are eleven river crossings each way, making 22 in total. We were met at the start by Baz and invited in for coffee. We enjoyed the quirky bus stop and the old leather miners boot complete with nails. We had been told the track was very overgrown but it was fine and we made our way up the valley in about three hours. A young woman ran past us to the resurgence in one hour. We had one interesting river crossing that saw some people wet to their waist. We made a better choice on the return trip. From the resurgence we went up the dry stream bed for about half hour to the cave system. The return trip was quicker and we were back to the cars in about 2.5 hours. There was a slight mishap on the way back when someone slipped off the track down the bank and had to be helped back up. Only his pride was damaged. It was a great day.

Trampers: Alan, Dave, Deb, Heather, Janey, John, Kathleen, Kathy, Lynne, Maggie, Marie, Sally, Sjors, Sophie, Yvonne

Photos: Various people. Thanks to them all.











Wainui Circuit

4 February 2024

Leader and Scribe: Yvonne H.

Eight members - Ann, Christine, Dave, Kathleen, Kathy, Maggie, Marie and myself, Yvonne, set out to do the circuit from Canaan Road, up to Wainui Saddle via the Moa Park Track, onto the ridge northwards and then down to the Wainui River, a river crossing and lunch at the turn off to Wainui Hut, and back via a farm track.

We had some nice bird encounters on the Evans Ridge and a very friendly robin at lunch. Seven of the eight members were successful on the full circuit and become self managing for the return while I got a helicopter direct to Nelson Hospital from Wainui Hut. My pacemaker had not revived me sufficiently from a sudden drop in heart rate.

The pleasant walk became a military operation to alert the emergency services with our trusted PLB, which Maggie confirmed with another device, was very accurate at sending our coordinates. Dave found a suitable landing space for the helicopter while the patient was taken excellent care of with Marie as Chief Medical Adviser and with very capable help from the rest of the team.



I am informed that the return trip was a very relaxing counter to the earlier activity.



Photos: Kathy





Balloon Hut

11-13 February 2024

Leader and Scribe 1: Marie

Scribe 2: Ann



Five of us set off in perfect weather for Balloon Hut on Sunday morning. We checked out the rock shelters along the way, keeping an eye out for plants and birds. Sadly no who were heard or seen on this trip, however we did see lots of tussock butterflies close to Salisbury Lodge. The creeks were all extremely low, but fortunately the water tank was about 2/3 full. Ann's very useful new App called "Aotearoa Species" was great for identifying some of the plants. We pretty much had the hut to ourselves on both nights, so everybody could claim a comfortable lower bunk.

On the second day, once the mist had lifted to a bright sunny morning, we headed up towards Peel Ridge. A cold southerly wind was blowing so jackets were donned to keep us warm. Many flowers were spotted including *Celmisia hectorii*, *Gentianella bellidifolia*, *Gentianella montana*, vegetable sheep, and edelweiss. We had a stop for morning tea overlooking Lake Peel with lovely views over the ranges. We then continued on to the summit of Mt Peel, and further along for full views of the Cobb Valley. There were stunning 360 degree views of all the ranges at the summit. The Cobb Dam is very low. After a long lunch enjoying the sunshine and views we made our way back to the hut for a welcome cuppa. After which we went off looking for what seemed like a needle in a haystack - a temperature gauge by a monitoring station for wetas, but five pairs of eyes failed to find it. Two of our party again rose at 11pm to go spotting for *Deinacrida tibiospina* (Mt Arthur giant weta) again but failed to see any this time.



On our last morning we set off back across the Tablelands, where we chalked up the Bishop's Cave area for a future cave trip (perhaps staying at Salisbury) of the area, and then on down to the big rock shelter near Salisbury Lodge, where we had morning tea. After that it was a gentle wander down the track with stops at Lower Gridiron and Flora Hut.

This was a very enjoyable trip as we had such stunning weather, great views, great company, and some entertainment provided by looking for giant weta, which had wisely departed for greener grass, possibly taking the gauge with them.....

Trampers: Ann, Kathleen, Kathy, Dave, Marie. Photos: Kathy. The photo of the weta was from the web.





Mt Julius

18 February 2024

Leader and Scribe: Sjors

In the runup to the day of our walk to Julius summit, the weather forecast was not great, but every day we came closer it got better. And on the day itself it was just perfect: 15 degrees, clear skies and a cooling breeze, but not too much.

Many of you will be familiar with the Mount Robert Circuit off St Arnaud. The Julius Summit is roughly the halfway point between this circuit and Lake Angelus, so this tramp incorporated a nice distance of ridge: walking on top of the world! Walking the ridge is the reward after climbing the mountain, I would say.

Becky, Heather and Sjors were the brave souls taking on the initial 500 meter, 1h10m ascent on the 18th of Feb, before reaching the bench with superb lake views for some well earned morning tea. To imagine that all the equipment for the historic ski field there was lugged up that same path in the 50s, by hand. We met some cheerful Nelson Ski Club members who just returned from the old ski lodges in the second basin and told us that some individuals still ski (-tour) the area.

For some of the history of the Mt Robert ski field, visit <https://www.mtrobort.org.nz/our-history>, or pop into the hut named 'Relax' at Mt Robert, that sports excellent info boards (better than the website or facebook page). Shame to see so many trampers simply walk past it, and lucky that Sjors likes to poke his nose inside every single hut he sees!

We'll gloss over the fact that we just didn't reach the actual Julius Summit, mostly due to time constraints, and move on to what we saw: Some skinks, lots of lake views, historic huts, space, views all around, and a glider aeroplane! This glider was perfectly using the wind or thermal lift of the Robert Ridge, so entertained us with several fly-overs. Heather told us that the local airfield used to have an honesty box. If you land there, better have a 5-dollar note at the ready!

<https://googlesite.glidingnelson.co.nz/about>

All in all a lovely day, good exercise for a good night sleep, entertaining conversation, beautiful alpine landscape and great pizzas afterwards in St Arnaud.

Trampers: Becky, Heather and Sjors,



Photo of us at Flagtop, between 2nd and 3rd basin, with the camel hump shape of the Julius Summit in the background on the right





Beebys Hut

25-26 February 2024

Leader and Scribe: John



Things didn't start off too good because there was confusion as to the meeting point. I hadn't made this clear. To cut a long story short, two of us went up the four wheel drive track to the hut and four up the bush track, with one car left at the bush track end and one at the Six Mile carpark end.

I was with the bush track quartet and we enjoyed the uphill slog through good bush. At one point two cyclists came down a steep bit of track. Lunch on some lovely soft moss was appreciated and we then continued up onto the 4WD track to the hut. After settling in we all went further up to marvel at the views and look at the alpine plants.

Cryptic crossword time back at the hut. Kathy had her normal collection of crosswords and I had a Listener one which I hadn't been able to finish. The latter proved a fiendish opponent but eventually all but one of the missing clues were solved.

The next day we partially retraced our steps and then went down the Maitland Ridge Track to the Red Hills Hut and then back to the car at the Six Mile carpark.

Trampers: Dave, John, Kathleen, Kathy, Lynne and Yvonne H.





Swimming Trip

3 March 2024

Leader and Scribe: Kathy

On a chilly Sunday morning in March, an excited group of 5 swimmers/walkers piled into Debbie's car en route to Stephen's Bay.

The plan was to swim at all the beaches between Stephen's Bay and Honeymooners Bay if the mood took us and to walk the bits in between with a refreshment stop at the café at Kaiteriteri.

There were 2 catamarans in the bay and Debbie mentioned that she liked to swim through the middle between the 2 hulls so Kathy thought she'd give this a go after checking with the owner. It was fun! Not everyone decided it was warm enough to face the water yet though but Jo and Debbie (I think) kept Kathy company.



Next bay was Dummies and the tide was low enough to walk through the arch to the next little beach but we didn't swim here until on the way back. By now, the sun was glinting off the sea and it was warming up nicely.

We headed further up the track from here towards Kaiteriteri and were horrified at all the new development and at how close the new houses are to the track. Most of us explored a little side track with traps which fishermen use to access the rocky coastline, but Debbie decided her knees weren't up to it. We

continued along this track until we reached a good viewpoint along the coast and then re-joined Debbie.

We enjoyed the sunshine and beautiful views from the cliff path and were warming up



nicely so that by the time we descended to Little Kaiteriteri, we all felt ready for a dip. It was beautifully calm and the water felt silky and rejuvenating. It was also a good spot for some morning tea.

We dressed again as we planned to have some lunch at the café and didn't want to go in dripping wet! The tide was still low enough for us to walk around the rocks to reach Kaiteriteri and we just needed to wade across the river. As we felt as though



we needed a bit more exercise before lunch, we decided to walk through the motor camp and climb the hill behind to a viewpoint which was along a lovely cool little bush track and returned as a round trip. Two members of the group had not walked this before so it was nice to share the beautiful view from the lookout.

We enjoyed seeing the newly painted pastel chalets at the camp, reminiscent of European resorts and having the luxury of “posh” toilets on a tramp!

We had some delicious food at the café

and great service, coming out feeling very relaxed. We all agreed it was a real treat!

Kaiteriteri beach was quite busy so our next swim was at the gorgeous Breaker Bay. It was very warm by this time and quite idyllic. With few other people there and away from the road, it felt like our own private beach. We even had time to chat and laze, feeling totally unstressed. Before long though, we plunged into the turquoise waters and swam around the rocks to the very secluded Honeymooners Bay. Kathleen went back to mind our gear while the rest of us explored the beach and all the hidden houses, only visible when you landed on the beach.

Time to head back! We then retraced our steps back to Stephen’s Bay, but taking the high tide route through the bush back to Little Kaiteriteri. There were gorgeous views looking down as the shadows lengthened.

Lesa and Kathy walked behind as they were taking photos whilst the others headed back to Stephen’s for 1 last swim. Kathy managed to do a spectacular landing, slipping on the way down to Dummies, impaling her arm on a stick, but Lesa was a great nurse and a swim at Dummies washed away the blood!

The others enjoyed a last dip at Stephen’s and we returned home feeling pleasantly tired and relaxed after a wonderful day.

Participants: Debbie, Jo (new), Kathleen, Kathy, Lesa (new).

Photos: Kathy.





John Reid Hut via Chummies New Track

10-13 March 2024

Leader and Scribe: Sonya L



Don't think the team that put in the new chummies track was very chummy! Very steep, slippery, straight skywards describes the new section of the track to John Reid hut. Aside from all the grumbling it was well worth the effort to reach a picturesquely positioned hut.

Our plan was to tramp from J. Reid hut along to Kiwi Saddle hut for a night, then across Mt Luna and down to Stone hut for a night and out, but the weather gods had other plans. We stayed two nights at J. Reid hut instead. Our tents the first night were bent inwards with the force of the gusts hurtling down the valley. The second night we decided to sleep in the hut, a lot calmer. The second day we did a walk up onto the tops and enjoyed snatches of view amongst huge mountain tops and dragon backs that seemed to go onwards to the horizon. Was great to sit and have morning tea and enjoy the mountain ambience. The next day we decided to walk out along the tops to find Gibbs track to head out of the Wangapeka. The trip along the tops was challenging in spots and a bit of route finding to be had, probably good that the clouds covered the valleys below, as we walked along steep narrow tops.



We sidled below Pt 1463. The terrain was tussock, flax and strategically hidden spaniard that spiked you at every opportunity. Lots of holes lay hidden below the tussock, so made for fairly slow going. Gibbs track is a stunning track which goes down through beech, then rata dominated forests. The track is not as steep as chummies and is well marked, but your knees certainly let you know you have done some down. Upon reaching the Wangapeka river, we had a refreshing swim in a great swimming hole. Was good to cool down before walking out on the main track. Highlights would be hearing lots of ruru, snatches of stunning views and a hut to ourselves. We will go back and one day complete the whole tramp. Bluebird, no wind, days are essential.

Trampers: Alan, Sjors, Sonya
Selfie taken by Alan.
Others by Sonya.





Golden Bay Walks

17 March 2024

Leader, Scribe and Photographer: Heather

There were only three on this trip, but we had favourable weather and a good day out. We walked for a total of about three and a half hours, and drove for approximately the same amount of time, spending the remainder at the café listening to a toddler with a potential career in opera.

Our first walk was along the Payne's Ford tramway where there are swimming holes, and cliffs for climbing. When we arrived the area was quiet and deserted, but upon our return the carpark was beginning to liven up. Historically, this track has stopped in the middle of a paddock, but now there is a signposted wetland and a walk/cycleway extending to East Takaka Rd. It had a rather English countryside feel to it. We followed for a while to indulge our curiosity, but being unsure of its distance and destination at the time we eventually turned back.

After morning tea we headed out to the Kaituna Forks track. This track was severely damaged by ex-cyclone Gita in February 2018, but has been rebuilt and redirected by a local group in conjunction with DOC. There were only a few people on this track as well. We ate lunch at the forks, contemplating how a substantial post had been laid across the river to act as a bridge.

Lucky last stop was at Washbourne Scenic Reserve (not to be confused with Washbourne Gardens in Richmond). It is a mixture of exotic and native plants, seemingly random, except perhaps for an enormous rhododendron near the remains of a fireplace of a long-gone building. The 15-minute walk takes you to a stream a bit short of Onekaka Ironworks Rd; the track appeared to continue down the riverbank, but we had "been and seen" and headed back to the car.

Trampers: Christine, Heather and Marie.



Kaituna Forks track where it picks its way through storm damage



For various reasons the following tramps didn't go ahead.



Lewis Pass Tops Tenting

24-26 March 2024

Dun Mountain

31 March 2024



Angelus Hut

7-9 April 2024

Gordon's Knob

14 April 2024



Flanagans Hut

21-23 April 2024





Nydia Track

26-27 April 2024

Leader and Scribe: Heather

Kaiuma Bay starters: Dave, John, Kathleen, Lynne, Yvonne H
Duncan Bay starters: Ann, Heather, Marie, Sally.

Day 1: After a twisty drive over a road that has seen better (pre-storm) days we started our walk with morning tea at Duncan Bay, where a family we would see several times along the way also started out. We were treated to the iconic views of water through the trees, but also, confusingly, to a flourish of flowers on Scarlet rata vine (*Metrosideros fulgens*) when we are accustomed to rata flowers much earlier in the year (from *M. umbellata*). *M. fulgens* does, however, flower in autumn according to internet sources. There was evidence of major erosion damage, where sides of a gully had been scraped clean of substantial growth and a neatly-cut track went through weedy new growth. We followed the meandering track, feeling that it was further than it needed to be at times, but it is twice as far to travel by boat which is how many would access this area. We rested and ate afternoon tea near the jetty for the private baches in Nydia Bay (just as the family who passed us having morning tea were leaving) then continued on to the Lodge – about an hour more. Here there was a warm welcome by the Ranger and the Kaiuma group, a hot shower and a well-appointed communal room for dinner and evening chat; I was very taken with the hospitality of the Lodge.



Day 2: After a fairly long walk the previous day it was nice to start with a gentle stroll back around the shoreline then up through open farmland, past stands of native trees including kahikatea; eventually coming across the cattle that the signs on gates warned us about, but they were very calm and understanding and taking life easy too. After that there were a number of challenging uphill sections that were rough for walking and would be tough on a mountain bike (which is an option on this track). Multiple stops were made for catching breath where there was a bird or a diversity of plants, ferns or fungi for trying out the new app 'Aoteroa Species Classifier' that Ann was sharing with Marie. We met up with the family at Kaiuma Saddle who had leapfrogged with our party. Another downhill and uphill stretch, a break for lunch, then we made the final downhill run into Kaiuma Bay; but I forgot to look for the view of Tapuae-o-Uenuku which may have had snow on it following an overnight cold front, so maybe I will have to walk this way again. Our trip concluded with changeover of vehicles in Rai Valley.



Photo: Heather





Poet Hut, Mungo River, West Coast
27 December 2019