

# South Wairarapa Tramping Club

## Newsletter for June 2025

[www.swtc.org.nz](http://www.swtc.org.nz)

*Club night:*

**AGM** Tuesday 10 June 7.30 pm

**Please make the effort to come** as we expect to pass a resolution adopting the new Constitution - and under those rules (which are mandatory) all members are supposed to sign a consent to be a member.

**Cookes' house, 57 Wood Street**

*Supper:* (tea towel, milk and biscuits) David and Kaye Bowie  
Supper box is kept in the store cupboard at Studio 73

For the next two meetings the roster is:

July: Billy Adair

August: Jennifer Pomeroy

### ***Trip List***

2025

<b>Date</b>	<b>Destination</b>	<b>Trip Coordinator</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Fitness</b>
7.6	Mangatāre ridge with MTC (see Duntulm.nz)	Celia Wade-Brown	021 247 8630	F
14.6	Powell Hut	John Wilson	304 8486 or 022 309 8480	F
21.6	Lake Reserve	Ian Montgomerie	021 0237 4092	E
28.6	Wellington Cable Car Museum & Botanic Gardens?	<b>Coordinator needed</b>		
5.7	Norbert Creek loop with MTC	Stuart Hammond	04 526 7224	F

*If you wish to go on a trip, please let the organiser know by the Thursday prior.*

### ***Trip Gradings***

*The letters are an indication of how tough it will be.*

**E** **Easy.** Completely flat, no hills, 2 – 3 hours.

**M** **Moderate fitness.** Some hills, well formed tracks. 4-6 hours walk per day.

**F More fitness.** Steep hills, challenging tracks. May go off tracks. 6 – 8 hours walk per day.

**Leaders:** Please remember if you are unable to lead your trip it is your responsibility to find a replacement leader / trip.

### ***Trip Reports***

#### ŌTARI-WILTON'S BUSH 10 MAY

##### *Combined trip with Masterton Tramping Club*

On a perfect autumn morning four MTC members drove to Upper Hutt, parked Phil's car, then travelled by bus to Wellington railway station and thence to Ōtari. Six SWTC members arrived independently by car.

Our guide, Kathy Ombler, met us and led us across the canopy walkway to the Cockayne Lookout, where we had morning tea in the sunshine while she outlined the story of Ōtarikākā (Ōtari), 'the place of snares to trap kākā'.

From the earliest settlement of Te Whanganui-a-Tara, Ōtari was a mahinga kai, a food-gathering area. In the 1800s, much of the iwi land became public reserve and is now part of Ōtari-Wilton's Bush.

Settler farmers began clearing the land in the 1800s. One, Job Wilton, left 7 hectares of forest untouched and fenced as the original Wilton's Bush. Ōtari Scenic Reserve, comprising much of the adjoining land, was established in 1906.

Further steep and regenerating land was added to the reserve, and in 1918 Wellington City Council took over its management 'for recreation purposes and the preservation of native flora'. The addition of Wilton's Bush to the reserve in 1925 brought the total area to about 100 hectares. One tract remains in the ownership of shareholders associated with Ngāti Tama.

In the early 1920s, botanist Dr Leonard Cockayne was dismayed at the destruction of New Zealand's native forests and flora. He wanted to avoid the large scale loss of species, and chose to bring as many as possible to Ōtari.

The Ōtari Open-Air Native Plant Museum opened in 1926. With Wellington Parks and Reserves Director J.G. McKenzie, Cockayne developed a vision to establish and cultivate a collection of New Zealand plants, teach people about native plants, advocate their use in gardens and restore the native forest of Ōtari. This is still the vision for Ōtari-Wilton's Bush.<sup>1</sup>

As we walked down the path to the Troup Lawn (with 1940s memories for the trip coordinator) in the valley of Kaiwharawhara Stream, we met some of the volunteers who contribute to the upkeep of the reserve. We watched a giant eel in the stream, then ascended into the forest to the north, pausing to admire Moko, an 800-year-old rimu that is Wellington's largest remaining native tree.

Kohekohe ('New Zealand mahogany', *Didymocheton spectabilis*) with its curious trunk-borne fruits, abounded on the upper slopes. This tree has characteristics normally associated with tropical vegetation: its flowers and fruit grow directly from the trunk or branches, and its large, glossy, pinnate leaves may be up to 40 centimetres long. Once common in damp coastal and lowland areas in the North Island, kohekohe forest has mostly disappeared because of clearing or possum browsing.

A right turn took us along the Kohekohe Trail, which sidles the hillside. It was formed by volunteers including John Dawson, one of the trip coordinator's botany teachers in the early '60s and more recently co-author of the seminal *New Zealand's Native Trees*. This brought us to the Skyline Walkway (on which a trip is scheduled for September), where we lunched with a view to British Peak in one direction and the city and harbour in the other. We descended another well graded track through the forest to the Flax Clearing and so back to the valley of Kaiwharawhara Stream.

Our walk ended at the visitor centre, after seeing some of the nearby plant collections from as far afield as Aotearoa's subantarctic and northern offshore islands.

Many thanks to Kathy for a most enjoyable and instructive day.

Participants were Ross Anderson, Jenny Bradley, Phil Brown, Chris Crowe, Liz Crowe, Jane Lenting, Geraldine Oliver, Hilary Ryan, John Rhodes (coordinator) and Mark Walthall.

Photos are at <https://swtc.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/2025.05.10-Otari-Wiltons-Bush.pdf>

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## CANNON POINT SATURDAY 31 MAY

Eight of us left Greytown in really strong winds, not looking forward to the trip over the Rimutaka Hill. However, there were very few gusts of wind as we drove over the hill, and all was calm and sunny at Totara Park.

None of us had been on the Cannon Point track since the beginning of the track had been replaced by a new road and subdivision, with houses under construction. The track was well signposted from Tulsa Park, up a new route following Three Skulls \* Road till we branched off that and took a steeper path up through the pine trees to the trig, where we had morning tea and observed snow on Tapuaenuku.

From the trig we descended gradually, and then more steeply, down past the reservoir, where large numbers of ducks swam hopefully towards our group standing on the viewing platform, only to be disappointed when none of us had any spare food for them. The route crosses three bridges before emerging above Bridge St at a parking area, where we ate our lunch.

We returned to Tulsa Park through the housing area, linking up with California Drive which took us back to our cars, after a 3 hour 50 minute walk: 10.36 kms, and a height gain of 393 metres.

Those on the trip were Ross Anderson, Barry Kempton, Ian & Rosie Montgomerie, Jen Pomeroy, Stefan van Trig, and Ed & Juliet Cooke, co-ordinators.

\* We wondered whether the skulls were animal or human - but never saw any skulls, let alone three!









