

South Wairarapa Tramping Club

Newsletter for August 2026

www.swtc.org.nz

Club night:

Tuesday 11 August 7.30 pm

Studio 73, Main Street, Greytown

Speaker: Paul Furkert speaking about his trip up the Waitaha River to Ivory Lake, then onwards over the Whitcombe Pass and down the Rakaia River.

Supper: (tea towel, milk and biscuits) Juliet & Ed Cooke
Supper box is kept in the store cupboard at Studio 73

For the next two meetings the roster is:

Sep: Rosie & Ian Montgomery

Oct: Mary & Bruce Lambert

Trip List

2026

Date	Destination	Trip Coordinator	Phone	Fitness
1.8	Mt Dick	Ingrid Ward	021 264 8343	M
8.8	Kaitoke ridge track	Stuart Hammond	04 526 7224	F
15.8	Near Martinborough	Ruth & Peter Graham	027 445 0882	
23.8#	Fensham Reserve	John Rhodes	06 304 9095	M
29.8	Trip needed – offers please			
5.9	Belmont Regional Park	John Rhodes	06 304 9095	M

Sunday

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.

M **Moderate fitness.** Some hills, well formed tracks.

F **More fitness.** Steep hills, challenging tracks. May go off tracks.

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

Trip Reports

MATIU / SOMES ISLAND 4 JULY

On a midwinter's morning at 8 am, sparrows John Wilson, John Rhodes, Barry Kempton and Hilary Ryan met and travelled to Days Bay, arriving in time to visit the cosy pavilion while we waited for the East by West ferry. The wind from the north was strong, but the weather was dry, brighter than expected and not too bad in sheltered places. We put on suitable jackets and when the ferry arrived we all hopped aboard, holding on tightly as the boat was rocking! It's a short crossing to the island, and we were soon heading into the DOC biosecurity check room, before exiting onto the island to explore.

We made quick work of a steep path up the hill under the big trees to the little nursery, where propagation of plants for the revegetation of the island is being undertaken by many volunteers. After a brief visit to the little visitor centre housed in one of the quaint old buildings we continued clockwise around the circuit. The path is generally flat but was a little slippery with mud in some places. There are great views of Lower Hutt, Wellington Heads, Miramar and back to the city as you continue.

We climbed steps to the impressive concrete remnants of WW2 gun batteries and marvelled at the few hardy old pines still standing despite many storms. On continuing along the circuit path past the old lighthouse to the lookout we saw the seabirds soaring, and John even saw an orca in the waters below.

The wind turbine was very busy when we walked back through the old pa site and quarantine buildings, before heading down the main route to wait for the ferry. There wasn't enough time to do the full circuit or visit the cemetery.

Fortunately the rain held off. We had hoped to stay on the island longer, have our lunch, do a more complete extended trip and meet up with Lynne King, but it seems that the ferry timetable is determined by East by West fluctuating schedules, so we returned to Days Bay all too soon and took shelter in the Skoda before returning via the Eastern Hutt route.

A pleasant and very easy trip.

Photos are at <https://swtc.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/2026.07.04-Matiu-or-Somes-Island.pdf>

Hilary Ryan

RANGITŪMAU 12 JULY

Dawn brought a day of crystalline clarity after a week of bitter cold and rain. A small convoy—with its origin in Akatarawa and pickups in Greytown, Carterton, Masterton and Double Bridges—proceeded up the valley towards the peak that dominates it.

We were 11: Peter Ammunson, Margaret Beale, Sandra Burles, Sheila Butler, Chris Crowe, Liz Crowe, Stuart Hammond, Katrina McGillicuddy, Cushla Murphy, John Rhodes and John Wilson.

A short drive from the Lake Mallard gateway brought us to a large woolshed. On foot, we then followed the vehicle track that leads to the microwave and radio communications tower at the summit of Rangitūmau.

As we climbed, our view of the valley below expanded, as did that of the snow-capped Three Kings, rising above cloud that almost hid Pukeamoamo / Mitre.



Away to the south, Mt Hector was clear.



Rangitūmau seemed to keep receding, and with it the coordinator's hopes of an early morning tea. But at last we reached the survey mark, 604 metres above the sea.

There Peter said this karakia:

*Whakataka te hau ki te uru
Whakataka te hau ki te tonga
Kia mākinakina ki uta
Kia mātaratara ki tai
E hī ake ana te atakura
He tio, he huka, he hau hu
Tihei mauri ora*

*Cease the winds from the west
Cease the winds from the south
Let the breeze blow over the land
Let the breeze blow over the ocean
Let the red-tipped dawn come with a sharpened air.
A touch of frost, a promise of a glorious day.*

Peter and John then recounted the story of Haunui-a-Nanaia, who long ago came this way after pursuing his runaway wife Wairaka down the west coast of Te Ika a Māui.

Wairaka, turned into stone near Pukerua Bay



From the top of Remutaka, Hau saw a lone mountain at the northern end of the valley, which he used as a landmark. He named it Rangitūmau, meaning that it holds up the sky.

Wairarapa Māori express their identity and kinship with the land by saying, ‘Ko Rangitūmau te maunga, ko Ruamahanga te awa, ko Wairarapa te roto’ (‘Rangitūmau the mountain, Ruamahanga the river, Wairarapa the lake’). The saying recognises the mountain at the head of their valley, the great river that drains their valley and the lake at its foot.

Several trampers asked about the origin of the limestone on Rangitūmau, which is weathered into intricate shapes.



The Rangitūmau limestone consists of quintillions of broken bits of shells. Shelly invertebrates living in such numbers need clear water, free of sediment that clogs their delicate filter feeding organs. Also, the water must be less than a few hundred metres deep to allow sunlight to penetrate, so that diatoms—the start of marine food chains—can live. However, most such sea floor is near land, where sand and mud abound.

A rare larger shell fragment (from an oyster) picked up on our walk, with centimetre scale.



The shelly animals that make the Rangitūmau limestone lived on a ridge free of land-derived sediment, shallow enough for light to reach it, and surrounded by deeper water where sand and mud accumulated.

This ridge was one of several caused by the pushing together of the Indo-Australian and Pacific plates, about a million years ago. It slowly rose above the water to become part of the land. Limestone of the same kind and with the same origin is found right along the eastern side of the Wairarapa valley and as far north as Hawke Bay.

The Three Canoes east of Martinborough (seen from Woodside) are formed from limestone like that of Rangitūmau.



Beyond the coast the process continues today, forming ridges of the same kind, also covered with shell fragments. Here are some that were dredged by NIWA researchers from a depth of 384 metres on the South Madden Bank



... about 40 kilometres off Cape Turnagain.



Looking north from Rangitūmau we saw Mt Ruapehu looming in the distance (185 kilometres away), reminding us that we're on an active plate boundary.

Our hosts, Viv and Chris Bunny, came up on mountain bikes and stopped to chat with us in the sunshine, then executed flawless hill starts.

Other photos are at <https://swtc.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/2026.07.12-Rangitumau.pdf>

John Rhodes (coordinator)

BIKE RIDE FEATHERSTON 26 JULY

Four bikers left the Rail Trail at 9.30 to bike through the trail and on to Underhill Road and on to Featherston.

The temperature was about 7 degrees and it was freezing, we could hardly feel our hands by the time we got to Featherston.

We met lots of dog walkers and walkers on the trail and it was wet and muddy on the trail as well as Underhill Road.

Arrived in Featherston about 10.40am and had a much needed coffee and a warm up at the Everest Cafe.

We left again at 11.30am to bike back and arrived at Greytown at 12.30pm. It was nice to be out and about, though it was cold.

Thanks to David Bowie and Marysia Depczynski for joining us.

Leaders for the day Mary and Bruce Lambert.

