

17 May Whatipu Leader John

It was a lovely day for the first tramp after lockdown. We walked around past the caves till we came upon a 2m rock wall. This wall is climbable and one of our members did just that. There was also the option of wading around it. However, I happened to be carrying an aluminium ladder so up that we went. On the other side of that, we hid the ladder and meandered along the unofficial track or just made our own way through quite a lovely area until, upon reaching an upright rock that looks like a chess piece, the going got harder. We bushbashed through flax and water until we found we were still a long way from the Pararaha, so stopped for lunch sitting on a rock outcrop and then returned.

Members present were Alan, Dave, Eleanor, Heather, John, Louis A, Lynne, Peter and Sandra

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24 May Riverhead Forest Leader Shena

8 of us met at the Old North Road entrance to the forest. 10 people had registered but 2 pulled out; one had hurt her back and the other (**she** shall remain nameless,so there is a clue in that) said she looked out the window and decided to give it a miss. The car park was near capacity, so we were going to meet lots of mountain bikers, runners, dog walkers and people walking to enjoy the fresh air. Yes, it was overcast, and some light rain or drizzle was expected, and it eventuated towards the end of our walk.

We headed into the trails, running parallel to Browns Road. Someone behind me commented that she hoped I knew where I was going as there were no trail names. We popped out onto the gravel and made our way down Limestone Road where we saw the first of several named trails - Thing 1 and Thing 2. This had us pondering for a while until someone said they are characters in a Dr Suess book. (Other tracks we passed were Once ler, Burma Moto Link, Thistler and Motorun Down). Down we went to Burma Bridge track and onto Burma Road and just around the corner on Strip Road we had morning tea as it was more sheltered here rather than the planned spot at the top of the hill. This is a large concreted area where I think the air force does exercises. I had a challenge for everyone to pick up a weight in the middle of the area. We strolled over to read 250 kg on it and then someone noticed another smaller one next to it and most of us had a try and succeeded at lifting it. It was a 20 kg plastic container with concrete poured into it. Is concrete heavier than water? At the edge of the open area was another weight - 650 kg!!

So onwards to the Trig which is barely discernible now amongst the trees. Unfortunately, the views were shrouded in cloud, so we didn't linger. At the side of Long Bush Road and on the corner of a side road, we huddled under trees for lunch. A group of about 6 people started down the side road and then turned around and carried on down Long Bush Road. We soon found out why. After lunch we started down the side road to have it finish after about 300/400 metres. Whoops. So back up the hill. It was worth it in that we got a lot of mileage out of the pig bones scattered along the side of the road. And there was Wattle Road, the road we should have gone down and Weir Road off it. After a long walk along the often-heavy gravel of Long Bush Road we headed up another bush track where we met a group of young mountain bikers having fun in the mud. Finally, out of the bush onto Barlow and then Browns Road and the car park.

Those attending were: Shena (leader), Jim, Denise, Sandra, Alan, Eleanor, Jill D and Izzy.

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31 May Huna's Leader Lynne

Four of us turned up at the Dam at 10.00. This later start gave us more time to get there. Myself, John, Shirley O and John Walter. We headed up Lilburn Road as per usual and stopped for morning tea at the hut. We then explored the unmarked track on the left just past the hut, which I had understood, went up to manganese mines. We didn't find the mines but ended up at some sort of weather station and rain measuring apparatus. We then went back down and proceeded around Rata

Ridge. We listened out for Kakapo but didn't hear a definite sound from them. We lunched at the junction with Mangatawhiri track. I always forget about the hill on Rata Ridge! By the time we got to the steep part it was starting to rain and was quite slippery. This turned out to be quite a workout. By the time we headed back down Lilburn, it was raining solidly, and good conversation took my mind off my legs. Thank you to everyone that turned up.

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07 June Bayview-Beach Haven Leader Angela

Wow, what a great turnout we had for our walk around the bush area of Bayview/Beach Haven. 19 people in total. We headed off at 9 am walking through the bush trail of Lynn Reserve and then across to Eskdale Reserve where we stopped for morning tea. After reaching the top of Eskdale Reserve where it meets with Glenfield Road, we then returned the way we came to the beginning of Eskdale Reserve. We had to walk along the road for a short while as some of Eskdale Reserve is closed due to an upgrade for mountain bikes. We then headed across the road to Beach Haven where we followed the water edge around Shephard's Park stopping for lunch at the spot where we had our Xmas Party.

It's amazing that given we were in suburbia most of the walk was so tranquil. It felt like we were a long way from the city with views of mangroves, native bush, and rocky streams. We could have been in the Waitakeres at times. The walk was well enjoyed and great to discover a spot many people hadn't explored before.

Entire walk including breaks was 5.45 hours.