

A CELEBRATION OF THE FIRST  
FIFTY YEARS OF THE NELSON  
ROCK AND MINERAL CLUB



## INTRODUCTION

- The very history of Nelson is intimately associated with the search for mineral wealth which occurs in any newly settled area.
- Among the early settlers of New Zealand were several prominent geologists who made expeditions the length and breadth of the country through some extremely difficult terrain, and under very harsh conditions, searching to understand what the earth might yield in the way of mineral wealth and agricultural opportunities.
- The Nelson region was reported as being extremely diverse and complex and over the years it has gained the reputation of being a paradise for the rockhound.
- It is not surprising therefore that newcomers to the region are fascinated by the different rocks they see in the area and around fifty years ago, a group of interested locals decided to set up the Nelson rock and Mineral Club to further their understanding of the geology of the region.

## FOUNDER MEMBERS

As research for this presentation I decided that it would be worth tracking down and reading through all the minutes of the club, a somewhat daunting task.

- Apart from the difficulty of deciphering the copperplate of early secretaries, it took me awhile to understand that the men were referred to as Messires and the women as Mesdames! No first names were used so it seems that the club was run along much more formal lines in the early days.
- Ian Ladds mentions being a Member in 1963/4 before the constitution was finished and the first Patron was also elected before the Club was registered.
- *(Little bit of history): In 1897 the enormous interest in mining in New Zealand led to the formation of a New Zealand Department of Mining Engineers which began with 80 members but only survived initially for four years. On its demise, 28 of its member joined the Australian Institute of Metalliferous Mining and Metallurgy (AusIMM). Both our first two patrons were elected as New Zealand representative Councillors to this body in their time, as was Jock Braithwaite later on.*
- The club started around some older men who had looked for gold during the depression; and the expanding prospecting being done by Lime and Marble Ltd., and others at the time.
- The earliest notes dating back to 1960, mention the following people: Mr Way, Mr Railton, Mr Canton, Mr Davies (who introduced Mrs Way as Secretary), Mr Bullen, Mr Faulkner from Waimea County Council, Mr Hogg, Mr McLeod, Mr Stanton & Miss Craig, Mr Bayley.
- They met at NZART rooms.
- 47 interested people were at the first meeting but this rapidly dropped to 25, then 18, and their early minutes reflect a need for a place to meet.
- The Nelson Rock and Mineral Club did not become an Incorporated Society until October 4th 1965.

## PATRONS

- Over the 50+ years we have existed, our club has only had three Patrons:
- The first was Tas McKee, elected on October 27th 1964 – died 1973.
- Dr G.J. Williams (Author of ECONOMIC GEOLOGY OF NEW ZEALAND) 1973 – 1984.
- Dr Mike Johnston: July 2nd 1984 – present

## TASMAN (TAS) JOSEPH MCKEE 1911 – 1973

Industrial and Agricultural Chemist, Geologist and Company Director



Tas McKee at work in his laboratory, probably during the 1950s



Tas McKee 1960's

Photographs and notes from Te Ara Encyclopaedia of Aotearoa.

- Studied for BSC in Chemistry and Geology at Victoria University.

- 1932 established Fruitgrowers Chemical Company at Port Mapua with his father and brother Guy.
- Worked for 9 years developing colloidal sulphur as a fungicide eliminating need for imports.
- 1938 - The 3 McKees established Lime and Marble.
- 1950's -a range of mineral exploration and development, including use of helicopters.
- 1960's ventured into oil exploration (with Jock Braithwaite).
- 1965 elected NZ representative to Aus IMM.
- 1966 OBE for pioneering work (he stressed contribution of his 150 staff).
- From 1932 to 1960's agrichemicals changed from lime and sulphur to persistent organo-chlorines like DDT. These in turn were replaced by the more toxic, but less persistent organo-phosphates.
- 1972 Read Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring" and was appointed to Environment Council.
- 1972 - Last public address at 12th Science Congress at Massey University stressed environmentally damaging practices by mining industry could no longer be tolerated.
- After his death his business merged – TNL and in 1988 the Mapua operation was closed down.

## **GORDON J. WILLIAMS - PATRON 1973-1984**

- 1944 65 Dean of the Otago School of Mines and served as N.Z. representative to AusIMM.
- 1955 gave Cawthron Memorial Lecture entitled "New Mineral Discoveries in the Nelson Province" on Uranium discovery in the Buller Gorge.
- 1965 - 8th Commonwealth Mining and Metallurgical Congress held in Australia & N.Z.
- "Economic Geology of N.Z." produced, largely by Williams, subsequently becoming "the bible" for those engaged in mineral exploration.
- 1965 – Left for Teheran to establish a Department of Mining Resources.

## **DR. MIKE JOHNSTON - PATRON SINCE 1984!**

- Now as we all know Dr. Mike has an awesome geological pedigree in his own right; but I decided to look more at what he has done for the Club in his long patronage. He has been a source of inspiration and instruction to us for many years.
- Mike is a highly respected Geologist who has worked tirelessly in the Nelson region. He has not only made himself available as a speaker (and huge draw card) at our Annual General Meetings, each November, but has also been extremely generous in donating many of the books and maps, which he has been involved in publishing, to the Club.
- He was also involved in the Club's initiative to provide a workshop of site visits and education, entitled "Whose Fault is it Anyway?" in 1999 which was patronised by the

region's senior science teachers, who, under N.C.E.A. are required to teach a Geological component. The notes he provided have become the basis for the secondary geology teaching in the Nelson region. We are truly honoured to have him.



Magazine point, Nelson, with Dr. Mike Johnston and Diane Toole

## WANGAPEKA CLAIM

Early in the life of the Club the decision to apply for miners rights over an area of the Wangapeka was made, simply to make it easier for members to look for gold in the area. Tas McKee was most likely behind this but eventually it was unsustainable by the club.

- Claim over lower Cullifords Hill bounded by the Blue Creek and Nuggety (including Colossus Mine?) applied for 11/1/1967 – Florence Grabham (president) wanted mineral rights too.
- 1969 Wangapeka - 10 hours gorse slashing.
- 1970 The club was to further develop the resource. There was a hut for members – burned out?
- Club to write to the government to stop excessive granting of rights to mining companies.
- Wangapeka claim, Lengthy discussion on the Club's rights and duties: to succeed in holding the claim, the club had to put in a certain amount of man hours and report to the Mines Dept every 6 months together with a statutory declaration.
- In Sept 1971 the Wangapeka claim of 1000 acres was coming up for rent again at \$1 per acre.
- A common phrase in the minutes (when faced with decisions of some magnitude) is to "Leave it for the incoming committee to decide."!
- 1972 Discussion held about safety of general public and insurance taken out covering volunteers at claim.
- 1974 Discussion on orbicular granite in Granity river brought our by Vern Grabham. Relinquishing the claim on the Collossus Mine was discussed – left till AGM.
- 1976 Interest in exclusive rights by members over Wangapeka claim relinquished. AGM poorly attended.

## **PRESIDENTS AND OTHER COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

The first President, Mr McLeod was elected in 1965 with two Vice Presidents, Mr Bayley for Town and Mrs Henry for Country (Motueka) and this format existed until 1997.

Mrs Ladds was the secretary and

Mr Moulder the Treasurer.

### **PRESIDENTS**

### **Years served**

1965-7 Mr McLeod	(2)
1967-9 Mr Bayley	(2)
1969-70 Mr. Jim Smith	(1)
1970-72 Mr J. Samuels	(2)
1972-8 Mrs F. Grabham	(6)
1978-1980 Sid Jenks	(2)
1980-81 Mr Jim Smith	(1)
1981-2 Mrs F. Grabham	(1)
1982-84 Mr P. Brunt	(2)
1984-93 Mr Cyril Wells	(9)
1993-98 Mr Philip Wells	(5)
1998-9 Mr Rex Hunt	(1)
1999-2002 Mr Philip Wells	(3)
2002-4 Mr Alan Mathews	(2)
2004-7 Mr Don Kivell	(3)
2007-10 Mr Chris Fraser	(3)

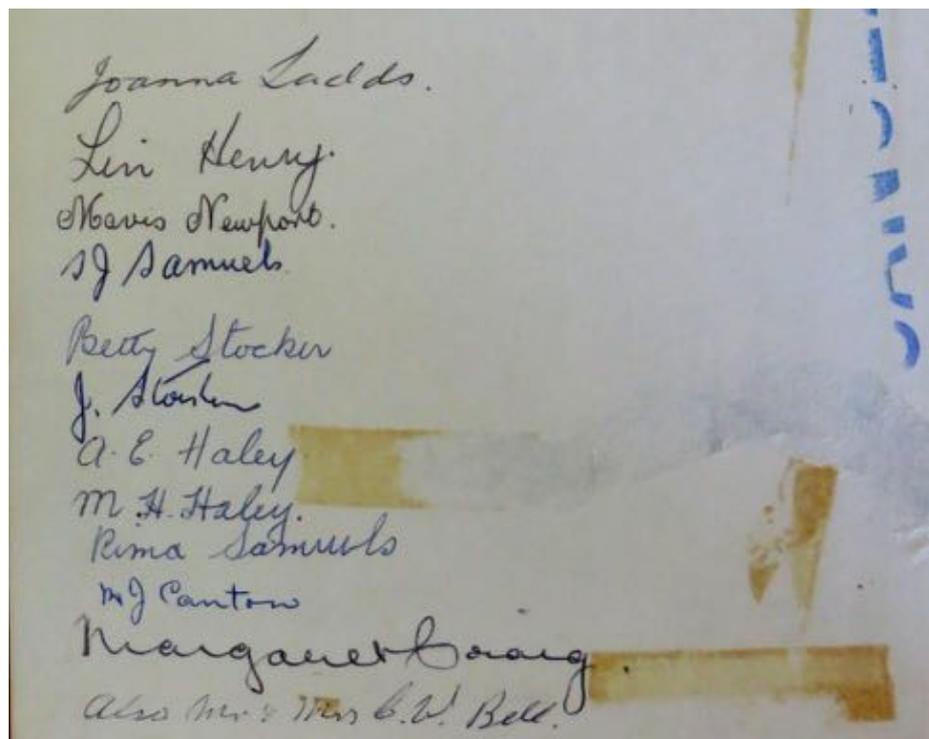
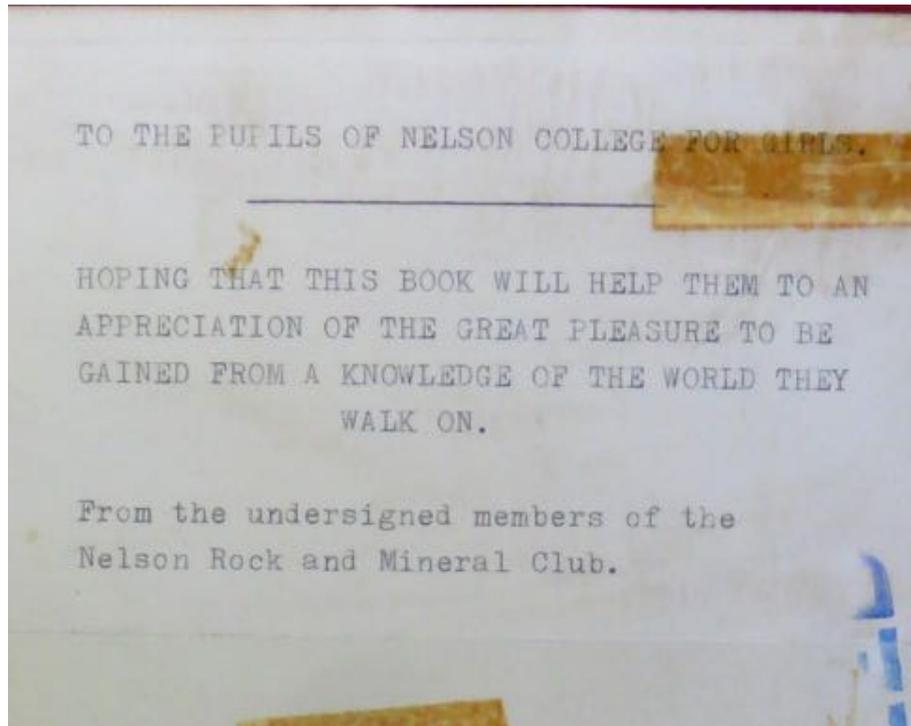
Since 2010 no one has stood for president so members of the committee roster the role of chairperson.

## OTHER DOCUMENTS (with thanks to Dave Buchan)

In 1968 the book "Mineralogy" by Kraus Hunt Ramsdell, was donated to the pupils of Girls College (it was later cancelled and discovered at a book fair by Dave Buchan).

It is signed by Joanna Ladds, Lin Henry, Mavis Newport, Rima and S.J. Samuels, Betty Stocker, A.E. Haley and M.H. Haley, M.J. Canton, Margaret Craig, Mrs B.W. Bell.

Mr. Eric Ladds also organised interesting rocks to be placed in the school grounds. Education has always been part of our aim.



This is the record of those Members who attended the 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary celebration of the Nelson Rock and Mineral Club.



**Nelson Rock & Mineral Club (Inc.)**  
**21 YEARS OF ACTIVITY**  
**Patron Dr Mike Johnston**  
**Guest Speaker: Jim Henderson**

*Handwritten signatures and names:*

- Free Ducla 21 Douglas Road Nelson
- Hub Opdenbosch Queenst Richmond
- Timothy Opdenbosch " " Dawson Heights
- et. Ast. 1, Selbourne ave, Richmond
- Ruth Jacobsen Blyton R.D. 1. Takaka
- Ted Jacobsen Blyton R.D. 1. Takaka
- Gayle Wells Jim Henderson Dow.
- Elaine Wells
- John Patterson Alan Patterson Kath. Blum
- Sylvia Hart
- Eileen Smith V.C. Franklin

*Other handwritten notes:*

- 1964
- 1985
- Autograph Card
- J.L. Gray
- 1984

## PEOPLE OF THE ROCK AND MINERAL CLUB



Philip and Elaine Wells

### ED SIXTUS

- From his book, "Canaan: the hidden land of the Marble Mountain". p.84
- Over many years I have been pleased to have been a member of the Nelson Rock and Mineral Club, and have had the pleasure of many interesting field trips and club meeting, also of collecting trips to other provinces with other Club members. One of these times was down the West Coast to Jackson's Bay with Vern Grabham. We travelled down in his Landover towing a trailer, calling at the places that we knew of where minerals were to be found and arrived home with many memories of the beautiful scenery we travelled through, and plenty of nice specimens for our collections.
- Ed Sixtus was a life member of our club and is mentioned in many papers and books on N.Z. mineralogy. Watters (1963) made references to Canaan minerals found by Ed and perhaps the crowning mineralogical achievement was the identification of the rare radioactive minerals fergusonite and samarskite. Finally, "...Ed Sixtus is the most knowledgeable, self-taught, amateur geologist to be found in the country" (attributed to Prof G.J.Williams).



Fossicking at Parapara with Ed Sixtus



*Nelson Rock & Mineral Club visit Barite & Fluorite deposit at Thompson Hill, Baton, E.J. Sixtus with hammer.*

Vern Grabham and his famous Austin Gypsy



The son of Mr and Mrs Grabham, he was a retired British army driver. He was sometimes gruff, but held the position of Club Treasurer for many years. He drove this distinctive Austin Gypsy.



Florence Grabham, Kath Blunt and Jim Smith.

**Mrs Florence Grabham** – Club President for some years and very good too. She was also a good and well known artist with a number of her paintings in Tasman park Rest Home in Stoke. She was a nurse in WW1 and loved all rocks. She broke her ankle on Mount Arthur and walked all the way back down on it.

**Sid Jenks** - A Teacher at Waimea Intermediate. In Ian's view the best field trip leader he's known. He still has some of the trip notes that he produced and he believes there are some in the club library. He lead a number of very exiting trips that where always a pleasure to go on.

**Ralfe and Cisi Blake** - A couple from Blenheim, joined very early on. They had an early type Subaru and would come through the Maungatapu. Ten years later they were involved in the starting up of the Marlborough Club.



Mr Jim Smith and Mrs Elaine Wells

Jim was president on more than one occasion and VP for many years. He was fascinated by gold and had a “nose” for it. He loved cutting and polishing and got into faceting later on. He kept meticulous notes of trips which are in our Club Library.

**Eric and Joanna Ladds** – Ian’s parents: Joanna liked the colour of rocks and got to develop her interest with polished stone and a silver jewellery course allowing her to make bits and pieces. Eric liked gold panning and was good at making machinery. He made a long tumbler that could hold 4 pots or drums at a time. They just loved being out on the trips and the new places that the trips took them.

**Dr James Crampton** - Joined the club in his early teens and became part of a group of young folk that Ian’s parents encouraged and helped,. Ian had the privilege of watching him grow through university and on to Cambridge to do his Doctorate. Another was David Woods.

**Mavis and Ivan Newport** - A wonderful couple who where a driving force in the club. I just remember Mavis, (Vice President between 1973-8), the tough pants wearer and Ivan the quite one who got on with it. I think that sometimes he just didn’t hear Mavis or deliberately ignored her. They were early micro-mounters.

**George and Lyn Henry:** - A delightful couple who used to come on overnight field trips in a Morris camper van. George was a big gentle giant of a Shetland Islander. They lived in Motueka and were involved in the next photo: ‘The Rock Hounds Salute’ with Ian’s mother.



Lin Henry, Joanna Ladds and George Henry doing the Rockhound salute

Mr Cyil Wells and the young Philip



Their interest began around 1974/5 and both became fascinated with cutting and polishing. Later, Philip became interested in Micro mounting. Between them they have held the club presidency for over 17 years!

**Colin Bayley** – was Involved for 3 to 4 years and interested in gold panning.

**Charlie Davies** - Husband of Sonia, the Labour M.P. He was among the first or start up group of the club. He also was into gold panning with a history of Gold mining during the depression.

**The Samuels** - Early club members and well known in Nelson for the Samuels Rose Gardens at Broadgreen House .They grew and cultivated roses for the NZ market.

**Lew Mooar** - A retired Post office gentleman who just enjoyed the trip and company as outings.

**The Stocker family John and Betty** - came on field trips and was Club treasurer

**George Railton** - An early member with a science back ground. It is possible he worked at The Cawthron Institute.



Mr Cyril Wells enjoying a trip



Vern Grabham and Kath Blunt

Hillary Drake - Club geologist.

Kath Blunt – Secretary for many years.

David Woods – Took a digger into Thompson’s Hill to excavate the fluorite/barite deposits.

Jean Jenks – had to be helicoptered out of Thompson’s Hill after a bad fall. Loved orchids.

The Bells were the caretakers of the Wangapeka Rolling river claim.

Ruth Jacobsen: very knowledgeable and a keen micro mounter.



Mrs Kath Blunt. Secretary between 1982 - 1993.



Hillary Drake, Club Geologist



Kath Blunt, Nan Ash, Hillary Drake, Jim Smith, Elaine Wells, Phillip Wells

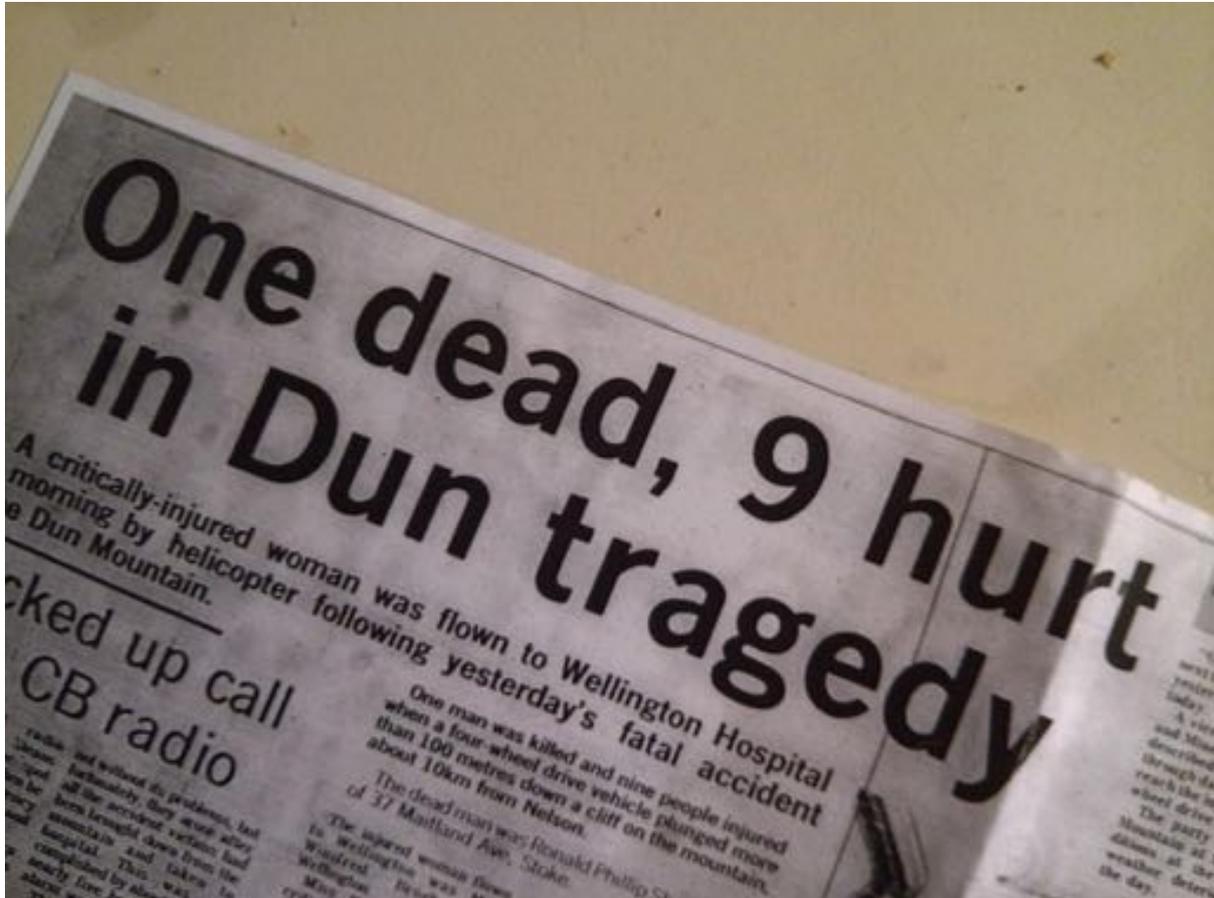


Philip Wells and Vern Grabham

## **There are a number of perennial topics that arise in the minutes of the past 50 years; and the first one is TRIPS!**

The absolute the absolute highlight of the club's activities, are the trips.

However, Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> May 1980 was the blackest day in our Club's history.



....and another young lady guest of the Club died 5 days later.....

### **REPORT OF THE TRAGEDY IN THE NELSON MAIL 19/05/1980**

A critically injured woman was flown to Wellington Hospital this morning by helicopter following yesterday's fatal accident on the Dun Mountain.

One man was killed and nine people injured when a four-wheel drive vehicle is plunged more than 100 m down a cliff on the mountain about 10k from Nelson.

The dead man was Ronald Phillip Shorter, 46, of 37 Maitland Avenue Stoke.

The accident happened shortly after 2 p.m. during a Nelson Rock and mineral club field trip involving two four-wheel drive vehicles.

As they were traversing a ridge on the Dun Mountain at the head of the Brook Valley, one of the vehicles slipped off the track and down the cliff face.

The party had driven up the Dun Mountain at 9.15 a.m. Although conditions at the time were fine, the weather deteriorated rapidly during the day.

It was raining heavily with dense mist. The weather was so bad that they decided against stopping for lunch and at about 2.15 they were heading for Third House. Mrs. Grabham described how she saw the vehicle roll off the road at a steep bend and crash down the precipitous 140-metre mountain side. It could have struck a boulder on one side of the road. The heavy rain might have affected the surface. They went straight down. One minute they were there – the next they were gone.”

While two passengers fought the rain and gathering darkness to reach the crashed vehicle, Mrs. Grabham and the rest of the party drove on to Third House to call for assistance by radio. We couldn't help anyone. In those conditions, you have to know what you're doing. All we could do was stand in the rain waiting for them to be brought up. It was an awful experience. It was terrible to think of those people lying at the bottom waiting to be helped.

All but one of the 10 occupants were thrown out of the vehicle, (one woman was trapped inside for the entire 140 m fall) and lay in atrocious weather for about an hour and a half before help arrived.

A mayday call was sent using Citizens Band radio equipment in the second vehicle. This was picked up by a local CB operator and the Nelson Police were informed. An extensive operation was launched by about 3 pm., involving Fire Service rescue units, a St John's four-wheel drive ambulance and an Army Bedford vehicle from the Nelson four Wheel Drive Club.

Heavy rain and the steep unstable terrain made the rescue operation extremely difficult.

All the injured people, and the dead man, had been brought out by about 7 p.m.

Injured: Mrs. Winifred Broekes of Wellington Mrs. Cherry Shorter, Mr. Arthur and Mrs. Marie Olliver, of Stoke, Mr. Eric Collinson and his son Neil, 12 of Nelson and Mrs. June Shone, Mrs. Zoeliza Goodwin and Mrs. Clarice Rackley, all of Richmond.

Mr. Collinson's older son Mark, 14 was in the second vehicle with Mr Vern Grabham, Mrs. F.V. Grabham, Mr. J. Smith (the Club's president,) and Mr. Brian Thomsett.

The rescue was not without its problems. Fortunately all the injured had been rescued but the four-wheel drive ambulance went off the road as it was coming back from the scene. The two fire brigade vehicles were trapped behind it and could travel no further until the ambulance was moved.

The extremely bad weather conditions made this impossible until the following day.

Recovery parties on the Dun Mountain track yesterday were greeted by the crumpled remains of a four-wheel drive Land Rover – a stark memorial to Sunday's tragedy in which a man died and nine other people were injured.

Evening Mail photographer Ann McDonald accompanied police and civilian recovery parties to the crash site – 24 hours after the vehicle plunged off the track down the precipitous bush covered mountainside. The accident occurred a kilometre north-east of the Third House. “When we arrived, personal belongings were still scattered around and inside the wreckage together with blankets left by the rescue team.”

Recovery teams faced difficulties in reaching the crash site yesterday. They had to walk 8 kilometres along the narrow twisting track, piloting a bulldozer and fire rescue truck.

## **A letter from the Solicitors and Barristers: Fell and Harley who wrote re: Accident on Dun Mountain**

We have duly attended the inquest on Mr Shorter and Mrs Winifred Broeks and the decision was that Mr Shorter died on the 18<sup>th</sup> of May 1980 near Dun Mountain track from traumatic cerebral oedema etc. sustained when a Landover driven by Mr Oliver slipped from the track down a steep slope and that W. Broeks died on the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of May 1980 at Wellington Public Hospital as a result of severe head injuries sustained in the same accident.

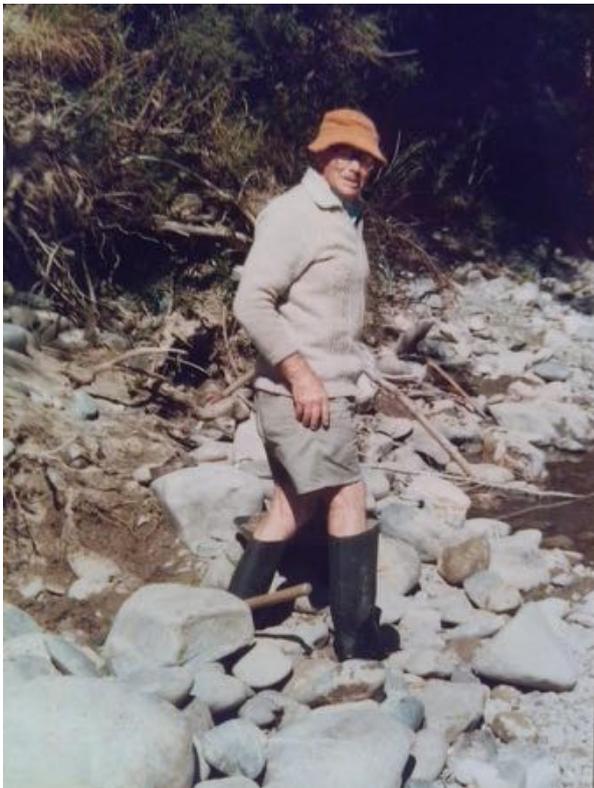
We trust that the Club will hear no more of this matter as we cannot see how any claims could lie against it with these findings and the result of the Police prosecution when Mr Oliver was acquitted of negligence.



The club was overwhelmed by the amount of sympathy and support offered by the other clubs in New Zealand who were shocked that such a tragedy could occur on a club trip.

The following letter was written by the President, Jim Smith to express our gratitude.

## **A letter from the President, Jim Smith (to other clubs)**



On behalf of our members I should like to convey grateful thanks to you for your concern and sympathy at this time of our tragic trip to Dun Mountain.

We have been visiting and comforting the injured who have now, all but two, left hospital. These two have great spirit and have gone out for short visits, so it is only a matter of time before they are well again.

It is amazing how the joy of living and the will to get well has been the highlight of the injured.

One lady in intensive care said, "This is the most wonderful day of my life. I can feel the air coming back into my injured lung. It is so invigorating."

Please convey to your members that hospitality, information and help is offered to you when visiting the Nelson district.



Fundraising for Search and Rescue

## **Letter from the new Zealand Police**

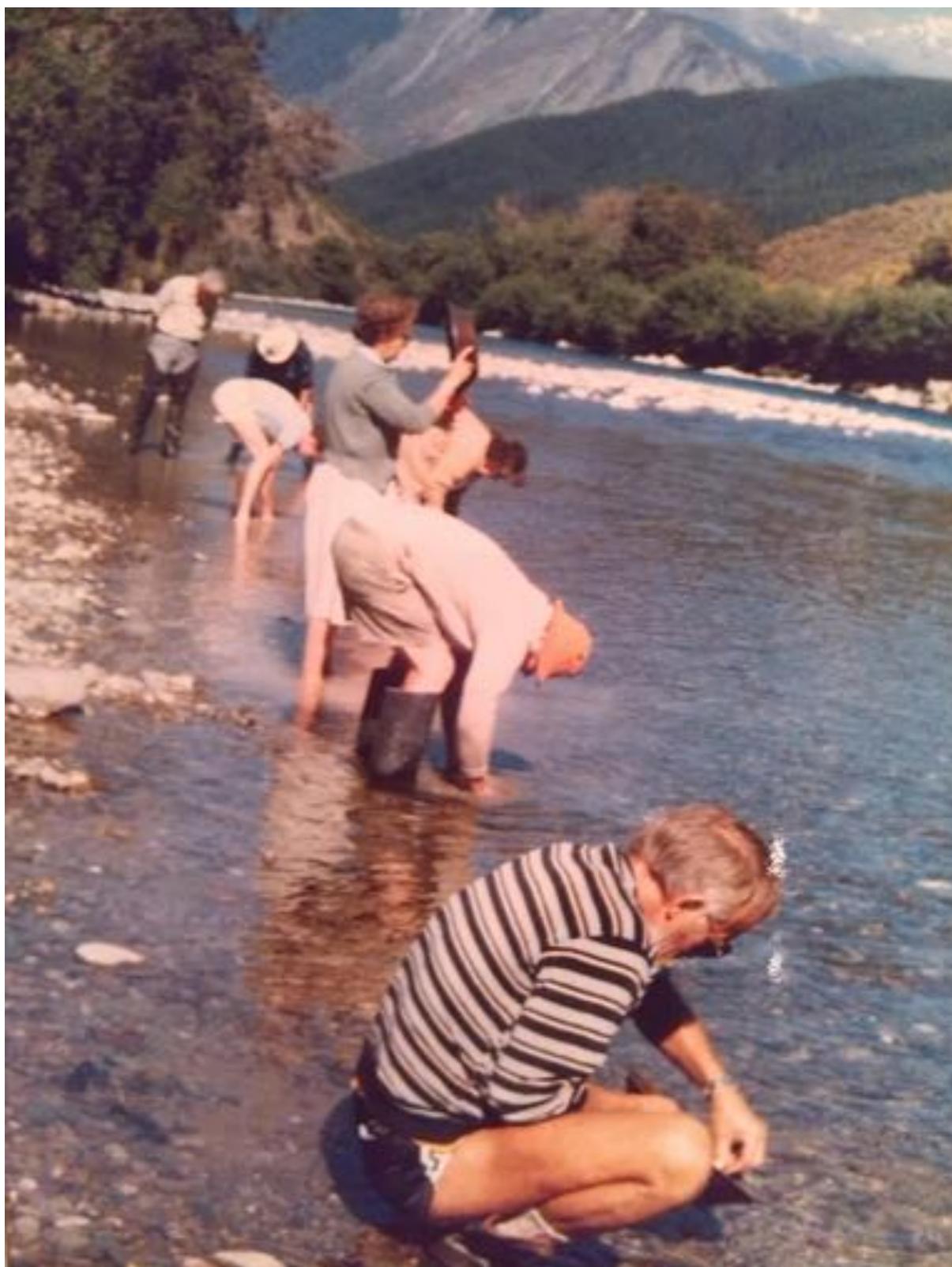
On behalf of the Nelson Land Search and Rescue Organisation Committee; I thank the Rock and Mineral Club for the very generous funds which have been given for the purchase of mountain rescue stretchers and other vital equipment necessary to assist rescue teams in future operations.

The funds will be used to the fullest advantage in the purchase of the rescue equipment, and hopefully, when the items have been supplied; members of the club will be able to view them.

Enclosed is a receipt for the \$847.90 cents.

If there are any further details you wish to know about the stretchers etc., please do not hesitate to contact me.

The following set of photographs is of happier Club Trip memories.....



Hub Op den Buysch. Collector of minerals and micromounts and organiser of incredible quizzes. Hub has also been treasurer on and off for 22 years.

The rest of this retrospective is a series of photographs of wonderful trips and members and my own personal experience of the Nelson Rock and Mineral Club over the past 20 years.

## **MY EXPERIENCE OF THE LAST 20 YEARS OF THE NELSON ROCK AND MINERAL CLUB - By Sheila Hardwick.**

I arrived in New Zealand from the U.K. 20 years ago and was lucky enough to be introduced to the Nelson Rock and Mineral club, which at that time was meeting at the Methodist Church on Wensley Road in Richmond. The meetings were always run by Philip Wells and they opened my eyes to the fascinating world of collecting mineral specimens in the wild, so to speak.

We would go on amazing trips to quarries such as Collins Valley for Serpentine and other minerals which I had never heard of. There were older members such as Jim Smith, Bill Murcott and Hub op den Buysch who were welcoming and eager to share their knowledge. Hub, especially would organise fantastical quizzes, showcasing some of his incredible collection; and there were raffles which meant that we could become the proud possessors of mineral samples formerly unheard of.

There were winter field trips which took us to visit the wonderful collections of local people, such as Ed Sixtus and the Polglaises, which inspired me to try and find my own specimens.

And then there was the Saturday morning “field trip” to Philip’s garage, where he kept the club’s, and his own, lapidary tools. It was the first time I had ever seen a rock cut in half and polished and I was blown away by the realisation that doing these things was possible for me.

I was hooked, and joined the committee very early on in my membership, as I wanted to help such a wonderful club to survive and flourish.

It seemed that Philip Wells had been doing a lot of the running of the Club on his own and was anxious for support, so a new president was chosen in Rex Hunt, who organised the most memorable 3-day field trips to Golden Bay and to Waiuta, near Reefton. We saw so many different facets to geology; minerals, leaf fossils, working mines, mining museums, quarries full of marine fossils, cliffs and beaches. I felt so lucky to be able to do all this exploring in my new country and I cannot express enough gratitude to those who made it all possible.



Heather and Don and Colin Brooker, Maria and Rudi Tetteroo, Chris Fraser Clyde Nicholson, Steve and Kathy Webb, Margaret and Don Kivell, Tim Sheila Hardwick, Rex Hunt, Alan and Marion Mathews at Matakītaki.

Alan and Marion Mathews, also recently arrived from England were involved with the club on many levels. They both gave talks to the club members and Alan was president of the Club in 2002/3, whilst Marion became responsible for running the library over many years and also edited the newsletter.

Don and Margaret Kivell had also moved to Nelson and Margaret had a wonderful rock shop on Bridge Street called Crystal Creations. Don was responsible for running a stall in the Nelson Saturday market, and quickly became a focal point for local rock hounds and visitors alike.



Jude Longley, Alan Mathews, Don and Margaret Kivell, Philip Wells, David Greer, Sheila Hardwick and ??? 1999



Chris Fraser, Kathleen Page, Alan and Marion Mathews at the School of Mines in Reefton

Dave Buchan, a very long time member, and his wife Irene were also frequent members of field trips and Dave's knowledge of the area and willingness to share his expertise was always a valuable addition to any trip. Dave was treasurer between 1981-7 and also acted as Vice President between 1993-6.



Dave Buchan at Motenau

Clyde had also retired into the area in 1999 from Galatea, a small farming valley on the edge of the Urewera National Park. Clyde was a keen and knowledgeable collector who also led many trips. He acted as treasurer between 2002 and 2008 and also ran the sales table at monthly meetings until very recently.

Katie Greer was the very able and experienced secretary and she also contributed enormously to the club's ability to produce a monthly paper newsletter, both in an editorial and an administrative capacity.

In 1998 the Blenheim Club put on the National Show and there was another wonderland to explore. The show itself was stunning; and part of the entertainment was to meet some of the Blenheim Club members and visit their clubrooms. Those of you who have seen them will understand the fascination and the promise that those clubrooms held.

It seemed to me that our own club would be so much more attractive if it could also have such premises, not only to store all its gear, library etc., but as a working space for members to meet and develop their skills, and also, more importantly to house the club's collection and showcase our local specimens, to interest and educate both locals and visitors about the region's geological potential.



Clyde Nicholson at Campbell Creek



Clyde Nicholson and Ian Ladds at Lee Valley



Clyde at Thompson's Hill



Joe and Ivan Hodges and Dave Buchan at Waipara



Joe and Ivan Hodges and Dave Buchan at Oaro – it's a haul up that hill!



Ivan Hodges at Waipara, collecting in style....



Margaret Kivell's field trip style!



Ivan Hodges field trip style!



Marion and Alan Mathews, Sheila Hardwick, Ian Longley and ?? 2001



Don in Kairuru Marble Quarry 2005. Don and Sheila entered the National Show in 2005 with a Club Showcase on the marble of Kairuru out of which the old New Zealand Parliament Building is built.

**The second (perennial topic) is Clubrooms:** and along with clubrooms especially comes the third.....

Which is: **Finances; and specifically, fundraising;**

The schemes have involved weekly “Housie” sessions, Sales tables/shop, Christmas raffles of hampers and donated BBQ; specimen boards, silent auctions, chopping and selling firewood, the hiring of the big saw and hiring out of other equipment, carving classes, sausage sizzles at the Warehouse, monthly specimen raffles and, probably the most enjoyable of all: Club Shows.

Well, we searched for premises and Founder’s Park seemed like the ideal place to be. Hub, our long term treasurer, from 1988 to 2002, warned us that in his previous experience, having club rooms was not always a positive thing. However, there was sufficient enthusiasm, and with Don Kivell acting as our new president in 2004, and wonderful support from such members as Clyde Nicholson, and Ivan Hodges, who donated so much time and expertise putting 3-phase power into the clubrooms, we went ahead; and we truly hoped that our clubrooms would grow to be a shining gem in the heart of Nelson.

We worked hard on making it happen with huge input from many members. We painted the premises and had all kinds of shelves put in to house our books and gear. There was much to do in terms of sorting and displaying and housing our collection, but by far the greatest emphasis was on

the lapidary equipment, and there were many schemes to make income from the equipment.

As a result of having club rooms we became eligible to apply to the Lottery Commission for funding and Alan Mathews organised the application and acquired funds to buy an enormous saw to be designed and built by Don and to be used to cut larger rocks than ever before.

Ian Longley, a local jade carver was involved in our plan and he used the rooms as his working premises and contributed a portion of the rent. As time went by, his involvement increased and he became Club room manager, maintaining the club's machinery and promoting the club to members of the public.

Don lived close by and as President (2003-2007) he was always very concerned with making enough money to pay the commercial rent. He organised sausage sizzles at The Warehouse which were reasonable earners but took lots of time and effort, and people having to give up their weekends to fundraise, rather than enjoying their hobby. We also were lucky to have Bruce Rollo as a member, and he would donate a BBQ for many years which we could raffle before Christmas. Many of us spent long hours in the Richmond Mall or at Countdown in Nelson selling raffle tickets and promoting the activities of the Club.

Would YOU buy a sausage from these men???

Fortunately, many people did.....



Sausage sizzle at the Warehouse, Nelson with Tez Hardwick, Don Kivell, Clyde Nicholson and Philip Wells



Don Kivell and Clyde Nicholson Warehouse sausage sizzle in 2004

In 2006, one of our initiatives was to raise money by having our own Show in conjunction with the Marlborough and West Coast Clubs, which was called the "Top of the South Show". There was much to do but members got together and produced a very memorable occasion. We hired Stoke Hall and had a huge logistical task of moving tables from Founders Park.





Don and Margaret Kivell and Ivan Hodges and some of the rocks that will be on display





Dave Buchan and Dave Davidson from Marlborough









Fluorescent minerals und 3er UV light







Philip Wells and Ian Longley demonstrating the use of the workshop machinery.





Ian Longley, Don Kivell and Phillip Wells with the workshop machinery





Dave Buchan, Hilary and Ian Ladds



The wonderful Joan Bottom, fossil lady from Derbyshire a stalwart of the Marlborough Club.





Joe Hodges (13) demonstrating the use of a dremel to expose fossil crab





Toby Page and Margaret Kivell

We had some very good times but there was always pressure to pay the rent and eventually the same people were fundraising endlessly, sadly, leaving them with little time to enjoy the facilities they were paying for. More worryingly, for some reason, the club rooms were not well patronised by the members and membership did not grow.

During this time, the club had close relations with the Blenheim Club with several members of both clubs having joint membership. There were productive trips fossil hunting along the Awatere with the wonderful Joan Bottom from Derbyshire, to the Wakamarina goldfields, and overnight trips up to Mount Upcott and Middlehurst for zeolites and crystals with Ron Bothwell – it really was a very interesting time for members.

## **A fourth common theme is: Communication**

Monthly meetings and trips have been co-ordinated by notices in social columns of local free community newspapers and in printed newsletters, but historically this has been expensive and inflexible – so for instance, phone trees have been tried for when plans change suddenly.

In the minutes of the past 50 years I have seen many references to the size, content and frequency of the newsletter, the pleas for articles of interest, and the cost: firstly of producing it, and secondly of getting it to the members.

Originally there was a quarterly publication called “The Nelsonite”, sponsored by advertisers such as Hettie’s Rock Shop of Christchurch, Whitcombe & Tombs Ltd., a Bookshop of Nelson, The Sports Depot of Nelson and Price’s Pharmacy of Nelson.

Since then we have used newsletters, which, depending on funds etc., have been published and circulated monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly, or even three times a year.

I was privileged to be the newsletter editor at a time of technological change and we first moved from typing to word processing and secondly from photocopying and posting by “snail mail” to emailing the entire list of members with the touch of a button – a huge saving in time, effort and money.

Communications technology is moving quickly and we now have many of the Club’s documents online in Cloud storage courtesy of Diane Toole (on receipt of a hyperlink).

I would like to go even further and look forward to the Club producing and running a website.

We are also lucky to have cell phones; which not only improve safety, but have the extra advantage of being able to map sites of interest via GPS.



Middlehurst



Don fording a torrent at Middlehurst



Middlehurst amethyst



Stunning views from Mount Lookout at Middlehurst



Middlehurst



Sheila and Tez Hardwick at Middlehurst 2003



#### Middlehurst

Between 2007- 2010 Chris Fraser was our President and he decided to hold another show in 2009, at Founder's Park. Again, it was a wonderfully successful show , but not only did we have to pay \$1,600 to hire the park for the weekend, but we also had to give Nelson City Council \$1 for each person who attended. Because our clubrooms were too small to host the monthly meetings, we also had to hire the Jaycee room each month for a further cost of \$30.

Chris Fraser in the field!





Chris Fraser and old gold working machinery, at Parapara



Lovely day out at Iron works Parapara, Golden Bay



Thompson's Hill



Wangapeka ooops!



Gold panning in the Rolling River, Wangapeka



Marion and Alan Mathews trying their luck panning for gold.



Gold panning at the Rolling River, Wangapeka



Rameka Creek with Clyde Nicholson, Alan Mathews, Sheila and Tez hardwick, Dave Buchan and Don Kivell



Don Kivell at Hawke's Crag



Hawke's Crag: Bill Howie and Jock Braithwaite

## **JOCK BRAITHWAITE**

- Jock completed his B.E.(Mining) degree at the Otago School of Mines in 1957 and joined NZ minerals industry pioneer Tas McKee in Lime and Marble Ltd to realise Tas's ambitions of developing a significant New Zealand's mining industry.
- Beginning with uranium exploration on the West Coast and small non-metallic operations mainly in the Nelson District (Takaka Hill marble, Cobb talc/magnesite, Mt Burnett dolomite), Jock built an encyclopaedic knowledge of the non-metallics business and fine grinding, and was soon involved with evaluating a number of base metal prospects mainly in NW Nelson.
- In the course of this work he forged a strong relationship with the geologists of the Geological Survey who were completing regional mapping.
- Jock and Tas were very successful in gaining recognition at a political level of NZ's mineral potential to the extent that small grants toward exploration work became available.
- By the late 1960s mineral exploration was very active and Jock was instrumental in forming joint ventures between Lime and Marble and several major overseas companies.
- Jock developed the Mt Burnett dolomite deposit in extremely steep and difficult terrain to produce dolomite for glassmaking, refractories and agriculture, and the Coalgate bentonite deposit which produced a product successful in penetrating the competitive markets of oil well drilling, iron ore pelletising.
- He was involved in Oil exploration.
- He also became interested in gold in the late 1970s and established operations on the Shotover.
- By the 1980s Jock had become a sought after consultant.
- He joined AusIMM as a student in 1957, was admitted as a member in 1965 and transferred to Fellow in 1968.
- He was a founder member of the N.Z. Branch in 1966, Branch Chairman 1975-7 and Councillor representing N.Z. in 1982-7.
- Life Member of the Nelson Rock and Mineral Club.

Sadly, Jock died in 2011 and is hugely missed.

Thanks to Alistair Wallace for this outline of his life's interests in relation to our Club

## CLUBROOMS

Although we had such high hopes of our clubrooms, we could not, as a club, afford the cost of running them and in the end we were struggling to raise the funds. At this time no one really wanted to be president as there was the unpleasant task, which had to be faced, of leaving our clubrooms to save the club from financial difficulty. This was, initially, an unpopular move, but once the members realised the extent of the problem they sought solutions.



The club has gained and lost Clubrooms on no less than 3 occasions in its 50 year history.

1. From 1968 -1973: 135 Harley Street, Nelson
2. From 1974 - 1984: Sea Cadets Drill Hall, Nelson
3. From 2002 – 2009: Founder’s Park, Nelson

In the case of the last two Clubrooms a rent hike led to their demise.



We were lucky enough to have some very keen new members; including Diane Toole, Mary and Kevin Bourne-Davies, and Mike and Hazel Blowers, who were glad to support the move. We also had some very welcome support from both Mike Johnston and Jock Braithwaite, both very highly respected people, who tried to plead our case with the council. Unfortunately they were unsuccessful, so instead became supportive of our efforts to relocate.

Kevin Bourne and Mary Davies generously offered room to house the equipment and collection at their home and have provided facilities for people to use their premises to cut and polish rocks once they have gained sufficient expertise with the tools. We are still cataloguing the collection at very enjoyable social working bees with a BBQ.

One of the biggest problems we had was the removal of the large saw, which had never properly worked and had certainly not generated the income we were hoping for. We did, however, manage to find a home for it in Motueka; where it is still available for use by both members and the public.

In order to facilitate these changes we had to share the duties of President around the committee members, a system that seems to have worked successfully for the past 4-5 years. Hub op den Buysch rejoined the committee as treasurer once again and we managed to sort out our finances. The search was underway for new premises but we were cautious of jumping into anything and also, after hearing the suggestion from Alan Mathews, that the Richmond library had a fully equipped meeting room costing \$10 per session, we decided to try meeting there.

We have not looked back. Without the need to fundraise or manage rooms, the committee is free to organise excellent speakers and interesting field trips, and we now have the time and resources to do more interesting projects.



Diane Toole and Mary Davies at Cobb Valley



Alan and Marion Mathews at the Cobb



Heading up the Cobb track



Heading up the Cobb Valley for Graptolites



Dramatic Cobb Valley



Kev, Alan, Dave, Sheila, Marion, Tez, Diane, Toby & Mary at Trilobite Hut



Social evening in the Cobb D.O.C. House



Mike Blowers, Greta and Paul Henare , Kev Bourne, Hazel and Mary, working on the club collection with a BBQ at Kev and Mary's home



Alan and Marion Mathew, Sheila Hardwick, Diane Toole, Don Brooker and Ian Ladds, searching for dinosaur footprints



Lunchtime – in style



Kev Bourne and Diane Toole



Diane Toole, Kev Bourne, Tez Hardwick and Mary Davies in Golden Bay



Tez and Sheila Hardwick and Mary Davies near Pakawau



Diane Toole checking out the strata



Sheila and Diane at Westhaven inlet searching for dinosaur footprints



Rib bones from a whale found in Tarakohe quarry –“This big” says Ian

Ian Ladds has put in an enormous amount of time and energy to working on the fossil record in the 88 Valley and has inspired many children with his fieldtrips. As a club we are now looking at doing a project on this area, which will, hopefully result in a scientific publication.



Ian Ladd's Children's field trips to 88 Valley





Ian Ladd's Children's Group trip to 88 Valley



Kev Bourne, Diane Toole, Ian Ladds, Tez and Sheila Hardwick, Mary Davies and Ian's friend at Aorere



Puponga. Mary, Diane, Mike and Hazel Blowers



Rabbit Island Christmas BBQ 2013



Digging for chromite, Ben Nevis



Dave and Irene Buchan, Vanessa Neame and Chris Fraser, Paul Henare and Greta, Hazel and Mike Blowers

Cheaper technology has also enabled some of our members to take micro-mounting to new levels. Hub Op den Buysch and Tim Saunderson have been working with the club's new microscope and camera. The illustrated talks they have given have inspired awe in the members, not only looking at minerals but at microfossils too. Tez Hardwick, our newsletter editor, has now taken up this aspect of our hobby and has begun collecting specifically from the Champion copper mine.

These are exciting times for our club. We have a wonderful group of members with a variety of interests and expertise, and much enthusiasm to learn and further our understanding.

But sadly members come and go, and I would like to pay tribute to two members who have recently passed away; Garth Gavin and Brian Faulkener, (who used to have the farm at Thompson Hill). Both their collections have returned to the Club. Also, Tim Saunderson, who was doing such wonderful work for the club, has had to relocate to Auckland.

However, I am convinced that the some of our newer members, such as Paul Henare and Greta, Dave Briggs and Liz Martins and of course, all our remaining members, still have the enthusiasm and interest to keep the Club running productively for many years to come....



Magazine point, Nelson with Dr Mike Johnston, Diane Toole and Liz Martins



Diane Toole Golden Bay - Puponga



Discussing dinosaur footprints



Discussing dinosaur footprints



Diane checking out the dinosaur footprint strata



Rangiheata – kahikatea forest stumps



Rangiheata: Tez, Mrs Briggs, Paul, Sheila, Greta, Diane, Liz, Dave and Tim

The club is a place where like-minded people can share and extend their interest. Thanks must also go to the people, who set up the chairs, bring the sales table, organise the raffles, bring along and organise the library, bring the suppers and wash up afterwards, book the rooms, introduce the meetings and organise the technology required for films slideshows etc. Then there are the speakers, the competition organisers the trip leaders and those who organise fundraising, as well as the treasurers, secretaries, newsletter editors and other committee members. All in all there are so many different roles to be filled in order to achieve the trips and monthly meetings that we all enjoy.

So I would just like to extend a huge vote of thanks to all the people who, throughout the past 50+ years have made the effort to contribute to a club which is still flourishing. The commitment and enthusiasm of our members are our biggest and best resource. I am so proud to be a member of the Nelson Rock and mineral Club and I hope that we can nurture enough interest and expertise to ensure that it will have a long and successful future.



D'Urville Island



D'Urville Island Kev Bourne, Tom Brown and Tez Hardwick.



Redhills



Kev Bourne, Chris Fraser, fossilised whale head, Alan Mathews, Diane Toole and Tez Hardwick at Nile River, Charleston.

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Te Ara Encyclopedia of New Zealand for background on Tas McKee.

<http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/5m17/mckee-tasman-joseph>

Alister Coleman for background on Jock Braithwaite.

<http://www.ausimm.co.nz/files/2012/07/Jock-Braithwaite-Obituary.pdf>