

# **CULTURAL HERITAGE OF THE MAITAI VALLEY**

## **PHOTOGRAPHS AND EXCERPTS**

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CULTURAL HERITAGE OF THE MAITAI VALLEY

ATTACHMENT TO EVIDENCE OF JENNIFER DUNCAN

FOR SAVE THE MAITAI INC (CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUES OF THE MAITAI  
VALLEY DATED 11 JULY 2022)

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<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Looking Back in 1915</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Picnics, Swimming and Sports</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Picturesque Beauties of Maitai</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1896: A Place of Resort such as No Other Town in NZ Possesses</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1897: Premier of New Zealand understood Value of the Maitai Valley</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1896: Road Needed to 'Favourite Resort'</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1911 Reserve Land wanted – Trips up the Maitai a 'Chief Pleasure'</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1914: Petition from 801 people Requests Continued Effort to Acquire Public Recreation Land</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Boating</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1914: Burns Poem</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>1923: Bathing in the Maitai River</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Improved Access to Valley Desired</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>1932: Anyone Wanting a Good Holiday should Camp Up the Maitai !</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>CLUBS: Tramping, Cubs, Scouts, Fern Society</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>1937: Uniqueness &amp; Beauty of Maitai Valley recognised Repeatedly</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>1940: Nelson Fortunate - such a Delightful Spot at its Back Door</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>1940: 31 Dec. Y.M.C.A. Touring Party Visit To Nelson District</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>1945: Seek the Silent Country (A Letter to Children)</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Picnics Picnics Picnics</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>1961: Camping Fun</b>	<b>22</b>

<b>Many Scenic Photos in the 1960s</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>1972: Tranquility</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>1966: Popular Holiday Spot, Black Hole</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>1968 - 1969: Maitai Boat Races</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>1968: Swimming</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>1960s: Lots Going On in the Valley</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>1970: Western Gymkhana</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>1963: 10-mile walk; Community Fitness Challenge</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Scenic Beauty</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>1967: Camps – cubs, girls brigade</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>1971 &amp; 1972: Boat Race: Rolling Down the River</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>1972: Old Nelson Remembered</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>1972: Council Xmas Party</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>1972: Waahi Taakaro Face Lift</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>2021 – 2022: Contemporary Uses of the Valley</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Kākā Valley is Visible from Many Viewpoints</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>53</b>

## INTRODUCTION

This document contains photographs, quotes and extracts from Papers Past & Nelson Photo News or other sources found online, as well as photographs shared by locals with Save the Maitai Inc.

These images and quotes illustrate just some examples of the cultural heritage of the Maitai Valley and its cultural values to Nelsonians from 1843 up to the present day.

As a pākeha compiler, I have not attempted to present a Māori world-view. These snippets of history are to some extent grouped by theme however they are also in approximate chronological order.

- Jennifer Duncan, 10 July, 2022.

## LOOKING BACK IN 1915

### THE PEOPLE AND THE MAITAI.

Up to the time of Mrs Richardson's departure for England, picnicking or camping **up the Maitai** was not much in vogue, there being no roads or bridges." And proceeding the Commissioner says :—

Subsequently the Maitai Valley came to be used as a picnic and camping resort, and in about 1898 roads were formed and bridges erected, partly out of the funds of the local bodies, and partly out of moneys raised by public subscription; and thereafter the valley became largely used by citizens, for the most part on the river banks on the Richardson estate, with the express or tacit consent of the tenants. During the same period Denne's Hole and Sunday Hole became largely used for swimming and bathing generally, though there is evidence to show that for many years the Maitai has been used for swimming, and in particular Denne's Hole was used by the school boys for learning to swim, under the supervision of the teachers.

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NEM19150301.2.6>

## PICNICS, SWIMMING AND SPORTS

### 1861: Wesleyan Sunday School Picnic

*"...in the Maitai Valley, upwards of 300 children, with their parents and friends, ... enjoyed themselves..."*<sup>1</sup>

### 1863: Boys Swimming

**JUVENILE BRAVERY.**—Last Friday afternoon some twenty or thirty little boys were bathing in and about the ordinary bathing hole, up the Maitai, which in some of the parts is about ten feet deep, when one of

### 1870: Destination for fun - Public Holiday Sports & Picnics

*"... we felt convinced that all Nelson had chosen that locality [the beach] for the scene of their day's enjoyment, but on strolling up the Maitai Valley at a later hour we were surprised to find some five or six hundred people congregated there. ..., for the scene of their picnics."*<sup>2</sup>

### 1876: 3000 People Attend Sports Event in the Maitai Valley

*"... Caledonian Society annual gathering in the Richardson's paddock, Maitai valley, ... there must have been nearly 3000 people on the ground during the day..."*<sup>3</sup>

### 1885: The Scene of Sports is a Very Pleasant One

**THE MAITAI SPORTS.**—The Maitai annual sports will take place in Mr Newport's large paddock in the Maitai Valley on Friday next, and with the very attractive programme the attendance will in all probability be very large indeed. After a procession, in which the cricketers in fantastic attire will take part, there will be a costume cricket match, and the general sports will include horse racing and the events usual at athletic sports. The scene of the sports is a very pleasant one, the river flowing round the greater portion of the paddock, and a footbridge will be erected for the convenience of the public.

### 1892: School Swimming Races at Dennes Hole and Sunday Hole

*"Two Schools, ... held their annual Swimming races up the Maitai yesterday..."*<sup>4</sup>

## PICTURESQUE BEAUTIES OF MAITAI

**1843**

*"...an exploration trip up the Maitai. ... they describe the beauties of their journey. ... kakas and canaries are numerous as well as most of the smaller species of birds. . . . The banks of the river are here and there adorned with a fine shrub bearing a profusion of blossom of a vermilion colour. ."*<sup>5</sup>

**1878: Few Places Can Beat the Maitai Valley For Picturesqueness**

*"There are few places, however, that for picturesqueness can beat the Maitai Valley, and that alone proves an attraction to many. Yesterday was a perfect day, and the holiday appeared to be enjoyed to the full by all those who visited the grounds..."*<sup>6</sup>

**1896: A PLACE OF RESORT SUCH AS NO OTHER TOWN IN NZ POSSESSES**

*"...Nelson has at present little to attract the tourist or holiday-makers from a distance, but it is only necessary to improve the road up the Maitai Valley, and it would have at its door a place of resort, such as no other town in New Zealand possesses,"*

**1911: One of the Prettiest Rivers to be Seen**

Almost at one's feet lies the town, many of its homes simply embowered in green, while at the back of it the Maitai, surely one of the prettiest rivers to be seen, flows on its tortuous way to the sea, crossed by an endless number of

## 1897: PREMIER OF NEW ZEALAND UNDERSTOOD VALUE OF THE MAITAI VALLEY

Sir Richard SEDDON could see the existing and future value of the Maitai Valley in 1897.<sup>7</sup>  
He wrote:

*"The project to open up the Maitai Valley as a tourist resort is most commendable, and will prove advantageous, not only to your district but to the whole colony."*

### NELSON EVENING MAIL, 13 SEPTEMBER 1897

#### THE PREMIER AND A VISIT TO NELSON.

Premier's Office.  
Wellington.

Dear Sir,—I am deeply grateful to the citizens of Nelson for their hearty congratulations on the safe arrival of myself, Mrs Seddon and family from the Mother Country, and I am also under great obligations to yourself, Messrs Rout and Baigent for the honour done by coming personally to present the communication. I am very pleased indeed to hear that the attractions of the environs of your beautiful city have been so much improved by the Rocks Road, now nearing completion. The project to open up the Maitai Valley as a tourist resort is most commendable, and will prove advantageous, not only to your district but to the whole colony. As you are well aware my time between this and the coming session will be entirely taken up by public business, so that I shall not be able to visit Nelson prior to that date. Later on and as soon as I can do so, I shall be pleased to comply with the request to deliver a lecture on my visit to the Mother Country. It is very pleasing to know that I still retain the goodwill and esteem of the people of your beautiful city.

With kind regards,  
Yours truly,  
(Signed) R. J. SEDDON.

## 1896: ROAD NEEDED TO 'FAVOURITE RESORT'

*"...So many visitors to Nelson would find their way up the Maitai for a day's outing if there was any means of getting up this interesting and pretty ... it being quite a favourite resort..."*

### 1899: Demand for Road Access to Nelson's 'Ruggedly Picturesque' Resort

*"... until the road is mended, it is to be feared that the attractions of the Maitai Valley will not be availed of*

*...*

*... one of the most ruggedly picturesque resorts near Nelson is perforce neglected because of the absence of means of comfortable and easy access...*

*It is to be deplored that such characteristic country as the Maitai Valley, so near the city, should be neglected by tourists simply because the County Council will not or cannot expend a small yearly sum for road maintenance ...*

*... a pleasure resort unique in its attractions for picnics and camping – within an hour's drive from the centre of the city, and with a rugged grandeur that grows into one's soul and haunts the memory – the matter is of importance to the city, ...*

*Hundreds ... use the valley for picnic and camping purposes; ...<sup>8</sup>*

until the road is mended, it is to be feared that the attractions of the Maitai Valley will not be availed of to any great extent by means of vehicles, though the temporary bridges have proved a great boon to all who like a pleasant walk. The condition of the road is a disgrace to the County Council and to the city; and, to show how one of the most ruggedly picturesque resorts near Nelson is perforce neglected because of the absence of means of comfortable and easy access, it may be pointed out that when the Governor was here he was not taken on the Maitai road for a drive. It was very wise to preserve the Vico-regal equilibrium and good temper by choosing the smooth roads to the Waimeas; but none the less it is to be deplored that such characteristic country as the Maitai Valley, so near the city, should be neglected by tourists simply because the County Council will not or cannot expend a small yearly sum for road maintenance. It may be ad-

### 1902: Who should Pay for Maitai Road Upkeep?

Nelson city was identified as the main beneficiary of the 'pleasure resort' and as such should contribute to roading maintenance.<sup>9</sup>

### 1902: Most Attractive and Adjacent Pleasure Resort – Road Should Be Maintained<sup>10</sup>

*"The Maitai Valley is one of the most attractive and most adjacent of our pleasure resorts, ..."*

### 1903:

*"... the city should certainly conserve and foster that which provides its residents with pleasure and its visitors with an attractive resort within easy reach of the main streets."<sup>11</sup>*

### 1903: Access to Enormous Value of the Maitai a Moral Obligation

*"...it may be asserted that the enormous value of the Maitai Valley as a tourist and picnic asset is not sufficiently realised ..."*

## 1903: Noble Pleasure Inheritance

### MAITAI CAMPING GROUNDS.

All who love and admire the beautiful Maitai Valley, the noble pleasure-inheritance of Nelson, will be interested in the circumstance that a comparatively rare land sub-division into small and cheap lots has just been made. It will be seen by advertisement that about 15 acres, recently the freehold of Mr Newport, jnr., have come into the market in convenient acre sections, and from personal knowledge we can say that the area contains a large proportion of the few remnants of native bush and fern yet left within easy access of the city in the Maitai Valley. The locality is well-known to all who seek the reaches of the Maitai beyond Smith's. It is just about a mile and a half beyond Mr Smith's place, and starting a little below a bend of the river, the property curves round by both banks of the stream, including both hillside and flat land. With a few exceptions all the lots have full frontages to the river, with convenient spots for the erection of camping whares, while each section retains a share of lovely native bush and fern, the maiden-hair and the todea—of which the famous "Prince of Wales' feather" is one variety—growing in luxurious abundance. The property is just about six miles from town and the

### MAITAI CAMPING GROUNDS.

NELSON EVENING MAIL,  
VOLUME XXXVII, ISSUE 207, 29  
OCTOBER 1903

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Nelson.

Blue foamy sea, high circling hills

With dreaming garden squares between,

An old-world fragrance breathing soft  
Amid the waving green.

Here trade's loud wheels but slowly turn,  
Here men may pause and joy to live,

And take the seasons as they change  
With all they have to give.

Here there is room to breathe and think,  
Here there is space for souls to grow,

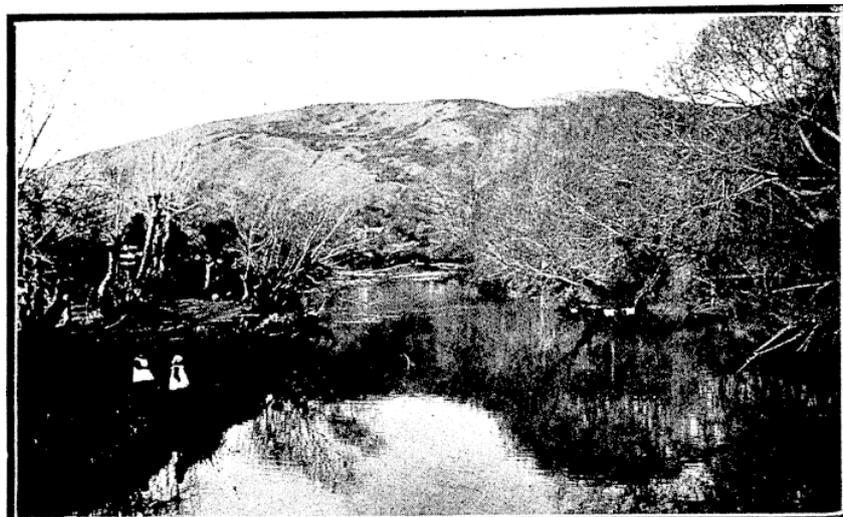
And life may run as pleasantly  
As Maitai's waters flow.

David McKee Wright.

### McKee Poem

Poem by David McKee Wright, written in the 1910s

### 1905.01.04. Nelson Mail - Scene on the Maitai



## 1911 RESERVE LAND WANTED – TRIPS UP THE MAITAI A ‘CHIEF PLEASURE’

“...Cr. Lightband. as one of the oldest residents of the city, gave his early experiences of the Maitai. He had attended the first picnic in the valley, and his children always looked forward to a trip up the Maitai as one of their chief pleasures...”

water supply and power purposes.  
Cr. Lightband, as one of the oldest residents of the city, gave his early experiences of the Maitai. He had attended the first picnic in the valley, and his children always looked forward to a trip up the Maitai as one of their chief pleasures.  
Cr. Lightband, Chairman of the Waimea

### 1911: an Asset of very great Value to Nelson - Reserve wanted for Posterity

“There was in the Maitai as a scenic and water reserve an asset of very great value to Nelson, but if the public were to be excluded, its value would be greatly diminished.”

### 1911: Public Meeting Held by Council in support of Acquiring Reserve Land

A long article was published discussing the Council’s intention to purchase reserve land and how that could be done.<sup>12</sup>

### 1912: Funding Sought from Central Government for ‘Most Attractive Holiday Resort’

“For generations the Valley has been the recreation ground for the children of the district, and by far the most attractive and popular of our holiday resorts...”<sup>13</sup>

## 1914: PETITION FROM 801 PEOPLE REQUESTS CONTINUED EFFORT TO ACQUIRE PUBLIC RECREATION LAND

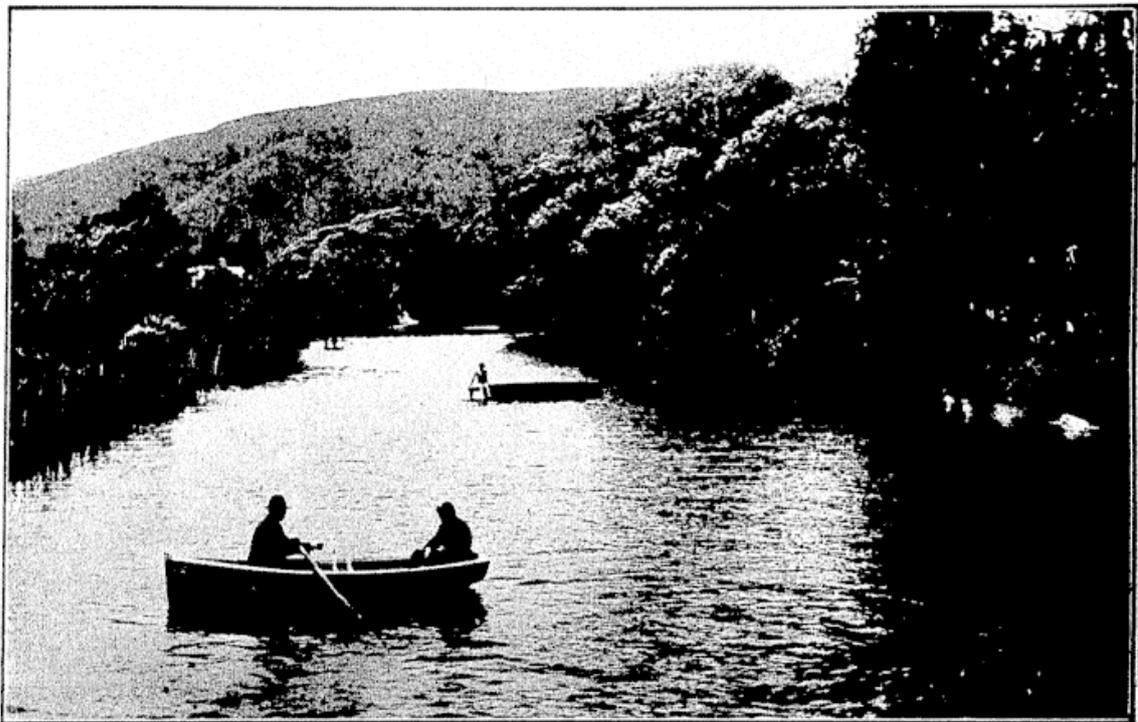
A petition signed by 801 ratepayers was presented to the City Council last evening by Cr. Wilkens praying that the Council would continue its efforts to acquire certain lands in the Maitai Valley for public recreation purposes. On the motion of Cr. Wilkens, seconded by Cr. Webley, it was resolved that the petition be received and handed to the City Solicitor.

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NEM19141024.2.21>

## BOATING



1903.03.18.-PHOTO NZMAIL 2.88.2.1-a1-700w-c32.gif



1919: Boating on Maitai River - photo published in Otago Witness  
1919.03.19s 2.82.3.5-a1-700w-c32.gif.

## 1914: BURNS POEM

Written some time before 1914, by Mr David Burns<sup>14</sup>

*When peaceful thoughts the heart enthrone, And Hope makes Fortune's, gifts her Own,  
There jet me wander all alone, Along the Maitai Valley.*

*To spend the hour that labour spares, Sweet hour! Redeemed from pressing cares, And sing  
the phases nature wears Along the Maitai Valley.*

*The sea-born breeze that morning brings, When slimmer in her gladness sings, Snakes health  
and fragrance from its wings Along the Maitai Valley.*

*On every side the mountains rise, And towering pierce the azure skies; A world of peerless  
beauty lies. Along the Maitai Valley.*

*Seen from heights in noontide glow, The winding waters, far below. Like silver threads; shine  
as they flow Along the Maitai Valley.*

*When in the; robes of summer drest, How sweet the breeze that fans each crest, And warm  
the slumbering sunbeams rest, Along the Maitai Valley.*

*Here young and hopeful lovers roam, And pore on Fate's slow-opening tome, And dream of  
love's, own happy home, Along the Maitai Valley.*

*Here groups of sportive children play — Some scamper far o'er bank and brae, Some stem  
the gurgling streamlet's way, Along the Maitai Valley*

*Around, the warblers pour their throats; On high, the sunny lav'rock floats, And fills the air  
with liquid notes, Along the Maitai Valley.*

*The mavis, on the flowering thorn, Awakes the echoes of the morn; The blackbird's mellow  
notes are borne Along the Maitai Valley.*

*And childhood's dear-loved butterflies Still loved by age, however, wise — Here greet us in  
their gorgeous dyes, Along the Maitai Valley.*

*High on the distant knolls so green, Are troops of deer—an instant seen, And pheasants  
haunt each leafy screen Along the Maitai Valley.*

*Few home-loved flowers-flowed loved of old— In white, or crimson, blue or gold, Their  
beauty and their scent unfold Along the Maitai Valley.*

*The primrose and the pink, I ween, Upon thy banks are seldom seen; Yet all is ever fair and  
green, Along the Maitai Valley.*

*Rich in the sunset's golden glow, Are nooks and dells, a fairy show, With spreading plains  
where plenty grow, Along the Maitai Valley.*

*But fairy, elf, nor naiad fair, To tingle foxglove bells is there, And charm the soft and balmy air, Along the Maitai Valley.*

*No salmon from the Tweed nor Tay, Gold-dusted, in the silver grey Enrich thy water's peaceful way, Along the Maitai Valley.*

*Thou hast no grand heart-sacred knowe — No Martyr's Grave, where pilgrims bow No Pear-Tree Well—no Habbie's Howe, Along the Maitai Valley.*

*No shrine that stirs the bosom's core; No tale embalmed in deathless lore; To waken up the days of yore, Along the Maitai Valley.*

*But thou hast treasures all thine own; Fair flocks and herds, unequalled shown. And smiling fields in plenty grown, Along the Maitai Valley.*

*And rich and tempting fruits are thine; The plum, the peach, and grape divine, Here ripen fair, in shower and shine, Along the Maitai Valley.*

*And here the graceful tree-ferns grow, And native flowerets sweetly blow, While scented shrubs their fragrance throw Along the Maitai valley.*

*Here, all unnoted, man may dwell In blest contentment's golden spell, With little e'en to buy and sell, Along the Maitai Valley.*

*Here pillowed up in soft repose, Removed from weary cares and woes, How gently could life's evening close, Along, the Maitai Valley.*

*Here far removed from war's alarms, May I reside, in Peace's arms And sleep at last amidst thy charms, Fair, winding, Maitai Valley.*

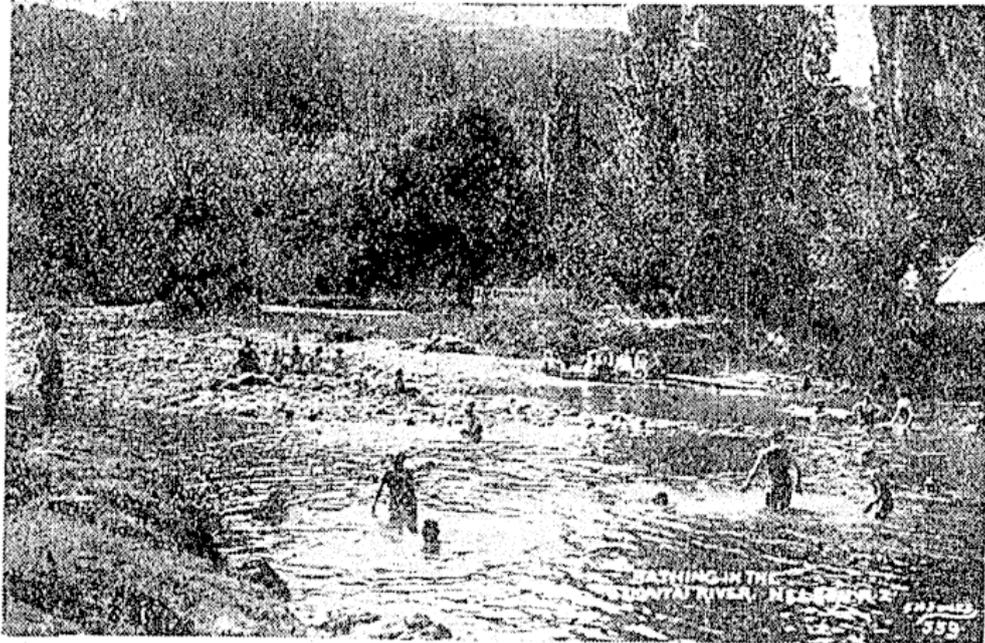
Nelson.

### 1927: Outstanding Beauty Spot

A BEAUTY SPOT

The Maitai valley is one of Nelson's out-standing beauty spots, and like other beauty spots in our near neighbourhood it is by no means appreciated as it should be. From the centre of the

## 1923: BATHING IN THE MAITAI RIVER



Nelson Mail, 17 Oct 1923

## 1926: 'Bathers in Maitai River'



1926.12. Nelson Evening Mail - Bathers in Maitai River  
11.2.138.120.2-a1-664w-c32.gif

## IMPROVED ACCESS TO VALLEY DESIRED

### 1926: Pleasant Resort Road in Disrepair<sup>15</sup>

"Observer" writes: "One of Nelson's most pleasant near resorts is certainly the Maitai Valley, particularly during the summer months. Yet for some years now both the roadway and also the bridges in this valley have remained in a very shocking state of repair. As

### 1934: Glorious Asset - Another Plea for Road Maintenance<sup>16</sup>

We have a glorious asset in our municipal reserve situated three miles up the Maitai valley, and the entire valley indeed is ideal for picnics and camping, and for spending a quiet, restful and refreshing day. It is a pity such minor impediments to its free and generous use should be allowed to remain neglected.—

### 1937: A 'Handy Outlet for City People' - Council proposes Bridge over Ford<sup>17</sup>

#### SUNDAY HOLE FORD

#### NECESSARY BRIDGE IN MAITAI VALLEY

Article Image

#### CITY COUNCIL'S ATTITUDE

A suggestion that the City Council and the Waimea County Council make an effort to have a bridge built at Sunday Hole ford in the Maitai Valley was made by the Mayor (Mr G. L. Page) at last night's meeting of the City Council.

The Mayor said he would like to see the City Council and the County Council combine in erecting the bridge over the ford. City people used the Maitai Valley road more than country people. Visitors to the valley frequently met trouble in crossing the ford, and campers became trapped in the valley if rain was experienced. He moved that the Waimea County Council be written to suggesting that a bridge be erected and that the county and city engineers confer and report on the estimated cost of the work.

Councillor S. A. Gibbs seconded the motion. He said the Maitai Valley offered a handy outlet for city people but they were largely precluded from using it with the ford in its present state.

The motion was carried.

Sunday Hole Ford.—Your executive has given this matter consideration and has participated in deputations to the Nelson City Council and Waimea County Council, in an endeavour to have this ford bridged, thus giving quick and easy access to the Maitai Valley, which is undoubtedly one of Nelson's outstanding beauty spots.

## 1932: ANYONE WANTING A GOOD HOLIDAY SHOULD CAMP UP THE MAITAI !

### MAITAI RESERVE

#### POPULAR CAMPING GROUND

*"It is astonishing the number of Nelson residents who do not know what an asset they have in the Maitai as a camping holiday resort.*

*During the last two months their [sic] have been about half a dozen parties camping in the Reserve which is owned by the ratepayers and rented to the campers at a nominal figure by the City Council.*

*One particular camp has a range set in the earth, and close by is the bathing hole which is patronised by all and sundry.*

*Another camp is situated under the manuka trees and connected up with the river so that one may have a hot or cold bath. On the other side of the river there are three whares where mother, father and the children enjoy the fresh air.*

...

*Anyone wanting a good holiday should camp up the Maitai."<sup>18</sup>*

<abridged>

### MAITAI RESERVE

#### POPULAR CAMPING GROUND

It is astonishing the number of Nelson residents who do not know what an asset they have in the Maitai as a camping holiday resort. During the last two months their have been about half a dozen parties camping in the Reserve which is owned by the ratepayers and rented to the campers at a nominal figure by the City Council. One particular camp has a range set in the earth, and close by is the bathing hole which is patronised by all and sundry. Another camp is situated under the manuka trees and connected up with the river so that one may have a hot or cold bath. On the other side of the river there are three whares where mother, father and the children enjoy the fresh air.

Recently the whare holders challenged the Reserve campers to a game of cricket and after a good deal of slogging and broken bats the former were declared winners by 34 runs. The return match was played soon after resulting in a win for the whare holders by 10 runs. The scores were:

Reserve Campers: Lance Smith 1; Captain Rees, b 10; J. Gaskell, b 27; H. Gaskell, c 1; Russell, run out, 4; M. Smith, b 0; Miss Schalcrass, not out, 12; A. Schalcrass, b 9; byes, 4. Total 68.

Whare Holders: Mich Crequer, b 0; V. Crequer, b 13; Win, c 0; Miss Currin, run out 9; Miss Willis, c 3; L. Willis, b 15; T. Potten, b 21; J. Newton, c 3; T. Dee, c 8; byes, 6. Total 78.

The crowd numbering 75 then adjourned to the bathing hole where a 30 lb eel has been seen. After persuading the eel with a bucket full of blood he did not make his appearance. The crowd after waiting till 10.30 p.m. decided to adjourn to bed after a strenuous day.

Anyone wanting a good holiday should camp up the Maitai.

## CLUBS: TRAMPING, CUBS, SCOUTS, FERN SOCIETY

1934: Tramping Club <sup>19</sup>

### NELSON TRAMPING CLUB

#### VISIT TO SHARLAND'S CREEK

A very pleasant tramp was held last Saturday afternoon by members of the Nelson Tramping Club. A small party walked up the Maitai Valley until they reached Sharland's Creek, up which they turned and tramped for a mile or so. The Maitai Valley with its green fields and hills presented a delightful picture and Sharland's Creek was a very pretty stream. The weather was typically springlike and the glorious sunshine added to the enjoyment of the outing.

Next week-end a tramp to the top of The Doubles, via the Maitai, has been arranged.

1935: Rangatira Cub Pack - Weekly meetings at Dennes Hole

*"Until last month, we held our parades every Wednesday up the Maitai River. We took our tea, bathing togs, etc, and mounting our cycles set out for Denny's Hole [sic], which was an ideal spot during the very hot weather we experienced this summer. After a swim and much good fun, we would then... discuss all manner of things cubbing. Best of all were the .. games; they are far more interesting and exciting when playing out-of-doors amongst the trees..."<sup>20</sup>*

1944: New Scout Hutt in lower Maitai Valley<sup>21</sup>

### NEW SCOUT HUT

#### BEAUTIFUL SETTING IN MAITAI VALLEY

#### OFFICIAL OPENING CEREMONY

#### CAMP FIRE ON SATURDAY EVENING

In the light of a brightly burning camp fire a new Scout Hut, situated in a beautiful corner of Miss Richardson's property in lower Maitai Valley opposite Hanby Park, was officially opened on Saturday evening.

1961: Nelson Fern Society

### Readers' Pictures



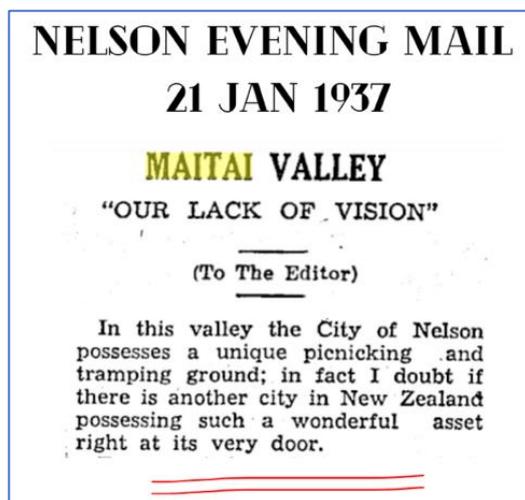
1961.05.27. Photo News

## 1937: UNIQUENESS & BEAUTY OF MAITAI VALLEY RECOGNISED REPEATEDLY

*"In this valley the City of Nelson possesses a unique picnicking and tramping ground; in fact I doubt if there is another city in New Zealand possessing such a wonderful asset right at it's very door."*<sup>22</sup>

### 1937: Maitai Valley

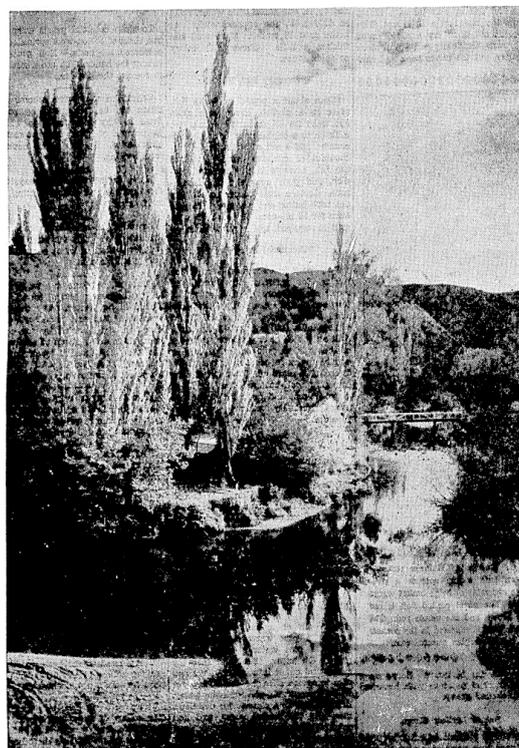
*"...Few cities or towns in New Zealand possess a valley with so many attractions. If, for instance, a change of air is desired close at hand, there are not many places so refreshingly different as this valley."*<sup>23</sup>



### 1937: "Beautiful Maitai Valley"

*"... The picture is of autumn in the beautiful Maitai Valley."*<sup>24</sup>

Photo: Ellis Dudgeon, F.R.S.A. (1937.05.29)



### 1937: One of Nature's Greatest Gifts to Nelson

*"Having lived twelve months in the Maitai Valley, I feel better able to appreciate the immeasurable possibilities in putting to proper use one of Nature's greatest gifts to the people of Nelson."*<sup>25</sup>

### 1945: Visitors' Guide to Nelson - Maitai Valley top attraction

Scenic Walks or Drives near City: Maitai Valley, and Queen's Drive (Port Hills). Others given in the A.A. Guide.

## 1940: Peaceful Rural Scene of the Maitai Valley

Letter to Editor: (excerpt)

*"...I have recently made the ascent of the "Zigzag" at the back of the Botanic Gardens.*

*... a magnificent panorama of landscape and seascape may be obtained—a view that in all probability will linger in one's memory as long as life shall last.*

*... the reverse side of the picture is taken up with the peaceful rural scene of the Maitai Valley. ..."*

**1940**

*"All the year round the Maitai Valley is a picture of loveliness.*

*The green unfolding of spring, the golden dappling of the grass in summer, the black tracery of bare branches in winter and, perhaps most beautiful of all, the rich colour painted so lavishly by autumn on tree and bush. This wooded curve in the road will be familiar to many wonderland members."*<sup>26</sup>

Ellis Dudgeon Photo



## **1940: NELSON FORTUNATE - SUCH A DELIGHTFUL SPOT AT ITS BACK DOOR**

**27 April 1940: SUNDAY HOLE FORD**

**PROPOSED BRIDGE - PUBLIC SUBSCRIPTION LIST OPENED**

*"The condition of the Sunday Hole Ford ..., has prevented many motorists from visiting the beautiful Maitai Valley.*

*It is generally accepted that Nelson is fortunate in having such a delightful spot right at its back door, and the only drawback to full advantage being taken of it by members of the public generally, has been the bad access.*

*Several attempts have been made in the past to get a suitable bridge erected over Sunday Hole Ford but without success as apparently the necessary finance has not been available. ....*

*It is considered that many hundreds of Nelson people will be only too willing to make a subscription, either small or large, to this object which will be the means of making available to the people of the city and district one of nature's most delightful spots.*

*The city already owns a splendid reserve in the valley and unless some better means of access are provided, very little use can be made of it."*

## **1940: 31 DEC. Y.M.C.A. TOURING PARTY VISIT TO NELSON DISTRICT**

*"... a tour of the Nelson district organised under the Y.M.C.A. Group Travel Scheme, a party of 30 young Wellington men and women ... left Wellington on Christmas Eve, and .... spent two days visiting places of interest in Nelson, their itinerary including a trip up the Maitai Valley on Boxing Day.*

## 1945: SEEK THE SILENT COUNTRY (A LETTER TO CHILDREN)

*Dear Boys and Girls,*

*—Alice just stood and gazed. It seemed wrong even to breathe.*

*“How glad I am I came up here to be quiet,” she thought, and sat softly down on a mossy log. She had chanced on a little bushy gully off the Maitai Valley and followed a streamlet for some hundred yards before she arrived at this dell, where surely elves danced at night.*

*There was not a sound, except a quiet whisper of the creek and now and then a cracking of a fuchsia twig as it parted for no apparent reason, from its scaly branch. There was everything that a fairy meeting place should have —a carpet of red fuchsia flowers, cushions of green moss with long orange whiskers, even two tall, slim, purple toadstools and a circle of red ones, while over all was the clean fresh scent of new manuka leaves, still damp from last night’s dew.*

*Alice would not have been surprised if the little bush robin over by the mysterious tangle of supplejack had spoken to her. But it was left to a busy bellbird in the fuschia tree to tell her the gossip of the bush, and a frantically excited fantail joined in, chattering and gesticulating as if what lie had to say were the most important thing\* in the world.*

*And so it was—his world was not made of loud machines, timetables and regular meals. It was his own private, free world, and as he told Alice about it in his own way, she gradually forgot her uncomfortably heavy cares and felt some of the peace of the bush steal into her.*

*At last, when she stepped into the road again and cycled home, she felt a new person and this little poem, written by Patience Strong, in England, came into her mind:*

*Follow the footpath through the bracken. Find the narrow trails — That skirt the fields and  
thread the forests Far from roads and rails; The ribbon of the heathland track With ling and  
gorse ablaze; The paths that run by ferny banks, Down unfrequented ways. Seek the silent  
country Whence no sound of wheels is heard*

*And nothing breaks the silence But the singing of a bird  
Nature tells her secrets Not to those who hurry by—  
But to those who walk with humble heart, And seeing eye.*

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NEM19451109.2.36.1>

## PICNICS PICNICS PICNICS

### 1943: New Year's Day Picnics

*"... Last New Year's Day, ...  
Hundreds of people of all ages  
picnicked in the Maitai  
Valley, and there were dozens of  
parties under the shade of the  
trees near Black Hole and  
Denny's, having walked, cycled,  
motored or driven by horse and  
cart from town."*<sup>27</sup>

Hundreds of people of all ages picnicked in the Maitai Valley, and there were dozens of parties under the shade of the trees near Black Hole and Denny's, having walked, cycled, motored or driven by horse and cart from town.

### 1943: Gay Scenes in City 'Hundreds of Parties Visit Maitai Valley' for Christmas<sup>28</sup>

There were large crowds of picnickers and swimmers at Tahuna beach yesterday and hundreds of parties visited the Maitai Valley. There are more

### 1944: Nelson Anniversary Day picnics<sup>29</sup>

#### **Anniversary Day**

The 102nd anniversary of the founding of the Nelson settlement to-day was celebrated by the usual annual holiday. Most Nelsonians took advantage of the perfect weather conditions to spend a day out of doors. Many picnic parties went to the Maitai Valley and there were large crowds on Tahuna beach. A bowling tournament

## 1961: CAMPING FUN

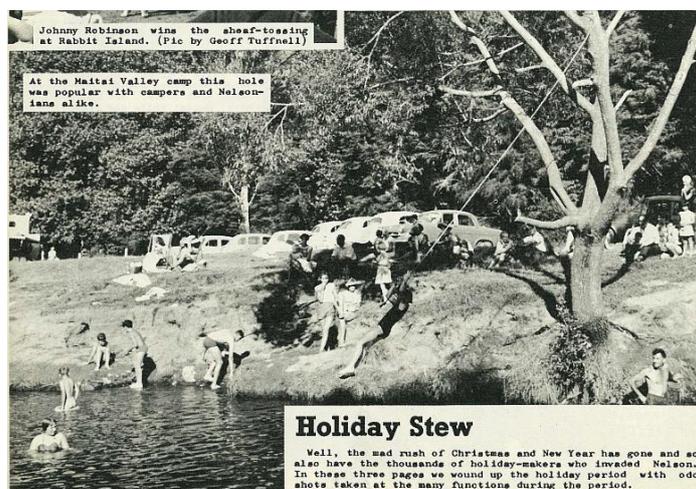


Left: *The Beynon family (Christchurch) relax at the Maitai camp*, Right, *Children at Play*<sup>30</sup>  
1961.02.04 Nelson Photo News



1961.02.04. "Bill Rowling and Ray Watson entertain guests at the Maitai."

## 1963: Popular Camping Spot



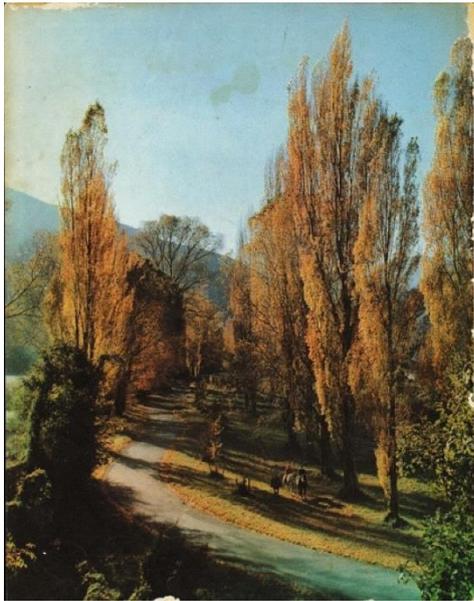
At the Maitai Valley camp this hole was popular with campers and Nelsonians alike.<sup>31</sup>

**MANY SCENIC PHOTOS IN THE 1960s**

1961.07.22

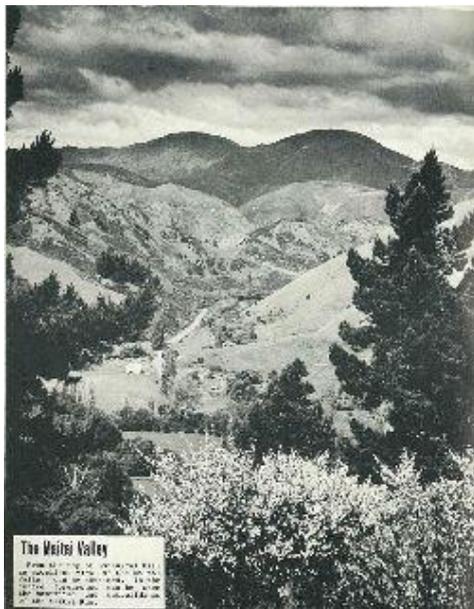
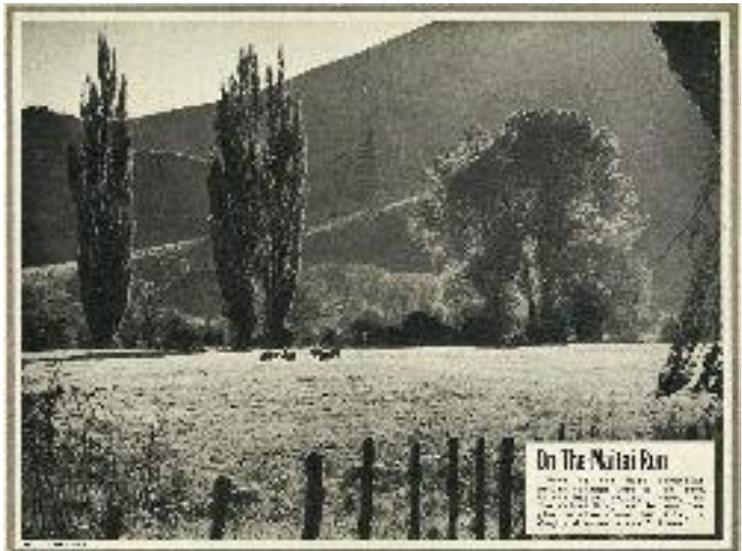
*"... the beautiful avenue of poplars in their autumn coats leading into the Maitai Valley.*

*... a fine herd of Herefords quietly grazing beneath another fine stand of autumn tinted poplars."*



*Left: Nelson is renowned for many things, not least of all being the glorious autumn tonings around the Maitai . It is a beautiful place and ideal for an early morning ride. Here we have caught Helen Rout, Jan McPherson and Jane McCullough on their horses enjoying the weather and a ride."<sup>32</sup>*

*Right: "Some of the most beautiful autumn tonings were to be seen in the Maitai Valley. Here, on the Maitai Run, as the sun begins to*



*rise above the hills, a shepherd moves a small flock."<sup>33</sup>*

*"From the top of Botanical Hill an excellent view of the Maitai Valley can be obtained. In the centre foreground can be seen the homestead and outbuildings of the Maitai Run"<sup>34</sup>*

[https://photonews.org.nz/nelson/issue/NPN31\\_19630525/t1-body-d29.html](https://photonews.org.nz/nelson/issue/NPN31_19630525/t1-body-d29.html)

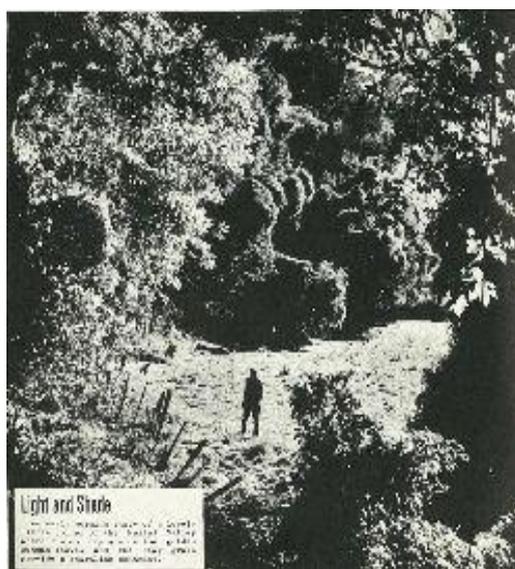
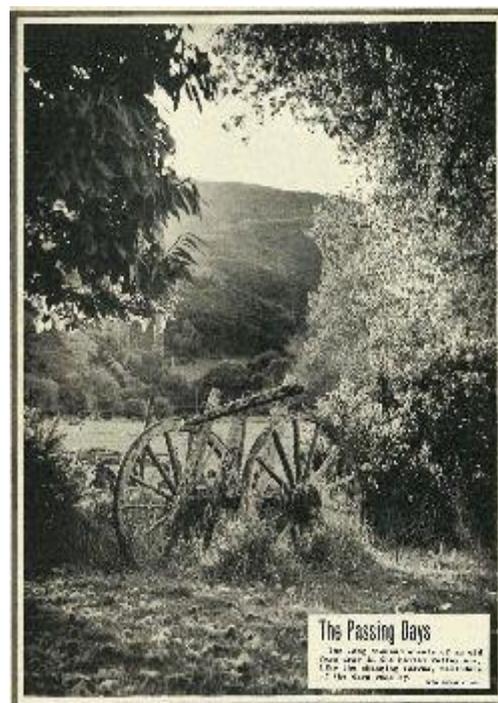
*“The long disused wheels or an old farm dray in the Maitai Valley are, like the changing leaves, reminders Of the days gone by.”*

PETER COOPER STUDIO

[https://photonews.org.nz/nelson/issue/NPN31\\_19630525/t1-body-d33.html](https://photonews.org.nz/nelson/issue/NPN31_19630525/t1-body-d33.html)



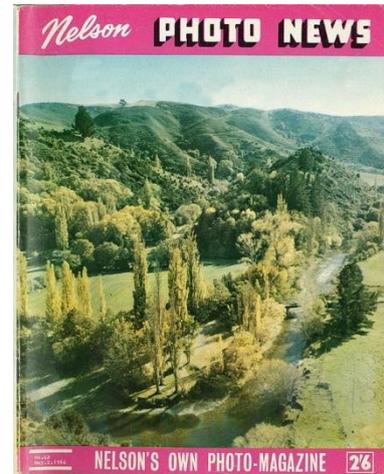
*“Within the last four weeks countless hundreds of photographs have been taken of the superb autumn shades which clothe the poplars leading into the Maitai Valley.”<sup>35</sup>*



Right: *“An early morning study of a lovely little corner of the Maitai Valley where the morning sun on the golden autumn leaves and the dewy grass provide a startling contrast.”<sup>36</sup>*

## 1964: One of 'Nelson's Loveliest Spots' – regularly on Photo News Covers

*"...[one of] our loveliest scenic spots .... Our front cover is easily recognisable as the Maitai Valley around the Black Hole area - a spot which each year draws droves of cameramen."*<sup>37</sup>



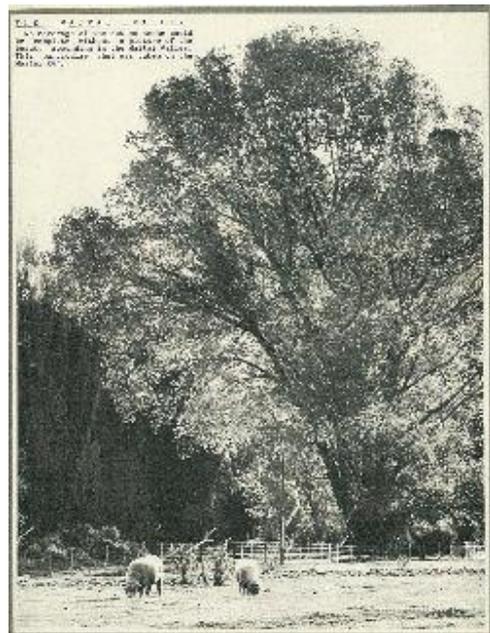
## 1963: Art Exhibition features Maitai Farm

Autumn Art Exhibition ... was again strongly supported, especially in the land and seascape fields. Marjorie Naylor's beautiful pastoral in oils, "Midsummer, The Maitai Farm", was one of the most highly priced at 40 gns.<sup>38</sup>



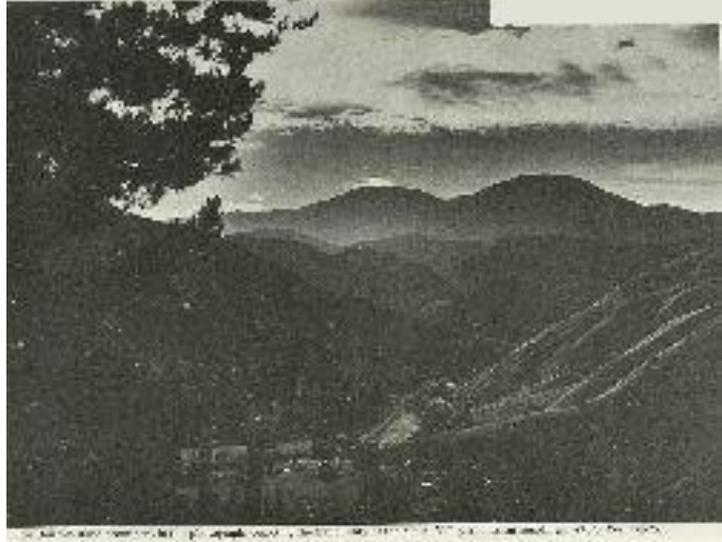
## 1965: Beauty Abounding

No coverage of the autumn scene would be complete without a picture of the beauty abounding in the Maitai Valley, This particular shot was taken on the . Maitai Run.<sup>39</sup>



## 1972: TRANQUILITY

*“The Doubles stand prominent in this photograph, depicting the tranquillity of the Maitai Valley and its surroundings. ” (Photo: Ray Pengelly).<sup>40</sup>*

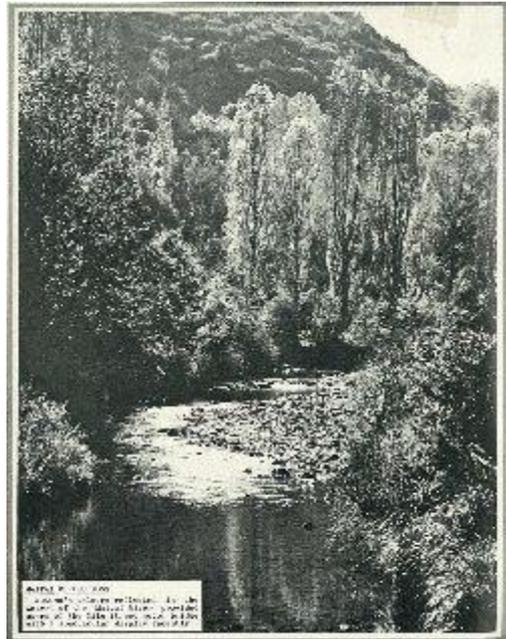


### 1965: The Tranquil Maitai

*The Maitai River can go on the rampage given sufficient rainfall, but it also offers the stroller, in its more tranquil moments, peace and serenity.*

Ellis Dudgeon Photo

*Right: “Autumn's colours reflected in the waters of the Maitai River provided users of the Nile Street motor bridge with a spectacular display recently.”<sup>41</sup>*

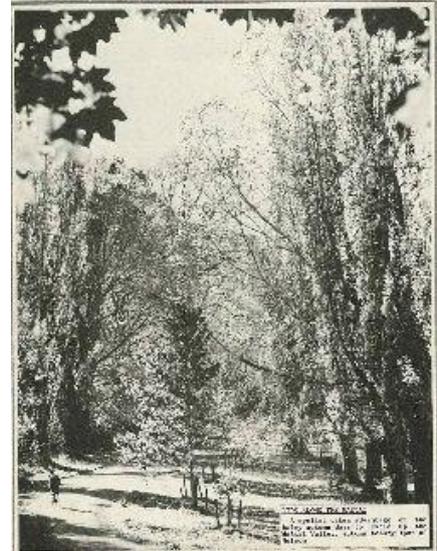
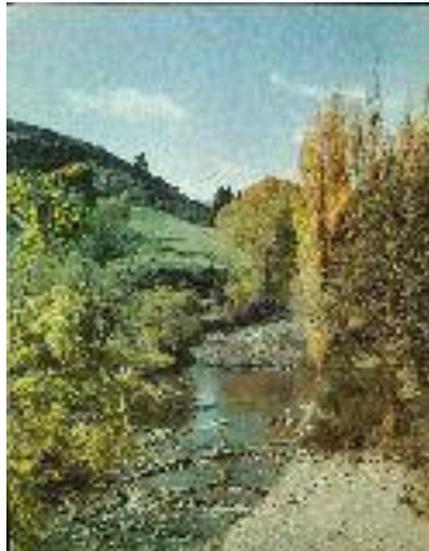


*Below: 1965: Taking it easy in the sun on the banks of the Maitai river<sup>42</sup>*



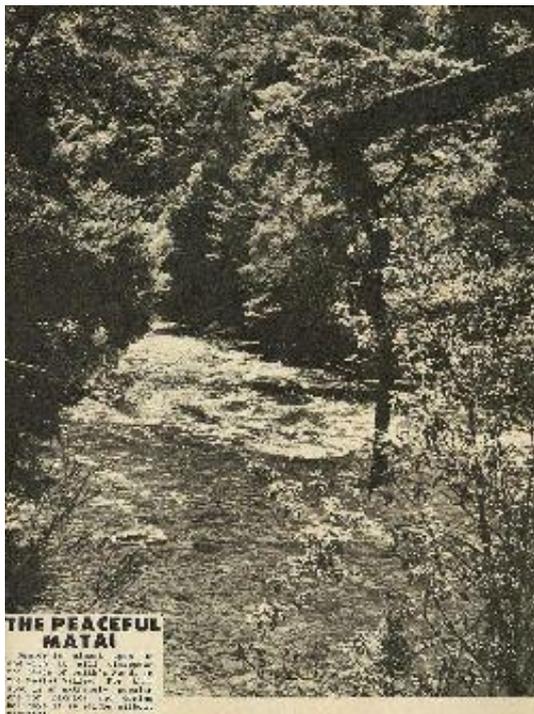
**1965: on the Cover again !!**

*"... Autumn colours as the Maitai River meanders through the Maitai Run."*<sup>43</sup>



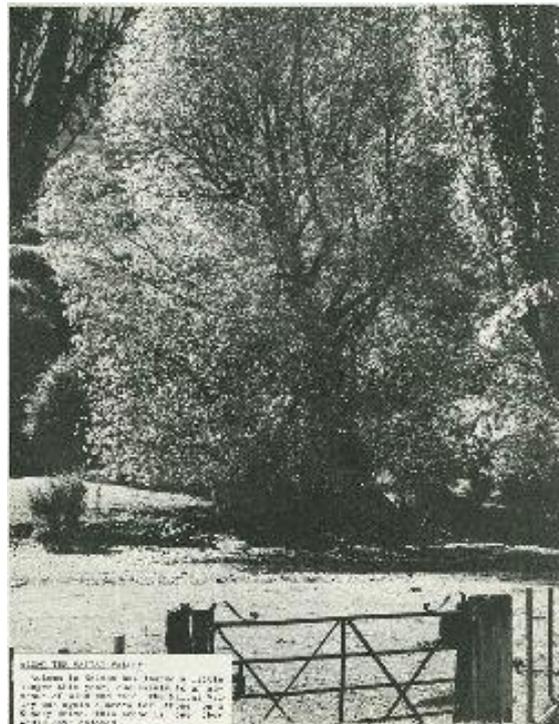
**1966: Autumn Beauty Spot** Right: *"A cyclist takes advantage of the balmy autumn days to cycle up the Maitai Valley, autumn beauty spot of Nelson."*<sup>44</sup>

**1966: The Peaceful Maitai – Extremely popular for Picnics / Mecca for Sunday Drives**



*Smith's Ford, ... an extremely popular [spot] for picnics .. during holidays it is seldom without visitors*<sup>45</sup>

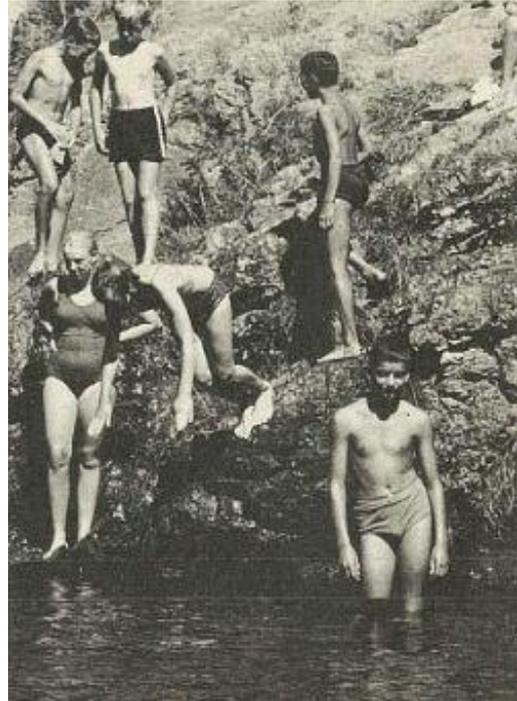
*The Maitai Valley was again a mecca for those on a Sunday drive. This scene is one they would have enjoyed..*<sup>46</sup>



## 1966: POPULAR HOLIDAY SPOT, BLACK HOLE



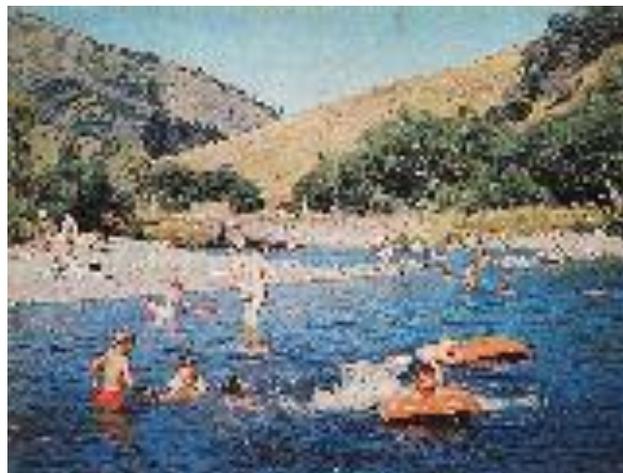
Popular holiday spot, the Blackhole, Maitai River.



*Popular holiday spot, the Black Hole, Maitai River.*<sup>47</sup>

*Right: Black Hole ... a boy standing on the submerged rock close to the diving area.*<sup>48</sup>

## 1969: Black Hole A Great Attraction

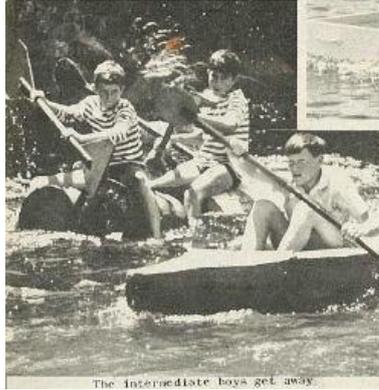


*“Our back cover features another great attraction for Nelsonians and visitors alike, Black Hole, on the Maitai River. Several deep pools allow the swimmer the opportunity to actually swim and dive, and the shallows are ideal for the wee tots.”*<sup>49</sup>

## 1968 - 1969: MAITAI BOAT RACES



Prize for the most original craft was won by the Nelson Plunket Mothers (most of whom appeared to be fathers).



The Intermediate boys get away.



Boats (if you could call some of them that) of all shapes and sizes were paddled, splashed, run, pushed or kicked downstream by as motley a collection of boaties as we've ever seen, in the second Nelson Jaycee Maitai river races. At times it appeared as if the crew with the most underhanded methods might win the major event, the Fruit Salad Finale, but the 2ZN entry, crewed by Graham Veitch and Tony Muff, got its nose in front of the interference and never looked back. That's them at bottom left. Terrific fun for a tremendous crowd.

Above: The Fruit Salad Finale race gets under way.

Left: This female crew was soon overwhelmed and scuttled.

Below: The Apollo 9 (Aero Club) crew prepares to repel boarders.

*"... boats and canoes of all shapes and sizes which competed in the first (and we hope, not last) Maitai river races.*

*Prize for the most original craft was won by the Nelson Plunket Mothers (most of whom appeared to be fathers).<sup>50 51</sup>*

## 1968: SWIMMING

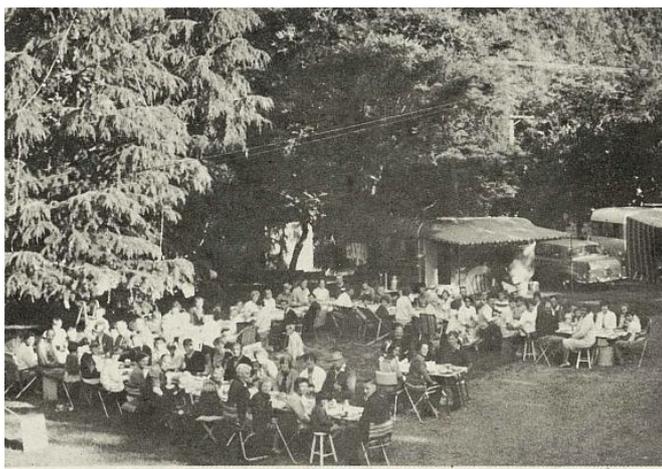


*"During the long spell of hot weather, various ways of cooling off were found. A group of children found this old swimming hole in the Maitai River (just outside the Municipal Pool) the ideal spot.<sup>52</sup>*

## 1960s: LOTS GOING ON IN THE VALLEY

### 1968: Caravan Club's Weekend

*"The Nelson Caravan Club is a strong and active organisation, and throughout the year, particularly in the summer, the members hitch up and take off for all sorts of wonderful places. For their Christmas outing, members selected the Maitai motor camp and well before the holiday season approached the camp had a festive and well lived-in look. During the weekend one of the trees was festooned with coloured lights and all sat down to a Christmas dinner under the tree."*<sup>53</sup>



**CLUB'S WEEKEND**  
The Nelson Caravan Club is a strong and active organisation, and throughout the year, particularly in the summer, the members hitch up and take off for all sorts of wonderful places. For their Christmas outing, members selected the Maitai motor camp and well before the holiday season approached the camp had a festive and well lived-in look. During the weekend one of the trees was festooned with coloured lights and all sat down to a Christmas dinner under the tree.  
Above: A view of the camp site.  
Left: How would you like to cater for this crowd for Christmas dinner?  
Below: A small section of the diners.

### 1968: One of the Busiest Roads in Nelson

*"During the summer, one of the busiest roads in Nelson is that leading into the Maitai Valley. Nelson residents use the swimming holes in the Maitai River regularly and the road carries traffic to the motor camp. For the most part the road is in excellent shape, but between Nile Street and the quarry is a particularly dangerous section of roadway which barely permits the passage of two cars. Might we suggest that the council widen the road at this point. It could be done quite easily."*<sup>54</sup>

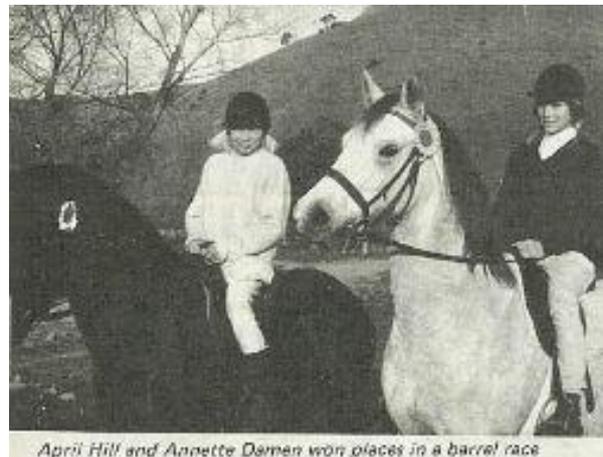


**1968: Rotarians Erect New Swings at Maitai Motor Camp<sup>55</sup>**



**1970: WESTERN GYMKHANA**

*"... group of young horsemen and women in Nelson. Recently the group held a western-style gymkhana in the Maitai Valley..."<sup>56</sup>*



*April Hill and Annette Damer won places in a barrel race*

**1963:  
10-MILE WALK; COMMUNITY FITNESS CHALLENGE**

*"Setting off on the 10-mile walk up the Maitai Valley, one of the courses in Operation Challenge."<sup>57</sup>*



## SCENIC BEAUTY

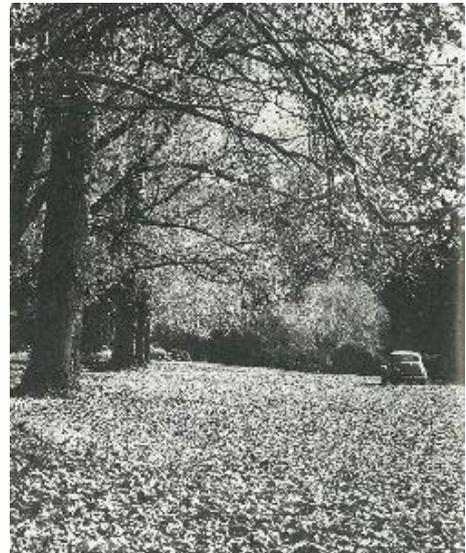
**1969: One of the most pleasant spots in Nelson's autumn; the Maitai Valley.**

*"A beautiful place for a quiet walk with the dog"<sup>58</sup>*



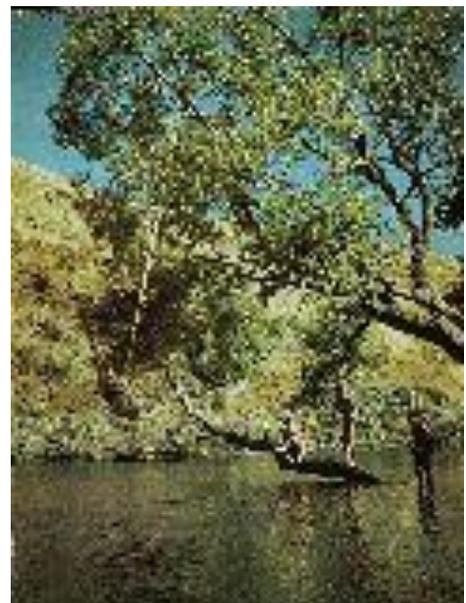
**1970: Packed with Holiday Makers**

*"During the summer the picnic ground at the Maitai Motor Camp is packed with holiday-makers and swimmers"<sup>59</sup>*



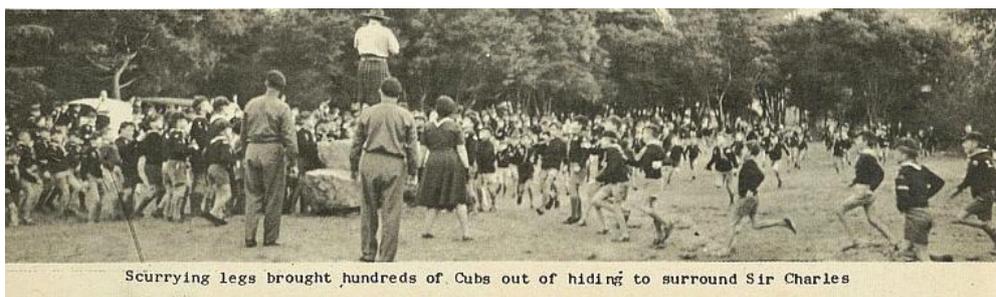
**1972: A Very Popular Spot**

*"A very popular spot during the summer months is this swimming hole on the Maitai River, at the recently acquired City Council reserve, Waahi Taakaro. And having a rope to swing into the river on adds to the popularity of the spot."<sup>60</sup>*



## 1967: CAMPS – CUBS, GIRLS BRIGADE

The Corder Park Cub Pack spent such a weekend recently at the Kingsford Hut up the Maitai Valley. (Pix by Peter Cooper Studio).<sup>61</sup>

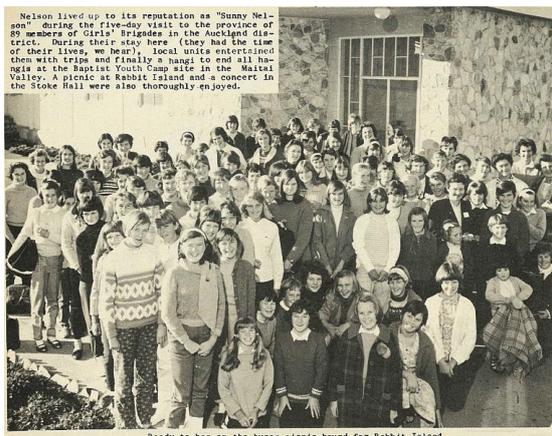


Scurrying legs brought hundreds of Cubs out of hiding to surround Sir Charles

Hundreds of Scouts and Cubs from all parts of the province converged on the Maitai Reserve<sup>62</sup>

### GIRLS' BRIGADE INVADES NELSON

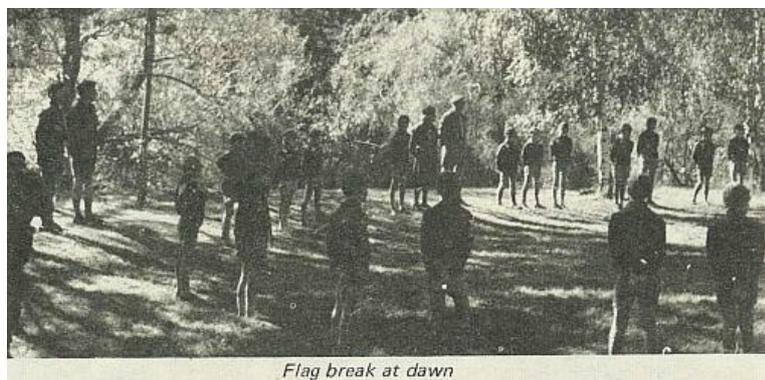
“... 89 members of Girls' Brigades in the Auckland district. During their stay here (they had the time of their lives, we hear), local units entertained them with trips and finally a hangi to end all hangi at the Baptist Youth Camp site in the Maitai Valley.<sup>63</sup>”



Nelson lived up to its reputation as "Sunny Nelson" during the five-day visit to the province of 89 members of Girls' Brigades in the Auckland district. During their stay here (they had the time of their lives, we hear), local units entertained them with trips and finally a hangi to end all hangi at the Baptist Youth Camp site in the Maitai Valley. A picnic at Rabbit Island and a concert in the Stoke Hall were also thoroughly enjoyed.

Ready to hop on the buses picnic-bound for Rabbit Island

### 1971: Cub Camp In Maitai



Flag break at dawn



Their hangi, constructed by group members, revealed a tough day under the weight of those days

“... Cub groups held a two-day camp at the Baptist Youth Camp in the Maitai Valley recently.” (Photos by Mr Gordon Brett).<sup>64</sup> .<sup>65</sup>

## 1971 & 1972: BOAT RACE: ROLLING DOWN THE RIVER

*“One of the highlights of the holiday carnival programme was the Maitai River race series, entered into with gusto by a large number of contestants of all ages. .... A tremendous amount of fun enjoyed by competitors and a very big crowd alike.”<sup>66</sup>*

*The annual raft race down the Maitai River attracted the usual assortment of entries. Most were extraordinary, some zany and others just plain ridiculous. Regardless of the seaworthiness of the craft, the crews had a great time, and as any river sailor will tell you, that's the main thing. “(Pictures: Ian Skinner).<sup>67</sup>*



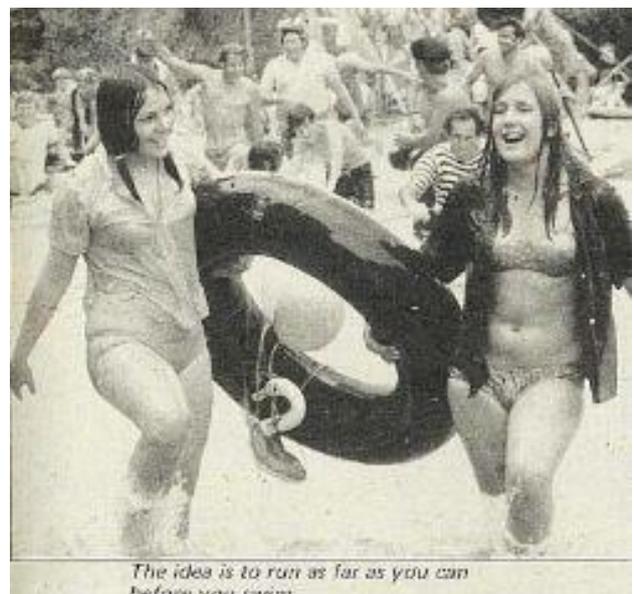
*The Nelson "Roll On, Roll Over Ferry" entered we understand by the boys of the Anchor Shipping Company.*



*The younger generation of the more adventurous*



*No quarter was asked, certainly none given.*



*The idea is to run as far as you can before you swim.*

## 1972: OLD NELSON REMEMBERED



*"A man and his dog enjoy the tranquillity of the Maitai River. To the left behind the man and dog, were some trees, but the water and the mountains."* <sup>68</sup>

## 1972: COUNCIL XMAS PARTY

*"You'd never guess who turned up at the Nelson City Council's Christmas party for employees' children? That's right! Santa Claus! ... The party was held at the Maitai Motor Camp."* <sup>69</sup>



## 1972: WAAHI TAAKARO FACE LIFT



*"Nelson College pupils and, to a lesser degree, their parents and friends of the college, combined to tidy the city reserve, Waahi Taakaro. Some pupils were heavily sponsored and the effort served to benefit the college financially, as well as make the reserve more pleasant."* <sup>70</sup>

# 2021 – 2022: CONTEMPORARY USES OF THE VALLEY

## Lockdown Walks



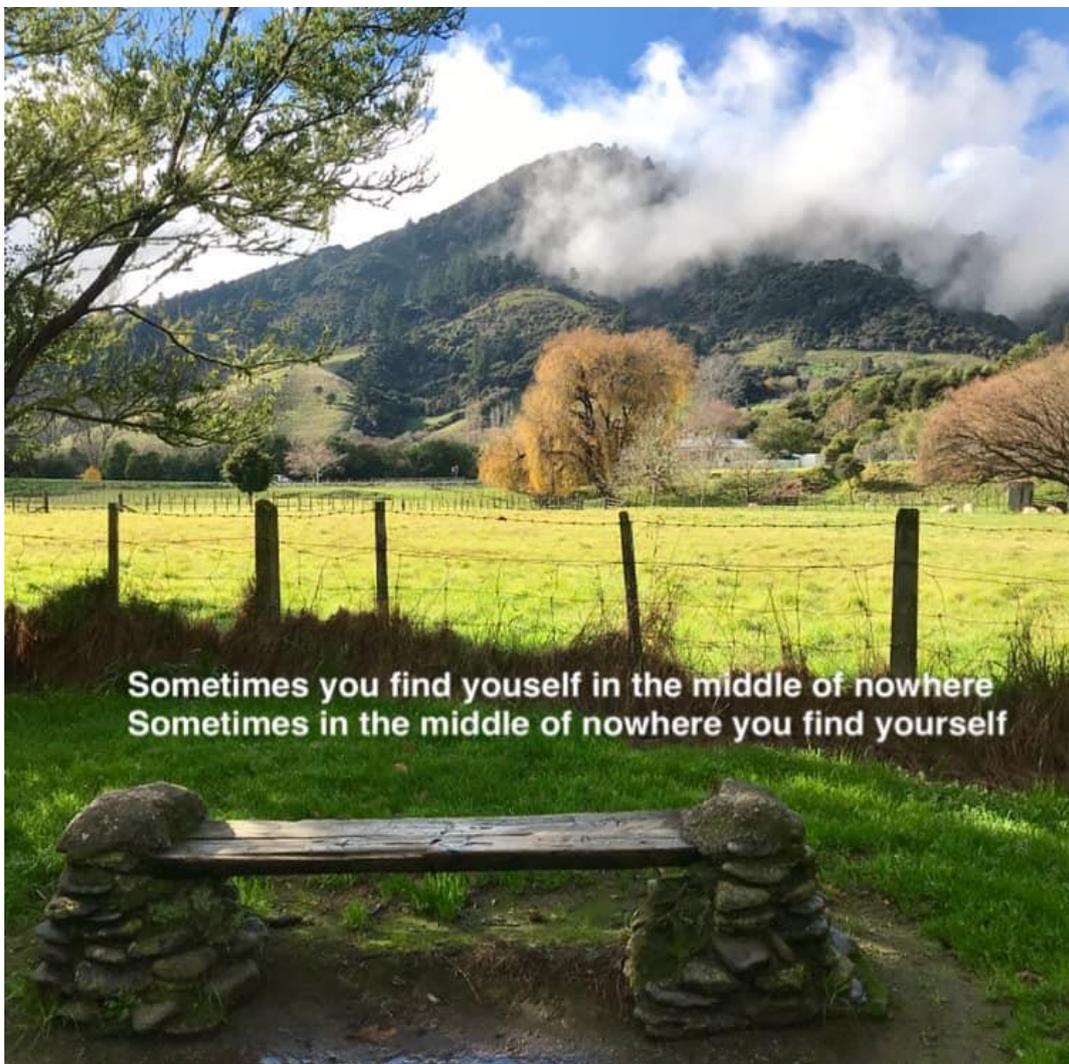
## Kite-flying



## Throwing Stones



## Contemplating



Sometimes you find yourself in the middle of nowhere  
Sometimes in the middle of nowhere you find yourself

## Painting



## Enjoying the Reflections.



## Walking the dog



## Running



## Cricket



## BBQ Parties and Picnics



## Large Sports Events



## Hanging out with Mates



## Riding Home from a Mountain-Bike Ride

## Soccer



## Summer Swims





**Lindsay Powdrell**

Noticeable this holiday week-end, were the return of family groups enjoying walks, cycle rides and picnics again. A real tourist destination, attracting many to this precious place.

Like Reply Share 9 w

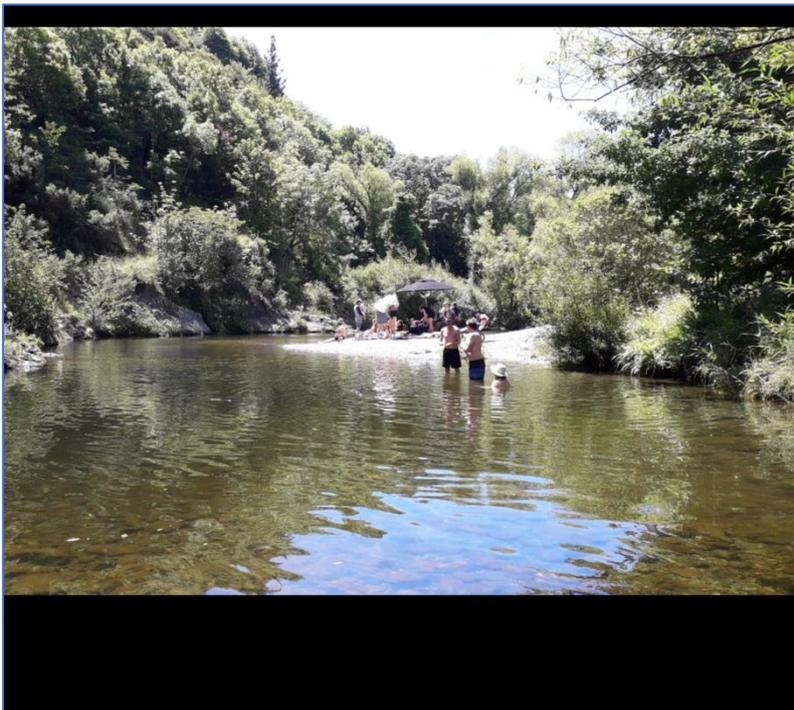


Like Reply Share 1 y

**John Smith**

Exactly. Likewise NCC councillors are only there for the blink of an eye in the scheme of things yet the legacy they'll leave if this development goes ahead will negatively impact the valley, the river and generations of Nelsonian's to come. We're so lucky to have this largely untouched valley on the city's doorstep. Don't be remembered as the council that stuffed this up for ever.

Like Reply Share 1 y



**Mary Willett**

Precious!! #

Like Reply Share 1 y

↳ **John Smith** replied · 1 reply



**Waide Ringakaha**

Awsome

Like Reply Share 1 y



**Gail Earle**

I love swimming at Dennis Hole

Like Reply Share 1 y



**Caroline Vine**

I love that hole too its shocking to imagine any mass housing development across from this spot. Save the Maitai!

Like Reply Share 1 y



**Mary Willett**

Love dennes hole.our previous river!

Like Reply Share 1 y



**John Smith**

Now imagine a large concrete stormwater channel emptying into it!!



## Christmas in the Shade



## Loving the colours – Enjoying the Seasons



Like Reply Share 9 w

 **Italina Sowman**  
Absolutely beautiful should have special protection 🌹🌹  
Like Reply Share 9 w   4

 **Deborah Knowler**  
A real treasure, Autumn a beautiful time, need to keep this wonderful greenspace away from developers.  
Like Reply Share 10 w  7



 **Tony Haddon**  
11 December 2021 · 🌐

  29 6 comments 2 shar

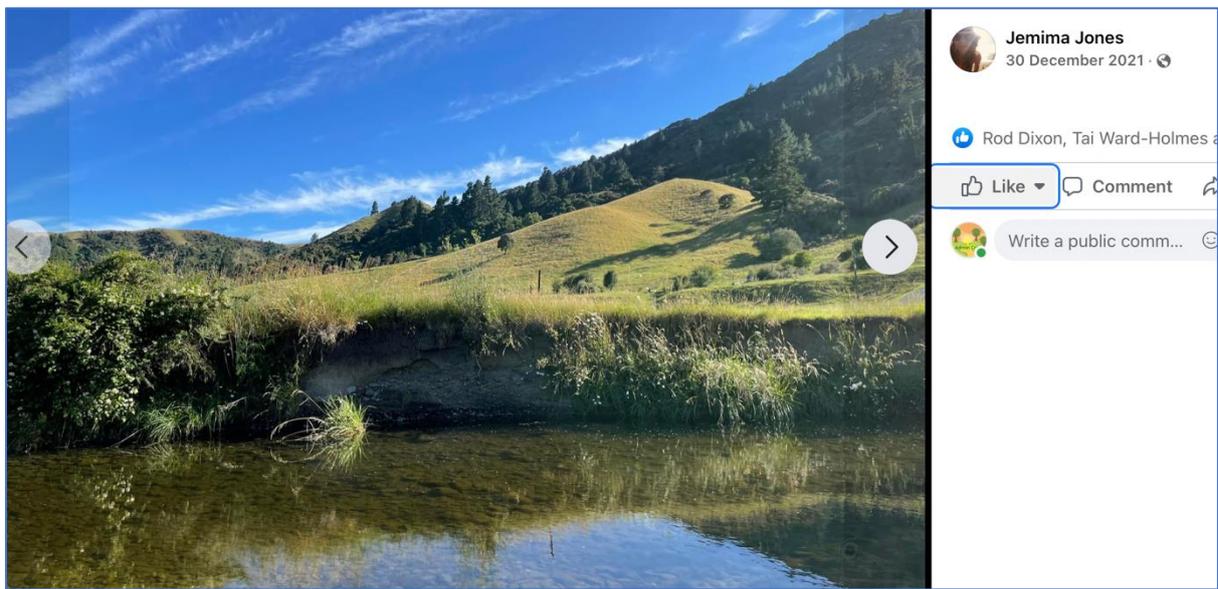
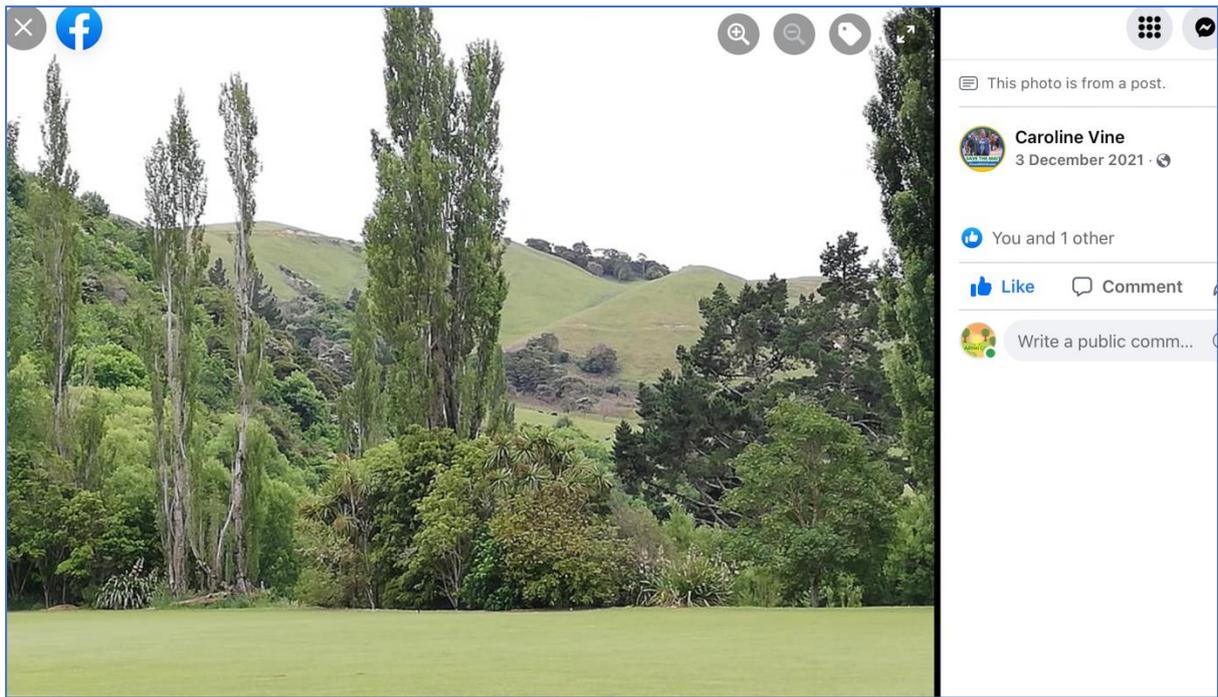
 Like  Comment  Share

Most recent

 **Alli Jackson**  
So clear - even with all we do to it. Let's not ruin it forever, I want future generations to swim here too 🍀 to steal secret kisses, to skim stones, to dive for eels and hold hands under water. The lives that this river has touched are innumerable, she holds our youthful secrets and needs our protection. Future memories still have the chance to drift in her water 💧  
Like Reply Share 28 w   3

## KĀKĀ VALLEY IS VISIBLE FROM MANY VIEWPOINTS





*Above: A few photographs showing Kākā Valley as the backdrop to recreation sites in the Maitai Valley.*

## Current Information from Nelson City Council

### Centre of New Zealand Walk

*"The Centre of New Zealand on Botanical Hill is one of Nelson's most popular walks.*

*.... At the top take a seat, enjoy the stunning view and pick out the features of Nelson's geography ... A good summer option is to take your togs, walk down the eastern side of the hill to Branford Park, have a swim at Black Hole and take the Maitai Track back to your starting point."*<sup>71</sup>

Screenshot:

## Centre of New Zealand Walk

*What is it with Nelson? First game of rugby, centre of New Zealand...are we just showing off, or can we truly make these claims to fame? It's a 'Yes and No' answer, and one that you can learn about with a pleasant walk that also gives you a view of the city and coastline, taking you into Nelson's leafy Maitai River valley.*

Find the Botanics Reserve, set aside by the early settlers, at the end of Hardy Street. An interpretation panel, shaped like rugby ball and goal posts, will tell you all about the history of the playing field.

### Centre of New Zealand

The Centre of New Zealand on Botanical Hill is one of Nelson's most popular walks. The starting point is the Botanical Reserve, over a footbridge from the end of Hardy Street, or you can start at the Nelson Visitor Information Centre and follow the Maitai Walkway to the Hardy Street footbridge. Take a look at the interpretive panel at the bottom of the hill for some views of Nelson over the last century, and the history of this 'Village Green'.

To reach the Centre of New Zealand will take 20-60 minutes, depending on your age, speed and fitness. The main track is suitable for sturdier push chairs and buggies. At the top take a seat, enjoy the stunning view and pick out the features of Nelson's geography from the information panels. You can go downhill on one of the other tracks on the Botanical Hill, or opt to head along the hillside to Walters Bluff. A good summer option is to take your togs, walk down the eastern side of the hill to Branford Park, have a swim at Black Hole and take the Maitai Track back to your starting point.

## Another use of the valley: 2022.07.09: Traffic Management Assessments



NCC Interpretive Panel in Branford Park:



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