

## Mt Evans

We had a good weather forecast for our scheduled trip up Mt Evans, the highest point in the ATNP at 1156m. However, we didn't have quite the numbers to do a through trip from north to south, so we did a return trip along the standard route via Moa Park.

The track is fairly overgrown, but the path itself is well worn, and still very well marked with old-fashioned tin lids painted red, so it was quite easy to follow.

We sat in a warm spot out of the breeze among the rocks at the top, avoiding the wasps' nest in the rocks. A



trap line has been put in along the track, but sadly there were no wasp bait stations. The views from the top were lovely, although we kept an eye on the black clouds rolling in from the south.

There are lots of awesome old trees along the track, and good numbers of mountain cedar. We had a great day out, with good company, along a track which doesn't get a lot of use.

## Johnsons United Battery

Six club members departed Motueka on the prospect of an excellent weather forecast and made the obligatory stop in Takaka for a track information update and a coffee stop at the Wholemeal Cafe. Once settled into the bach at Collingwood Motor Camp five of us headed out to the Aorere Goldfields.

Our objective for the day was to visit Johnson's United Battery, which had eluded us on a previous trip. From the Devil's Boots car park one member elected to try out the mountain bike tracks, whilst we remaining four headed off on foot on the loop track



via Stafford's and Ballroom Caves to Druggans Dam. En route we passed evidence of early gold mining activity from the 1880s including ground sluicing, water races, tunnels and an old benched track. We enjoyed lunch overlooking the dam on a stunning summer's day with virtually no wind.

From there we retraced our steps and joined the 4WD track that leads to the Johnson's battery turnoff. The very steep descent down to the battery site at the bottom of Wakefield Gully requires a most cautious approach. What an amazing sight greeted us, a twenty head stamper battery which was the longest running gold battery in the Nelson region, and the only remaining twenty stamp battery to be standing in New Zealand. The machinery was stabilised with new foundations by DOC staff in 1993 and 2011. The company that operated Johnson's United Battery from 1879 recovered 18745 ounces of gold and it was abandoned in the early 1900's.

The climb back up to the 4WD track took less time than the steep descent down. We made it back to the vehicle and returned to Collingwood.