

Rocks and Hard Places

Takaka Hill

A review by Gary Willis

I have been lucky enough to be the first person to read the clubs copy of this book by Cliff Turley. The author has obviously done a lot of research into the subject and the story of Takaka hill starts with the Maori who had a track into the area. Settlers were the main driving force behind the creation of several tracks over the hill via valleys such as the Remeka and the Upper Takaka valley. The real story though is of the men and women who forced their way into the area of Takaka hill and made their homes in its harsh environment. Cliff Turley has done a wonderful job of bringing these characters to life and explaining how they made their living either from working on the road when it was upgraded from a Bridle Track, or farming the harsh Karst lands through to our generation of cavers, climbers, hang glider pilots or Bed and Breakfast owners.

There are stories from the Takaka hill schools; Public works department camps and the Rat Trap hotel further afield to Asbestos cottage and the Cobb through to Multi sports and the relatively recent Gathering dance parties. If you have questions about Takaka Hill then this is the book to read. I give it 5* out of 5*.