



## The Maitai Valley recalled

*Fred Shallcrass slept on the open verandah of his Maitai Valley home, winter and summer...*

*Jane Martin recalls a Maitai trout cooked over an open fire...*

*Maurice Gee looks back on swims with his daughters in the pools below their Cleveland Terrace home...*

*These are just some of the memories in 'Maitai Stories', an oral history project commissioned by the Nelson City Council to add another layer to their on-line Maitai 'story-map'.*

Oral history draws on personal memories, often of significant events, to round out the factual historical record. For example, newspaper advertisements for the service car that ran school children down the valley to school exist in archives. But Fred Shallcrass explains what this meant, as one of the driver's children: 'Our worst thing, we had to be picked up at Fergusson's store and taken home every night – we couldn't play sport!'

Local journalist Jacquetta Bell says interviewing the Maitai 'old-timers' was both a privilege and a challenge. To start at the beginning, Bell turned to local historian John Mitchell, who describes the very first survey map done just days after the New Zealand Company arrived in Nelson, when 'tenths' reserves were selected for Maori by Crown Agent Henry Thompson.

"When you look at the order in which Thompson made his selections, the first 20 odd were mahinga kai - food gathering places - on the edge of the estuary and up the sides of the Maitai River," he says.

John also covers the pakohe (argillite) quarry further up the Maitai, and how this resource was mined by early Maori.

While most of the interviews were about Maitai childhoods, retired City Engineer Mac Crampton recalled the dramatic floods of 1970, when heavy rain fell over a four day period in August.

"The Maitai River over-flowed its banks at the Maitai Valley Road, flowed down Nile Street and across to Pitt Street before crossing the Botanical Reserve at the foot of the hill," Mac recalls.

The Hardy Street footbridge withstood the weekend deluge, but when the Monday flood peak reached town the sun was shining, and bystanders turned out to see the bridge go.

The interviews were undertaken in the subjects' own homes, by videographer Fraser Heal. Bell says hearing the stories first hand was a real privilege but the challenge came in reducing those stories to short videos.

"A short format makes them more watchable and more likely to hold a viewer's attention but there was so much detail in the stories that it was really difficult making decision about what to leave out and what to keep in."

You can see the Maitai Stories at:

[nelson.govt.nz/environment/healthy-streams/maitai-oral-histories/](https://nelson.govt.nz/environment/healthy-streams/maitai-oral-histories/)



## Environmental Grants Applications

**Open 1 - 26 February 2021**

If you are a group or individual working to improve the health of our environment, you may be eligible for an Environmental Grant. Find out more at:

**[Nelson.govt.nz/environmental-grants](https://nelson.govt.nz/environmental-grants)**



## Poorman Valley Stream Field Guide Cover Competition

Nelson City Council's Healthy Streams team is looking for a cover design for their latest Field Guide which will focus on Poorman Valley Stream.

The aim of the guide is to encourage exploration and to develop a community of care around our freshwater ecosystems. To find out more and enter, go to [shape.nelson.govt.nz/poorman-valley-stream](https://shape.nelson.govt.nz/poorman-valley-stream) or email [healthy.streams@ncc.govt.nz](mailto:healthy.streams@ncc.govt.nz). The winner will receive a \$250 Prezzy card.