

## 2 MINUTES WITH ..... Gil Roper

Gil featured in this newsletter when his book *Tawa the tree, the community and its reserves* was published last October. The book stems from his involvement with both the Friends of Tawa Bush Reserves and the Tawa Historical Society.

He was one of those from FoTBR who gave huge support to the Tawa community's drive at this time last year to convince Wellington City Council to secure the Forest of Tane (on Tawa's western hills) for community ownership – a bid that was ultimately successful.



*Where were you born?* Palmerston North.

*Where did you grow up?* Palmerston North, New Plymouth, Wanganui and Wellington.

*Where were you educated?*

Wanganui Intermediate School, Wellington College and Victoria University of Wellington.

*How long have you lived in Tawa?* Eight years (2010 to 2018) but previously for four years (1968 to 1972) when I began my teaching career at Tawa College.

*What about family?*

Married to Helen for almost 49 years. We have five adult sons who all live in New Zealand and then we have 10 grandchildren from the next generation, including seven girls!

*Work experience over the years .....*

I've worked in Secondary Education all my life – a Science and Biology Teacher at Tawa College and then HOD Science, Katikati College. In 1993 I moved back to Wellington to join NZQA in the Secondary Assessment Section. In 2002 I became an Adviser to Secondary Schools for NZQA when the NCEA qualifications were introduced. I'm currently employed part-time as an Adviser to Staff at Wellington College.

*What are your interests and hobbies?*

Botany and the conservation of flora and fauna. I take guided tours at Zealandia and more recently at the Botanical Gardens. Gardening and landscaping, plus music and sport. Interests in the history of Tawa and its native bush reserves are enabled as a committee member of both the Tawa Historical Society and Friends of Tawa Bush Reserves. Writing, editing, as well as overseas travel, provide further interests.

*Favourite sports team and/or sports person?*

I'm an avid follower of national team sports – but especially Cricket and Rugby, having played and coached both of these sports in my younger days.

*Favourite musical group and/or individual singer?*

I'm a keen fan of opera and operetta – having sung in many productions in my earlier years.

*What is your favourite holiday destination in New Zealand?*

Anywhere where there are pristine native bush walks, lakes and rivers. First-time recent visits to The Catlins, Stewart Island, Great Barrier Island and White Island have been memorable.

*What accomplishments/achievements in your life give you the most satisfaction/pride?*

Helping other people through imparting knowledge and experiences learned in my employment in secondary education. Also, I enjoyed writing and publishing a book last year, which took two years to prepare – *Tawa the tree, the community and its reserves*. Seeing the content used locally and beyond has been satisfying.

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*What are three things you would like to do before you die?*

Visit the Galapagos Islands and tropical rainforest in the Amazon.

View opera at Covent Garden or 'the Met' in New York.

Visit parts of historical Europe previously unseen.

*(Compiled February 2018)*