



Hugh Derham

The call of the hills



After the first Christchurch Earthquake in 2010,
the house in Bexley was home no more.

This book tells a personal and visual story about how a
house in the hills became home.

This book also asks you at the same time, to consider what
it is about the high country and mountains that calls to you.

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The front cover is Lake Coleridge viewed from the eastern
end looking westwards.

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Bee on the native Kowhai flower

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The Rakaia Valley

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As you drive towards the mountains and reach the top of the rise, you see the hills and the rivers appearing in front of you.

You ask “What is it about the hills that draws you here?”



The north face of the Hutt Range.

The mountains are often the first to greet the morning sun.
As the sun reaches the horizon, the mountain tops light up with an orange glow.

The glow descends the mountain and it is morning for everyone.
Every sunrise is different. What will be different for you today?



Black Hill Range

You can walk past this range several times a week, not particularly noticing its beauty. Then one day it suddenly seems incredibly beautiful as the snow, the clouds and

the light all work together in a way not seen before.
Is it the ever changing views that make you want to be here?



Lake Georgina in winter

Winter brings its own special effects. In good winters you can ice skate here.

Is it the special nature of a favourite season that calls?



Lake Coleridge in winter

8

Sitting on the hill top looking at this view of Lake Coleridge, you feel so insignificant.

Is this what happens to problems when you are in the hills?



The Wilberforce River in winter

You sit and wonder, where does that river start?

A new adventure starts to form in your subconscious.



Lake Coleridge in summer

10

You come back in the summer.

The snow has gone, but has the beauty?



The Wilberforce River in summer

A river, often ferocious, made famous by the book “A River Rules My Life”.
Now would be a good time to cross it, or walk to its source.

The man made canal you can see, feeds water from the Wilberforce into Lake Coleridge
for the Power Station at the other end of the lake. Did you know there are over 40
consents the power company has to keep to preserve the environment?



On the Clay Range looking west

12

The hills contain so many walking tracks.

The tracks take you from stunning view to stunning view.



The track over the Clay Range

Around every corner there is a new view encouraging you to carry on.

You wonder, what surprises are there in store?



and you reach

Lake Mystery,

and then

The Pinnacles.



and along the way you see
many small pleasures:

The Kowhai tree shaped by
the wind and

The Corokia Cotoneaster
in flower.



Lake Coleridge looking north from the top of Peak Hill

On another day you just have to walk to the top of the hill you see every day from the lounge window.

The mountains tower high above the lake, creating weather patterns, and giving turbulent skies.



Lower Glenthorne Station and Ryton Bay

In the midst of all the mountains are pockets of human development.

What will future generations do with this land?



Castle Hill

Sometimes you stumble upon places “out of this world”.
Here are limestone rocks which were once at the bottom of the sea.

These rocks make you ask, how do I, and they, come to be here?



The Rakaia

Walking to the river you see two small green hills in the distance.

You wonder what the view would be from the tops of those little hills?



The confluence of The Rakaia and The Mathais. The Rakaia is the left branch.



The river valley is wide and river flows can change before your eyes.

Is it the challenges the rivers and hills pose that draw you back?



Looking west at the upper reaches of the Rakaia

22 The view from Whaleback Hill towards the source of the Rakaia.

There are river braids to cross and huts to find.



The thought of seeing the source of this mighty river drives you along.

But clouds are forming behind you. Should you carry on?



The Lyell Glacier

The river is too high to cross, the only option to get to the source is over a mountain, the consolation is the view.

The Lyell and Ramsey glaciers in adjacent valleys, are the sources of the Rakaia. Today it is cloudy, do you have to climb again on a better day?



The Ramsey Glacier at the head of the Rakaia

Each glacier, black with all the accumulated shingle on its surface, slips into a lake, one frozen, one just full of ice cold water.

Do you come back in better weather when you can walk to the glaciers safely?



The Rakaia

26 Before the rain comes, the sun is out, the river meanders peacefully down the valley.

How long will this experience last?



The Rakaia

The Northwest wind and rain can change the picturesque valley into a torment of dust and water.
The clouds are black, the rain comes down in torrents and the snow shimmers on the peaks.

Is it the moods of the weather that add a special dimension to life in the hills?



The Rakaia

28

The river rises and changes to a raging torrent of muddy water.

What will the river look like tomorrow?



The Rakaia

The river has subsided after the storm. Its form has changed.

Is it the ever changing natural environment that gives so much interest?



Autumn in Lake Coleridge Village

30 In town, the seasons can pass you by, but in the village the seasons are very evident.

Is it the different impacts of the seasons that brings you here?



Just outside Lake Coleridge Village

In winter it is a different place.

You will not be driving anywhere today.



Sunset after snow in Lake Coleridge Village

32 The snow is deep, last time it took some time to melt.

You wonder if it will still be here tomorrow?



The morning after

The silent beauty of snow brings its own timetable of events today.

Is it this variation to plans and deadlines that enlivens life?



On top of Cottons Sheep Range

34 In whichever direction you look, there are snow capped mountains.

You stare at all this natural beauty and wonder what its like in town today?



The hoar frosts gradually build up their influence on the plants making them sparkle in the sun.

What are the influences on your life?



Looking towards the Hutt Range from Quartz Hill

As the snow recedes, the mountains
in front of you throw down the gauntlet.

Climb and see the beautiful views at the top.
Is it this challenge that brings you back?



Lake Coleridge from Peak Hill

As spring comes, the pastures are green and the snow lingers on the mountain tops.

Where have you experienced views like this?



Down at the lake the water looks so inviting, you just have to go to the water's edge.

In the distance you see the winter playground of Porter Heights ski field.

In the crystal clear water you find trout enjoying the ice cold fresh water.

What would you enjoy here?



The view looking west from the top of Peak Hill

As the snow disappears, you take up the challenge of the hills.
This three hour climb is worth every moment of effort.

Is it views like this that make you want to climb the next hill?



Looking up The Rakaia from the Dry Acheron walkway.

40 There are many types of walking tracks for all to enjoy.

Is it the promise of exercise in the beautiful scenery that draws you here?



The clouds constantly change the scene.

Are clouds like dreams, always putting a different light on things?



Lake Georgina

There are so many rivers and lakes around, that a quiet day brings a multitude of reflections.

Do you ever wonder how your reflection is seen by others?



The Hutt Range reflected in the Rakaia



Lake Henrietta



Lake Selfe



Sunset in the Rakaia River bed

46

Sometimes when the sun is going, the sky lights up and the mountain is dark.

Is this the promise of a bright new day tomorrow?



The fantail

Most days bring visitors.



The fantails who can pop in, but always find their way out.



The Bell Bird.

48 Bell birds get so tame, they become part of the family.



As soon as you appear in the morning, they quickly greet you.



The wax eyes that come in their hundreds during winter, and completely disappear in spring.



The native falcon, who when hungry during the winter, pops in for lunch...if it can be caught!



The Kea

The kea who likes some company,



even if it is grandchildren tobogganing in the snow.



The banded dotterel

The banded dotterel runs with you as you walk by the lake's edge. It lays its eggs in a hollow in the shingle bank.

The babies hatch, and run around. You can barely distinguish them from the stones.



A shingle bank in Lake Coleridge

A shingle bank in Lake Coleridge is the nesting ground for this banded dottrel.

What birds will nest here next year?



North side of Mt Hutt

54

A last farewell as you drive to town early in the morning.

You will be back, because...?

This book has been written and produced by Hugh Derham.
The photographs were taken by Hugh Derham in the Lake Coleridge
and Rakaia Basin in Canterbury, New Zealand.

Hugh came to live permanently in Lake Coleridge Village after his
house became uninhabitable after the first large earthquake to hit
Christchurch in September 2010.

All photographs in this book are available on canvas or photographic
paper, mounted or unmounted in a range of sizes. If you would like any
of these pictures, please contact:

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The Hutt Range