

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**TABLELAND**

**The History Behind Mt Arthur**

**RAY SALISBURY**

**Published by Potton & Burton, 09 November 2020,  
RRP: \$59.99**

**The magnificent Arthur Range and all the colourful characters who have lived, worked and played there**

Generations of Nelsonians have lived and grown up in sight of the Arthur Range, which lies on the western border of the Nelson district. However, few know the stories that played out on the Tableland – an elevated tussock plateau beyond the Mt Arthur Range, west of Nelson, which is now part of Kahurangi National Park.

*Tableland* is the story of a stunning and much-loved part of Aotearoa New Zealand’s backcountry. Over the decades, it has been explored by surveyors; farmed by early pioneers; prospected by goldminers; beloved by trampers, hunters and cavers; cared for by Forest Service rangers, DOC rangers and conservationists.

Author Ray Salisbury traces the history of Tableland and the diverse land usage which has made it so fascinating – from mining (gold and asbestos) and hydroelectric generation to grazing, forestry and hunting, and conservation refuge for endangered species. Salisbury has also succeeded in writing a lively social history, one in which he recalls a cast of colourful characters whose names have become synonymous with the region, including his namesake, the Salisburys, the Hodges, James Mackay and forest ranger Max Polglaze. While they may have sought to change the wilderness, it was the wilderness which changed them.

While the geographical footprint of this area is relatively small, it punches above its weight in several ways, featuring New Zealand’s deepest cave system (Nettlebed-Stormy Pot), the highest earth dam (Cobb hydro scheme), the largest continuous predator trapping network, and the most quirky selection of rock bivouacs. It is also an ecological smorgasbord sheltering more than half of New Zealand’s native plant species and 18 species of native bird.

Hon. Dr Nick Smith says, “It is all the more special that this book is authored by Ray Salisbury, a descendant of one of the pivotal Tableland characters, John Park Salisbury, from the nineteenth century. This gives him the connection to ably explore the human history of the area, the tales of exploration, and the attempts at exploitation of that pioneering era. He also features the hardy Forest Service and DOC staff who have helped protect the area for thousands of visitors each year.”

*Tableland* showcases Ray Salisbury’s stunning photographic images, alongside comprehensive historic material and photographs. It will not only be treasured by those with a connection to this area, but by all New Zealanders.



**Ray Salisbury** is the great-great-grandson of the first European Motueka Valley pioneer, John Park Salisbury, whose brother Thomas discovered the Tableland in 1863. The Salisbury's were the first to find gold, build huts and graze the sheep there.

Ray was raised in Auckland where he trained as a graphic designer. After 12 years of teaching design to high school students, he is now a professional photographer and tutor based in Nelson. He has been a keen trumper for more than 40 years and his images, and articles on the New Zealand backcountry have featured in *Wilderness* magazine for decades.

Ray is married and is a member of the Nelson Tramping Club.

**RAY SALISBURY IS AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW / EXTRACTS & IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE ON REQUEST**

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**PREFACE**

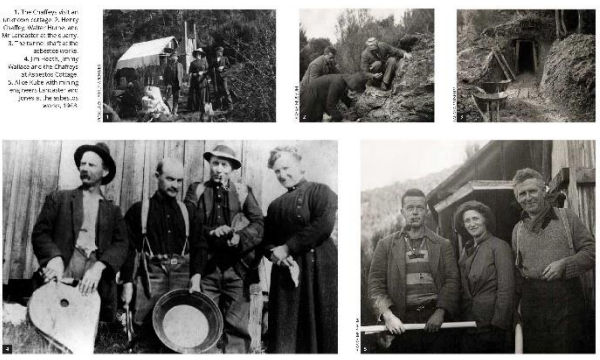


The Tableland is a vast, flat, open landscape of volcanic ash, sandstone, and granite. It is a unique and beautiful area that has been the site of many adventures and discoveries. This book tells the story of the first European settlers who came to the Tableland in 1863, and the adventures of their descendants who have lived and worked there ever since. It is a story of exploration, discovery, and the enduring spirit of the Tableland people.

goldfields, grazing, land ownership, and the environmental impact of the gold rush. It is a story of the people who lived and worked on the Tableland, and the adventures of their descendants who have lived and worked there ever since. It is a story of exploration, discovery, and the enduring spirit of the Tableland people.



Photo of Ray Salisbury in the Tableland, taken in 1988. Left: Extracts from the Tableland book.



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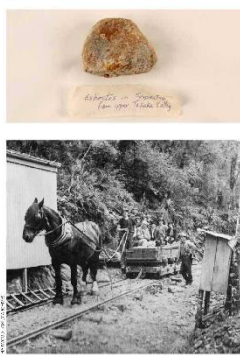


Photo of a gold nugget found on the Tableland.

**Annie Fox**  
Annie Fox moved to the Tableland in 1863. She was one of the first women to live on the Tableland. She was a pioneer and a trailblazer. She was a woman of many talents and a woman of many adventures. She was a woman who lived and worked on the Tableland, and she was a woman who made a name for herself. She was a woman who was a pioneer and a trailblazer. She was a woman who lived and worked on the Tableland, and she was a woman who made a name for herself.



Photo of Annie Fox, a pioneer and trailblazer who lived and worked on the Tableland.

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