



Newsletter of the
NELSON TRAMPING CLUB
Founded 1934, Nelson, New Zealand
www.nelsontrampingclub.org.nz

Nelson Tramping Club June 2016



Walking the talk: Pat at work inside Flora Hut

PRESIDENT'S PIECE:

Support Huts & Tracks

We have a fantastic network of huts and tracks in our National Parks and in the rest of the conservation estate. However, it is largely unappreciated and often under-used, especially in back country areas. It is estimated that only about one-third of users pay hut fees and a high proportion do not even bother to fill in the hut books. Let's face it, most of us take the back-country network for granted and expected the government via the Department of Conservation (DOC) to continue to pick up the tab as for the past 50 years. Well, we need to get real and understand that this is not going to happen.

DOC is providing Federated Mountain Clubs (FMC) with some commitment to not remove huts. But there is a sinking lid for maintenance of under-used facilities and this includes tracks as well as huts. The large increase in the numbers of visitors to our front-country is putting pressure on the DOC budget and priorities for recreation services. We can bang on about tourism not paying its way. But we also have to take more responsibility as a club and a community for many of our favourite lesser-visited areas.

We should remember the good old days. Prior to about 1970, Nelson Tramping Club mainly relied on the NZ Forest Service cullers huts, or we contributed to construction efforts (e.g. Third House Shelter) or we built them ourselves without significant external funding (e.g. Rocks Hut and the associated track.)

These community inputs are beginning to happen again through the Outdoor Recreation Consortium (ORC) administered by FMC and funded by DOC. There have been about ten ORC grants to projects in the Top of the South. This includes NTC's renovation of Flora Hut and our forthcoming move of Mt Fell Hut (see below). We can be very proud of Flora Hut after a total of more than 800 person-hours of effort from club volunteers over three years. It now resplendent in appearance and the linings, insulation, improved fireplaces and new water supply have made the hut much more attractive to families – especially outside the short summer season.

The ORC programme over the past 2–3 years has been very successful in preserving and improving many other iconic huts in this region and nationally. Just as important as these tangible outcomes, is the enhanced cooperative spirit within clubs, the outdoor community and with DOC personnel. It is all about people working together on common goals. This is leading to positive outcomes for the future of our back country hut and track network.

So... here's your take-home points:

- Get out there into our lesser -trodden areas (NTC is always looking for new trips and leaders).
- Encourage others to get into the hills & join NTC.
- Share your stories/experiences in the outdoors
Post your trip photos on our FaceBook page.
- Make sure you and your friends have a valid Hut Pass and fill in the Visitor Books.
- Always leave huts and tracks in a slightly better state than you find them. Cumulatively, this can make a big difference (DOC may only get there every 2–3 years on a reduced maintenance schedule).
- Take part in organised working bees
- Lobby politicians for better funding of DOC and continued support of the ORC.

Pat Holland
CLUB PRESIDENT

THE RE-LOCATION OF MOUNT FELL HUT

NTC received an Outdoor Recreation Grant of \$10,000 to assist DOC with the relocation of this key hut in the Richmond Ranges. Without this project, DOC would likely have removed the NZFS six-bunker, as it is located on a slip zone and is regarded as under-used. This would also threaten continued maintenance of the track up from Middy Hut in the Pelorus valley which has strong club associations (e.g. 1960's water barrel).

Silvano recently participated in the initial shift of the hut about 250m to a new site in early June by DOC and the Air Force, using a heavy-lift helicopter from Ohakea. The chopper also brought in a large quantity of building materials that we had ordered. NTC, with assistance from Marlborough and Waimea TCs, now need to construct new foundations, winch the hut on and then do some renovations and a range of other tasks (water tank, toilet, fireplace).

We do need able-bodied workers to assist with the digging associated with the foundation work and new toilet. It is likely the first major bee will be four days over Labour Weekend, 22-24 October.

A local helicopter can carry six people, albeit at high cost. So we will run a club trip for those wishing to tramp in. (It takes 4-5 hours from the Timms Creek road-end). Jot this in your diary and watch the trip list for more details on an exciting and very worthwhile project.

Happy tramping, rain or shine!

Pat Holland
CLUB PRESIDENT

VIEW THE VIDEO: <http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/80681016/hut-moved-by-helicopter-in-mt-richmond-forest-park-in-marlborough>



TRIP REPORTS

February–June 2016

28 February | The Grampians | Nelson
Leader: Kate Krawczyk

It was a very hot day for a casual jaunt up the hills behind Nelson. It was a great thing that the Grampians are covered in beautiful native bush with plenty of shade to spare!

We walked from Kate's place on Anglia Street, cutting through Bishopdale Reserve to Market Road and the start of the Kahikatea Track. The track is so named because, about halfway up the hill, there is a massive kahikatea that is 36 metres tall, has a 34-metre spread and a trunk that is 8 metres in circumference. It is thought to be 300-500 years old. There are other beautiful ancient trees that you pass further along the track: a massive matai and a gnarly old New Zealand fuchsia tree.

We turned left just before the last climb to the viewing platform and circled around the hill towards The Brook. Chris was leading the way at this point. Many years of running these hills have made him very familiar with all the tracks up there. After some meandering zigs and zags we climbed again and reached the viewing platform below the TV tower. We enjoyed gorgeous vistas over Rabbit Island, the Arthur Ranges, the Mt. Owen massif and, of course, Nelson and the Boulder Bank.

We returned back to the bottom via the Mahoe Track, then back to Kate's place for some great conversation, a cold beer and a sausage on the BBQ.

Participants were: Kate Krawczyk (scribe), Sue Henley and Allan the dog, Ian and Sue Doohoo, Chris Louth, Penny Parker, and David Cook.



PHOTO > IAN DOOHOO

Kate's intrepid crew reach giddy heights on Mt Flaxmore

29 February–5 March | Heaphy Track | Kahurangi

Leader: Marianne Hermsen

The trip members were picked up in Nelson and Mapua. We stopped at Langford's store to leave a car key for Derry Kingston to collect; he was to drive the car round to Kohaihai for us. We left the historic store about 10:30 and we were soon parked up at the Collingwood end of the Heaphy Track. We changed footwear and set off for the short walk to Browns Hut in fine weather.

Almost immediately, the track crossed a bridge. We started a sustained climb at a gentle gradient that lasted all the way to Flanagan's Corner; the high point of the track. At 15:20 we stopped at the Aorere Shelter from where Mount Egmont can be seen on a fine day. Sadly, it was rather hazy by now and we didn't see much. There was a short downhill section to Perry Saddle Hut (built 2012).

As the evening progressed, the cloud level lowered and by midnight a drizzly cloud layer had enveloped the hut. The hut lighting had a fault in the system, so it was not long after sunset when we retired for the night.

At 07:00 the weather was still misty outside and Marianne saw what may have been a Brocken Spectre on the cloud. As we left the hut, we passed through Perry Saddle; the weather was now fine. The Goulund Downs were a nearly tree-less expanse; part of the old exposed peneplain forming the Northwest Nelson area. We zig-zagged around the various watercourses, one of which was sign-posted 'Big River' (the headwaters of the same river that had diverted the Kahurangi Lighthouse trippers a month earlier).

Boot Corner, a post festooned with old boots, was an eccentric feature of the track. We soon reached Goulund Downs Hut on the edge of a beech forest fragment, growing on a limestone outcrop above the downs. It was too early for lunch so we explored the bush immediately behind the hut. Cary and I explored a waterfall and cave that might well have provided shelter for Maori in the past.

Finally, the gentle climb out of the downs led to Saxon Hut. As was the case at many of the huts, a short walk gave access to a swimming hole; popular in the summer heat.

Wednesday was our easiest day of the trip; James Mackay Hut was only three hours distant so there was no rush to get away. Initially the track crossed the Saxon River and climbed steadily for some time onto the ridge separating Goulund and Mackay Downs.

At about 12:15 I emerged onto a clearing where a monolith not unlike an Easter Island statue dominated the view. This was an illusion as, closer up it was not as large as it first seemed and more limestone outcrops appeared.

At the hut the west-facing windows gave a view of the mouth of the Heaphy River in the distance. During the afternoon five trampers from the



Marianne's Heaphy hikers

PHOTO > DAVID COOK

Richmond Tuesday Walking Group were among the arriving trampers, meaning that the hut was nearly full. The solar-powered motion-sensor lighting turned on automatically. As was the case at most of the huts, there was a good collection of about 15–20 *Powelliphanta* shells on a window sill.

Thursday was another fine day and the first section was mostly downhill. After a break at the Lewis Hut, we back-tracked slightly to the relatively-new Heaphy River Bridge – supposedly the longest suspension bridge constructed by DoC.

Travel was through increasing numbers of nikau palms. The shape and colour of the base of their fronds suggested a seal was sleeping beside the track. There were often 3–4 at the base of each palm.

The Heaphy Hut had a commanding outlook over the estuary to the river mouth. Set back from the beach by several hundred metres, a grassed area led from the hut steps down to the driftwood-strewn beach. Many at the hut braved a swim in the estuary during the afternoon, though some were quite short because of the ubiquitous sandflies.

Without the transport deadline of the other trampers we were able to have a more leisurely breakfast. We emerged onto Heaphy Beach. The next feature was Crayfish Point where high tide could cause problems. Marianne had timed the trip for low tide, so we had no difficulty here.

Lunch was eaten at Scotts Beach before the last section of the track; the extended climb over the Kohaihai Bluff. On the descent from the top, we met Derry Kingston on his way to Lewis Hut, having relocated another car. By 15:00 we had crossed the Kohaihai River Bridge to the track end.

We reached the Last Resort at 15:35. This has various types of rooms with a café and restaurant.

Saturday was spent exploring some local attractions, including the Oparara Arches. We dined at the restaurant again that night.

We were awake early enough to leave before 08:00. We reached Westport and stopped for coffee before continuing on to Murchison; for an early lunch. The last leg through to Mapua was done in increasing temperature and wind. We reached home around 1400.

Great walkers: Marianne Hermsen (leader), Cary Richman Evey McAuliffe and David Cook (scribe).

FLORA HUT WORKING BEE REPORT

16-17 April

The weekend of 16-17 April saw a flurry of activity at Flora to bring the project to completion. This followed huge efforts in February by Silvano, Lawrie, Ian and Graeme to line the ceilings and walls of the western bunk-room with plywood, similar to what had been done for the eastern bunk-room in 2015. This had been very fiddly due to the panels being placed between existing structures rather than over.

So, on Saturday a team of eight assembled at Flora Saddle. The morning had been balmy in Nelson and the weather remained fine and calm for the whole weekend, although on arrival at Flora Hut, we were greeted by an impressive hoar frost.

The main tasks were to complete the polyurethaning of the plywood panels and to prepare and paint all other exposed interior woodwork in both bunk-rooms. This required a sustained effort over both days. It was especially tricky *not* to get paint on the panels.

On the Sunday, there was some relief for the tired work-crew with the arrival of four more workers. The bunk-rooms have come up a treat with the off-white structural timbers standing out from the dark wall and ceiling panels.

In a parallel effort, Graeme and Bob installed a water system from the side creek down to a spigot outside the hut on the loo side. This included a sediment trap and 100m of pipe which proved tricky to lay so the water would flow without priming. The open fireplaces were enhanced by galvanised hoods and wall vents were also installed. These improvements have largely solved the problem of smoke and the fireplaces now work well to heat the rooms that were cold and drafty prior to the renovation.

Participants (April): Pat Holland, Ian and Marilyn Morris, Graeme Ferrier, Bob Janssen, Marie Lenting, Kathy Smith, Steve McGlone, Dion Pont, Kate Krawczyk, John Whibley, Tim Tyler (& Sophie).

NTC has now met the broad aims of the three-year project with the full renovation of the hut to a high standard: firstly to preserve the hut for the future whilst retaining its character, secondly to improve the experience especially for young families and thirdly to extend the season for the hut into winter. Hopefully we can organise a semi-formal opening/PR effort in the near future.

Thanks for the excellent support from club members – especially Ian, Graeme and Silvano; from DOC staff Tom Young and Matt Page; and from the Outdoor Recreation Fund.

Pat Holland



Marilyn Morris proves herself a dab hand with a brush



Steve McGlone hard at work on the paint job



Organiser Ian Morris beside the new firebox inserts

THE KARAMEA KINK

5–6 March | Greys Hut, Karamea Rvr
Kahurangi National Park

Leader: Dion Pont

I once read that Karamea has more sunshine hours than Auckland, and I can believe that. The local storekeeper attested to drought conditions when we passed through. At the road-end carpark, we noticed the time on the DOC sign had been lengthened to '6 hours' – it wasn't too far wrong.

In a litany of errors, our first boo-boo was missing the start of the track. We were resigned to following the farm road up the hill to a gate. Here, a sign warned that **'You Have Arrived At The End Of The World.'** I thought to myself, 'Armageddon outta here!'



Quirky farm humour at the end of the road

A side-road mis-lead us down to the Karamea River, below a dis-used cableway. We began scrambling over house-sized boulders – energy-sapping stuff in the humidity of early Autumn. Passing Old Man Rock, after an hour, I suggested we clamber up the riverbank. Sure enough, the old miner's track was easily found, and our progress was about four times faster.

At times the track spat us out onto the river stones. We searched for elusive orange triangles that invited us back into the cool shade of the bush. The old trail began to falter, requiring tricky legwork to negotiate rock steps and chains. Then a long stretch of boulder-hopping ensued.

It was rather late in the afternoon when I made my blunder. Surely, I thought, we should bash back onto the track. After 100m of very steep bush-bashing, and fighting supple-jack, there was zero success in locating even a smidgen of track. Defeated, we battled our way back riverside, only to stumble onto a track only 200 metres further upstream.

Some four hours of tough travel brought us past Cuckoo Stream, which tumbled from nowhere into

the gorge; beyond here, the Karamea disappeared around a sharp corner. Since 'The Bend' had already been used, I named this corner 'The Karamea Kink'.

Around the kink, our sidle track spat us onto a jumble of giant rocks. We were tentatively tip-toeing along the tops, trying not to slip. I looked up. Some 500m upriver, there was the hut.

A SIGN WARNED:

**"YOU HAVE ARRIVED
AT THE END OF THE
WORLD."**

**I THOUGHT TO MYSELF...
"ARMAGEDDON OUTTA
HERE!"**

Yeah, right. Without my glasses, I was short-sighted. According to my younger companions, my mirage was not the hut I hoped for, merely a huge stone prism on the riverbank, which sported a very geometric profile. We dubbed this 'Rocks Hut.'

Further up, father on, the real deal was waiting on the grassy flats; a typical NZFS six-bunker set back in a clearing. A ridiculously high concrete staircase led up to the door, where we escaped the dreaded namu. After a tea-drinking frenzy, I hit the pit, exhausted.

I remembered that, back in the late 1800s, my gt-gt-grandfather had left his sheep on the Tableland, and with his 12-year-old son, had made a remarkable journey down this same river to the coast. However, before the devastation of the 1929 earthquake, travel would have been better.

On Sunday morning, we enjoyed a well-deserved sleep-in. The return journey was uneventful, and we made faster progress into a cooling seabreeze. The fleshpots of Westport beckoned – the Denniston Dog café to be precise. Flat Whites in hand, we toasted to another hut bagged. (*Eat yer heart out, Ian, Mike and Wade.*)

Delusional rock-hoppers were: Dion Pont, Grant Standing and Ray Salisbury (scribe).

6 March | Brook Waimarama Sanctuary

Leader: Pat Holland

A beautiful, warm, sunny Nelson day was ideal for a trip into the depths of the Sanctuary to enjoy the forest and streams. A deliberately measured pace was maintained so as not to discourage the several new chums.

Pest-proof fencing (14km) of the area (715ha) is in its final phase but the fencers were not working that day.

We went up the main Koru track to Jacobs Ladder where the steepish track got us up to D-line. Two km of excellent track took us through majestic red beech forest with some podocarps into the heart of the Sanctuary to where the track meets the Brook stream. Here there is a profusion of tree and ground ferns under the canopy alongside the pretty stream with delightful pure water.

After a morning break we proceeded on a rougher track (East-D extension) by the Brook which ends at a side stream coming down on the left from the fence line and Dun Mountain walkway 200 m vertical above.

Here was a scene of devastation. The recent storm event that damaged a section of the new fence has scoured out the gully, leaving fresh gravel, boulders and large tree trunks. Fortunately, the main Brook Stream was not affected and we continued on E-line over a bluff and then a short way up the now small stream.

Here some stopped as there was no clear track, only some infrequent pink tape. The energetic few pressed on upstream 250m past F-line to where the valley opens out into a basin directly under Third House – with some fine mature rimu and matai plus broadleaf trees.

Then, we dropped back to rejoin the group for lunch. Our return was from whence we came to the end of D-line where we then followed the track down the true-left by the Brook with seven crossings to Corkscrew Crossing. With the heat of the day steadily increasing, many indulged in a quick dip in a lovely pool before we proceeded downstream to Ferny Flat.

Rather than returning via the direct route on the full length of Koru Track, we chose to do the valley floor route via Flagstone Crossing and Totara Traverse to the foot of Falcon Ridge. Here, the old waterworks engineering starts with the main public track leading past the Upper Weir and down to the main dam at the car park.

Six hours return – a good tour of the glories of The Sanctuary. Only a few birds were spotted which is what the fence and removal of predators are all about.

We were: Pat Holland, Chris Louth, David Blunt, Debbie Hogan, Ian & Susan Dohoo, Kate Krawczyk & Kelvin Drew. Visitors: Bernie Goldsmith, Jill D’Orio, Kath Ballantyne, Kim Wilson, Michelle & Peter Cunningham.



Treasurer Ian Morris bags Nina Biv for his collection

PHOTO > RAY'S IPHONE

25–27 March | Nina Valley, Lake Sumner FP

Leader: Ray Salisbury

PLAN B: THE LONG & SHORT OF IT

Someone wise soul said: “Long weekends were created cos you can’t fit that much bad weather into two days.” Thankfully, the bad weather was restricted to the West Coast region, and we had a backup plan. My scheduled trip to Cedar Flats was shelved – for the 4th time – so we opted for a shorter drive, shorter tramp, and shorter long weekend.

To cut a long story short: Ian Morris kindly collected us early on Good Friday, and whisked us away for coffee at Beechwoods. On up the Mariau Valley, over Lewis Pass, to the NZDA hut beside the road. The row of about six cars at Palmer Lodge suggested we carry tents.

A greasy but easy riverside romp up the Nina River was delightful. Two swingbridges over the Boyle and Nina Rivers give access into this, the most beautiful valley in the region. Most other valleys had been hugely modified by farming, but here, there was only silver and mountain beech, draped in sphagnum moss and complimented by the odd celery pine.

Four leisurely hours put us at Nina Hut, built in 2002, and exceedingly popular with Cantabrian locals, which included a fair sprinkling of children. The Outward Bound instructors, with kids in tow, opted to tent outside on the dracophyllum plateau, graciously allowing us bunk space.

On Saturday, the valley was shrouded in mist, so our start was delayed. A short drop and wet crossing soon saw us sifting through the remains of the old Nina Hut site. Now on the true left, we followed the old cullers track over river terraces and along eroded banks, up to the Upper Nina Bivouac, (3 hrs) painted in the original rescue orange, presumably so choppers could spot the tiny abode from the air. As I perused the visitor



PHOTO > RAY'S IPHONE

Happy hut-bagger on morning detour to visit Lucretia Bivvy

PLAN D:

28 March | Gordons Knob | Mt Richmond FP
Leader: Pat Holland

The team of 10 was very keen to do Plan A, the proposed day trip to Ben Nevis. Despite some prior intelligence that the access road was closed for forestry operations, we believed the DOC website notice that this applied to work days. Not so! We found locked gates on both access roads off the Upper Wairoa Gorge Road.

So, we drove back out to Wakefield looking to do Plan B: the Red Hills Hut–Beebys Knob circuit. However, along the way we decided the day was too well-advanced. So, up we drove up to Inwoods Lookout for Plan C: Gordons Knob.

It was a beautiful clear day as we headed up the track and it was delightful on the ridge. How thoughtful of DOC to put new marker poles for the route but these seemed not to be leading to the traverse I remembered across to the saddle under GK. Up we went another 50m vertical before we realised the markers were the tops route to Hunters Hut! Oh well, it was lovely on the ridge so we decided to continue up to North Peak (1564m; Plan D).

There we found a good lunch spot with shelter from a cool southerly breeze. There were excellent views across Tasman Bay and down into the headwaters of the Motueka River with Hunters Hut glinting in the sun. The vista including Ben Nevis, Mt Ellis, Mt Richmond, Red Hills and Beebys Knob.

Most of the team elected to return via a spur off North Peak, down into a gully and then up onto the saddle under GK. Our contribution to conservation was to build a cairn marking the turnoff to GK from the main track.

The descent back to Inwoods was uneventful (5.5 hours return). Everybody enjoyed a leisurely day out on the tops and there were no recriminations about all the changes in plans.

Daytrippers were: Pat Holland, Kate Krawczyk, Graeme Ferrier, David Cook, Mary Honey, Dan McGuire. Visitors: Kath Ballantyne, Arif Matthee, Tim Horne and Neville West.

book, which began in 1993, I noted the last official NTC party had visited in 2010 led by the illustrious hut bagger, Dion Pont.

Seven hours had elapsed when we returned to our base at Nina Hut, to greet a new entourage of occupants. More families from Christchurch were camping, and the boys from Hurunui College in Hawarden were back. The school has a voluntary scheme whereby the students check and re-load the stoat traps. Recently, kiwi have been released here.

On Resurrection Sunday we awoke, reviving ourselves with coffee and fried breakfast. Ian and myself embarked on a hut-bagging mission down the true left of the Nina, dropping our packs at the confluence with Lucretia Stream. We followed this rough route over a shoulder into the headwaters, where Lucretia Biv was hidden on a grassy shelf. Again, it was painted in the same colour as the carrot I ate for lunch. The visitor book dated back to 1991, when Shaun Barnett had visited. Predictably, Dion's party had frequented this facility too on their hut-bagging trip six year's previous. (Our detour up and down Lucretia Stream took us 4 hours.)

On the way over the spur, Ian was stung a dozen times by wasps. On the return journey, he cunningly navigated around the wasp hive using his GPS waypoints.

Long story short, we raced back to SH7 and were reunited with Uta and her daughter Gisela at the NZDA lodge. The tearooms at Springs Junctions beckoned.

Easter egg eaters were: Ray Salisbury, Ian Morris, Uta & Gisela Purcell.

**Kate happy to be on another knob**

PHOTO > PAT HOLLAND



Ian, Kate, Kath and Jacqui on the Pinchgut Track

10 April | Julius Summit | Nelson Lakes NP

Leader: Kate Krawczyk

We set off from Nelson with five keen trampers on a beautiful April morning. The goal was to walk along the Robert Ridge to Julius Summit ascending the Pinchgut Track, then descending Paddy's Track to complete a circuit of Mount Robert.

It was a stunning April Day with very little wind and the views were spectacular. The Pinchgut Track starts at Mount Robert car park and is aptly-named as the relentless switchbacks seem never ending.

Eventually, we popped out of the bush line onto the ridge and took a break at the summit of Mount Robert which Ian pointed out he had walked past many times on his way to Angelus Hut but had never actually stood on top of.

It was great to see so many walkers and families out enjoying the day. Looking down on the Pinchgut Track, it looked like an ant trail – there were so many people out making the most of the beautiful day on this popular track.

We carried on along Robert Ridge and reached the saddle at Julius Summit around 12:30pm. Here, we enjoyed a leisurely lunch, after which a few adventurous and keen trip members decided to scramble up to the top.

On our return we did not reach the junction with Bushline Hut / Paddy's Track until after 3:00pm. This meant that there was no time to complete the circuit – the trip down Paddy's Track is an hour longer than the descent down Pinchgut. So, we descended the way we came and reached the cars just after 4:00pm.

Participants were: Jacqui Bozoky, Ian Morris, Kath Ballantine, Mary Honey & Kate Krawczyk (scribe).

23–25 April | Lockett Range traverse Kahurangi National Park

Leader: Steve McGlone

ANZAC weekend saw me leading a club trip for three days over the Lockett Range in the North-west Nelson area.

The forecast for Saturday was for rain in the

afternoon becoming heavy by evening, so to make the use of a clear morning we set off early from town at 7.30am. Although we made a speedy departure, it's still a long and somewhat exciting drive up to the track start along a very narrow hydro dam road through a scenic gorge over two hours away. Then when we arrived, we arranged a car shuffle to make sure we had a vehicle at each end. We weren't actually on the track till 11am.

It was fortunate for our party of six that we did, as we had a very pleasant walk up the valley with a lunch stop at the nicely restored historic Chaffey's Hut and the Tent Camp. Ian was larking about with a piece of timber he found there, fashioned into a rifle stock, and held us up, demanding we hand over all our valuables.

By 1.30 pm, it started to drizzle lightly and when we reached Cobb Hut it was raining in earnest for the last 25 minutes up to Fenella Hut.

We were glad to find this beautifully sited hut with space for our party and the fire already lit. Three dads and young daughters were in residence. We had endless cups of tea and played cards with the friendly crew in the hut until it got dark. Time for bed by 7.30pm!

We were all up early, woken by the roar of Pat's reliable hot brew-making and off to a beautiful cold and windy morning for the climb up to the ridge. Views from the tops were simply stunning in the early morning light, with long shadows from the sun being low on the horizon.

The first parts of the ridge were easy-going and we passed a number of lovely tarns. Then we did a bit of bush bashing through dracophyllum to gain a further section of the ridge. An early morning tea stop was had by some further tarns I'd promised the party would be there to fill our water bottles.

More clambering up and down ensued to a lunch spot tucked down out of the ever present sou'west wind. After our break, some challenging gendarmes on the ridge meant scrambling down an unstable rocky slope to bypass the problem area well below and under some bluffs, a little west of Mt Benson.

Then we topped Mt Benson itself with views of our intended campsite by Ruby Lake.

And there it was, shining like a veritable jewel in the afternoon sun. We had a long descent ahead of us to reach our goal. Off the ridge, down a spur, then down a rocky gut to bush-bash through some trees to reach the lake shore.

Finally we were down just before 3.00pm, but where was the sun? The lake was swallowed up by the shadow of the spur which banished thoughts of a swim from our party (except for myself who stripped off my gear and leaped in anyway!)

WILDERNESS WISDOM:

"If it doesn't challenge you – it won't change you."

FRED DE VITO



Clockwise: party atop Mt Benson | On the Cobb at Chaffey Hut | Steve's selfie at Ruby Lake | Ian goes mental at the Tent Camp

Within about 20 minutes of our arrival, even our prospective campsite was in shadow and temperatures plummeted. The wind was still blowing really strongly from that SW quarter, adding to the chill factor. We soon all were wrapped in every stitch of clothing we had, and were gathering firewood and brewing up hot drinks. The wind fetched up copious smoke and sparks as we leapt about dodging these hazards, attempting to get warm. By the time dinners had been eaten, by common assent, we all retired to tents to try and warm up, with eyes smarting and clothes smelling of smoke. It was only 7.00pm!

During the night there was a lot of mizzle, and fierce blasts of strong wind. Kate commented she had all her clothes on in her sleeping bag and everything zipped up and was still cold. I had a similar experience in my little tent. Eventually, I warmed up.

Pat was up rattling pans at 6.30 am (as usual) when I got up to look around. The drizzle was still about but I promised Pat it would be gone by 8.00am.

By the time we were away the sun was shining – another gorgeous day to continue our journey. We began skirting Ruby Lake, then a number of other tarns as we climbed out of the basin to the main ridge. On the crest the wind nearly blew us over. It didn't let up all day, and in fact got stronger and colder.

Despite these trials, we had a wonderful walk along the tops east to Iron Hill. There were some more interesting gendarmes to negotiate and bypass, much to Peter's chagrin. He'd found the previous day's challenges a little nerve-wracking.

With Lockett Lake in sight we descended the end of the ridge to Iron Lake, with a nice lunch stop on the way down. We continued on past Sylvester Lake and numerous other tarns for a brief stop at Sylvester Hut. 12 people had been there the previous night, but no one was in sight when we arrived around 1.30 pm. We were soon back down to Ian's car for the final car shuffle and on the road home by 4 pm or so.

In summary, it was a fabulous trip away. The team comprised myself and Pat Holland, Michele Cunningham, Peter Phipps, Ian Morris and Kate Krawczyk who were all ably fit and very good company.

1 May 2016 | Takaka Hill Walkway & the amazing Harwood's Hole

Leader: Kate Krawczyk

We set out from Nelson in three vehicles and reached the Takaka Hill Walkway Carpark at the top of the Takaka Hill around 9am. This area is noted for its unusual elevated landscape including spectacular marble karst rock formations.

Takaka Hill Walkway crosses private land owned by the Harwood family. It was protected with three QEII Open Space Covenants in 1985.

The Harwood family generously allowed the construction of this walkway over their land for the enjoyment of the public. Ongoing maintenance of the track and facilities is undertaken by the QEII National Trust and volunteers.

The walkway has a few options for shorter loops

but we did the large loop. At 5km, it takes two and a half hours. It took us a bit longer because we took lots of breaks to enjoy the unusual rock formations, vegetation and views.

From the car park we went through the farm gate and followed the farm track up the hill.

At the top of the hill the road takes off to the left. We took the uphill track off to the right. The marker posts were well set out, so we had no problem finding the track. There is a map here that guides the way.

In about an hour we were at the high point on the track where there is a TV antenna. We enjoyed morning tea and the panoramic views over Tasman Bay, Golden Bay and the mountains of Kahurangi National Park.

From there the track meanders around the hill through the karst landscape past many tomos or sinkholes. We found a lovely grassy clearing for our lunch stop.

On the way back to the cars we took a small detour down a bush loop track to check out an old fallen-down farm hut.

From there it was onto the Canaan Road and a drive to the Canaan Downs carpark for a quick jaunt to check out Harwood's Hole – another amazing feature of the karst landscape of Takaka Hill. At 176 metres, it is NZ's deepest vertical shaft. Unfortunately, it is too dangerous to get close enough to look down the hole. However, the forty five minute walk to the hole passes through some beautiful beech forest. The towering limestone bluffs around the edge of the Hole are impressive enough.

Ten minutes before you reach Harwood's Hole there is a turn off to the right that climbs to Gorge Creek Lookout. This offers impressive views into Golden Bay and the ridgeline of Takaka Hill.

Participants: Jacqui Bozoky, Penny and Dana Parker, David Cook, Kath Ballantine, Debbie Hogan, Michele Cunningham, Peter Phipps, and Kate Krawczyk (scribe).

14 May | Jenkins Hill, Barnicoat Range, Nelson
Leader: Mary Honey

As we started from the carpark, the voluntary conservator of Marsden Valley asked that we watch out for Kokako as there have been a couple of soundings in the area. No luck although a couple of members remembered to look and listen as we tramped along. The steep Scout Track moderated our pace as we ascended to about 700m altitude.

After about an hour we emerged from the bush at the point where the Involution and Widdershin bike tracks meet the 4WD road that follows the ridge. We stopped for morning tea at a sunny, elevated spot on the road with views of the Richmond Ranges and the Waimea Plains. We couldn't miss the just-completed Brook Sanctuary pest-proof fence at the junction of the tracks to Third House and Jenkins Hill. We followed this as far as the Jenkins Hill trig. From there, we descended down a fire break and then on a trap-line through the native bush where we paused to listen to brilliant bird song. A chorus



Dan's party en route to the Dew Lakes

worth recording and a tribute to the volunteers who have trapped the area over the last few years.

After a while, we met the Involution bike track and zig zagged down to the carpark.

The morning tramp provided opportunity for a short walk with ample time left to do other things. Happy trampers were Kath Ballantine, Dan McGuire, Graeme Ferrier, Karen M (visitor), Kate Krawczyk, Tony Morgan (visitor) and Mary Honey (scribe).

21 May | Dew Lakes | Mt Richmond Forest Park
Leader: Dan McGuire

Two trampers showed up for the walk to Mt. Mangatapu and Dew Lakes, as the weather was marginal and another trip was planned for the weekend. We reached the Saddle in good time, then headed for Dew Lakes through the beautiful bush with lovely outlooks all around. It was a first time tramp for Grant, a visitor to the club. We hope to see him again. Participants: Dan McGuire and Grant Derecourt.

22 May | Mount Campbell | Kahurangi N Park
Leader: Graeme Ferrier

On a cool autumn morning a good muster of 18 trampers gathered to climb Mt Campbell. We set off at a good pace on a farm track. 45 minutes later we were strung out climbing a steep track beside pine forest.

With an enticement that there was a veranda to sit on for morning tea. We continued on up the farm track, now at a better incline, till we reached Ashton's house. Here, we sheltered from the cool wind and ate morning tea. A farm yard it was, with some chooks hungry for our scrap, and pigs in the pen behind the house.

We continued through a patch of bush, had a scramble up a rock to get a view over the bay before joining the access road to the summit. It was just a short stop in the lee of the solid structures with light flurries of sleet and snow. A plan was made to descend via a different route that Sue and Christine were familiar with, that took us out via Nick's Hut.



PHOTO > PAT HOLLAND

Pick the chooks

The access to this track was identified and we followed yellow markers descending through a lovely patch of bush with large rocks before coming out at Nick's Hut, where we had a more comfortable and leisurely stop. Descending from the hut, we re-joined the farm track and out to the car park by 3.00pm. Most of us then gathered at Toad Hall for coffees en route home.

Special thanks to trip leader Graeme Ferrier, who spent considerable time obtaining permission from farmers to do this walk. Other trampers on the day were: Rob Renshaw, Sue Martin, Christine Hoy, Pat Holland, Sue & Paul Henley, Karen Mumme, Mary Honey, Bruce Alley, Neville West, David Cook, Debbie Hogan, Marie Firth, Kath Ballantine (scribe), Kate Krawczyk and Ian Morris.



SUBS DUE 1st JULY

- **Single** - no post\$30
- **Single** - with post.....\$40
- **Couple** - no post\$45
- **Couple** - with post\$55

Change to Newsletter

Because the club only runs one trip per weekend, this has led to fewer trip reports, therefore less content for the Newsletter. The Editor has therefore decided to publish quarterly.

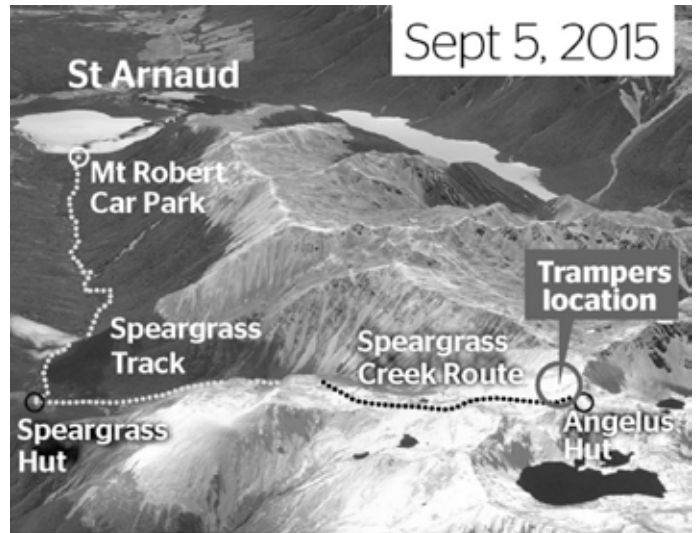
Folks paying for Newsletters to be posted will still receive these, plus the quarterly FMC *Bulletin*. Everyone also can download the full-colour [PDF File](#) from the club website and print their own copy.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS...

*Pete and Michelle Cunningham,
Steve McGlone & Arif Matthee*

Silvano gets SAR Award

Congratulations to **Silvano Lorandi** on his receiving a SAR award for his efforts in a small team that located and rescued a pair lost in a blizzard on the ridge to Angelus Hut. The dramatic rescue occurred last winter in Nelson Lakes National Park. (see map below)



The trampers were found below the saddle in a hypothermic state, unable to assist themselves or rescuers. There was a wind chill of -20C and heavy blowing snow.



“Two tourists, an Irish woman and Latvian man, had set out on a trekking adventure through Nelson Lakes National Park.

It was 5.30pm on September 5, 2015 but as snowfall increased the pair began wandering blindly. It soon became clear to the pair they would not find their destination, Angelus Hut.

They were in trouble. Night was falling and a storm was on its way. By chance, a small pocket in Mount Robert Ridge had a scrap of cellphone reception.

As the brutal weather took hold, they stopped amid a rocky outcrop and called for help. It did not take long before hypothermia gripped their bodies as a minus 20 degrees Celsius wind-chill factor whipped the mountains. The pair waited.

What unfolded over the next seven hours has led to national recognition for Walker and two other volunteers - the Operational Gold Award at the New Zealand Search and Rescue Council Awards.”

Excerpt from Nelson Mail article: Read the rest: <http://www.stuff.co.nz/nelson-mail/news/80118476>

Wangapeka BETTER IN BITUMEN?

Queen's Birthday weekend | Kahurangi NP

Leader: Pat Holland

The re-elected mayor of Buller, Garry Howard, is lamenting the loss of some 600 jobs on the West Coast, due to a slump in the coal industry. Understandably, this is a dilemma that needs addressing. But his silver bullet is to build a road-link from Tapawera to Karamea, halving the travel time up to Nelson. He reckons it will provide employment for hundreds, and attract thousands of paying tourists to the region north of Westport. Easy peasy.

Except there's a little problem. The proposed 59km road will slice Kahurangi National Park in two, totally destroying the Wangapeka Track. (Not to mention security sites for blue duck and the endangered rock wren colony.)

So, during Queens Birthday Weekend, our club has decided to give the mayor a helping hand. We will walk over his proposed highway to test the feasibility of such an ambitious political agenda. Our mandate is to answer the question: **'is the Wangapeka worth saving?'**

Here we stand, at Rolling River, assembled in our polyprop, beanies and mittens; donning leather boots and gaiters and backpacks that have seen better days. Our average age is 64. I'm the youngest, and perhaps the most stupid, hauling a hefty 25kg pack which includes home-made street signs and a hammer. My crazy idea is to install a few road signs along the route – perhaps this 'boring wasteland' can be enhanced with some brightly-coloured, geometrically-shaped pictograms?

Off we go, crossing the first of many swing bridges, and striding out along the first of many frozen river flats. Craning our necks at the stupendous, triple-spired summit of Mt Patriarch, crowned in white, dominating the valley ahead.

An hour's jaunt up the benched track, then it becomes a rough route, scrambling over debris from the 2012 landslide. The skeletons of drowned trees punctuate a one-kilometre-long lake, as yet un-named. Beyond this natural dam, we regain the old gold diggers' trail, skirting above small gorges where the Wangapeka River squeezes through the granite, emptying into pools of deep green. In one of these we discover a trio of whio. Grabbing my telephoto lens and DSLR, I stealthily creep into position. *Click! Click!* I get all my ducks in a row.

The whio population in these parts totals about 60 birds – the Wangapeka/Fyffe is one of eight strategic sites developed nationwide to protect this threatened species.

THE SUNLESS WINTER HAS ARRIVED AT KINGS CREEK; BOTH HUTS ARE GIANT FREEZERS, LOCKED INTO A WORLD OF WHITE PERMAFROST. WE CRUNCH THROUGH ICE-ENCRUSTED PUDDLES ALONG THE EASY BUT GREASY TRACK.

The beanies stay on our heads, as we push on toward Stone Hut at the valley head. Darkness falls quickly as we gather around the bush telly, absorbing its warmth and inhaling woodsmoke.

At some ungodly hour our intrepid leader rouses us, urging our aching bodies into action. Hours before sunrise, we stumble around in the frigid cold to eat breakfast. By torchlight we walk, silent, in single file, wrapped up like Egyptian mummies.

Soon we are climbing to the pass, somewhere ahead in the pre-dawn murk. The ascent is mercifully gentle, and we barely sweat in this single-digit climate. At Wangapeka Saddle there is no decent view, so we pose for a group photograph in the dim half-light.

Now below the pass, the track spits us out onto the Karamea River headwaters, frozen in time like a scene from Narnia. The chill air is sucked into our lungs. When we exhale, our warm breath is vaporised and visible – we look like a gang of chain-smokers.

Recent weather events have wrought havoc in this corner of Kahurangi. We opt for the high-side track, to keep our feet from frostbite. But this route is torturous and time-consuming. When we traverse the high-wire bridge over to Helicopter Flat Hut, lunch is long overdue. I boil the billy.

The weak, winter sunlight gives feeble heat, then leaves us chilled to the bone when it disappears behind the mountains. We scramble for our gloves and hats, somberly discussing the mission ahead. Only half-way to our destination, it is inevitable that we'll run out of daylight. Our group is then divided into an advance party of faster folks, and a party of plodders.

Hours pass, as we traverse the valley wall on a good, benched path to a junction. Here, remnants of Jonathan Brough's tabernacle lay testament to his track-building efforts in the late 1890s. Rusted shovels and picks have been left here, trackside, as a reminder of the back-breaking slog that is still required to build and maintain this track, now more than 150 years old.



PHOTO > RAY SALLISBURY

Pat's west-bound party on Little Wanganui Saddle, which is definitely NO PLACE FOR A ROAD!

It's nearly night time when I lead my two septuagenarian colleagues over a swing bridge and up the Taipo River. This section of trail is almost benign, cutting a path through forest over ancient river flats. Except it is cold, wet and dark. I search intently for the orange markers, and then glance behind for the jiggling headlamps of those following. Our pace has slowed to a crawl.

When we walk into the huge 16-bunk cabin, we have been on our bruised feet for 11 hours. It is a welcome relief to reunite with our cross-over party who are walking the Wangapeka in the reverse direction. Graeme has the woodstove cranked up, and Sue gives us warm tea to drink. After swapping stories and car keys, we collapse into our bunks.

On the third day we depart Taipo Hut at 7am. By torchlight we reach a bridge, a bottleneck where we regather. A second alpine pass is today's objective. The initial climb is soon dispensed with, and we arrive at the two-berth bivouac in good spirits. Here at Stag Flat, the tussock clearing is a giant white blanket. Each plant is freeze-blasted in ice; each puddle is frosted like plate glass.

Atop Little Wanganui Saddle, we snap obligatory photos, before the biting breeze sends my party scampering down to warmer climes. I decide to wait for the sun to crest the range. I can see the distant Tasman Sea, framed by the valley walls ahead; the twin Saddle Lakes providing some foreground interest. The highest point on the Wangapeka Track is also the best vantage point. I erect my DIY street sign in a prominent position, and then snap a few photographs. I really do think some well-placed road signs enhance the landscape; the red and yellow primary colours contrast well with the cool blue and green hues of nature.

Our party rendezvous in the open sunshine at Little Wanganui Gorge Shelter. This is a relatively new

two-bunk portacom just off the track. Another swing bridge sends us into the dark shadows of the north bank. The old pack track spits us out riverside, before returning us to the eternal dampness of our muddy footpath. DOC have downgraded this western section of the Wangapeka into a 'marked route' because of recent weather events which have dramatically damaged the valley. A trifecta of landslides, treefall and erosion have created a 'perfect storm' of obstacles that we cautiously negotiate.

The hours tick by. Above Tangent Creek we totter, admiring a mossy green waterfall from the footbridge above. At McHarrie Creek there is no such amenity. We are forced to descend a frightening rock face with dubious handholds. From here on, innumerable blockages impede our forward progress, as we struggle on in the impending darkness. Over trees. Under trees. Around trees.

The night envelopes us like a shroud. We are walking through our own nightmare, prodding the bogs ahead with trekking poles, searching for markers with fading headlamps.

After another 11-hour epic, we reach the safety of Belltown Manunui Hut, dead on our feet.

On our final day, a deserved sleep-in sees us hit the track after 9am. Our legs are aching, our feet our swollen, but our spirits are high, now the worst is over. The Little Wanganui tumbles toward the Tasman, sandwiched between the river banks. The track has now lost its notoriety; being level and easy underfoot, it's almost delightful.

In three leisurely hours we arrive at our vehicles, about 16km south of Karamea. Within an hour we are huddled around steaming lattes inside the sunlit porch of the Denniston Dog in Westport. Mission accomplished.

In retrospect, we believe this proposed road will never eventuate. It appears to be a knee-jerk

solution to a problem that can be solved with more ingenuity, and more long-term consideration for the environmental impact and historical preservation. The Wangapeka road-link will go the way of the Heaphy and the Hollyford roads, which never got off the ground.

The rugged terrain is so torturous – in places – that building, let alone maintaining, a two-lane highway is fraught with difficulties. Heck, even DOC are finding it too hard to maintain a narrow footpath!

Therefore, I find it somewhat ironic that the mayor's pre-election promise of a \$500-million-dollar road is popular with his constituents.

So, to repeat my original question: **is the Wangapeka really worth preserving?** I believe it is. While some of the track is clearly in urgent need of some TLC, the eight huts are in good order and the birdlife is thriving.

Extra funding in this neck of the woods could upgrade the Wangapeka to its former glory days as a loop option with the Heaphy Track. This would help solve the transport issue in getting Great Walkers back up to Nelson, and give opportunity for Coasters to provide a shuttle service and accommodation around Karamea. Regular maintenance of the track and hut network will also supply ongoing jobs for the Coasters who desperately need it.

Long live the Wangapeka!

West-bound Wangapeka

Trekkers were:

Plodding Party:

Pat Holland (Tail-end Charlie), Ray Salisbury (Scribe), & Marie Lenting.

Faster Folks:

David Rae, Barry James, Annette le Cren & Kath Ballantine. Jane Minto and Paul Shipley came courtesy of the Marlborough Tramping Club.

See the September Newsletter for a full report from the **East-bound Trekkers** led by Mike Drake.

UPcoming CLUBDATES...

Monday 13 June

Club Night

7.30pm, Nelson Intermediate

Speakers: Mike Drake & Dave Quested

Mount Cook to Arthur's Pass via the Southern Alps – Part 1

The good, the bad and the ugly aspects of walking from Tasman Lake to Vane Stream (head of the Wanganui River).

The next stage (Part 2) will be continued from Vane Stream to Arthur's Pass later this year.

Come along and share our experiences of walking up the Murchison Glacier, traversing the Garden of Eden and skipping over a few passes along the way.

Silvano Lorandi and Lawrie

Halkett will give a brief update on our next project: the relocation and renovation of **Mt Fell Hut**.

7pm, Wednesday 13 July

Pub Night

VENUE TBA - CHECK WEBSITE

Catch up with club members and talk about upcoming trips.

Bring along maps and ideas so that we can fill the programme for the next couple of months.

Email: [Kate Krawczyk](mailto:kate.krawczyk@maxnet.co.nz) for info.

Monday 1 August

Club Night & AGM

Speaker: **Ben Winnubst**

A brief AGM followed by a talk from Ben on his adventures in South Westland (Whitcombe and Mt Evans). He's a member of the local NZAC and one of our more experienced mountaineers. He wrote the climbers guide *Kaikoura to Kahurangi*, which includes tramping access.

Nominations are being received for the Committee. Please put your hand up if you are willing to assist in any small way.



NOMINATIONS

Our club **AGM** is an important annual event for the club to review the status and plan our future.

Regarding the Committee, please consider putting your or another name forward for the Committee.

Nominations close in late July so you cannot be dragooned at the AGM.

Contact the President [Pat Holland](mailto:pat.holland@maxnet.co.nz) for a Nomination Form. We keep the AGM very brief but functional. Come along and contribute, then be entertained with our special guest speaker.

COMMITTEE :

President: Patrick Holland

Correspondence Secretary &

Vice President: Kate Krawczyk

Minutes Secretary: Andrea Cockerton

Treasurer: Ian Morris

Programme Co-ordinator &

Gear Officer: Chris Louth

Committee: Dion Pont, Graeme Ferrier, Lawrie Halkett, Ray Salisbury.

Patron: Robyn Walsh

Newsletter Editor: Ray Salisbury

Post reports to: 71 Montreal Rd, Victory, or email to: newsletter@maxnet.co.nz

Website: nelsontrampingclub.org.nz

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1548415462086918/>

Mailbox: C/o Wisers Picture Framers, 78 Buxton Square, Nelson 7010.