



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

Nelson Tramping Club

March 2018



Graeme, Rod & Ian working hard on John Reid Hut

PHOTO: ONE OF THE GIRLS

KATE'S KORNER

Tenacity

Recently, on the epic Garden of Eden trip, I mentioned to Mike Drake, the leader, that I appreciated him letting me come on the trip. After all, I'm not at my fittest at the moment, I hadn't done anything so difficult before and I'm not as hard core as a lot of trampers in the club.

Mike said to me "I remember the climb up to Tarn Hut from Mid-Wairoa Hut with you on the Richmond Alpine Circuit. The one thing I know you've got is tenacity." I'd completely forgotten about that climb with Mike, but I do remember thinking that was the best compliment I've ever received – it restored my self confidence in so many ways. It got me thinking.

Tenacity: persistence, perseverance, doggedness, determination, resoluteness, patience, staunchness, steadfastness ... to me this is tramping in a nutshell.

I've always wondered why tramping was my thing. You see, I'm no thrill seeker; I'm totally uncoordinated; I never was much good at sport; but one thing I can do well is persevere!

And the people I've met through the club? Well, other than being kind, interesting, generous, intelligent, enlightening and so many other things, one thing that they've all got is tenacity!

Tramping makes us all better people and teaches anyone who gets out in the hills invaluable life lessons about seeing things through to the end. That's what I love so much about it. You can't just sit down in the middle of a mountain and say "nah, I'm not going on, I've had enough, I'm done. Taxi!"

You must keep going to reach the hut, or the roadend, which sometimes feel like a lifetime away. You just put your head down and put one foot in front of the other. To me, this is a huge life lesson that helps me every day to get things in perspective and just 'keep on keeping on.'

Even when I've been almost in tears, struggling up a mountain, my fellow trampers have always urged me on. I've done the same for others too.

Kate Krawczyk, President

yeah nah

2017 > The year in review

First female club president!	Kea in serious decline
Leadership training w/ends	Takaka Hill closed (Feb)
Wangapeka 'Road' stopped	Cobb Valley bridge out
Kaikoura & SH1 re-opened	SH6 clogged with trucks
Facebook Page thriving	20% Kauri infected/dying
Mt Fell Hut reno complete	5+ huts at Mt Cook closed
John Reid Hut nearly done	Overcrowding by tourists
10th Great Walk underway	Hunting accidents increase
Leah's legendary cooking	Kiwi are in decline
Brook Sanctuary progress	Waitakere Tracks closed
Waiiau Hut built on TA Trail	Lake Angelus Hut crowded
DOC's Short Walks & Hikes	DOC focussed on tourism dollars, not conservation

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBER:

Mikayla Wright

JOHN REID HUT WORKING BEE 27–29 January (Anniversary Weekend)



Workers on smoko break at John Reid Hut: Chris, Silvano, Peter, Michele, Leah, Graeme, Rod, Ian & Richard.

MICHELE CUNNINGHAM

Having mostly completed the Mount Fell Hut relocation and renovation (with just a woodshed left to build), the keen builder-types of the Nelson Tramping Club couldn't wait to get their hands on another project. John Reid Hut in Kahurangi National Park was settled on as a worthy target.

On completion of a suitable mountain of paperwork, funding was secured from DOC and we were ready to get started.

Following an earlier recce and planning trip, the first big working bee was scheduled for Anniversary Weekend. The weather forecast couldn't have been better, and lived up to its promise. We were very privileged to be able to fly in and out on a helicopter for this trip. Five of us got the cruisy option of a half hour drive to Reid's Helicopter base



Leah & Michele ride with Toby in the front

in Wakefield, and a fantastic 20-minute flight up to the hut. This was my first time in a helicopter, and it was an amazing bird's eye view from the front seat on a perfectly clear day. You could see the red of the rata trees, and the pilot commented that there has been rata in places they have never seen it before this year. On arrival we met two very surprised hunters who had come up for a quiet weekend and had certainly not expected a large group of noisy renovators to drop down from the sky! They said they had been commenting only the night before how old-school the hut looked!

Once the first group were safely deposited, the chopper flew down to the Rolling Junction road end where the rest of the group had driven with a trailer with a 900kg cage full of building materials and tools to be airlifted to the hut. We watched as the chopper came back into view dangling the cage below on a long rope. The pilot placed the cage in front of the hut with impressive precision. Two of our guys quickly unhooked it, the rope was then dropped a bit further off, and the chopper flew back down the hill to collect the remainder of the group. What on earth did we do in the days before helicopters?

Once the helicopter left and tents were pitched in the nearby bush, no time was wasted in getting the cage unpacked, power tools hooked up to the generator, and work underway. Silvano was our very capable foreman. He had organised the six key group members into pairs to take control of the three main projects: removing the old chimney and restoring the wall and floor, installing the new



Out with the old; in with the new. The original iron chimney was toppled, and replaced with a modern one.

MICHELE CUNNINGHAM

wood-burner and stainless steel benchtop, and lining the ceiling. Leah took charge of the food with her usual flair. Pete and I were the general dogsbodies.

Despite the relentlessly hot sunshine, work proceeded at an impressive pace. Scaffolding was erected, and the big old iron chimney was quickly toppled by Richard and Rod with assistance from Pete, leaving a gaping hole in the side of the hut which much improved the amount of light and fresh air inside! Shame the wall had to be replaced. Ian and Graeme pored over the complex instructions for the new wood-burner, and that quickly began to take shape. Silvano and Chris hammered away at the ceiling, installing the new lining.

The old chimney did not go to waste. Initially, it was used as a bench behind the hut for Leah's cooking. Later, it was moved to the front of the hut, dismantled, and reassembled as a woodshed (and the hut door became the bench for a while)! I was able to assist Rod with the woodshed project, including learning how to wind the number-8 wire pegged to the corners into a 'Spanish Windlass' to add extra strength. Another section of the chimney became the new front to the doorstep of the hut.

Leah and I were lucky enough to be able to go for an afternoon walk on Saturday, along the ridge, halfway to Mount Patriach. It was swelteringly hot, but beautifully clear with mountains in all directions; such an amazing location! Some of us also did a sunrise walk up to the ridge on Monday morning which was another highlight.

Four of the group slept in the hut. The rest of us camped in the shady bush nearby, and this in itself was a really special experience. It was so clear, still and warm. Riflemen flitted about, and a morepork called from directly above as we went to bed. In

the morning, early rays of sunshine filtered through the trees. I don't think I have ever experienced such warm nights at approximately 1300m metres above sea level!

There was a small stream flowing near the hut where all drinking water was collected, as the hut has no water tank. Keeping the large water containers filled was one of the jobs that kept me occupied during the weekend. Pete hollowed out a small bathing area a bit further downstream for washing and cooling off, although I have to say, Leah's solar shower was a more civilised option!

The food also deserves a mention, as always when Leah is involved. She had purchased and meticulously organised everything required for all the meals for the whole group. We had filled rolls individually catered to our own fussy requirements, a sausage sizzle under the trees, pancakes with maple syrup for breakfast, and hearty, filling main meals. Thank you once again, Leah, for your amazing catering skills!

And thanks too to Silvano for once again taking on the responsibility of co-ordinating one of these projects and making it all happen! It was very satisfying to see the improvements to the hut when the helicopter came back to collect us and our cage at 3pm on Monday. The next working bee will really add the icing to the cake.

Michele Cunningham
Club Secretary

WILDERNESS WISDOM:

"The most important things in life are not things."

TRIP REPORTS

December 2017–February 2018



PHOTO > DEBBIE HOGAN

Henry & Anne Chaffey's restored Asbestos Cottage

2–3 December 2017 | Balloon Hut via Asbestos Cottage | Kahurangi National Park

Leader: Liz Henderson

By the time the weekend approached and the weather forecast had improved, 13 trampers had signed up for the trip.

After we left Nelson around 7.30am we made a pitstop at different coffee shops in, or near Motueka, as some of us already showed the symptoms of caffeine withdrawal.

By the time we started at the car park on the Cobb Dam Road, our leader Liz (alias *Wound Wobin* as she pronounced her 'r's differently) had wounded us all up. It was 10 o'clock when we started our gradual ascent to the old Asbestos mine and cottage. Interesting history to catch up on plus a four bunk hut!

From here, it was down to Lower Junction and all the way back up to Peak Flat. But not before several of us had a swim in Bullock Creek. Including Peter (alias *Compulsory Dip*, as he took every opportunity to find refreshing water in the heat that was torturing us), and *Blue Skies Ahead* Debbie (because of her hair style colour).

It eventually dawned on us that we'd better keep up the pace, as we might be in for a long day. There was still quite an ascent up to Peel Ridge and it wasn't until 6 o'clock when we reached the top. From there we could see Lake Peel.

After everybody was *wounded* up again, our leader re-iterated there could be no swims in the lake. Forging ahead down to Lake Peel, I was passed by *Compulsory Dip* who was in no doubt about having his cooling off. He was followed by the two youngsters *Mountain Goat* Mikayla and *Daven Bare-foot Stud Muffin*, plus others who were not deterred by the temperature of the water.

When we did eventually reach the hut at 8pm, we were stunned to find no one there on such a

nice weekend. *Daring Adventurer* Denise and I decided to set up our tents. I believe most of us had good night's sleep.

Balloon Hut has had a nice makeover, courtesy of Waimea Tramping Club. Their renovations included a new woodburner, a checkerboard table with sets of home-made checkers, and a prefabricated wood shed almost the size and strength of a hut. The wood shed was impressive enough that it made Ian Morris terribly envious!

After the obligatory group photo, we proceeded along to Salisbury Lodge where four members of the Waimea Tramping Club also had the hut to themselves overnight. On to Dry Rock shelter, then out via Upper and Lower Junctions, where most of us had a dip in a waterhole.

Whereas *Deliberately Delinquent* David had been at the back for most of Saturday, I think *Can't-be-home-late* Kate must have whispered something in his ear on Sunday. David was the first to complete our eight-hour tramp. Meanwhile, *Graeme Hard Nut To Crack* Ferrier was hanging out for a real fruit ice cream in Riwaka.

An excellent weekend! Many thanks to *Wound Wobin* for the great organisation.

Walkers were:

Mikayla *Mountain Goat* Wright, Liz *Wound Wobin* Henderson, Kate *Can't-be-home-late* Krawczyk, Ian *Wood Shed Envy* Morris, Michele *All's Well* Cunningham, Pete *Compulsory Dip* Phipps, Denise *Daring Adventurer* Glover, Daven *Barefoot Stud Muffin* Illenberger, Graeme *Hard Nut To Crack* Ferrier, No *Ordinary* Sheelagh McCambridge, Debbie *Blue Skies Ahead* Hogan, Arif *Barrier Reef* Matthee, and David *Deliberately Delinquent* Cook.

by Arif "Barrier Reef" Matthee

P.S. I received my own nickname because several people found it hard to remember my name. I explained to them that when I got married, my wife got stuck on a reef (Arif). So, someone suggested I should be called '*Barrier Reef*' to make it easier to remember my name.



Wound Wobin's happy hikers & swimmers

PHOTO > DEBBIE HOGAN



PHOTOS > KATH B

Leah's party at the trackhead at Kaiuma Bay

6–7 January | Nydia Walkway | Marlborough

Leader: Leah Parker

Twelve trampers gathered at Kaiuma on a bright sunny day for a couple of very pleasant days tramping. We set off at 9am, heading for Kaiumu Saddle by 11.30am, where we ate an early lunch.

A pleasant down-hill through bush and over farmland ensued to reach the bay at 1pm, coinciding with the king tide inundating areas of the track. Some trampers walked through the water, while others did a tricky manoeuvre negotiating along the fence wire to avoid getting wet feet.

By 2:00pm, we reached our destination at Nydia Bay Lodge. Here, we settled into very comfortable accommodation for an afternoon of relaxation and activities such as swimming, quizzes, yoga, dancing, and table tennis, at which David was clearly a pro. Steve encouraged some of us into Acro-Yoga, surprising us with this acrobatic activity requiring trust between participants.

The evening was topped off with a lovely shared meal of tortillas with multiple delicious dishes that Leah had prepared. The Volunteer Camp host joined us for the evening.

Rod roused all at 6am with a loud thump on the cabin doors and after breakfast, tidy-up and group photo, we set off just before 8am for Duncan Bay in cool, overcast conditions. The first 30 minutes was the return to the turnoff to Kaiumu, then around the shoreline, and eventually on up to Nydia Bay Saddle. It was cool and breezy here, so we continued on to Ngwhakawhiti Bay where we had lunch. We spotted a stingray cruising close to the shore.

We reached Duncan Bay in time for some to have a



Bright & bushy-tailed at Nydia Lodge

swim, before a pleasant boat ride back to Kaiumu. Most chose to sit in the top deck in the new Mail Boat catamaran, enjoying the scenery. The boat proved to be much faster than the old mail boat. However, after a number of stops around the Sound, we reached Kaiumu – and our cars – two hours later.

Both days' walking were made pleasant by the recent rain which made the bush fresh and the ferns lush. There was a mixture of regenerating forest and old established forest, with some very big red beech trees. We also traversed a small patch of mature pine forest on the first day.

Many thanks to Leah for organising the trip and for the preparation of the wonderful shared meal we all enjoyed in the evening.

Participants were: Leah Parker, David Cook, Rodney and Carole Lewis, Theresa Magrane, Steve McGlone, Eva, Marie Lenting, Rita Bourn, Anna King, Lucy Patchett and Kath Ballantine (scribe).

COMEDY OF ERRORS

**17 December 2018 | St.Arnaud Range |
Nelson Lakes National Park**

Leader: Kate Krawczyk

Our plan was to climb up the Parachute Rocks track on to the St. Arnaud Range, then follow the ridgeline northeast, descending to the top of the Alpine Meadows Road.

I only had one carload of trampers which meant that Ben brought his bike to retrieve the vehicle at the end of the trip. The night before the trip, Kazu got in touch. He wondered why I hadn't answered his email yet. I said "what email?" and for the life of me couldn't find it... but oh well... another person and another vehicle was no biggie.

We dropped Ben's bike at the top of the Alpine Meadows Road on our way into the start of the track at St. Arnaud. We then drove to meet the other car only to realise that, because of the last minute addition of Kazu, we had another car to do a car shuffle at the end instead of Ben riding his bike to get the car! That was a bit dumb!

We returned to the Alpine Meadows Road where I left my car parked nicely on the grassy verge, out of the way of private driveways.

December was very hot and dry, but I foolishly assumed that the stream I'd crossed many many times on the way up to Parachute Rocks would be ankle-deep, as usual; that I could fill my bottles with my favourite mountain spring water before we started the climb – how wrong I was! Thus, I only had a litre of water with me for the 800-metre climb ahead on a hot and humid day. I was in trouble. I drink a lot of water huffing, puffing and sweating my way up mountains! Not a good look for a trip leader.

Halfway up to Parachute Rocks, my phone rang. This was very strange on a Sunday morning. It was the Nelson Police! Apparently a lady who lived at the top of Alpine Meadows rung about my ute thinking it was stolen or dumped there. The lovely policewoman also mentioned that it was parked on private property and the lady wanted it gone. I apologised and explained that I could either turn around immediately and be there in an hour or we would be finished our walk in about 4–5 hours. After ringing the lady back the policewoman said "No worries," so we carried on, but ... not a good look for a trip leader!

All of these things going wrong did shake me a bit. By the time I caught up to the group at Parachute Rocks a big part of me just wanted to turn around. But they said "no! Let's carry on! Bigger that lady and here's some water!" And carry on we did, having a wonderful time up on the ridge. It is a beautiful part of the St.Arnaud Range. There is nice variation: rocky bits; a tiny

bit of easy scrambling; some lovely open tussock slopes leading into open scrubby mountain beech goblin forest.

There is no track, just some old flagging tape where an old track used to be, no longer maintained. However, navigation was quite easy and I had my GPS with me to get us back down to the offending vehicle. The only tricky bit was turning off of the ridge at the right point, then staying on the spur to exit in the right place. We did have a bit of misadventure getting sucked into a bit of a steep gully, but without too much drama, we climbed out, traversed across the slope and managed to come out right above my ute.

I felt the need to apologise in person to the lady who had complained to the police and left a nasty note on my vehicle.

As I was there representing the club, I went to knock on the door. But the door was wide open and I could smell cigarette smoke. I knocked anyways and called out, got no response and so poked my head inside. There she was, a smoke in her hand, pretending to be asleep. Enough said.

14 January | Trig K, Pelorus Bridge, Marlborough

Leader: Graeme Ferrier

There had been two months of hot dry weather in November and December, so the thought of a walk through trees with the option of a swim to finally cool off had much appeal. That was the thinking behind the Trig K walk. But of course, the skies opened up during early January and so it was a very humid day that welcomed eight eager trampers to Pelorus Bridge.

Trig K is a loop-walk through a small remnant of ancient forest containing totara, rimu, matai, tawa and other shrubs. We took the more direct route to Trig K. It was a short, sharp climb of 350m, but in the high humidity it had us all puffing, panting and sweating profusely – a good workout after the indulgences of Christmas!

The stop at Trig K was most welcome providing views to the north up the Rai Valley. Sadly, the views to the south of a recently-felled pine forest were hidden by a wall of scrub.

The descent was longer and easier via Elvey Falls and other small streams to the return path along the Pelorus River. An early lunch stop was had on a small beach beside the river.

While the others did the Circle Walk across the bridge, the cool water influenced half the group to have a swim back at the car park. A higher water flow meant cooler water, and some care in the current, but it was most refreshing. Everyone reconvened at the café for a cold drink and ice-creams.

Trampers were: Ian Morris; Ian B; Steve McGlone; Arif Matthee; Michele Cunningham; Peter Phipps; Debbie Hogan; Philip P and Graeme Ferrier (leader & scribe).

PHOTO > LIZ HENDERSON



Mark's troupe arrive at Grid Iron Gulch on the Flora track

20–21 January | Tableland Historical Exploration | Kahurangi National Park

Leader: Mark Graesser

The brief talk in the car park at Richmond from Mark Graesser on a fine Saturday morning, indicated that this was not going to be an ordinary tramp. Our first stop was at the base of Graham Valley which, for many decades, was the Heath's accommodation house, and the road-end till the 1970's. The original packhorse track was described as narrow and precipitous, sidling up a slope on Sugarloaf to the south of the valley.

Twelve trampers set off from Flora carpark at 9am, taking our time to appreciate the Gridiron shelters, before emerging out of the bush on to Salisbury Open. Here, we had lunch near the site of the second Salisbury Hut, demolished in 1975.

We speculated about the reason for the name Starvation Ridge as we traversed this towards Balloon Hut. Mark pointed out the site of Butchertown. We got good views across the Tableland and to the Mt Arthur Range before we continued onwards to reach Balloon Hut.

More folks arrived after us. They had to utilise floor space and sleep outdoors (as did some of our group). In the afternoon, a smaller group spent two hours walking up to the ridge above Peel Lake.

We met Mark's friend Bill Rooke who had extensively explored this area as a trumper, guide, and founder of *Friends of Flora*.

Mark had brought with him copies of newspaper reports of recreational trips to the Tableland dating from 1880, and we enjoyed seeing the area through Victorian eyes. One article gave particular advice on the number of pack horses required for each female in the party for their "impediments and other necessities." There was also a report of Nelson's Bishop Suter holding a church service at Cundy Creek in January 1880.

By 8.30am the next morning, we were led through Cundy Creek by Bill, finding fascinating limestone rock formations, small caves, a sheltered grassy flat that was home to miners who panned for gold, and the lonely grave of prospector Edwin Moore who died here in 1892.

Captain Brian Renwick on his catamaran *Canopus*

PHOTO > LOU KOLFF

At the track junction to the Leslie-Karamea, half of our group followed Bill off-track to explore Pillar Cave, which featured beautiful stalactites, including graffiti dating back to 1880. Exiting the cave, we scrambled through tussock and beech forest to get to Salisbury Lodge for a quick lunch.

We were lucky that Bill met up with a *Friends of Flora* volunteer with a car at Gridiron. They kindly transported our packs to the car park, making the last 1.5 hours of uphill a little easier.

The weather was beautiful, the company good, and the weekend was enhanced by the knowledge and extra exploration that Mark and Bill contributed. Many thanks to Mark and Bill for leading the trip, and also for the history and anecdotes they shared.

Members: Mark Graesser, Liz Henderson, Kate Krawczyk, Kath Ballantine (scribe). **Visitors:** Rita Bourn, Christine Latimer, Ashley Windsor, Mary & Henry Hsu, Alena Zwiener & Bill Rooke.

21 January | Walk Sail | Abel Tasman N/Park

Leaders: Brian Renwick & Debbie Hogan

The morning was a balmy 18-degrees when the six set off from Nelson at 7am. Considering it is a Great Walk, the track was relatively quiet. We stopped at Stillwater Bay for morning tea. Lucy and Debbie went for a swim – the water was definitely not cold. We continued, making the 12.30pm rendezvous with Brian in his nine-metre catamaran, *Canopus*, which we swam out to.

Once we were lunched and drunk, we set sail out of Torrent Bay. The wind was steady and we were soon clipping along under sail. Some had sailing lessons and the chance to be skipper, while others dozed in the warm sunshine.

We moored next to Adele Island. The views from the top were worth the puff up the hill. Most of us swam back to the yacht, before being dropped off at Coquille Bay for another swim, before the final walk back to Marahau.

Sailors were: Captain Brian Renwick (sail leader), Gray Renwick, Jim Forsyth, Debbie Hogan (walk leader & scribe), Theresa Magrane, Lucy Patchett, Pauline Tout, Lou Kolff, & Scott Stocker.



The Needle presides over the Plateau; Debbie & Kelvin atop The Needle; Kath's quintet by Larrikins Creek Hut

PHOTOS > KATH & DEBBIE

26–29 January | 1000 Acre Plateau | Kahurangi
Leader: Kath Ballantine

Five intrepid trampers set off in the heat from the car park in the Matiri Valley at 3pm, heading for Lake Matiri Hut, our firsts night's destination. (The temperature was 33 degrees celsius according to our vehicle's reading.)

The river crossing at the start of this track was easy, but some of us took the opportunity to immerse ourselves to cool off. We reached our destination in three hours. Peter and Kelvin set up their own camp on the flats, while Debbie, Susan and I enjoyed the newly-painted hut, and the outdoor table for evening meal.

We set off at 7am on Saturday, hoping to beat the heat as we had 700-metre elevation to gain to the plateau rim. However, it became hot very quickly as sweat poured off while we struggled up the slope.

There was a slight reprieve half way up as the ridge levelled out somewhat, where we enjoyed brief views of the valley floor below. Most of the time we were in lovely bush that changed as we ascended.

We eventually clambered up the last steep section to Poor Pete's Hut, 30 minutes across the tussocks. It had taken us 3.5 hours instead of the stated track time of three. A brief stop to admire the renovated Poor Pete's Hut, then we set off in very hot sunny conditions across the undulating tussock plateau.

Lunch was brief as we had no shade, so we continued on. We found two small creeks allowing a chance to cool off in the shallow water, and eventually came into low beech forest offering some shade. After some steep descents into little creeks, we finally emerged onto a grassy flat and Larrikins Creek Hut in 3.5 hours.

Pete and Kelvin had arrived 30 minutes earlier and were already relaxing under a big beech tree, which became our dining and relaxing area. It was a lovely spot; we were entertained by robins, white eyes, bush wren, fantails and wekas. We were surprised to see a white weka, well documented in the hut book. All agreed that it

was the toughest conditions we had ever walked in. We devised a plan to get up early to climb the Needle, and to change the plan of walking all the way out on the last day to walking out to Poor Pete's hut late afternoon on Sunday.

At 7am on Sunday, we followed a marked track from the hut to an elevated flat area where we diverged from the track to The Haystack, heading across tussock land dotted with lovely tarns before scrambling up a steep slope of tussock and shrubs. We came out on a ridge to The Needle on the west of the peak. From there, it was a short ascent over the mudstone flanks of the Needle to the summit where we had magnificent views.

We returned to Larrikins Creek by lunch time and spent the afternoon relaxing. Debbie led Susan and I down to a beautiful deep rock pool in the creek just before the creek drops over the rim of the plateau – a great place for a swim and cool off. For the second afternoon cumulus clouds had gathered, threatening us with thunder, but we remained in the sun.

At 4.20pm we set off towards Poor Pete's Hut. Conditions for walking became a little better as the day cooled. We arrived in good time (2.5 hours), set up tents, had supper and enjoyed the sunset.

We departed before 8am on Monday morning. The descent was easier than the ascent, though care had to be taken. We had a leisurely lunch at Lake Matiri, before heading off, enjoying plentiful ripe blackberries along the track, Pete and Debbie collecting a bag full to take home.

A swim at the river crossing was mitigated rapidly, as we walked the road back to the cars for an hour, reflecting that it would have been good to have had 4WD's to drive the last four kilometres. By 3pm we were on the road returning to Nelson.

We all agreed it was a great tramp; we were all enthralled by the majesty of the landscape; we were enchanted by the multitude of small birds, especially the bush robins.

Thank you all team members for your support and good fun.

Participants were: Debbie Hogan, Kelvin Drew, Kath Ballantine (scribe and leader), with visitors Pete Waworis and Susan Jenkins.



Intrepid trio fresh at the Wanganui Valley trackhead; Smyth Hut provides refuge near the Wanganui headwaters

PHOTOS > PAT & MIKE

EXPEDITIONS

30 Nov–7 Dec 2017 | Wanganui River to Erewhon Col | Westland

Leader: Mike Drake

Mike Drake organised and led this private trip so he could complete the alpine traverse from Mt Cook to Arthurs Pass that he, Ruth Gray and Dave Quisted undertook in stages during 2014–2017.

Bad weather and swollen rivers had blocked their access from the west to Bracken Snowfield and Erewhon Col on the Main Divide. Although they subsequently did get there from the East, there remained an untrod section up the Evans Glacier and over Full Moon Saddle at the head of the Wanganui Valley. [Note: our times are inclusive of stops.]

Thursday 30 Nov. Meticulous planning and military precision saw Mike G and Pat rendezvous early with Mike D at Kohatu (thanks Deidre!) All good, apart from Pat misplacing his climbing helmet in the gear transfer to Mike's Toyota 4WD.

Steady driving in light traffic with a brief coffee stop at Reefton, the three of us arrived at the track-head for lunch. This is close to the main road bridge onear Harihari. It was drought conditions in Westland, with no rain for four weeks, although the rivers were not particularly low due to snow melt. We did not believe that this long spell of fine weather could continue for another 7–8 days. But it did!

Off we staggered, up the true right of the large river. There was some track which was being recut by DOC workers as we passed through. But there were long sections of boulder-hopping by the river; a couple of small bluffs to add interest; then the final three km of riverflats leading to the cableway across the river near Hunters Hut.

We were rather weary after a long day. The boulders were not particularly big but lots of hopping with huge packs had taken its toll. (DOC sign said 5 hours; we took 7 hours). We had the hut to ourselves and enjoyed a good nights' rest.

Friday 1 Dec. Another early start as we headed up the true left of the Wanganui into the long,

rough section that had been seriously affected by a huge storm in 2014. We climbed high above Poker Bluff via a dodgy slip face and descended a marked track through the bush back down to the river. There, Pat discovered he had lost his camera.

Most of the travel from there on was alongside the river where rock-hopping alternated with rock clambering, interspersed with minimally-marked track in poor condition. Still, we made steady progress on a beautiful day and enjoyed the dramatic river scenery with house-sized boulders, cliffs and cascades.

The soles on Mike's boots began to separate under the strain so temporary repairs were made with cord. In nine hours we reached Smyth Hut, delightfully situated near the bushline on an isolated promontory above the wild river.

Our rest and recreation was interspersed with more work on Mike's boots. Screws were purloined from hut fittings and soles were refastened to the uppers using his Leatherman multi-tool, then augmented by wire bindings. These repairs looked solid but only just lasted the trip.

Saturday 2 Dec. The route up the Wanganui river from Smyth is unmarked and the swing bridge to the true right bank is gone. The very rough travel along the left bank includes a couple of steep slips on exposed old moraine wall. The way beside the river seemed to be blocked, so we headed up into the bush for a prolonged struggle before coming back down to the river where it forks into the Evans River and Vane Stream.

The crossing of the Vane 100m upstream of the fork proved to be trivial but this was where Mike's party had previously been stymied by flooding. The boulder-hopping travel beside the true left of the Evans was then straightforward and a few kilometres up, we found an excellent camp site on a flat gravel area with adjacent large boulders for shelter and a nearby stream. This is just below the glacial lake at about 1100m (7.5 hours).

Although the valley was bouldery moraine, the tussock-clad slopes had a magnificent display of yellow flowering ranunculus. Waterfalls cascaded off the cliffs from the hanging valleys and icefalls above. A grand spot on a beautiful calm evening.



Mike & Pat are dwarfed by a truck-sized boulder in the Wanganui River; Smyth Hut with route to Erewhon Col beyond

PHOTOS > MIKE & PAT

Sunday 3 Dec. For the crux of the trip, we decided to do a day-trip. An early start found us working our way through the several kilometres of moraine past the lake to reach the snow and ice of the Evans Glacier. From here it was straightforward cramponing up onto Full Moon Saddle with impressive icefalls and bergschrunds on our left under Red Lion and Mount Evans. Mount Whitcombe was above us to the right but hidden.

Mike Glover led the charge, with plaintive cries from Pat at the rear for shorter steps in the steep, but softening, snow. At the saddle, the expanse of the Bracken Snowfield lay before us to the north. We climbed the gradual slope to Erewhon Col (2160m) where we had lunch under a impressive rock monolith with magnificent views down the Ramsay Glacier. The ridge from Amazons Breasts to Lauper Peak was prominent. We sauntered back down to camp with a little bum-sliding off the saddle, then toiling through the moraine (10 hours return). At camp we enjoyed the late afternoon sunshine and bathing in the stream.

Mon-Tuesday 4-5 Dec. After a leisurely breakfast with a visit from a thar, we broke camp and returned to Smyth Hut in 5.5 hours. Mike Glover found a route through the huge boulders beside the Wanganui, so we avoided the bush bash. The weather was delightful and we felt rather lethargic, opting for a rest day at Smyth.

We cleared some windfall off the pretty 250m section of bush track below the hut and did a little gardening. Where this track meets a small side stream there are hot pools varying from hot to warm. Again, we were the sole occupants of the standard NZFS six-bunker that is in excellent order. The hut book records that only a few parties visit each year.

Wed-Thursday 6-7 Dec. We returned from whence we came. The rough travel to Hunters Hut was easier, downhill with lighter packs. A thin

cord assisting on a bluffy steep gully was replaced with a piece of climbing rope. Mike Glover went over the Poker Bluff track and found Pat's camera! Mike Drake and Pat attempted the low route but were stymied where the river cuts hard against the bluff and is now deep and swift, even at lowish flows. So they had to backtrack, then use the high route. Following tracks of Mountain Goat Mike, across a steep area of eroded micaeous schist, Pat and Mike D got bluffed. Lowering our packs then backtracking to get above this section enabled a safe descent to Hunters Hut.

There was a party of two in residence who promptly went out hunting until midnight, before being chopped out in the morning. Nothing could disturb us. We slept the sleep of the just.

On the final day, in six hours we returned to our vehicle on another brilliant day, although Pat's knees were complaining.

Well done Mike Drake for excellent organisation, including of Hughie. Adventurers were Mike Drake, Mike Glover & Patrick Holland (scribe).

December 28-January 5 | Garden of Eden
Leader: Mike Drake

Sitting at my desk last Spring, perusing the NTC programme, I noticed that a leader was required for a trip during the summer. What about something a little different and special?

Last year I finally completed a Mt Cook to Arthur's Pass trip; doing this in three stages, rather than the intended one. Part of this trip involved traveling through the Garden of Eden and Garden of Allah, exiting by traversing Mt Lambert. So a trip to the Garden of Eden and returning the same way would be a good introduction to moraines and glaciers for club members. The idea was floated with Pat Holland and the trip was launched. Big rivers, heavy packs and rough terrain made

this tramp more challenging. The plan was to do this in 'easy' stages to ease people into heavy packs. The route would begin at Erewhon Station. Exploration would be done from our base camp and returning the same way to Erewhon Station.

Day 1, Lake Camp, December 28

A meetup at Kohatu 08:00 stopping at The Broadway Tearooms and Bakery in Reefton. Lunch was consumed at Lake Pearson. A stop at Mt Somers campground saw Madeleine diving into skippy bins for drink bottles, as Lake Camp does not have any water on tap.

At Lake Camp I expected lots of boat noise. However, I was not prepared for kids on trail bikes and quad bikes zooming past our campsite, kicking up lots of dust. The mountains were definitely beckoning us.

Day 2, Watchdog Hut, December 29

A short drive led to Erewhon Station to complete the intentions book. This was it; after all the planning, gear and food selection, we got to walk. Whatever had been forgotten, improvisation would have to work.

A short 4WD track brought us onto the river bed. By the time I had finished a pee stop, my group were heading along the bank. I set my path directly up the river bed, crossed the Clyde/Lawrence and continued, then waited for the group. They easily crossed the river and we continued up the river together.

The Clyde appears to have migrated to the true left, after coming up against Armada Bluff. We linked up to cross before Armada Bluff and were able to re-cross just prior to a long slip.

Negotiating along the bottom of the slip presented no problems. We were now on the true right of the Clyde which puts us on the true right of the Frances. No more river crossing!

At last we reached Watchdog Hut. After much thought and discussion, it was decided Liz would stay here and await our return. The gear was rearranged. We left Liz with food, stove, fuel, PLB and Kindle at Watchdog Hut.

Day 3, Glacier Lakes, December 30

A stroll up the true right over varied ground; boulders, bush, river flats, moraine debris found us at the Glacier Lakes. My campsite from the previous trip was very much intact. We allowed Kate and Sue to camp on 'our' front lawn. This is a great spot; green carpet, grass campsite and swims on hand.

A Satellite Phone schedule in the evening suggested our plan should be modified. It was decided we would go and camp on the Garden of Eden. This would give us a better window of opportunity to explore.



Day 4, Glacier Lakes, December 31

Rain, rain and more rain. We hunkered down and did some minor tweaks to the tent to stop the odd leak. Eating, drinking, knot work and *Readers Digest* saw us through the day. A whisky toast early in the evening was our New Years Eve party. Heather mentioned at 19:30 on the Sat Phone sched that Liz was out safely.

Day 5, Near Perth Col, January 1

We were away to the Garden of Eden. No rain! Once the Glacial Lakes were negotiated on the true right, we began to climb the Colin Campbell Glacier (CCG). Colin took the lead and I took up the rear. Colin found a great way up his name-sake glacier. The only tricky bit was getting onto the south-west branch of the CCG. We discussed a route which entailed just one very small section of ice. Once on the TL we traversed high until we found an opportunity to join the glacial stream.

Rain threatened, but didn't eventuate. We met on the snow and deployed our gear; axes, crampons, harnesses, rope and prusiks. Eventually we were off. Pat took the lead on a rope of four; Pat, Sue, Kate and myself, followed by a rope of three; Carol, Madeleine and Colin.

Pat did a sterling job, and once we had the zigs-zags sorted, a single line of steps lead to the neve. Blustery wind was waiting for us at the top which didn't entice us to venture further.

Colin quickly found campsites on a rock outcrop on the side of Wee McGregor Glacier. The shovel and ice axes were quickly put to work and guy ropes fully deployed ready for anything. This can be a very windy place.

Day 6, Near Perth Col, January 2

We were at the gateway to the Garden of Eden. Would the weather allow us to venture further? By around 10am the weather appeared to settle. We packed our bags with snacks, gear and roped up to head for Adams Col. Once over Perth Col we headed south-west. Finally, we arrived on the legendary Garden of Eden Ice Plateau!

We stopped to absorb our new environment. Clouds and blue sky allowed us to appreciate the scale. With the weather looking settled we



Kate, Colin, Carol, Sue, Mike & Madeleine on an epic trip to the Garden Of Eden ice plateau

PHOTO > PAT HOLLAND

headed to Adams Col to experience the vastness of this area. On the glacier we experienced slopes and crevasses. After a break at Adams Col we followed our footsteps back, then had a look at Baker Peak.

The journey was punctuated with whiteouts, glaring sun and 'oven-like' temperatures. After some time the rock outcrops on the flanks of Baker Peak appeared. A few 'zigs' and 'zags' brought us to the rocky slab slopes leading to the summit. Then we were at the top of the first peak. Cloud remained on the Garden of Eden, but we had clear views down the Clyde and into the Colin Campbell Glacier.

ONE OF LIFE'S LITTLE LUXURIES IS TO HAVE A TOILET STOP WITHOUT THE PAPER GETTING WET FROM RAIN, SAND FLIES, OR HAVING TO PUT STONES ON EACH PIECE OF PAPER TO STOP THEM BLOWING AWAY. URBAN DWELLERS KNOW NO SUCH PLEASURES.

We navigated back to the Garden then again followed our footsteps back to the campsite. A snow bath for me, food, drink and then bed.

Day 7, Glacier Lakes, January 3

A leisurely start today at 7am. It can get pretty hot with full-on sun. One of life's little luxuries is to have a toilet stop without the paper getting wet from rain, sand flies, or having to put stones on each piece of paper to stop them blowing away. Urban dwellers know no such pleasures. Today was calm and pleasant. You have to experience the tedium of life to fully appreciate the good.

After further chit-chat, packing continued and we roped up. Descending the Colin Campbell Glacier was a challenge. The top section was steep. We descended slowly using the old steps, but kicking others at the side to reduce the stretch. In some places, solid ice had frozen our steps, thus some downclimbing was done to avoid these sections. All steps were made into bucket steps to accommodate those with more flexible boots in the party, giving extra security.

Once at the end of the snow all the gear came off and then lunch. Our trip down the CCG went very smoothly, led by Colin. We were soon at our favourite campsite erecting tents, making brews and having swims. We unearthed our cache which we had left three days ago. Kate and Sue set up their 20-metre clothes line. They must be the cleanest trampers that have visited this area. Again, clouds came in when it was my turn for a swim! Life can be tough.

Day 8, Lake Camp, January 4

Today our destination was to be Watchdog Hut. We arrived at with plenty of time to swim and enjoy our last night. Tomorrow was going to be a long day; walking out then driving home. Again, during my swim the clouds came in, but this time



Mike breathes the fresh air amid moraine debris; INSET: Crossing the Clyde to exit before the rain

PHOTO > PAT HOLLAND

it poured. I left my clean clothes in a plastic bag while I had my unintentional shower, donning undies before entering the hut, (eight days into a tramp undies are classified as decent attire).

Colin shortly returned after visiting McCoy Hut, soaked. He too had been caught in the downpour.

Discussion ensued, and phone calls made to see if the weather was changing. No information suggested heavy rain in the area, but we decided to play it safe and walk out overnight.

By 19:10 we were packed and on our way. In dimming light the river crossing looked trickier. It was also felt that if we kept to the true left, we could keep the Clyde on our right; negating crossing the Clyde a second time.

However, we found ourselves being pushed more to the true left bank. We decided to cross and follow our original route up the valley. With dimming light the group developed an 'urgency' to get out.

There was no way we were going to get out before dark. The best thing to do was to stop before dark, take a break and ready torches: this we did. As night fell, we snaked down the valley. It was a pleasant evening.

We came across a road which took us to the last river to cross. We came to a spot that 'looked' shallow but was swift. To cut a long story short, we (a group of four) tried to cross. In backing out we lost the angle and everyone was exposed to

the full force of the river. We took a swim. The run-out was fine and so all eventually made their way to shore. This incident highlighted a few issues.

Once the party was safely at Lake Camp, the holiday-makers had gone. When tents were up hot water issued forth; hummus, biscuits, soup, tea and chocolate were spread out.

Day 9, Nelson, January 5

After our 3am bedtime, there was no hurry to move. All we had to do today was return to Nelson. Water was collected and the stove cranked up. We all gathered in my tent for hot drinks and a trip debrief. It was an indication of the cohesiveness of the group that only positive things were said, especially since four of us had an early morning, unintentional swim. It was a humbling experience.

Thank you, Kate Krawczyk, Madeleine Roher, Pat Holland, Sue Henley, Carol and Colin for making this a great trip. By Mike Drake (scribe).

WILDERNESS WISDOM:

"Success is not final. Failure is not fatal. It is the courage to continue that counts."
- Winston Churchill

UPcoming CLUBDATES...

Tuesday 6 March

Social Night

7.30pm, Prince Albert pub
Contact: Michele Cunningham

7.30pm, Monday 9 April

Club Night

Nelson Intermediate School
Speaker: **Nina Solter**

7.30pm, Monday 11 June

Club Night

Nelson Intermediate School
Topic: **Search & Rescue**

Monday 6 August & A.G.M.

Photo Competition

7.30pm, Nelson Intermediate
Guest Judge: T.B.A.

Our club's annual Christmas get-together, and a chance to show off your skills with a camera.

NOTE! New Categories:

1. **Above Bushline** with NO human element
2. **Above Bushline** WITH human element
3. **Below Bushline** with NO human element
4. **Below Bushline** WITH human element
5. **NATIVE Flora & Fauna** - NO human element
6. **HISTORIC** – Pre 1980.
7. **OPEN** – **Anything goes** (panoramic stitches, cloning, exposure blends, cloning, oversize etc.)
8. **PEOPLE's CHOICE** – Judge has no say!

Club Rules: You must have shot the photograph *yourself*, within New Zealand, during the past 12 months since the last competition.

Note: These changes are to align with FMC's national photography competition. In the past, 4–5 club members have won really good prizes, inc. \$80 coffee table books.

[Full details of FMC competition](#)

TRIP LEADERS & SCRIBES!

WRITING TIPS

Trip reports need not be **extensive epistles**, or feature award-winning writing. Just the facts, spiced with some memorable moments. Adding the total walking time may be helpful to future trip leaders searching our website database.

Following these guidelines will not only save the Newsletter Editor hours of extra work, but it will make it easier for others to read your trip report.

1. **Write the report in MS Word**, not an email. Don't be lazy! Because an email does not contain proper formatting, and copying from an email deletes all paragraph returns - this means lots more work for the editor.
2. **One space** between sentences. We have moved on from typewriters to computers! If you put a double-space between sentences, and the article is justified during pagination, horrid 'rivers' appear down the columns.
3. **Title:** Add Date / Name of Track / Name of Forest-National Park / Leader's Name. Remember to record all participant's names, IN FULL. This will save the Editor having to refer to the club website or Facebook, trying to fill in the gaps.
4. **Use humour** ... but avoid 'in-jokes unless they are obvious to the general reader.
5. **Keep sentences short** for easier reading. Avoid joining different ideas together with an 'and'. Use paragraphs too!
6. **House Style:** we write numerals 0–12 in full (e.g. zero, one, two, three).

Do not abbreviate (nth, sth, hrs,) Contractions are fine (such as don't, didn't, we've). Acronymns (such as DOC) are acceptable. Use past tense.

7. People like seeing themselves in photos, and images of people are much easier to take than landscapes, (and print better at a small size in the newsletter). So, try to get at least **one decent group photo**. Pose the group facing the light (unless you know what you're doing shooting *contré jour*).

8. Photos: Email only the best 4–5 shots to the Editor.

Don't just post 71 x images on Facebook, and expect the on-line viewers to sift through all the rubbish shots to find the good ones. Spend 5 minutes choosing them.

Note: **Facebook**

compresses the images so the low-resolution isn't suitable for printing in a newsletter.

Thanks for all your contributions!

COMMITTEE :

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Youth/Family Co-ordinator: Leah Parker
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