



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

EDITORIAL COMMENT > FILLING THE GAPS

Missing in Action...

Since the last issue, I have been inundated with over 14 trip reports, which will fill out this bumper edition of our newsletter nicely. And make up for my missing January newsletter (though no-one complained!)

Also, we welcome feedback and especially your articles on all things tramping. If you have good quality gear for sale, we can advertise it here. Or, perhaps, a private trip?

The Trip Programme is the cornerstone of our club, so if you're a capable leader, please continue to sign up on-line to lead new expeditions. There are often gaps in the Programme. If you're stuck, phone Jim for inspiration. We'd love to see you early for our Pizza feed before the next club night.

Club nights are where we rub noses with each other in a social setting, and get inspired by visual presentations. The Committee are always on the look-out for interesting speakers - maybe it's your turn?

Regarding the Committee, we need new blood here too, as people move on due to health reasons or busy lifestyles.

Remember, we are all amateurs. We don't get paid to run this club; we do it for the love of it. Personal passion is a much better motivator than money, anyway. So we appreciate the enthusiastic efforts of all our active members - you're a quirky but good-natured bunch of individuals who deserve a pat on the back. Let's have a great year.



See you at Club Nights...

Raymond Salisbury, EDITOR
newsletter@maxnet.co.nz

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS > Elizabeth Dooley,
John & Rae Sheridan, and Ian & Susan Dohoo.

Nelson Tramping Club March 2013

FREE PIZZA!

TRIP LEADERS ONLY

6.30pm before Club Night April 8th

RSVP to Lawrie Halkett

Phone: 544 4096

Chit-chat over pizzas about possible tramps for our next Programme - we need your support



PHOTO > JO KAY

FLORA HUT working bee

1-3 MARCH > FRIDAY, SATURDAY, SUNDAY

Bring: Claw-Hammer, Pinch-bar, and/or wire brush
We are replacing lead nails & painting roofing iron
Supporters & families welcome
Come for a day, or camp for the whole weekend

**LET'S KEEP THIS HISTORIC HUT OPEN
AND SHOW D.O.C. WHAT WE CAN DO**

RSVP to Patrick Holland

Phone: 539 1340



PHOTO > DAVID BLUNT

OPEN CATEGORY > A handful of memories (memorial to Ruth Hesselyn)

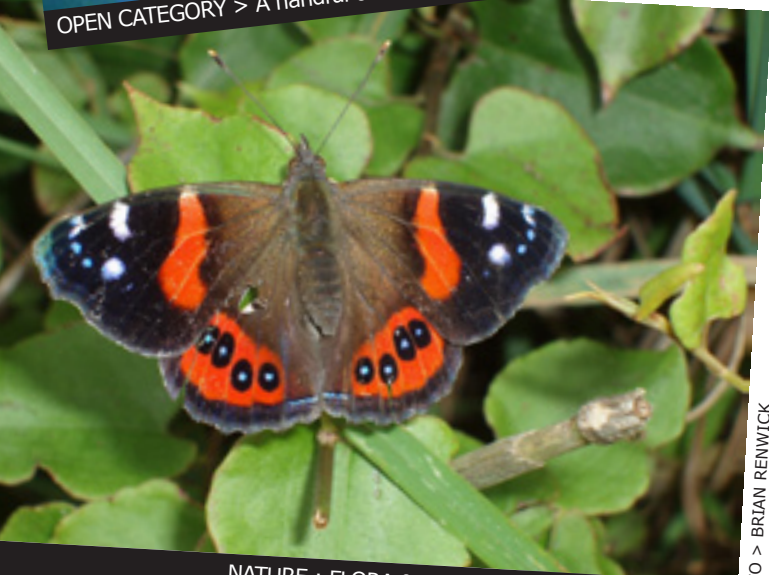


PHOTO > BRIAN RENWICK

NATURE : FLORA & FAUNA > Red Admiral Butterfly



PHOTO > RAY SALISBURY

PEOPLE'S CHOICE > trampers traverse snow en route Mt Peel



PHOTO > DAVID BLUNT

HISTORIC > Old and new Starveall Huts

3 December 2012 > RESULTS

Photo Competition

Organisers: The Committee > Judge: Peter Wise

This year we had our very own Peter Wise to choose the winning photos.

As per previous years, the first three place-getters in each category received a certificate. First place-getters were given \$15 vouchers to spend at Nelson City Cameras.

A new memorial trophy was awarded by Ruth's sister for the People's Choice category.

It was an enjoyable evening with a record number in attendance (41).

> WINNERS:

1. Landscape:

- 1st – Ruth Hesselyn
- 2nd – Ray Salisbury
- 3rd – Dion Pont

2. Hut/Camp Life:

- 1st – Brian Renwick
- 2nd – Ray Salisbury
- 3rd – Brian Renwick

3. Above The Bushline:

- 1st – Pat Holland
- 2nd – Uta Purcell
- 3rd – Ray Salisbury

4. Below The Bushline:

- 1st – Ray Salisbury
- 2nd – Pat Holland
- 3rd – Ray Salisbury

5. Nature:

- 1st – David Blunt
- 2nd – Brian Renwick
- 3rd – Brian Renwick

6. Historic:

- 1st – David Blunt
- 2nd – David Blunt

7. Open / Anything Goes:

- 1st – Uta Purcell
- 2nd – Ray Salisbury
- 3rd – David Blunt

8. People's Choice

- 1st – Ray Salisbury

The first six category winners will have their photos sent off to the FMC Photo Competition, run by the FMC *Bulletin* editor, Shaun Barnett.

Soon you will be able to view the winning entries on our club website:

www.drupal.nelsontrampingclub.org.nz/galleries

"In photographs, mood is the third dimension." – Ansel Adams

TRIP REPORTS

Oct 2012–February 2013

13 October – Daltons Bridge Track, Pelorus River
Leader: Robyn Walsh

With the weather forecast predicting buckets of rain for Saturday, I rescheduled the walk to Sunday, a good move. Also, this meant a fourth participant was able to come.

Jo kindly drove us to Pelorus Bridge by 9.30am. The locals were celebrating the 100-year milestone of the Bridge, built in 1912. Two Forest & Bird officers were talking about the successful Bat Recovery Program.

We began our day crossing the impressive Rai swingbridge. We were in the bush only 15 minutes when we arrived at the boundary fence between forest and farm. Now came the long walk through paddock after paddock, following a marked route that is part of the Te Araroa Trail.

We took a high-water route, as swampy fields were waterlogged. A large power pylon was a perfect place for morning tea.

Along a boundary fence above the Pelorus River, there were several stiles to cross. By 12:15, with no Daltons Bridge in sight, we lunched under poplar trees. Jim leant backwards a bit too far, and got zapped on an electric fence.

Feeling replenished, we decided to return to Pelorus Bridge, which we did by 3:15pm. We made a dash for the cafe here. Those on this pleasant outing were: Jim Maxwell, Ted Brooks, Jo Kay and Robyn Walsh (scribe).

28 October – Brook-Waimarama Sanctuary
Leader: Pat Holland

The dodgy weather report was ignored and a group of nine gathered at the Brook dam in mild sunshine. Off we headed up the excellent Koru Track which, from the back of the visitor centre, heads up the east side of the valley at a moderate grade.

Then a left turn after 1.5km up Jacobs Ladder towards the Dun Walkway. About half way to 4-Corners, we entered a track to the right that recently was constructed by volunteers. D-line is a trapping line built to public track standards and runs a long way SE into the heart of the Sanctuary.

The group enjoyed this very much as it is easy going at roughly the same altitude (400m) through magnificent mature forest – red beach with patches of podocarps, and some views across the upper valley. After 2km a couple of sidestreams are crossed and then the track meets the headwaters of the Brook. Whew, time for a break. The surroundings were delightful by the bubbling Brook with lots of ferns and large trees but on we went. Not much fur-



Pat Holland leads the crew to Gable End in the Waimarama Sanctuary

PHOTO > JO KAY

ther the formed track peters out and we were left with pink tape. Across the stream and we sidled up a steep bank looking for an elusive E-line. This un-used crude trapping line was now heading NW, down stream and after 0.6km of rough travel we reached Tutowhai Ridge with a more major track. Will we go up – too right! (left). And so, a steepish climb through the beech forest, then a flattish bit devastated by the 2008 storm, then up again and we reached Third House (a bit damp from drizzle which promptly cleared). Whew! – time for lunch.

Then back down but instead of following Tutowhai down to the Brook, the leader rashly decided to take E-line down Brook valley. Track was a bit rough but we presently reach a delightful side stream with waterfall. Whew, time for a break. Then on, and on, and on, with track very rough and up and down. Eventually we stumbled out onto Gable End ridge and headed down to the Brook and Ferny Flat, virtually civilisation. Here we regrouped and then stomped back to the visitor centre on the fine Koru Track. Not an “easy” day (7.5hrs), but enjoyed by all once the hot bath and GnT kicked in.

Walkers were: Pat Holland, Jo Kay, Chris Louth, Mike Locke plus Tom Quinn-Grigson, Jeremy & Gail Paterson, John & Rae Sheridan (visitors).

4 November – Champion Mine – Roding River
Leader: Chris Louth

It was cool and clear as five of us headed up Aniseed Valley. Our journey was briefly interrupted by a pair of hares on the road, one of which decided to “hare” off up the road in front of the car. We clocked it at about 40kph for at least a km before it finally dived into the scrub.

Dan logged us in at the caretaker’s house then it was off up the valley. The Roding River had spiked quite high the day before but had fallen quickly and was easily negotiated. At the old smelter we stopped briefly for those who hadn’t been there before, then made our way up to the final crossing below the old United Mine workings on United Creek.



Dan McGuire at the old smelter, Champion Mine, Roding River

PHOTO > RAY SALISBURY

Here we stopped briefly as sandals and shoes were swapped for boots for the steep, but fairly short, climb past the mine to the ridge. This track used to be overgrown and hard to find but recently someone has cleared and marked it all the way over to Champion Mine. It appears to be getting plenty of use.

After a brief stop for smoko we gained a high point on the ridge to survey what was ahead on the planned route up the ridgeline to the Rocks/Browning track. None of us had been that way before but we knew that it wouldn't be quick and easy to get through the patches of thick scrub we could see ahead, and time could become a factor.

After discussing the options, a democratic vote was taken and we decided to leave the exploration of that route for another day on a private trip. Instead we would head down to Champion Mine, cross the creek and head up to the opposite ridge between Mt Meares and Mt Malita via the valley floor.

At Champion Mine we followed the creek upstream for a couple of hundred metres before bashing through the thick bush up onto a spur. Above the creek the going was very steep, but much easier, as we climbed above a large slip to the ridgeline.

At one of the high points on the ridge we stopped to regroup and have lunch. A conversation then ensued about whose arms and legs were bleeding the most. Andrea thought it was her, with a tiny graze on her bum, but clearly some of the older, thin-skinned ones had fared much worse!



Time for lunch outside Hackett Hut

PHOTO > UTA PURCELL

From here there is a barely discernible track on the ridge up through the scrub, then through beech, to the NCC hut near the top of Mt Malita. After cleaning up at the rainwater tank it was off over the grass and down the forestry road to the car.

We arrived at the car almost exactly seven hours after we set off, after a very nice walk through terrain that is quite different from the usual bare ridges and beech forests outside the mineral belt. This was the first time Andrea and Marie had been in the area and both were suitably impressed.

Out for the day were: Marie Firth, Andrea Cockerton, Dan McGuire, Chris Louth (scribe) & visitor Bob Renshaw.

4 November – Hackett Hut – Mt Richmond FP

Leader: Ross Price

It's nice when you leave for a tramp as a group of three and at the start of the track in Aniseed Valley, the number doubles to six. It was planned, though, but made for animated conversation while getting to know each other or catching up.

The four-hour walk to the hut included a whole hour of early lunch outside in the sun. This popular area gets a lot of use. The first people we encountered were hunters walking out with their tired dogs. There were other walkers and cyclists of all ages. The Roding River and Hackett Creek also seemed promising to an aspiring trout fisherman.

When we looked closely, we could see limestone as well as mineral belt country, scrub-covered hill-sides and some good patches of remnant native bush. Tanekaha right beside the track was a surprise and tall native forest higher up was noticeable.

At the new bridge to the Hackett Hut was *Liber-tia grandiflora*, the native Iris, flowering. We also spotted *Clematis paniculata* and lots of yellow flowering *Myrsine divaricata* along the river bank. Eager walkers were: Ross Price (leader), Sue Davies, Gail Malinowski, Graeme Ferrier, Debbie Hampson (visitor), & Uta Purcell (scribe & photos).

11 November – Outdoor Recreation Expo, Nelson

Organisers: Ray Salisbury & Andrea Cockerton

Despite the inclement weather, and the tiny red gazebo which was too small for our big professional display panels, we had a great time talking to locals. Giving out our new glossy colour brochures and



showing off our new glossy A2 posters. As they say, any publicity is good publicity. We noted that we were the only tramping club with a visible presence there. Thanks to Lynette, Kate and the Glover family for their turn behind the table.

1–2 December – Bluemine Island – Queen Charlotte Sound, Marlborough

Leader: Uta Purcell

Weather predictions changed this trip from an overnight camping experience to a very enjoyable and quite unusual one-day trip.

We embarked in Picton on our hired private water taxi, which took us 22km out into the Queen Charlotte Sound. Our skipper, a university student at his holiday job, was good. I would have liked to keep him on as a guide on the island. He had mentioned the possibility to zig-zag straight up from the DOC campsite at Home Bay to the highest point.

Instead he left us on the island with a plastic dinghy and some life jackets. The tide was almost in. Rowing ashore, two at a time, was a slow process. So we eased our way around the outside ledge of the water taxi and jumped off into the shallow water. The adventure had started.

Numerous weka checked us out at morning tea. There were good display boards to inform. We decided to follow the recently completed track to the northern end. The experience provided good views, delightful birdsong, very mixed bush, whole groves of nikau. Some folk spotted tieke, the South Island Saddleback, which were re-introduced in 2010. Others saw orchids.

The island had been burned and used for sheep farming, which is now hard to imagine.

During WWII two large gun emplacements were built to provide protection for a (never used) secure anchorage for the US Navy in Queen Charlotte Sound. A lot of materials had to be moved to the inaccessible Blumine site. Associated facilities had to be built. All concrete structures, foundations, many steps, including a flight of 215 steps, are still in excellent condition. Just two metal poles are left of the old wharf.

Cave weta inhabit the old ammunition stores and along the track we opened the doors to inhabited weta motels, one had young ones in it. The two guns have been sent to the Auckland Naval Reserve. The old Ministry of Works camp is now an historical amp and can be booked through DOC for educational groups.

We spread out and explored everywhere but managed to get together for lunch at Barracks Bay on the other side of the island. The sea was lively, good breakers crashing. Retracing our steps, we had walked approx. 8km. It was a relief to see that the waters of Home Bay had remained calm. The water taxi collected us after five hours on the island. We developed new skills in rowing the dinghy, attached to a rope, back to the taxi and climbing on board. Dion was a good back-up for the skipper. Sue decided wading through the water to the boat might save some time, though it was not easy to climb aboard and still stay dry. What hilarity – luckily nobody fell in. It made for a re-

warding day for young and old in our group. I am pleased to have had the support of David Blunt, Roger & Maureen Cotton, Dion Pont & nephew Liam, Sue Davies & grandson Sam, John & Rae Sheridan (visitors), Elizabeth Dooley (visitor) on this exploration – Uta Purcell (scribe).

8-9 December – Lees Creek Hut, Raglan Ranges

Leader: Jo Kay

This was an overnight trip which made it an easy-medium grade compared to the same one-day trip.

A 4WD is required to cross the Six-Mile ford immediately after the ski field access road. Raymond saved us from walking the extra 5km from here to the start of the track by shuttling us to the trackhead.

Ray and Lynette decided to seek an alternative adventure for their 12th wedding anniversary, overnighing at Connors Creek Hut nearby. The remaining four of us continued on our way.

The start of the track involves crossing the rushing Wairau River on a suspension bridge followed by a steep climb up the opposite bank. The track then follows Lee Creek (on the true right bank for about 15 minutes then crosses over to the true left bank over another suspension bridge. There are a few scrambly 'up and down' rocky bits till about halfway up. From here, the track meanders through alternating beech forest and grassy meadows.

We reached the hut in about four hours. After a refreshing cuppa and wash we explored further up-valley as the creek narrows to become a stream tumbling down rocky boulders.

We enjoyed a peaceful balmy evening sitting outside the hut on the grass.

Sunday was another superb day. We returned with mixed feelings, thinking we were going to be walking the extra 5km on the road without shade. However, we were greeted at the bridge by a huge camera lens



Contemplating the way down to Speargrass Hut from near Julius Summit. Inset: Summit of Mt Royal.

PHOTO > CHRIS LOUTH & LIAM SULLIVAN

in front of the smiling Raymond. With me were: Brenda Griffen, Jocelyn Winn & visitor Elizabeth Dooley. Jo Kay (scribe).

9 December – Julius Summit, Nelson Lakes NP

Leader: Chris Louth

Shortly before 9am eight of us gathered from various parts of the district at Mt Robert carpark for the slog up the Pinchgut Track.

It was a perfect warm, sunny, windless day for climbing the ridges. Even with a stop for smoko near Flagtop we made excellent time and arrived at Julius Summit 2.5 hours later.

During the ascent we passed a continuous stream of people coming down - Angelus had been full for the night. Strangely though, we didn't see anyone heading up.

With most of the hard work behind us we sidled around below Julius looking for the easiest way down to Speargrass. I had been down the spur route a few times and was keen to look for a more interesting way down through the basin with the small tarn. Various people had told me that it was quite difficult and bluffy further down towards Speargrass Creek.

Mike Glover said he had been

that way about 20 years ago but all he could remember was sliding down part way on his bum in the snow.

It turned out to be easier than we could have expected and after half an hour of snow grass, tussock and the occasional rocky bit, we were surprised to find quite a well-worn track starting to form near the bush line.

Another easy half an hour through open beech forest and we hit the Speargrass Hut track about five minutes from the bridge near the hut.

Lunch at the hut stretched out a bit as it was such a nice day and no one was too keen to be the first to move. Eventually we got going for the deceptively uphill last couple of hours back to the cars.

Before leaving we did a group top-up with left over water of Janine's radiator, which had been making an unhealthy noise when she arrived in the morning.

Along for the walk were Dion Pont, Mike and Deidre Glover, Sue Henley, Sue Davies, Andrea Cockerton, Chris Louth (scribe) and visitor Janine Potts, all the way from Westport.

15 December – Mt Royal, Mt Richmond Forest Park

Leader: Ray Salisbury

Liam kindly drives a trio of eager trampers to Butcher Flat, the top end of the Wakamarina Road (1:15).

We amp up the relatively level pack-track to the six-bunk Devils Creek Hut, a good place for a brew up before the hard work begins. (1:15). A DOC ranger had been here the day before mowing the lawn.

A signpost leads us down a track in the direction of the Wakamarina River. Alas, the swingbridge is gone, so we lower ourselves down a bank, using tree-roots as handrails, into the cold river. A solitary orange marker is eventually spotted on the true right, upstream, immediately above the Devil's Creek confluence.

Initially a steep spur track, the going gets easier the higher up we climb. After three hours struggling up this spur, we saunter along a delightful ridge of gnarled beech which puts us on top of Mt Royal. (3:00)

We walk along the barren tabletop of shattered rock. At the summit cairn we enjoy un-paralleled views along to Mts Baldy, Sunday and Riley, and westward toward Mts Fishtail and Richmond.

After two hours' descent we



Dawn Pascoe (front), Graeme Ferrier & Kelvin Drew ascend the final section to the top of Mt Arthur

PHOTO > CHRIS LOUTH

reach the river. Ray's cramped quad muscles slow us down along the final leg back to Butchers Flat. (4:00) We have been on our feet for 10.5 hours.

Able alpine ascensionists were: Liam Sullivan, Chris Louth & Ray Salisbury (scribe).

23 December – Mount Arthur - Kahurangi National Park

Leader: Chris Louth

The recently accessible Flora carpark was quite full as five of us assembled on a glorious morning for the hike up Mt Arthur. The huge scar on the side of the hill on the road up, and the heaps of rock laying in the nearby fields were testament to the scale of the recent slip.

At Arthur Hut, Gail bid us farewell as she had a neck problem and would amble up the hill behind us and reunite coming down later.

At the turn-off to Gordons we did a right turn and started to lose some of the altitude we had just gained. From here we could assess the best way to ascend the proposed route up the north-east ridge to the summit.

We left the track near the floor of the valley and made our way through the jagged karst to a gully that would lead to a notch

high on the ridge. The route was largely dictated by skirting the many sinkholes that abound in the limestone of this area. From across the valley the gully had seemed a fairly constant grade but, in fact, it was a series of plateaux that were quite hard going in the hot morning sun.

At the base of the massif we left the grass and the spaniards behind. The next challenge was a near vertical ten-metre climb up on to the rock above. Thankfully there were plenty of secure hand and footholds. From here the going was easier as we scrambled up the steep but grippy rock to the crest of the ridge.

Dawn had described herself as a broken down runner trying to stay fit, but her light frame

easily handled the climb as she skipped on ahead.

Higher up, the ridgeline narrowed to about a metre in places, with a sharp drop off on both sides. Definitely not the sort of route to navigate on wet, windy or icy days!

At the summit we were greeted by about a dozen others who had followed the conventional route up. We had passed some of them further down, so we had clearly taken the longer way.

A long lunch was spent admiring the views and watching the groups of people still making their way up. Stories were recounted about the many times various people had been here before, in all sorts of crap weather ... and what a magic day today was.

By this time the top was getting quite crowded (by back-country standards) so we started down. The last snow of the year was still hanging off the lip so we had some fun glissading down to the track below.

A bit further along we met Gail, soaking up the sun by the side of the track, and she joined us for the trek down.

Back at Mt Arthur Hut we were greeted by a pair of adult wekas having a very raucous domestic, watched by three young downy chicks not long out of the nest.

We arrived back at the carpark, hot but happy, at about 4pm.

People with nothing they'd rather be doing two days before Christmas were: Kelvin Drew, Gail Malinosky, Graeme Ferrier, Dawn Pascoe (visitor) and Chris Louth (scribe).



Wandering the shores of Lake Sylvester, one of the true gems of Kahurangi National Park

PHOTO > UTA PURCELL

5–6 January – Sylvester Hut, Kahurangi National Park

Leader: Uta Purcell

We added our three cars to the number already parked at the small car park at Cobb Dam, bringing the total to 12 vehicles. As we carried tents for eight, this was of no concern to us.

The stretch along the reservoir in shockingly hot summer conditions was tempered by the welcome shade of beech trees on the uphill section. We found just two people at Sylvester Hut when we arrived for lunch.

There were good camp sites and grand views all around: Mt Snowdon, Mt Taranaki afloat in the sky, the coastlines, Western Ranges, finishing with the Seaward Kaikouras.

Tents were pitched, and trees hung with precious possessions to keep them out of weka reach. At 2pm, all 11 of us went exploring as far as the outlet and cairn at Lake Iron. Lake Lockett looked so close from there. "Two-swim Tim" found that Lake Iron was definitely colder than Lake Sylvester, which welcomed quite a few swimmers on the return. The sun was still hot when we enjoyed dinner on the deck. Eventually the sunset was reflected on the Arthur Range.

At Sunday breakfast we were charmed with a fly-past of three kea over our tents. We set off in two groups, the fit party to climb Iron Hill through the rocks above Lake Iron, and the medium party gaining the ridge of Iron Hill by skirting Little Lake Sylvester and then ascending through tussock basins to the red scree slope on the eastern flank. Quite amazing, but it was the first time for all of us that we stood here. As strong winds on the ridge exhilarated us, we identified as much as possible of the world spread out around us.

On the descent we were most impressed, that Tim who had never tramped with us, produced some marshmallow Santa Clauses.

Both parties returned fully rewarded by their efforts within 3.5 hours. I lost count of the number

of swimmers then. The last ones of us left the hut for the car park by 12.40pm.

It was unbearably hot again, but we stopped to enjoy the just-opening mistletoe on beech trees, followed by many more stops before we had to face the heat along the reservoir.

Two hours later, our cars were leaving this beautiful part of Kahurangi National Park. The happy team was made up of: Chris Louth, Mark Graesser, Katy and Maurice Cloughley, Jo Kay, Brenda Griffin, Carole Crocker, visitors Tim Tyler, Anna Millard & Sam Atkins, Uta Purcell (scribe).

20 January – Mt Arthur Hut – Kahurangi National Park

Leader: Jo Kay

We walked the circuit from Flora car park to Flora Hut, then up to Mt Arthur Hut and up onto the ridge above for lunch with a view.

On the second stretch from Flora Hut we saw many wee birds which warbled away and flitted around us without any sign of shyness. They were an insignificant brown and grey-hued bird in the shape of a fluffy ball and very short tail. We named it variously a robin, grey warbler, tom tit, then concluded confidently it was a rifle man. However, on checking out my *Soper Birds of New Zealand* afterwards I decided the rifleman has more colour and pattern and thought the female rock wren was a more likely candidate.

It was a glorious day and the *dracophyllum* grass trees were looking at their best, some in flower. The mountain *neinei* or *dracophyllum traversii* is the specimen found specifically in this area I later found out from J.T.Salmon's *Field Guide To Native Trees Of NZ*.

Trampers were: Marie Lenting, Rae & John Sheridan, Tim Filer, Mike Locke, with visitors, Martyn & Suzanne Smith, Debbie Hampson & Jo Kay (scribe).

26 January – Mount Takorika, Havelock, Marlborough

Leader: Robyn Walsh

What a glorious day for our Mt Takorika walk. Perfectly fine and sunny with a dash of high cloud and whisp of breeze to ease the heat of the sun.

We drove up Wilsons Rd, a service road which took us to a microwave tower. Here, we could 'have a look at Havelock.'

A steep road led to the next communication station. A verandah was an enticement for refreshments with fantastic views. From here the track undulated through 2–3 patches of bush.

The final stretch to the last tower climbed up into the open. After lunch here, we retraced our steps along the road, carefully descending to two very hot cars.

Everyone agreed it was thoroughly enjoyable day. They were: Marie Lenting, Ken Holmes & Bridie (four-legged tramper), Ian & Susan Dohoo (guests) & Robyn Walsh (scribe).

2–4 February – Lake Christabel, Lewis Pass National Reserve

Leader: Ray Salisbury

On my first attempt three years ago, we left our crampons in the car. The last time my desire to reach Lake Christabel was thwarted due to heavy snow falls. Then, finally, after two more years, I get that lucky break. A long, fine spell in late summer promises two more days before a southerly front hits the South Island with a vengeance.

There are a handful of routes to reach this remote inland sea but none are easy. The most straightforward route is from Palmer Road but this requires a car shuttle. The shortest distance is via Rough Creek, which lives up to its name, tumbling down into the Maruia River over a steep staircase of boulders.

We clamber up the hill for the first half-hour, profusely sweating, trying to reacquaint our legs with walking. However, the track levels out as we trample the confetti of fallen red beech leaves, crossing after an hour to the true left.

Flame red rata catches our eye and bush lawyer catches our clothing. From the headwaters

good old-fashioned Kiwi grunt gets us up to a defined treeline where the stunted trees suddenly give way to a tussock basin – no scrub to bash through here, but the spiky *Aciphylla Horrida* draws blood from our unprotected limbs.

Resting on the lip of this natural amphitheatre, we drink from a beautiful brook which cuts through the grass. In three hours we have gained the ridgeline and I trot off along the tops to photograph the lake from a nearby hilltop.

Shaped like a boomerang, Christabel is shining white under the blazing summer sun, the largest NZ lake still uncolonised by introduced fish. However, long-finned eel and koaro, renowned for their ability to climb waterfalls, have penetrated the lake's underground outlet.

My party have left long ago, so I descend down snow grass and jumbled rock on a spasmodic ground trail, ever on the lookout for marker poles.

Once under the bush canopy, I soon catch my companions. A well-graded path leads us down into the Blue-Grey catchment, where sunlight filters through moss-laden forest and robins flirt and flit.

But the last kilometre to the hut is brutal, as we negotiate some serious windfall, and our tired limbs are screaming blue murder, after nearly eight hours on our feet. A swing-bridge gives access to the old NZFS hut sited on a clearing by the Blue-Grey River.

I read through the visitor book, which dates back to the late 90's. It's almost exclusively the domain of Kiwi trampers who make the occasional pilgrimage to Lake Christabel – no foreign species here. Even sandflies are thin on the ground in this corner of the country.

Next morning I'm off along the track on a reconnaissance of the lakehead, an extensive gravel beach with a fair amount of duck droppings. Scaup, grey duck, shags and herons frequent these parts but today, all is quiet, subdued, even somnolent. I tarry here, until the rising sun inches over the forested flanks, reflected in the mirror calm waters,



Ray Salisbury gets a grand view of Lake Christabel, shimmering under a blazing summer sun.

PHOTO > RAY SALISBURY

crystal clear. The temptation to swim here is offset by the need to rendezvous with my party.

When I return to the hut, they have long since departed. I make another brew, lingering longer in the hut that has been my obsession for three years. Savouring my success with a mug of sweet tea. My dogged persistence has certainly paid off, and I can now remove Lake Christabel from my Bucket List.

Our hardy, veteran adventurers were: Mark Graesser, Ian Dohoo (guest), Bob Janssen & Ray Salisbury (scribe).

10 February – Mt Patriarch-3 from Wangapeka – Kahurangi Leader: Pat Holland

The infamous early start saw us starting up the Wangapeka Track from Rolling River before 9am on a beautifully calm, clear morning. Mt Patriarch came into view – very majestic and the forested ridge leading to it looked a breeze (oh, the folly of man!)

The river was at low flow and was easily crossed just past Patriarch Creek (about 1hr 20m

from start of track). Into the untracked forest and up the ridge which begins steeply with some bluffy bits. Hullo, this was not easy – lots of old windfall and regrowth, plus wasps.

After two hours hard work up the ridge, it narrowed, the gradient eased and the route became less congested. Three hours and we were at the bushline for a late lunch. Two stayed behind whilst Pat and Ray headed up the steep tussock and scrub gully to the tops. After an hour and 20-minutes we reached the interesting summit rocks.

A repeater station here spoiled the south view but not to Patriarch-2 and -1 to the north. Ray lost his grip going down and took a nasty ten-metre fall, fortunately landing on scrub, not rocks with no injuries except to pride.

We collected the others and bound down through the forest, but tricky windfall saw us veer off-route, ending up in Patriarch Creek. Finally, back to Rolling River after 11 hours, a very tired bunch. Pat Holland (Leader), Chris Louth, Carole Crocker, Ray Caird.



OUTDOOR SAFETY COURSES RUN IN NELSON

<http://www.mountainsafety.org.nz>

Intermediate Navigation 25-26 May > COST: \$55

This course is aimed at those with moderate experience. It will suit those who are looking for entry-level instruction to the Outdoor Leader course.

Participants must be:

- fit to travel for 6+ hours across hill country with full pack.
 - have a moderate level of navigation knowledge or have completed a basic nav course.
- On completion, the participant will be able to navigate on-track and off-track using maps and compass, and plan routes.

River Safety

16 & 17 March > COST: \$35
Venue: DOC Motueka & Mot Rvr.

Entry-level instruction. Participants may travel 4+ hours across boulder riverbed with full pack

CONTACT DETAILS >

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UPcoming CLUBNITES...

7:30pm Nelson Intermediate School, Tipahi Street. Gold Coin.

Monday 8 April:

Guest speaker: Mark Graesser

Mount Blanc

Monday 10 June:

Guest speaker: You?

Blank

Monday 5 August:

Guest speaker: You?

Monday 7 October:

Guest speaker: You?



DOC UPDATES

For latest track conditions, go to:
www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/plan-and-prepare/alerts/

Nelson Lakes

Sabine-D'Urville Track: a bridge has suffered flood damage. Trampers cross stream approx. 1m deep at normal flow. After rain stream may not be safe to cross.

Speargrass Track: bridge over Speargrass Creek near Speargrass Hut was washed away by floods. Trampers need to cross the stream which could be difficult after rain.

Wangapeka Track:

Extreme caution required when crossing a large slip on the lower Wangapeka Track. Located approx 1.5 hrs walk from Rolling Junction. In October 2012 this slip created a 15m natural dam & new lake approx 1km long & 20m deep. When crossing trampers should move quickly, follow marked route. Use spotter to watch for falling rocks. In heavy rainfall, move to at least 20m above the Wangapeka river bed level if they see the water suddenly become discoloured.

3-wire bridge at Waters Creek, near Helicopter Hut, has been damaged. During low-normal river flow creek can be crossed.

Western end of Wangapeka Track has two large slips.

Abel Tasman Coast Track

High tide track behind Bark Bay has been closed due to loss of Waterfall Creek Bridge in a flood. Cross the estuary using low tide track, accessed 2 hrs either side of low tide. **The road to Totaranui is OPEN. Gibbs Hill Track** is now closed for mountain biking.

Heaphy Track

There is **no mountain biking** until 1 May 2011. The new **Perry Saddle Hut** is open.

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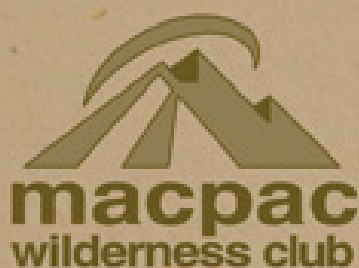
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