



Newsletter of the
NELSON TRAMPING CLUB

Founded 1934, Nelson, New Zealand
www.nelsontrampingclub.org.nz

Nelson Tramping Club March 2012

EDITORIAL COMMENT >

Summer Deluge

In early summer, our sunny city was subjected to a serious deluge during mid-December. Numerous slips careered off the hills, blocking traffic and causing havoc. Even the Abel Tasman track was closed.

Now I am being subjected to a similar deluge, this time a flood of trip reports, enough to fill up four newsletters. It's all good; we've spent time in the Hills together, been to new places, fed a few more sandflies, and hopefully got fitter.

So, keep sending those trip reports in – you might win the club Writing Competition. And don't forget the Compass & Map Training event which promises to be a highlight of the club calendar.

While I am certainly not an advocate of Reality TV, I was intrigued by the latest series of *I Shouldn't Be Alive*, screening on TV One Tuesday nights. This overly-dramatised show features folk in the outdoors who find themselves in a spot of bother. So far we have seen the rescue of two females on the Three Passes trip, and Mad Pom from his remote ledge below Mt Sefton. Mad Pom, aka Matt Briggs, has written up his sordid 10-day ordeal, complete with broken bones, on the NZ Trumper website: www.trumper.co.nz/?3643

The biggest lesson Matt learnt was to remember to bring his Locator Beacon, as well as to communicate his intended route and panic date more accurately with another person.

An innovative new way to do the latter has been launched in conjunction with the Mountain Safety Council. The website is called *Adventure Smart*, where you can download and print Intentions Forms, or complete the process entirely on-line: <http://www.adventuresmart.org.nz/Outdoors-Intentions/Default.asp>



See you (alive) in the Hills...

Raymond Salisbury, EDITOR
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Club treasurer Brenda Griffen, climbing up to Bushline Hut

PHOTO > COURTESY BRENDA GRIFFEN

MEMBER PROFILE > Brenda Griffen

- 1. Occupation:** I work for Sealord Group Ltd.
- 2. Where were you born?** Levin. My parents farmed next to the Tararua Ranges.
- 3. How long have you been a member?** 4 years.
- 4. What benefits have you found being a member?** Good company, humour, hearing the stories of past adventures.
- 4. Best tramp:** Climbing up to Bushline Hut, July 2011. The day was perfect with no wind, clear skies, plus a light snow fall. Once you are home and showered, all tramps are great!
- 5. Worst tramp:** I sprained an ankle on Ben Nevis. 'Twas rather painful coming down.
- 6. Funniest moment:** Seeing my pack roll slowly down a steep ridge, and over the edge.
- 7. What wild place would I put at the top of my 'bucket list?'** The Nelson region has plenty of destinations for me to see over the next couple of years.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS >
Andrea Cockerton and Marijke Boers

TRIP REPORTS

January–February 2012

1–6 January – The Arthurs Pass Trip

[Bealey Spur – Avoca River – Wilberforce River – White Col – Barker Hut – Waimakiriri River]

Leader: Ruth Hesselyn

Obeisant Followers: Brian Renwick, Mike Drake, Carole Crocker, Pat Holland, Marijke Boers (scribe).

TWO FOR THE PRICE OF ONE!

Dear fellow & would-be-intrepid trampers...

This is my first trip report for the club. As such, I'm exercising the privilege reserved for the ignorant novice to be somewhat original, so ... hang on to your seats, walking poles, whatever else is nearby.

Ruth laid out a fantastic New Years route and we set off with gay abandon, early on a beautiful Sunday morning. We arrived at Arthurs Pass, greeted by the surprise reception committee of Raymond and Dion, who had laid on champagne and canapés to celebrate the start of our journey, (just joking!)

We eventually set off on a leisurely, two-hour stroll up Bealey Spur. However, I laboured with super-pack-load syndrome, hypothermia and leaky, run-out-of-water-bladder-itis. (A more sinister truth emerged a few days later: New Years Eve was perhaps a little more festive than originally remembered.)

Night 1 – Bealey Spur Hut. Nice curry dinner –

thanks, Carole. The white spirits burner decided to give up the ghost, keeping Mike busy for two hours using two ice axes to fix it. Eventually, further endeavours were abandoned and plans for a Boy Scout-style, tin-can burner emerged instead.

Sensible souls slept in tents, but Ruth and I, decided to leave the door open on account of the heat, and slept inside. Repeated waking to noisy livestock rendered a disturbed night.

Morning came at last. A delicious breakfast was had, with New Year blueberries donated by Pat, but minus one bright, yellow Crock. It seemed our night visitors had taken more than expected. All camp members were duly designated to grid-search for the leader's disappearing shoe, but sadly to no avail.

Day 2 was a 600m climb to Jordan Saddle. The mountain mist offered a peaceful atmosphere. The descent down Galilee Stream on the other side proved more interesting. The author was down in a jiff, clinging gallantly with all digits to an uncompromisingly hard dirt face, and was saved after a wee slide by our able leader. A lovely, but protracted, walk down Galilee Stream ensued, arriving at the remote Avoca Hut by 7pm.

Day 3 saw us ascend through bush to Hanging Valley Stream. Windfall masked the track and, two hours later, after a bit of bush-bashing and traversing fresh and fairly unstable scree, we arrived. We boulder hopped and ascended for a further few hours, and broke for lunch at about 2pm, 200 metres short of the snow-clad, Half Moon Saddle.

A decision was then made to split the group. Mike and Brian – both young men in their muscular prime, were to proceed with the original route. [See next trip report for Mike's story.]

Ruth, Carole, Marijke and Pat headed back to embark on a gentler pass. Pat (despite also being a young-ish man in his muscular prime) kindly deferred to provide supportive company. The weather was just starting to pack in. In retrospect, it was a good idea as the boys didn't make their biv until 9pm.

We back-tracked down Hanging Valley Stream, though several hours of windfall were negotiated before reaching our goal. (Yes, all except Ruth, had our private little 'cockroach-on-its-back' experience.)

After dinner there was lots of reading of TROG manuals. Ruth and Carole manfully swung axes and sawed wood, Pat ablated miles down the river and yours truly had a



Ruth's intrepid quintet celebrate New Years Day at Bealey Spur Hut. Craigieburn Forest Park

blissful nap.

Days 4–5: We returned along Avoca Valley then along 'Easy Stream'... initially a broad dry river bed, but narrowed with some gorgey, fresh avalanche areas to skirt. After two hours, a wider valley opened and a secure camp site identified. In the afternoon we delighted in sun-lit alpine tussock meadows and mossy, babbling brooks.

Camp leader found a flat, far-away rock to lie on, read and sleep. Pat and Carole took macro photos of the dozen variations of perfect alpine daisies.

Camp kitchen was fun that evening. Carole designed a new, fully organic 'mug tree', and a restful, albeit slightly slopey, night ensued. Up next day for Sphinx Saddle, which we achieved by 9:30am with an easy scree-slide down the other side to Anti-Crow Stream, which we followed to the Waimak valley. 'Twas a wonderful reunion with the boys at Anti-Crow Hut that night.

We had not river-bashed down the Waimak before. Tall lupin fields and never-ending swampy matagouri-river-flats elicited more than a few under-the-breath expletives! Eventually, we encountered the gravelly river bed, but not before Ruth finally had her come upance and sunk crotch deep in a quoggy bog.

Final memories of the trip were the luxury of swimming, washing and lazing, (while the chivalrous boys arranged transport) before we made our tired but happy way home.



Quirky window & yellow paint inside the remote Avoca Hut



Marijke, Pat and Carole ready to depart Avoca Hut

PHOTO > RUTH HESSELYN

Avoca Hut–Anti-Crow Hut via Wilberforce

The Arthurs Pass trip split at Hanging Valley Creek; the party of four to return to Avoca Hut and head to the Anti-Crow Hut via Sphinx Saddle, the party of two to continue on the original route.

Once we split up, we attained Half Moon Saddle then dropped into Bristed Stream, also called Bastard Stream. We delayed the inevitable wet feet by bush-bashing along the true left, thinking that we would drop into a side creek and gain the main stream again. However, we pushed our luck and passed one easy entry into the stream. After much bush hugging and finding ourselves on top of a bluff, we decided to head down into the stream and get wet.

After hours of stream crossing, mostly thigh-deep, with two excursions into the bush on the true right, we emerged into the Wilberforce. Overall, the trip down the river didn't justify the alternative name. However, the stream would be un-navigable with high flows.

We finally arrived at Weka Burnett Biv thirteen hours after leaving Avoca Hut. Great to get a roof over one's head after a long day; with two bunks and cooking space, it was immediately home-from-home.

The following morning, pink markers pointed the way to Burnett Stream. We sauntered up the stream, which ran out of water about half-way up. The day was turning hot and waterless. Eventually, some pools materialised, created by a side-stream.

We decided to head up a snow gully that leads to White Col, and inspect the west branch more closely. Climbing onto rocks and heading diagonally to the saddle under point 1880 looked the better option. The only tricky part was climbing out of the gully; once done, it was an easy scramble to the saddle.

Nine hours after leaving the biv we were drinking soup in Barker Hut, set in a prime spot, well worth a visit. The next day was the trudge down White and Waimakariri Rivers. The monotony was broken by Brian checking the depth of a deep pool. Excitement ensued when a sunscreen container broke loose from his pocket, it bobbed down the river with Brian in hot pursuit.

As we approached the Anti-Crow Hut, people coming the other way advised us that our other party had arrived 30 minutes ahead of us.

The 'B' Team: Brian Renwick & Mike Drake (scribe).



Dion Pont at the base of Tarn Col

PHOTO > RAY SALISBURY

the CARR0T that Dangled

1–5 January:

the other Arthurs Pass Trip

A new twist on an old classic:

[Edwards Hut – Otehake Hut – Tarn Col – Walker Pass – Hawdon Hut – East Hawdon Biv]

Leader & Scribe: Ray Salisbury
Navigator & Bagger: Dion Pont

I was visiting the long-drop at Woolshed Creek Hut when he arrived, his twin trekking poles swinging in a determined rhythm. It was Dion on another solo hut-bagging mission around the back side of Mount Somers. This piece of serendipity saw us collaborate together on a New Years trip.

While Dion had already done the Edwards–Hawdon circuit, the carrot I dangled was the lure of adding a couple more remote huts to his burgeoning collection.

At midday Dion arrives at Arthurs Pass, and we wrestle unwilling packs onto our backs, fording the Bealey River, ankle-deep. We make excellent progress along the flattened stones of the Mingha before crossing it to the confluence

of the Edwards River.

A delightful trail through mature beech takes us over a small bluff above the gorge. Back down on the river flats, we note three recent landslides have filled the valley with rubble. The resulting gravel bash is hardly pleasant.

Skipping over the Edwards East Branch, an orange marker beckons us onto a second sidle track – this bypasses a series of serious waterfalls. Three steep, grunty climbs knock the stuffing out of us, as we sweat profusely under a blazing summer sun.

A chain helps us clamber down a vertical rock step. However, the lost altitude has to be regained, step after sputtering step. Then at last, a distant mirage on far-away fields of tussock: Edwards Hut is resplendent in its red coat; Twin radio masts betray its location in the scrub.

5.10am. Billies rattle and benches wobble. I am awakened by a sharp jolt, as a trio of tremors remind me of the 1929 earthquake that toppled Falling Mountain, further up this valley. All becomes still, the dawn chorus louder than ever, the hut enveloped in morning mist which mutes the ochre colours into sombre shades of melancholy. We pack. I count the little blue squares on the topo-map. From the tiny black box of Edwards Hut, it's a long, long way to the next black box: Otehake Hut.

Travel is cruisy along to the foot of Taruahuna Pass where an obvious indentation in the featureless pile of rock debris proves to be the ground trail up onto the Main Divide. We thrash around at the base of the climb, and scree allows us some yardage. Soon we are peering down the Otehake into Westland.

We boulder-hop and scree-slide to the bottom. A few intermittent rock cairns provide meagre comfort as we drop down the debris into the Otehake, a lively, bubbling cascade tumbling over freshly-fallen boulders.

Dion spots marker poles high on the true left, where a rough trail leads us above the shingle gorge, crashing through stunt-ed scrub. A marked route then

takes us through bush onto a stony plateau. Splashing down-river, we pick up a final forest track to the forks.

Dion opens the visitor book of Otehake Hut, begun back in 1991. We note a large number of folks had arrived here by accident.

On our third day, I peer through louvered windows at ridges rising into a mantle of thick mist. Forecast rain is falling, birds are silent – nothing to sing about on this day. Only the river is awake, driven by the relentless pull of gravity.

By mid-afternoon, cabin fever has us on our feet. We discover the hut's ping pong set, but the tiny bats and miniature net require more skill than we possess. We get inventive. The hut's old door is put to good use as a table tennis table; the four ancient hardback novels above the fireplace double as a net. My plastic sandals and the coal shovel are employed as efficient bats. Then it's game on, at 660m above sea level. Our ping pong match is the highlight of the day.

We occupy ourselves by planning future adventures. Soon the shadows of dusk have engulfed our little hut. A kiwi calls.

Night imperceptibly lightens toward day. After the drowsy co-siness of inactivity, we emerge from our cocoons, stiff.

The return journey to Taruahuna Pass is speedy. After two sweaty hours we arrive at the green DOC signpost at the base of Tarn Col, our destination.

Low cloud clings to the jagged peaks like a shroud. A cold wind blows up the Otehake valley. Dion has climbed this route on a previous trip, so he confidently leads up a narrow gut, diverting to the left. When marker poles run out, the tussock slope steepens.

Not having a head for heights, I fight off vertigo, forcing myself to focus. Grasping the snow tussock for hand-holds, I hurl myself upward, my boots searching for tiny ledges which might hold my weight. Fall is a four-lettered word I banish from my conscious mind, as I refuse to look at the void below. An eternity of thirty minutes



Dion Pont plays ping pong in Otahake Hut

the tumbling torrent of the East Hawdon Stream. Boulder-hopping along the river bank, or cutting across cairned terraces. It takes us two hours to claim our prize – the 2007 bivouac near the valley head, squatting proudly on a shelf above the river. The log book features entries from more prominent hut-baggers than ourselves.

Returning to the main valley, we set our backs to the wind and our hearts toward home. Far ahead, the open spaces of the Waimak River taunt us, deceptively distant. We trudge along through tall tussock, fields of dandelions and past scattered matagouri.

You know the feeling you get when you're near journey's end, weary from days of continuous travel; you want it to finish. You're crying out for a hot shower or a cold beer. Days of perspiration have dried on your clothes; your chin is prickly from a week without shaving; your stomach has shrivelled from strict pasta rations; but the rough living has awoken something deeper in your soul. You emerge from the Hills with the smug satisfaction of having lived the hard way.

Mindlessly wandering along, not paying attention to my surroundings, trapped inside the spaces in my head, I stumble toward the exit. Our summer tramp is over. Done. El finito. My camera is full of digitised memories; my mate has added two huts to his burgeoning collection.

8 January – Pearse Resurgence – Kahurangi National Park

Leader & scribe: Brian Renwick

We parked a bit short of the road-end to avoid the last rough part. Walking off up the Pearse Valley we immediately had to ford as the bridge was no longer there: a taster of what was the dominant feature of the day, with eleven thigh-deep crossings each way on a slippery bottom. Amazingly, no-one fell over during any of the crossings. The river and bush were especially beautiful in the overcast conditions.

Highlights: a blue duck family of seven; checking out the Australian Wet Mules cave-diving team camped at the resurgence. They expected to remain for another two weeks of diving and filming, hoping to dive down to 220m, a dangerous undertaking.

Those who are interested in the cave dive can check out this web page: <http://www.wetmules.com/home/pearse-resurgence>

Walking time to the resurgence: about 2½ hours including breaks. A bonus was the 20-minute walk to Nettlebed Cave.

Members: Brian Renwick, Bernard Molloy & Ken Ridley. Visitors were Diane and Kim Renwick.

21 January – Takaka Hill Walkway – Golden Bay

Leader: Robyn Walsh

Well, we finally did it, after three earlier cancelled attempts last year. Today, everything fell into place with perfect weather.

Earlier, back in Stoke, the day began with a disjointed start with some confusion as to the prearranged rendezvous.

After a diversion to an old roadman's hut to view the mummified cow hide, we got going.

A short, steep road-climb to some radio masts gave great views across the Takaka Valley to the western mountains, Golden Bay, and east to the Richmond and Bryant Ranges.

With us were two Canadian tourists from the 'other' Nelson, in British Columbia. We had fun sharing the quirks and idiosyncracies of our two countries.

On the walkway, we passed through sections of rocky limestone outcrops, groves of beech trees and spots of overgrown gorse. Signs warning of dangerous sink-holes became more frequent.

On the return car journey, we drove to the end of the Riwaka valley to show Karen and Dawn the Riwaka Resurgence. A stop at Toad Hall for real-fruit icecreams completed a lovely day.

Participants were: Jim Maxwell, Karen Robertson and Dawn Clendinning from Canada, Christine Burton & scribe Robyn Walsh.

ends when we scramble over the lip, breathless. I clean my fingernails of dirt, feeling subdued.

The gully draining Tarn Col has a reasonable marked route down into the Otehake. But hidden stones in the long grass make this straightforward descent an ankle-twisting nightmare. At the bottom, we ford the river to find a plethora of cairns and a campsite. Mental fatigue is taking its toll, but the lure of a soft mattress at Hawdon Hut gives me the motivation to keep going.

Round the corner, a poled track leads up to a postcard-perfect tarn. Beyond that it's a clear day in Canterbury. This is a magical place of wild beauty, worth all the effort to get here.

Walker Pass proves to be one of the easiest ways to cross the Main Divide. A wide, dirt pathway takes us down beside the Twin Falls Stream. We hit the Hawdon River flats, and arrive at the comfortable new hut, its chimney smoking and children playing cards inside. Today's door-to-door mission has lasted nearly nine hours, so I hit the pit.

It's our last day. Hawdon hotel empties its occupants, but we decide to stage a different exit. And so it is that we find ourselves up

30 January – North Peak – Mt Richmond Forest Park

Leader: Jim Maxwell

The weather forecast for Sunday was for very strong SW winds in the Nelson Lakes area so we postponed the tramp to the Monday (Anniversary Day). We had a good day kept cool by the overcast sky and mild breeze. We didn't quite reach the summit before it was time to turn back but had good views of the hills. Climbers were Ross Price, Robyn Walsh, Elizabeth Dooley (visitor) and Jim Maxwell.

4–6 February – Mt Patriarch – Kahurangi National Park

Leader: Lawrie Halkett

With a reasonably good long-range weather forecast, five high-spirited hikers set off early Saturday afternoon from the Wangapeka carpark, heading for Kiwi Saddle Hut. All were buoyed by the warm temperatures, the mostly blue sky and the impressive Mt Patriarch, rising proud to the north west.

As we tramped up the valley, Lawrie was asked to explain why he thought pine plantations should be considered a sustainable and environmentally-friendly business that all NZers should embrace. Lawrie was able to explain to Alison and Marie that this veritable, jolly green giant, radiata pine, not only produced a product that gave mankind shelter, but it provided employment, foreign exchange earnings for the nation, locked up carbon and was truly the world's only renewable construction material (as well as protecting soil and water values). However, the scribe is still unconvinced that the said persons are now pine converts.

Sunday morning arrived. Kiwi Saddle Hut was cloaked in a persistent, enveloping cloud. Not to be beaten, Brian and Kurt knocked off Mt Patriarch before continuing with the party northward along the Arthur Range.

The party had 200m visibility throughout the day. Despite the lack of panoramas, the walk to

John Reid Hut was interesting. Marie and Alison imparted their botanical knowledge of alpine plants, broadening Lawrie's horizons beyond that of just pine!

Monday morning, we dropped down Chummies Track and out.

Our party included: Alison Aaron, Marie Firth (visitor), Brian Renwick, Kurt Mullis (visitor & uni graduate) & Lawrie Halkett (scribe).

6 February – Mt Malita via Hackett, Nelson

Leader: Jim Maxwell

Our Feb 5th walk up the Roding River to the falls had to be cancelled because the TDC will not open the road to the public until it is inspected by an engineer following the floods. I replaced it with a climb from Whispering Falls to the top of the ridge joining Mt Malita. On reaching the ridge top we found too much gorse and decided it was a bit rough to carry on to Mt Malita. We had an interesting return trip when we had a bit of trouble locating the top end of the route leading off our spur. We managed to find it and avoid a real bush bash back to Whispering Falls. Only two participants. Steve Salt (visitor) and Jim Maxwell.

12 February – Captain Creek Hut – Mt Richmond Forest Park

Leader: Katie Cloughley

A mystery, 'no-show' blonde Swedish scientist, a track that took longer than anticipated – the tramp to Captain's Creek Hut was one of surprises.

Ten trampers rendezvoused at 7.30am at the Cathedral steps. Number eleven, the blonde, failed to materialize for the planned pick-up.

Who to believe? The club notes advised three hours each way. DOC, far more realistically, noted it as four hours.

However, the weather was fine, the company very agreeable, the track in good condition, the river with its emerald pools a delight. No time for swimming though. It wasn't until 7pm that

we were back in Nelson.

An excellent day out was enjoyed by: Jim Maxwell, Val Latimer, Marie Lenting, Brenda Griffin, Maurice & Katie Cloughley (scribe) & visitors: Ellen & Rob Goodman; Joan & Carl Fessenden.

SANDFLIES AND MUDWALLOWS

8–14 February – Sabine, Waiau & D'Urville Valleys – Nelson Lakes National Park

Leader & scribe: Brian Renwick

This was a trip of short days alternating with long days.

Wednesday: we parked at Mount Robert late in the afternoon and enjoyed a pleasant walk to Speargrass Hut in fine, cool evening conditions.

Thursday: we tramped along the Speargrass Track to Sabine Hut for lunch, and then took off up the Sabine River, finding our energy flagging for the last hour before West Sabine Hut.

Friday: a short nip up the Sabine River to Blue Lake. Marijke found herself a little off the beaten path in a boggy section short of Blue Lake, sinking up to her thighs in the mud, while Brian snapped photos.

We arrived at the lake just after rain set in for the day. Blue Lake well and truly lived up to its reputation in the overcast conditions. It certainly is beautiful and the water was exceptionally clear.

Saturday: up over the gravel dam and bluffs sidling above Lake Constance to the base of the slog up Waiau Pass. This went without incident, but with some sweat and red faces until the angle eased off at about the 1650m mark. There were a few loud whoops (and testing of mountain acoustics) as Marijke came over the top of the pass – achieving a small but persistent hope first envisaged 25 years earlier.

After lunch, we followed the newly-poled route steeply down the rock rib, grassy face and spur

to the Waiau west fork, which we ascended.

Arriving at a cold, windy Lake Thompson at 3:30pm, we replenished our energy in the lee of a man-made rock wall, and found we had enough gas left in the tank to complete the final 20 minutes climb to Thompson Pass and descend steeply down fine scree to the D'Urville headwaters. The boulder-hop down the river was most enjoyable; challenging enough to test our skills, but never intimidating. We then followed the Upper D'Urville Track (from the David Saddle route) to the bivvy, which was most comfortable.

Sunday: another rest day, strolling down the D'Urville to Morgan Hut, enjoying the bush and river scenery, easy flats, and swimming.

Monday: down the D'Urville to Lake Rotoroa, a shortcut across the river to Sabine Hut, then back along to Speargrass Hut.

After a break at the ponds, Marijke demonstrated that she didn't need trekking poles after all, by leaving them at the pond when we took off. She is now an expert on a 1200m section of the track, having walked it four times in five days – chivalry only goes so far!

Tuesday: dawned murky with occasional light rain, so we enjoyed a saunter back down Speargrass Creek with considerably lighter packs than the trip up six days earlier.

Marijke 'Mud-wallower' Boers & Brian 'Sandfly-magnet' Renwick.

KAHURANGI

C R O S S O V E R

18 February – Arthur Range traverse – Kahurangi NP
Leader: Mike Glover

Every three years or so, our club tackle the Arthur Range, walking from Mt Campbell to the Lodestone in a single day. This



On Crusader (1428m): Dion Pont, Diedre Glover, Wade Glover, Andy Clark & Mike Glover

PHOTO > RAY SALISBURY

17-km pilgrimage traverses five peaks over 1300m and requires a high level of fitness and aptitude in negotiating a route along beech-clad ridges and up steep rock faces – all off-track. After all the scratches, bumps and bruises, the trade-off, on a good day, is unsurpassed views in all directions, and the pure joy of spending time in the mountains.

It's 6am when six of us cram into a Hilux ute and drive into the pre-dawn murk towards Motueka. A steep 4WD road meanders up Rocky River Road onto the forested flanks of Mount Campbell, with its trademark television tower guiding us to the summit. By 8am we have our boots on and our polarfleece jackets off. The low-angled sun is illuminating the landscape from the nor-east, heating up the rocks beneath our feet. It promises to be a perfect day.

We splash sunblock over our skin before heading south toward a subsidiary peak. At this altitude any vegetation is scarce so we make excellent progress down the hill. With clear visibility, our compass work is really a redundant exercise as we crash through open beech forest onto some sunny saddles. The entire route is along a series of disjointed ridgetops – there is no

water supply.

After several hours we top out onto the exposed expanse of Hoary Head, a monolithic tabletop of shattered marble, 1473m above the Riwaka River. From this high vantage, we gaze across the vast wilderness of Kahurangi.

To our north is Hailes Knob, the tower on Takaka Hill; beyond that is Golden Bay, glistening under the punishing summer glare; then, squinting into the midday sun, I gasp – is that really Mount Egmont? My companion confirms this sighting, and we rave on how blessed we are.

A pair of keas arrive to inspect us, and we see a chamois wandering the lonely tops of Hoary Head.

From the summit cairn we spot our support crew on our next objective: the serrated top of Crusader. Two tiny dots are moving as one, along the razorback summit ridge – Brian and Kurt had volunteered to park their van at Flora carpark, and do our journey in reverse.

Dropping off a broad ridge we pass a cosy campsite, large enough for a couple of tents. Pressing on, the scrubby ridge-line narrows into a torturous knife-edge, forcing us to sidle beneath rock outcrops and make tricky balancing moves. Under a canopy of *dracophyllum* we ren-



Ray on Lodestone summit (1462m). Hoary Head, Crusader & McMahon lay vanquished beyond

PHOTO > RAY SALISBURY

devious with Brian and his mate.

Here I am, staring up the north face of Crusader; 60-degrees of sheer terror. Back in 2009 the club had climbed this truncated pyramid in a directissimo from the Graham Valley – nine hours of wild scrub-bashing and mild rock climbing. From the top, I had peered over the edge in disbelief as to why any human would willingly choose to climb the north face.

Now, here I was, standing at the base, pondering the exact same question. Make no mistake, it wasn't the angle of the climb which had my nerves on edge, no, it was more sinister than that. As Brian had warned us, the entire face was guarded with an army of wild Spaniards, ready to draw blood from even the most cunning and careful bushman. It wasn't long before our limbs had blood mixed into the sweat and suncream.

It's 2pm. I have hauled myself up Crusader, the crux of the route at 1428m, and lunch is long overdue. I sit down with the others and lick my wounds.

Someone spots stick figures moving along Hoary Head; it's our support party. We photograph the panorama from Tappy to Taranaki, naming the peaks

we know.

I lead off down through some beautiful stands of *dracophyllum* onto a saddle with our next way-point, the gentle slopes of McMahon. The cabbage trees here provide much-needed shade as we push on along open clay pans.

The afternoon sun is low when we make for our final objective, the lofty subalpine heights of Lodestone, still five km distant. Thankfully, the open silver beech forest provides easy travel, and some kind soul has marked a rough route with pink tape.

The final summit push has us clambering up tussock to a radio mast at 1462m. I am ecstatic to be here. It was my ancestors who first climbed Lodestone in 1863 before exploring the Tablelands, starting the gold rush, and later grazing sheep there.

John Salisbury and his brothers had cut a track over this mountain, down into Flora Stream. According to the surveyors who followed years later, it was 'fit for neither man nor beast.'

Half an hour brings us down to Flora carpark, our journey's end. It's taken us over ten hours.

Intrepid explorers were: Mike, Diedre & Wade Glover, Dion Pont, Andy Clark & Ray Salisbury (scribe). Support crew were: Brian Renwick & visitor Kurt Mullis.

18–19 February – Brown Hill – Kahurangi National Park

Leader: Mark Graesser

Brown Hill looms above the Heaphy Track as it sidles gently from Brown Hut to Perry Saddle. However, today's route was only constructed around 1887-1889.

For some 25 years previously, a track from the Aorere to Heaphy Rivers (the Collingwood-to-Karamea Road) went directly up a spur to the open tops of Brown Hill and thence to the Goulard Downs near Mount Perry. The brown swathe of tussock from which the hill received its name can be seen from the Aorere Valley to represent a 'gap' or 'pass' for intrepid travelers wishing to get to and from the west coast.

One objective of our trip was to explore the probable line of this "Old Government Track". A vivid account of walking over this track was recorded in 1887 by a 20-year-old Frederick Gibbs, later to become the founding patron of the Nelson Tramping Club.

Mostly, however, we were out for some relatively easy tramping in search of new and interesting views. That we achieved, with the added bonus of a plethora of botanical features in the bush and on the moist, wind-swept tussock tops. In brilliant weather, we had a pleasant holiday-style drive from Nelson to the Heaphy Track road end, with stops at Takaka and Bainham. Four hours of steady walking brought us to Aorere Shelter, a commodious campsite.

Next morning we walked directly up the hill across the track from our camp, following a marked route. This is one of the few points on the east face of the hill with a reasonably moderate incline. The bush is a lovely mixture of beech, rata (northern and southern) and *dracophyllum*



Be safe. Tell someone where you're going. Download Intentions Forms at: www.adventuresmart.org.nz/Outdoors-Intentions/Default.asp

traversii. One hour brought us to open tussock, where we found a shiny new solar-powered rain-gauge.

We strolled to the 'summit' of Brown Hill (1104m), and on along the ridge for a couple of kilometres. In fine, windless conditions lots of time was spent appreciating both the distant views and the rich assortment of plants underfoot. The 360-degree panorama included views of both the Tasman Sea and Golden Bay. Mt Olympus, the Dragon's Teeth, Kakapo and Aorere Peaks, and Mts Inaccessible, Goulard, Domett and Perry were all readily identifiable.

A track was noticeable here and there along the plausible line of the Old Government Track, but the footprints had been left by deer rather than gold prospectors of yore.

After planning more ambitious future trips in the area, we retreated back down to camp, packed up, and descended briskly to the car and back to Nelson, with the satisfaction of a pleasant mission accomplished. The missionaries were Ruth Hesselyn, Mary Honey, Uta Purcell, and Mark Graesser (instigator).

18 February – Mt Arthur Hut – Kahurangi National Park

Leader: Jim Maxwell

We managed to find a spot to put our car among the 32 others in the Flora car park and ambled up to Flora Hut in the shelter of the bush. We were passed by several groups and found quite a few people at the hut. Some had their small children with them and there was a group of hunters pouring enthusiastically over a lot of maps. We spent a bit of time at the hut and ate our lunch before heading on up. Beyond the hut there was a very strong wind blowing but the sun was shining and it wasn't too cold. We carried on up the Mt Arthur track to Pk1565 before returning back to the car park on the same route. Club members were Robyn Walsh, Beverley Muirhead and Jim Maxwell (leader).



Sylvester Hut replaced the old Bushline Hut, and is a great base for exploration

PHOTO > UTA PURCELL

7–8 January – Sylvester Hut – Kahurangi National Park

Leader: Uta Purcell

It must've been good weather that allowed this trip to become a two-in-one-tramp; easy, relaxed, sociable and interesting.

Four members, Marie Lenting, Roger and Maureen Cotton and myself, reached the hut for an early lunch on the deck.

By 1pm we were ready to go exploring, meandering through the Sylvester Lakes to Lake Iron, meeting on the way eight happy North Island trampers, who were already in residence at the hut.

We had a look at the cairned route ascending Iron Hill, but as the cloud came down we retreated. There were alpine plants in abundance, wide views from the Arthur Range to Mt Peel to Lake Lockett, interesting rocks, and the New Zealand pipit darting about. Altogether, a very pleasing landscape.

On the way back we walked through the site of the old Bushline Hut. The new hut displays a photo of this old hut, removed in 2002, taken from Hans Willems' book of *South Island Back Country Huts*. (I had taken this photo many years ago on one of the Club's winter trips.)

Sunday morning was an ideal opportunity to also visit Asbestos Cottage and mine, which were new encounters for my companions.

Compass & Map Training

for beginners & experts ~ 1 day or 2 day option

Date: 28–29 April > **RSVP to Mike Glover** – Ph 544 7955

Location: Glover family bach, Glenhope **Cost:** \$17 fuel.

Times: Start 9.00am Saturday. Finish approx. 2:30pm Sunday.

Topo Maps: M28 / BR24 **Accommodation:** Hut bunk space for 6.

Morning session starts around the table with compass familiarization, map reading and grid references. Put this knowledge into practice with a navigational exercise outside.

In the afternoon, learn to navigate using a map and compass – the easy way. Then, a full outdoor navigational exercise. A BBQ potluck tea is followed by GPS instruction. There are bunk spaces for six people, (or bring your own mattress or tent). You could stay over Friday night too.

Sunday morning will be spent in the bush to find set way points. This is meant for everyone – make time for it, join in, learn, share.

UPcoming CLUBNITES >

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

Monday 2 April:

Guest Speaker: Mike Glover

Alaska: canoeing, sea-kayaking & hiking

Monday 11 June:

Guest Speaker: To be confirmed

Riverstone Monorail Proposal

Submissions Close 19 March

Although FMC is preparing a submission opposing this project, they strenuously encourage clubs and individuals to prepare their own submissions if they have strong views on the matter. FMC executive member contact is **Peter Wilson:**

petergwilson@gmail.com

Proposal: *Fiordland Link* are planning a catamaran voyage across Lake Wakitipu, an all-terrain journey overland to Mavora Lakes, then a 41km monorail from Kiwi Burn through tussock land, Snowdon Forest, to the terminus at Te Anau Downs.

[< Click here for more info >](#)



Poor Pete's Hut

A new two-bunk biv has been constructed at the site of the old Poor Pete's Hut on the Matiri Plateau. (Kahurangi National Park.)

The old hut was virtually derelict, no longer suitable for habitation. It had been identified for removal, however it did provide an important stopover point for exploring the plateau.

Thanks to some creative thinking by the Nelson Lakes staff, an old hunting biv became surplus to needs – a perfect opportunity to replace the old hut with a cheap and functional alternative.

Work commenced in July to refurbish the biv and over the winter months it was relined, insulated and painted. In January the old hut was removed and a new deck constructed with a small annex extending from the new biv. With extra inflating mattresses up to five people could bunk down in the biv and annex quite comfortably.

The old hut was flown out intact and is now located in Murchison. If anyone has any interest in the old hut please contact me. Email: gcarter@doc.govt.nz

Greg Carter

DOC Programme Manager,
Visitor & Historic Assets

HUT USER SURVEY

Auckland University is conducting a poll regarding the use of back-country huts in NZ.

To do the on-line survey, go to: surveymonkey.com/s/HUT_USERS

WRITING COMPETITION

The newsletter needs you!

To spice up our bi-monthly rag, and to motivate aspiring word-smiths, the Editor has launched a club-wide competition.

Deadline: End of 2012.

Prize: Voucher (to be advised)

So, dust off your typewriter, and get writing. This could be your next trip report, or a proactive piece on the pleasure (or pain) of tramping. There's no word limit, but a decent effort will probably score higher than just a few lines. Poetry and prose, (especially humour) are welcome. Entries limited to members only.

E-mail articles to:

Raymond Salisbury, EDITOR
newsletter@maxnet.co.nz

COMMITTEE >

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Newsletter Editor: Raymond Salisbury

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Website: www.nelsontrampingclub.org.nz

NEW Mailbox: PO Box 1238, Nelson 7040.

PHOTO COMPETITION : WINNING IMAGES

[< www.drupal.nelsontrampingclub.org.nz/galleries >](http://www.drupal.nelsontrampingclub.org.nz/galleries)

> **Winning entries** for our annual club photo competition are NOW presented on our club website (URL is above).

> **Thanks** to Mark Graesser for his hard work.