

Newsletter January to April 2026



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Trip Reports



Pelorus Track via Roebuck Hut

15 December 2026

Leader, writer and photographer: Becky

Trampers: Becky and Maggie

The Pelorus Track via Roebuck had its challenges but was very rewarding & Roebuck hut was worth visiting. We were very lucky to get a good weather window, changing our start day to maximise the sun & avoid rain forecast toward end of our tramp.

Day 1 – We had an early 6:30am start on Saturday, with Maggie’s friend Jenn, kindly transporting us to the start of the Pelorus track. This allowed us to get on the track at 8:50am, knowing we had a 6.5hr walk to Middy Hut for the first night. We started with a nice gentle 1hr warm up to Emerald Pools & from there the track steeply climbs up away from the river, then sidling around to Captains Creek Hut. Here we enjoyed our 2nd lunch & rest before continuing onto Middy Hut. The track follows the emerald green Pelorus river for 2.5hrs, with two long swing bridges awarding us with beautiful views. We arrived at Middy hut at 3:45pm, which put us right on par with the DOC times. A family of goats grazing on the hut lawn quickly made themselves scarce. We shared our hut with two fit ladies from ChCh Tramping club, hearing about their epic day trips to Mt Fell & Rocks Hut and learning about their club which currently has 300 members!

Day 2 – Today we split off from the main TA track 30mins after a steep climb from Middy hut, this is where the less maintained track to Roebuck hut begins. We had left ourselves plenty of time to tackle this more challenging track, so we could take extra breaks as needed & negotiate passing windfall that we might come across on the track. Pre-trip research & info from DOC indicated we could expect windfall & that no track maintenance had been in for a while. DOCs focus is now mainly on the TA route through the Pelorus (via Rocks hut). The track turned out to be better than we expected with only a couple of new fallen trees to climb over. One we had to squeeze under with our packs off. We enjoyed the beautiful native bush with big totara, matai, rimu trees & ferns along this section. The track has some unbridged side rivers to cross, which were low enough & with some well positioned rocks to keep our feet dry.

Roebuck hut is well positioned at the T-junction where the Roebuck river meets the Pelorus river. At 1:30pm we were surprised to see the hut so soon as we had made great time. There it sat across the other side of the Pelorus river on a sunny clearing beckoning us over. 2 goats were seen grazing beside the hut but had gone by the time we reached the hut 20 mins later, after crossing the 2 rivers via 1p swing bridges. It took us 6hrs from Middy hut including breaks – 1.5hrs longer than DOC time – not too bad as we didn't rush & the track was more challenging with obstacles.

We were happy to find Roebuck hut very clean & tidy in a beautiful location next to a big swimming hole. The river was just a little too cold to be able to stay in for long, so we enjoyed a very pleasant afternoon resting in the sun & reflecting on our achievements that day.

Day 3 – We left Roebuck hut at 8:30am feeling positive that this part of the track from Roebuck to Browning hut would be similar to yesterday, although a little apprehensive about a large slip that we knew we had to pass. We had a steep 1/2hr grunt up the spur from Roebuck hut – a 200mtr elevation gain but again we didn't mind this short exertion. It was the track section between the 2 mapped rivers (pt BQ26267146 to pt BQ26247154) that challenged us the most! We had lots of rocky slips & windfall to negotiate which slowed us down. The bush was very scraggly with lots of tree fall all around. You definitely would not want to be here with even a little amount of wind. We had a calm day with a little breeze which had the trees moving & creaking! We had to carefully pick the right spot for a lunch stop & didn't linger long. 10-20mins prior to reaching the slip there was a lot of newly fallen trees that tested our problem solving skills & stamina.

THE BIG SLIP: The location of the slip that occurred a few years ago is where the stream comes down from Mt Stewart – Grid ref: BQ26247154. The size of the slip is very impressive & we were admittedly fearful – how are we going to cross this? But once we decided on a route and found a way across we managed just fine, pack & all. What a buzz!

From here the track is much easier and only another 50mins to the track junction with Rocks hut track (TA track), then a steep descent to Browning hut. We arrived at 2:45pm, very drained and tired (1.75hrs longer than DOC times). Both of us were thankful for a night stop at Browning hut and not having to walk out to carpark. The following day we walked out to Hackett carpark for an 11:30am pick up from Graham (who unfortunately was unable to join us on the tramp due to injury) but whom kindly brought us coffee & choc biscuits before transporting us home – Super Star!

OUTCOME:

YES the track is challenging as predicted, but it was generally well marked & doing it over 3 nights made for a really enjoyable trip.

We were very lucky with the perfect weather & we loved Roebuck Hut. The roebuck track would be very hard and dangerous in wet/windy weather, especially Browning hut side.

We saw not one person on the track the whole time! Only the 2 ladies who shared our hut the first night. We also didn't have to share the track with many sandflies!



We had fun practising our map reading skills after the recent navigation course. We checked our position with GPS and were pleased to find that we were not far off where we predicted we were on the map 😊





Hori Bay

25 January 2026

Leader, writer and photographer: Sonya

Trampers: Alan, Gill, John, Lynda, Lynne, Sebastian and Sonya



From the turn off on the main highway to Blenheim, onto the Hori Bay road it takes nearly an hour to drive the old logging track to the place to park your car. The road track is in good condition but 4wd is better to drive it as there is large pot holes and various forest debris on it, ruts etc. The walk down to the beach is steep, muddy, rutted, uneven and it's a relief to get out of the pine forest and walk amongst native trees down to the beach. There was a sound of surf crashing in the background as we walked down, occasional glimpses through the trees revealed a rugged coast line and beautiful bluey green sea. Took us about an hour, lots of chat of course on the way down, catching up with each other's news. Upon arrival we ventured out on a pebbly horseshoe shaped bay, surrounded by steep sheer headlands on either end of it, stunning wee place. A cave was found down the eastern end of the beach and a small waterfall dripped down beside it. I'd imagine good fishing and shell fish gathering could be had at this beach. We all had a wander and fossick and found a rustic shack up behind the beach and a flat area for camping. A small stream nearby



could be a good water source for a few nights stay. After a small break we then decided to head up up the headland on the western end of the beach and do a coastal loop track, which eventually ended up back on the main track out to the cars. We avoided a massive slip on the way up and walked through shrubby steep terrain, good to get the heart rate up as the drive in took away a big walk for the day. We lunched at a spot (courtesy of pig rutting to clear the area for us) overlooking 3 intriguing shaped islands and Delaware Bay. Unfortunately Jeeves didn't arrive with our lattes and muffins, expect the helicopter was broken. After lunch the track headed inland and we discovered a tropical grove of old nikaus amongst whitewood and kawakawa trees and a small creek to water them all. It must have been part of a road as there were large concrete pipes in the stream bed. We came out on the main track and headed up the track, on a sweaty hot walk back up to the cars. Great to finally see what Hori Bay was all about.





Travis Sabine

10 - 13 February 2026

Leader, photographer and writer: Maggie

Trampers: Becky and Maggie

For this classic route, we decided to focus on the highlight – the Travers Saddle.

So, we got the water taxi across Lake Rotoiti to Lakehead jetty and enjoyed a pleasant walk up the Travers Valley to John Tait hut. The hut and campsite soon filled up with TA walkers, almost all SOBOs.

The next day was a short walk to Upper Travers hut. Again, many TAs, most of whom stayed in the hut as there is not much flat tenting area. It was a very full, very hot hut that night.

Here we met the golf caddy tramper Dougie, doing every step of the TA SOBO, starting from Cape Reinga, carrying two full sets of golf clubs in two golf bags as well as his own gear. He is raising money for KidsCan charity. Very impressive and very humbling!

We had planned weather wise for Thursday up on the Travers Saddle 1787m and we were not disappointed: a beautiful bluebird day with no wind and 360 views forever. So lucky.

Then came the steep down for 1,117m to West Sabine hut. The track is well trodden and not as difficult as expected so all good there. West Sabine hut is looking very old and tired. This was especially noticeable after the smart, newish huts at John Tait and Upper Travers.

The final day down the Sabine Valley we had expected heavy rain and maybe some windfalls, however, all the windfalls had been cleared and the rain was very light. From Sabine hut we water taxied out.





Dougie

A UK born Northland man with a love of golf has embarked on a 3000km trek the length of New Zealand - carrying two sets of golf clubs. Doug Haynes is walking the Te Araroa Trail to raise money for KidsCan, a charity supporting children in need. The 31-year-old, who has lived in the coastal town of Mangawhai for six years, began the 180-day walk from Cape Reinga to Bluff in October. "I have seen hikers on this trail for years and always thought, one day I'm going to do it," he said. "I wanted a way to stand out, to add a challenge that reflected who I am. I carry golf clubs all day at work as a caddie so I thought why not carry them the length of New Zealand?"

Carrying two sets of clubs adds roughly 28kg to Haynes' load, which also includes several days worth of food and snacks. Some days he has to stop every few kilometres to rest sore shoulders and aching legs.

"It's not pleasant, but it's also not as bad as you would imagine. My legs and upper body are definitely stronger each week," he said.

Haynes says he's been overwhelmed by the support he's had along the way. Photo: Supplied
Despite the grind, Haynes has still found time for golf.

During his 91 days walking the North Island, he played some 15 rounds, sometimes joining locals or spontaneous supporters.

"Playing a round of golf helps me promote the charitable side of things. It's a way to share the story and spread awareness," he said.

(Stuff News)



Mt. Richmond

30 March - 1 April 2026



Leader, writer and photographer: Maggie

Trampers: John, Lynne and Maggie.



Three of us, Lynne, John and Maggie, drove to the Wairau River Northbank Road and up Top Valley Road to the fords, at the confluence of Top Valley Stream and Jacksons Creek. A quick reccy of the water level (almost knee-high after recent rain) and the big boulders in the stream made it obvious that we were walking the rest of the road up past Jubilee Flats to the end of Richmond Saddle Road (520m). This was an easy uphill saunter, just over an hour. We had a quick lunch and brew up then headed up the track. It's a reasonable uphill walk interspersed with welcome flattish sections and we did it in just over DoC time - 4h15m. We had a quiet night at the hut (1200m) by ourselves.

The main objective of the tramp Mt Richmond (1760m) loomed impressively close and steep the next morning. We climbed slowly and steadily up the marked track to the ridge and then on the easier walk up to the summit. It was a great feeling to finally be at the top of the mountain that we had all seen for so long from Mapua. We had awesome views all round and of course a lovely vantage point for lunch and another brew up.

On the way up we had noted several helicopter drops at the hut below. This caused much speculation! It seemed to be a big hive of activity... which was

exactly what we discovered when we arrived back at the hut: 3 DoC workers repairing the roof, building a brand-new woodshed, digging a new long drop and base of the toilet which was to be moved across to the new hole. There were also 2 plumbers fitting a new wood burner and chimney. We were very happy to see the plumbers work as the old burner had looked very unsafe. The helicopter returned mid-afternoon to whisk the plumbers off to another job at Rintoul hut while the DoC guys continued work then later went goat hunting (unsuccessfully) and stayed in the hut. We christened the fire and soon had the hut toasty warm.

The return walk downhill was uneventful, all just satisfied to have achieved our goal.

Mt Richmond (1760 m) is the second-highest peak in the Mt Richmond Forest Park. Red Hill Maungakura is 30 m higher.



An unhappy looking woodburner





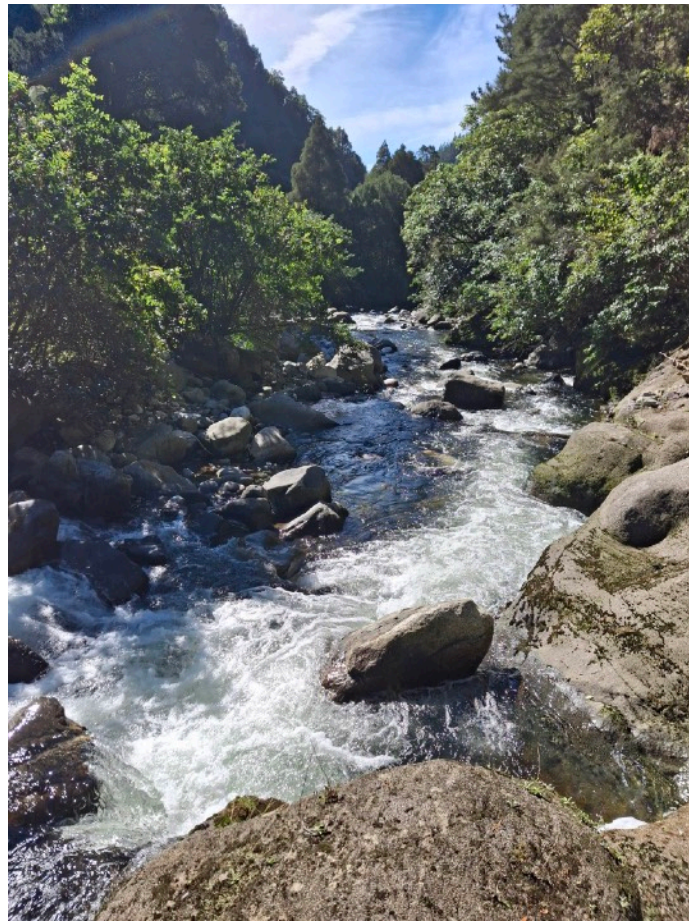
Riwaka River South Branch

11 April 2026

Leader, writer and photographer: John

Trampers: Becky, Heather, John and Lynne,

Coat track marker photo; Becky



Sunday was forecast to be wet so we did this tramp on Saturday. We bounced up the Riwaka Valley Left Branch road and parked part way along the rougher part towards the end. It was a shortish walk along the road to a shearing shed and shearers' quarters in an open area with poplars. The shearing shed looked in good condition but the quarters not so. These buildings, along with some cows, were all that remained of a once larger working farm. Forestry had encroached. Walking along a farm track we soon entered bush and with the river on our right we walked along an unofficial and sometimes missing (or missed by us) track. Markers included decaying water bottles and a raincoat. We had

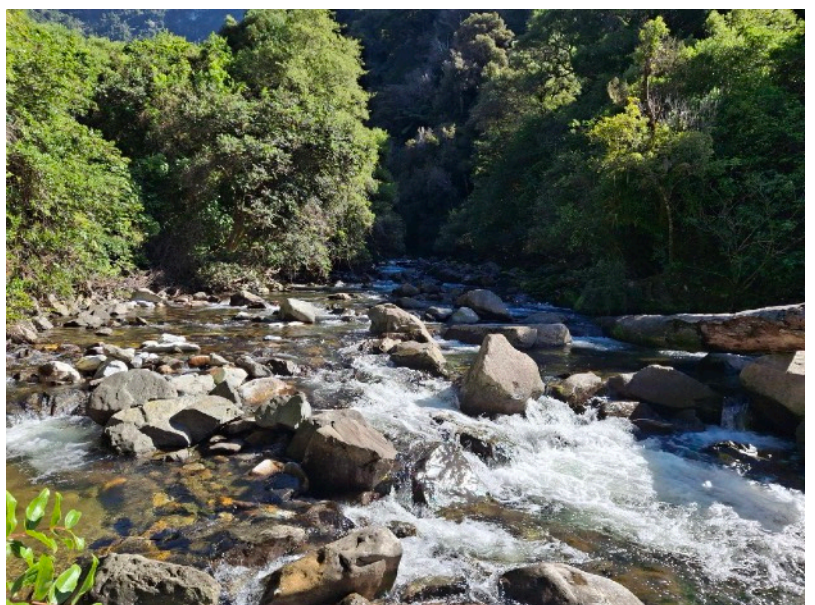
morning tea in the sun by the river then continued to where the river emerges from a gorge. By now we were in or nearly in the Kahurangi National Park. We climbed up steeply alongside the river but stopped after a short while. (Carrying on would have eventually got us to Mt Campbell through tough country.) So we turned back, had lunch and returned to the car.



A raincoat track marker



We were humans not gibbons so could have entered but weren't going that way





Totaranui Circuit

18 April 2026

Leader, writer and photographer: Becky

Trampers: Becky, Heather, John and Lynne,

This overnight tramp explored the Northern Abel Tasman Track in a circuit from Totaranui.

Day 1 – Due to the heavy rain expected on Saturday morning, we took a more leisurely start to the day by leaving Riwaka at 8:45am and stopping for coffee & cake at The Wholemeal Café in Takaka. This worked in our favour as by the time we arrived in Totaranui the worst of the rain was over. We headed off from Totaranui carpark at 11:15am and headed along the coastal track to Anapai Bay where we stopped for lunch. Anapai is a lovely beach & we were all surprised by the flush toilet – oh such luxury!

After lunch we headed off to Separation Point. Rather than heading to the point via the end of Mutton Cove beach we decided to take the turn off from the Whariwharangi track, as it was thought that the climb from the beach would be steep & slippery from the rain. It ended up that the turn off was further away than thought and so we walked a few more kms than expected. In hindsight the track from Mutton Cove beach was maybe not as bad as we had first thought. Visiting Separation point was worth the extra hours walk. No seals or birdlife was seen at the point today, most probably sheltering somewhere else from the weather. Lynne did spot a few seals on the rocks heading back from the point.

We arrived at Whariwharangi hut just before 4pm as the rain started up again. The DOC warden had kindly lit the fire making the hut nice and cosy. Only about half the occupancy that night so lots of room to spread out.

Day 2 – We woke to a cloudy but brighter day, so raincoats were packed away until we were just about to leave and moisture filled the air again. Raincoats were back on. As we headed off up the hill from Whariwharangi towards Gibbs Hill we heard distance thunder booming. Raincoats were off again as we were heating up on our climb, but this didn't last long as the rain finally caught up with us. Lucky for us about 10mins after the Gibbs Hill turn off the rain just stopped, the clouds parted, and the sun eventually peaked through. We enjoyed lovely views over Wainui inlet as we climbed towards Gibbs Hill. The bush here is regenerating and lots of small rimu trees are starting to push their way towards the tops. We stopped for a morning tea break then headed up the steeper ruttier track. Signs were erected telling mountain bikers that the section ahead is now grade 4 (bikes are only allowed in this section from Totaranui/Gibbs Hill/Wainui from May-Sep). The bush here near the top gets scragglier with pockets of gorse. Once we reached Gibbs Hill, there is a short side track that is somewhat overgrown but easy to navigate that heads to the top. There is no view from the top unless you do a bit more scrambling. From here I got a view of Wainui Inlet and Golden Bay behind.

Heading down from Gibbs Hill you come to the junction for the Inland track (towards Pidgeon saddle) and Totaranui. The track to Totaranui turns into an old vehicle track that in parts warned of ruts and sinkholes, which did appear and would have swallowed a bike or walker unawares. It was slow going due to the steep slippery terrain. We had to concentrate on every step. As we got closer to the bottom, we heard the water taxis in the bay and eventually we were rewarded with views of Awaroa & Totaranui bay. Finally, we reached the bottom with no falls. We took longer than the DOC time due to the track condition after the rain. From here it is an easy walk through the grasslands and road back to the front beach. We arrived just in time for lunch at the beach before our drive home.

Overall, this was a great loop enjoyed by all. An easy scenic walk but with a little challenge to keep it interesting. Gibbs Hill was a nice track with more views than I expected but I wouldn't recommend in wet weather, especially Totaranui side.





*London Plane Trees, planted 1965, with
Native Mistletoe in the Canopies*





Parachute Rocks

26 April 2026

Leader, writer and photographer: Heather

Trampers: Heather, Lynne and Sarah

The weather today was just perfect - blue sky and light breezes. Lynne, a prospective member Sarah and I headed to Lake Rotoiti where we found a rowing regatta underway - not as imposing as the classic boat races happening last time we did this walk. In fact I think the incredible amount of birdsong drowned out the racing today. Three years ago I walked up to Parachute Rocks for the first time. This time I wanted to get to the St Arnaud Ridge if possible. Thankfully my tramping companions today were supportive of that, so after our lunch break we carried on up the last 300 vertical metres of track. The view up there was great and I can see the possibilities for further adventures. The downhill walk was made easier by having a dry track and we made good time, having left the carpark a little after 9am and returning shortly after 4pm.



