



**Annual Report of the Wellington Tramping & Mountaineering Club Inc.
for the year 1 February 2013 to 31 January 2014**

www.wtmc.org.nz

PO Box 5068 Lambton Quay, Wellington 6145



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Photo credits: Photos sourced from the 2013-2014 WTMC newsletter and taken by members on their various adventures.





The Wellington Tramping and Mountaineering Club Committee is pleased to present its' annual report on the activities of the club for the year 1 February 2013 to 31 January 2014.

The Current Committee

Sharron Came (President)
Amanda Wells (Vice President)
Steve Austin (Treasurer)
Pete Gent (Secretary)
Mike Phethean (Chief Guide)
Debbie Buck (Assistant Chief Guide)
Richard Lardner (Transport Officer)
Helen Law (Membership Officer)
David Heffernan (Promotions Officer)
Sue Walsh (Social Convenor)
Brian Goodwin (Ruapehu Lodge Convenor)
Megan Sety (Newsletter Editor)
Craig McGregor, Mike Gilbert and Donna Maher (General Committee)

Off Committee Roles

Pete Gent (Gear Custodian)
Tony Gazley (Journal Editor)
Mike Gilbert (Web Master)





President's Comments

I'm hoping that in future years we will be able to look back on 2013 as the year that marked the start of a renaissance for the Club. Even if this doesn't transpire, 2013 was an outstanding year. For the first time in my memory we had a full committee of 15 volunteers and I believe this critical mass of enthusiastic and diligent members played a key part in our success. Of course the other key factor was the work that has been undertaken over the last few years, and will continue to be undertaken to monitor and continuously improve our systems so we continue to do our best to deliver what the membership wants.

In the 2011 Annual Report I suggested that if various initiatives we had begun implementing were working I would expect to see:

- membership remaining steady or growing and more members staying with the club (less churn);
- increased trip participation;
- greater club night participation;
- greater usage of the lodge and vans; and
- plenty of volunteers stepping forward for the tasks that need to be done to keep the club running.

To the extent that we are able to measure our performance against these indicators the results are significantly better than they were for 2012. We appear to have halted membership churn. We currently have 457 members compared to 448 members in 2012. The number of tramping trips that ran in 2013 increased for the third year in a row to the highest level we have achieved since 2005. Overall trip numbers were up on 2012 meaning participation is up.

2013 has been an excellent year in terms of people stepping forward to take on tasks that need to be done to keep the club running. In many ways this is the most pleasing result of the year because it indicates the strength of the club community in a way that membership or trip numbers don't. From my perspective a club is as good as the people in it and we have lots of good people.

Utilising our assets remains a challenge

Our assets remain in reasonably good shape although this is an area where we could and should do better. If I heard as many ideas for asset utilization as I did for asset maintenance I would be a happy person. While maintaining our assets is essential this should not be our sole focus. I will continue to stress the importance of using our assets. Not only does use help fund maintenance and get us more volunteers to look after our assets it also justifies us holding on to these assets. While Paua Hut utilization is good, possibly due to its proximity to Wellington, Ruapehu lodge





utilisation remains a challenge. Member interest in using the lodge is low, meaning we are increasingly reliant on other options.

We have tweaked the lodge booking rules to give non-members better access to booking. We will continue to review this and may remove member privileges such as early booking opportunities if these continue to go unutilized. Advertising lodge trips on MeetUp (www.meetup.com) has proved to be an effective means of increasing utilization of both the lodge and the club vans without crowding out members. We will look to expand on this initiative going forward. Big thanks to Mike Gilbert who has been the driving force behind this initiative both literally and figuratively. We have also been trialing “open lodge” weeks, such as the one we ran over the New Year period. This initiative will also continue on the basis that at least it got some people staying at the Lodge. Any ideas on how to get better utilization of the lodge and the vans would be greatly appreciated.

I would like to thank Brian Goodwin, Eric Evans and the rest of the Lodge sub-committee for their hard work. It is very much appreciated. Many of those involved with the Lodge have been associated with it for a very long period of time. Many are life members of the club. It would be really good if some new people volunteered to help out in this important area. Thanks to Mike Pratt and Phil and Ann Kendon for keeping Paua Hut up and running.

Modernising our trip systems and promoting the club

The club exists to run trips. In their first term in their respective roles Mike Phethean and Debbie Buck have had a magnificent year as evidenced by increased trip participation, the variety of trips run and in terms of recruiting and supporting new trip leaders and providing more training for members and potential members.

However, an aspect of trip administration that poses a challenge for us is that the days of people coming to the clubrooms, picking up a ball point pen and physically writing their name on a coloured piece of paper to sign up for a trip are numbered. Many would say we are living in the past maintaining a system our sister clubs have already abandoned on the basis that it is far too labour intensive for all concerned and inappropriate now most people primarily transact online. The specific issue facing the club is settling on an electronic system that meets the needs of club administrators, trip leaders and those wanting to go on trips without undermining the important social basis of the club. We do not want to compromise our safety protocols or the face-to-face contact that can be an integral part of determining who can go on particular trips.

Change can be difficult to navigate. If we were to consider partnering with existing electronic trip sign up platforms we would have to figure out how to retain control and avoid diluting the WTMC brand and losing members who do not like electronic sign-up. There is a fear that we would gain passive members – people interested in





tramping but looking for a tour guide to take them on an adventure rather than making any contribution to the club themselves. Other issues include the flow on impact on Wednesday night attendance that could result from electronic sign up. There are of course many pros to electronic sign up – convenience, relevance, more members, introducing more people to the delights of tramping in our great outdoors; and there are potentially significant positive spin offs in terms of asset utilization and recruiting more people to help run the club. To add to the complexity, many of the issues I've identified above need to be addressed regardless of what we decide to do about trip sign up.

We have been considering a few options, most notably www.MeetUp.com. At this stage we are still debating whether MeetUp is the only or best solution for trip sign up. In 2014 we will look to try other options such as actively facilitating the practice of allowing trip participants to contact trip leaders direct via email.

One of the great benefits of our relationship with an existing MeetUp tramping group is that we have found this an excellent tool for promoting both Wednesday night talks and Lodge based trips using club vans. We will be making more use of this opportunity in our promotional activity in 2014 when Mike Gilbert takes on the role of Promotions Officer. I would like to thank everyone who has been and continues to be involved in our ongoing discussions and experiments around trip sign-up and club promotion. These issues are significant for the club and many people have strong views. Perhaps our biggest challenge is keeping communication around these issues open and transparent and facilitating a robust and open debate about where we go from here. I look forward to this work continuing in 2014.

Our financial position remains relatively healthy with no large unexpected costs coming our way. We continue to keep a good reserve for when we need to replace the vans or gear or make significant investments in our existing assets. This year we made a small loss caused by a combination of increased operating costs, a poor ski season and trip cancellations due to bad weather.

The highlights from 2013 include:

Membership numbers increased in absolute terms for the first time since 2008 allowing Helen Law to bow out on a high note, thanks for your massive contribution Helen!

Member trip participation increased, we ran the most trips ever since 2005. There was a notable resurgence in alpine trips despite the worst weather and snow conditions I can remember since joining the club nearly 10 years ago. Such healthy alpine trip numbers and participation is possibly a reflection of the interests of the current leadership team reinforced by some excellent alpine slideshows on the Wednesday nights.





16 members joined the ranks of trip leadership. This is a great achievement in terms of both membership engagement and in terms of supporting and encouraging members to enhance their skills and thereby make a greater contribution to the club;

A renewed focus on instruction meant we ran more instruction courses particularly bushcraft and navigation while river crossing made a welcome come back.

Instruction is a great way to improve membership engagement, encourage safe travelling in the hills and to recruit new members who are passionate about tramping. It also provides a way for experienced members to pass on their knowledge thereby strengthening and consolidating our outdoor community. To everyone who helped with instruction and leading trips, thank you. I know from personal experience these roles come with rewards and challenges, in roughly equal measure.

We implemented an online blog style newsletter which will enable us to search trip reports for information when planning trips. While this sounds like a minor change it took a lot of hard work to make it happen and it has significant implications for storage of club related information that would otherwise get lost.

Our attempts to forge better co-ordination between communications and promotion started to bear fruit with more interactive Wednesday night talks better linked to club trips and the interests of trampers. Sue has been very creative with the club nights this year including quizzes, bake offs, gear talks and visits from scientists and expert photographers. The addition of a second New Member night and use of the MeetUp channel to connect with potential new members has helped boost Wednesday night attendance, Lodge usage and trip participation.

Big thanks to Mike Gilbert, Tony Gazley and Pete Gent for their work as Webmaster, Journal Editor and Gear Custodian respectively. These roles are off-committee but this does not mean they are unimportant. How well these roles are performed has a huge impact on club life and how we look to prospective members. Thanks to Steve Kohler who collects all our trip statistics and compiles the graphs that we use in this report. He is also a major contributor to website improvements.

As well as me, Helen Law, Steve Austin, Pete Gent, David Heffernan, Donna Maher and Craig McGregor are standing down from the committee after several years of service. Steve in particular has worked tirelessly for seven long years as our Treasurer. He has of course contributed far more to the club than merely preparing our accounts. As well as appearing shirtless in promotional slideshows for no fee he has led trips, instructed on snowcraft, offered his house up as a venue for barbecues, collected all the club mail and so on. I have certainly valued his presence as a supportive sounding board and wise head. While I'm sure he will continue his involvement it is great to have Brendan Eckert take on the responsibility of Treasurer. Likewise Helen has worked quietly and efficiently for three years in the demanding but relatively low profile role of membership officer to ensure our membership data is





kept up to date and new members are welcomed and effectively integrated into the club community.

I figure it is impossible to thank everyone who contributes individually and still keep this report at a length where people can feasibly use it as a door stop if they print it so I'm not going to try. To the many club members who toil away co-operatively and quietly behind the scenes helping out with the large number of small, odd or small odd jobs that need to be done to support the smooth running of the club, I salute you!

So, to everyone departing go safely and thanks for your contribution. Amanda and the rest of those staying good luck and keep up the good work. Amanda has been involved in the governance of the club for some time in a number of important roles including Chief Guide and Promotions Officer. She is very well placed to lead the club forward into new territory and I hope you will all get in behind her and give her your support. To those joining the committee and the club, welcome aboard. I envy you – so many interesting opportunities and challenges lie ahead.

Sharron Came, President





Committee Reports

Our Finances

The WTMC balance sheet remains in good shape with cash reserves of \$207,561 as at 31 January 2014, up 9% from prior year. Club income less expenditure for the year was almost at break even with a deficit of \$480.

A deficit of \$4,680 was recorded for transport and other tramping related activities. Income from South Island trips reduced from the rebound experienced in the year prior due largely to trip cancelation relating to poor weather. Only three years remain for van depreciation after which club transport should start to make surpluses contributing to future capital needs.

The lodge finances show a deficit of \$3,454 for the year. Good to see overall lodge income up 8% to \$73,676 given an average snow season. The lodge deficit was largely due to a catch up of DoC annual rental fees (under Rates).

Club operating costs were \$19,206 with the 15% increase from prior year due to more realistic pricing on the club journal (we had an exceptionally low quote for the 2012 journal).

This is my seventh and last financial report for the WTMC. Brendan Eckert will be taking care of the club finances from April 2014 – thanks Brendan! I have enjoyed my time as treasurer and contributing to the success of the club.

Finally, I would like to extend my warm thanks to Ed Juchnowicz for again auditing the WTMC accounts for us.

Steve Austin, Treasurer





Our Trips

This was my first year as chief guide and also my first year on the committee. I am therefore very thankful that I received a very comprehensive handover from Amanda Wells, the previous chief guide.

I'm also thankful for a great amount of help from Debbie Buck, the assistant chief guide, who was also new to the committee. Debbie seems to have picked up her role seamlessly and deputized very well for me during the couple of months I was overseas.

This year saw the last time Mike Gilbert put together the families tramping schedule. On behalf of the club I would like to extend our thanks for all the effort he has put into building up family tramping at WTMC. It certainly has been one of the success stories of the last few years. Please see the graphs in the later section of this report to show just what a good job Mike has done. I welcome Richard Lyth and Beth Piggott, who will share the role of family tramping coordinator going forward.

I would also like to thank a few other members who have assisted with the organization of tramping trips:

- David Jewel has taken over the alpine schedule and I am very happy to see a marked increase in alpine trips this year. This year saw the club run the highest number of mountaineering trips for at least the last ten years.
- Steve Kohler (amongst other club support activities) continues to collect the club statistics for each trip which you will see in this report.
- Katy Glenie who has been organizing the emergency contacts for all the weekends.
- Donna Mahler who as trip monies person has helped checked trip fares are coming in.
- Pete Gent who in his role of gear custodian has kept the gear in good nick and ensured there is someone to hand it out.

Finally I would like to thank everybody who has led a trip this year. This is after all, what our club is about and I feel members really appreciate the effort that goes into this. I would particularly like to thank all those who have led a trip for the first time. This year we focused on supporting new leaders and I was happy to see 16 people give it a go.

We will continue this support during the coming year and look to extend it by providing more comprehensive safety advice and more detailed information about potential tramping trips. We will also try and run a few more Christmas trips so members can take advantage of the holiday break to access more remote spots for longer tramps.





Instruction

One of our key points of difference as a club is that we have the resources to run instructional courses. These allow senior members to pass on their many skills to the new generation of trampers. This giving back to the club by senior members is greatly appreciated.

Amanda Wells and Richard Lardner jointly topped the tables having run bushcraft and leadership, and river crossing courses. They were ably assisted on bushcraft by Pete Gent and Craig McGregor, and on leadership by David Heffernan. Rowena Johnstone stepped up to run river crossing (drawing on her MSC / SAR experience). I am very glad that we restarted river crossing courses as learning the various techniques along with a robust decision making framework for whether to cross rivers are vital skills to acquire for tramping in New Zealand.

Marie Henderson also managed three courses running a navigation course with Anna L and Rowena and assisting with bushcraft and snowcraft courses. Like river crossing, navigation is a crucial skill for anyone heading into the backcountry.

Sharron Came, with the assistance of David Jewell, Marie Henderson and myself has for many years, very smoothly organized the Snowcraft course. Running this course is no doubt helping to both inspire members and equip them with the necessary skills to try alpine trips. Given the popularity of alpine trips we plan to introduce a weekend course on leading alpine trips in 2014.

Finally I would like to thank Allen Higgins for leading a bushcraft/navigation course assisted by Sue Higgins, Sam Kempthorne and Marie Henderson.

If any one wonders how the course are received, please be assured there are many tales of people almost bouncing into club nights the following week.

Search and Rescue

The club takes safety very seriously. As well as contributing volunteers to the local land search and rescue system run by the New Zealand Police we also run instruction courses, operate a club contact system and maintain a supply of PLBs for taking on club trips. This year we purchased several additional PLBs as we found that demand was outstripping supply on busy weekends.

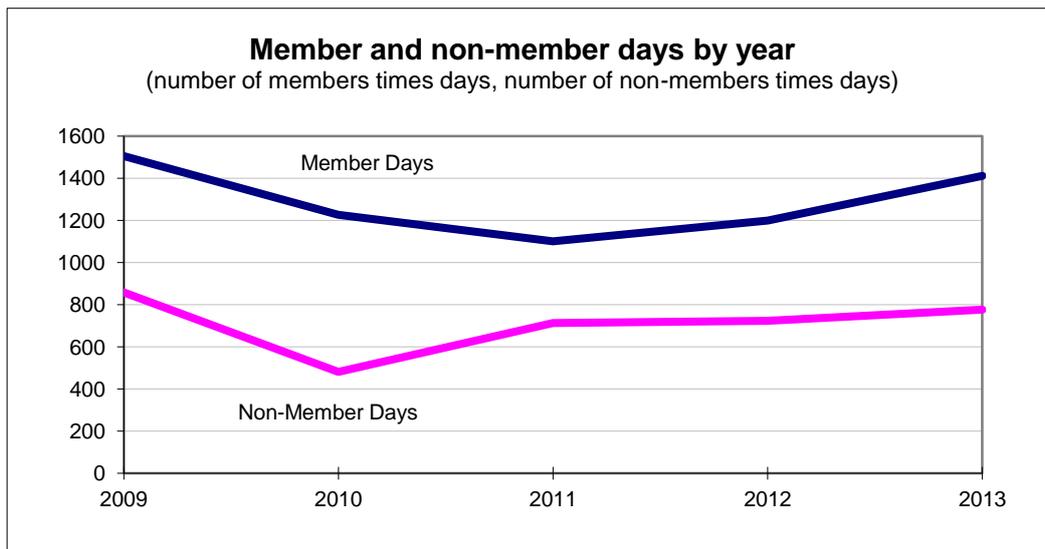
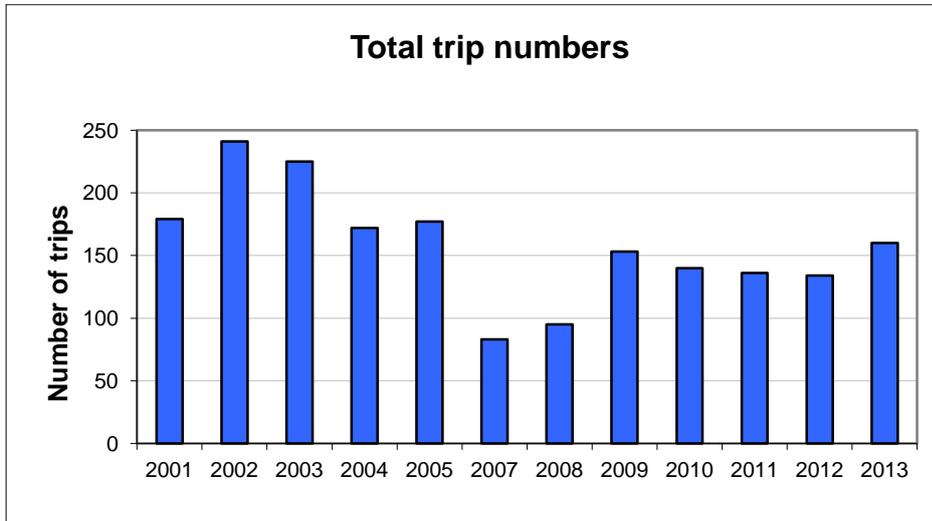
Trip statistics

The club had a good year with the number of trips the highest since 2005. I think this is the result the many small initiatives the club has been pursuing to encourage trip participation finally starting to bear fruit. Making ourselves a more welcoming club, assisting new members and supporting trip leaders is really starting to pay off.



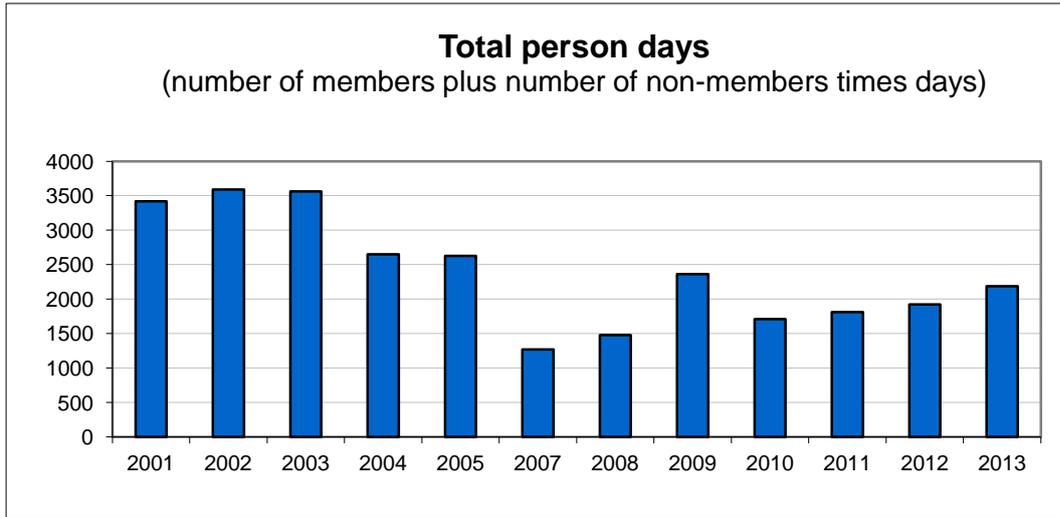


Please continue the good work! Particularly pleasing is the fact that the number of members on trips is increasing.

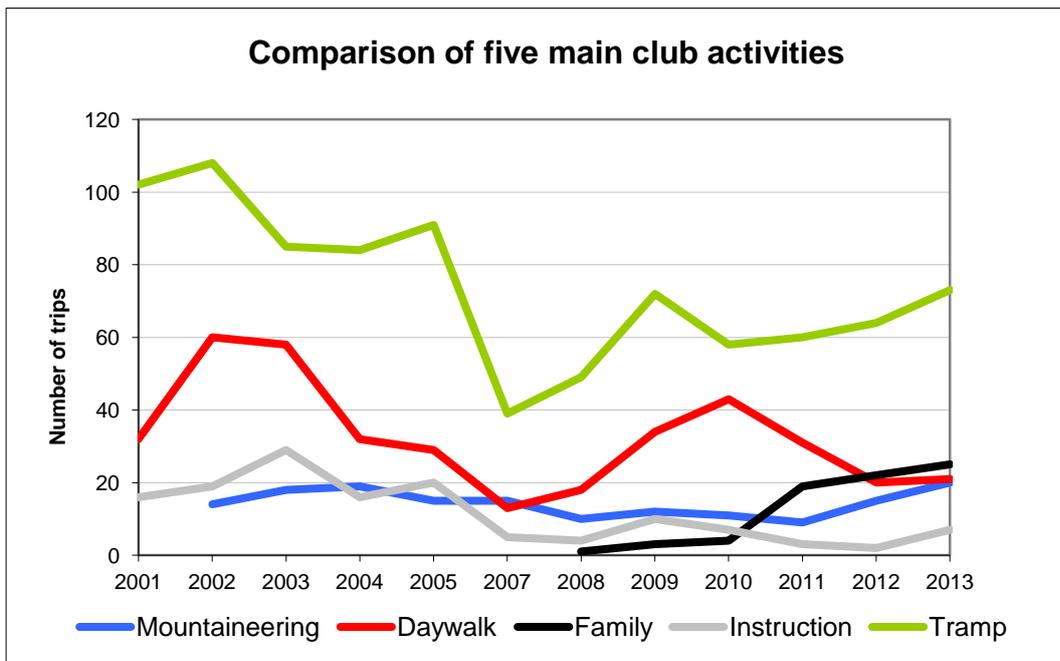


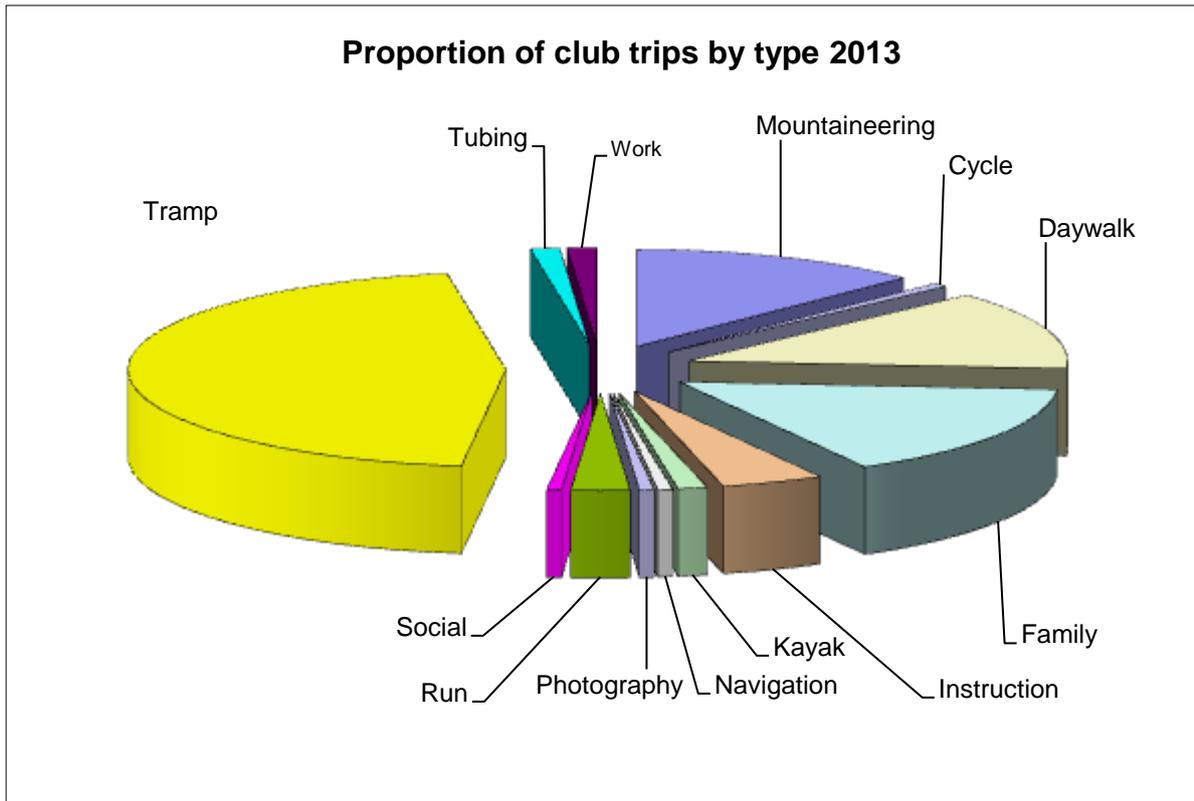
The total number of person trip days also saw a healthy increase, not as substantial as the increase in the number of trips which would indicate we have some capacity to spare.



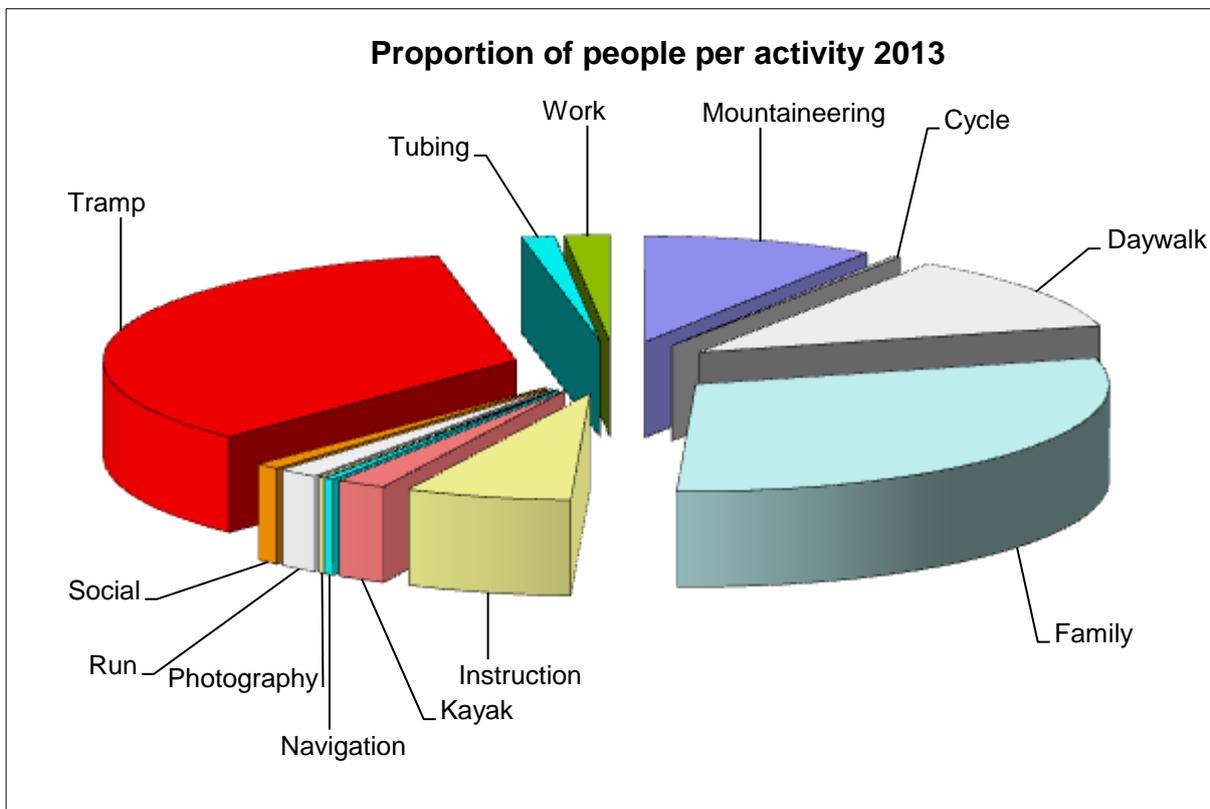


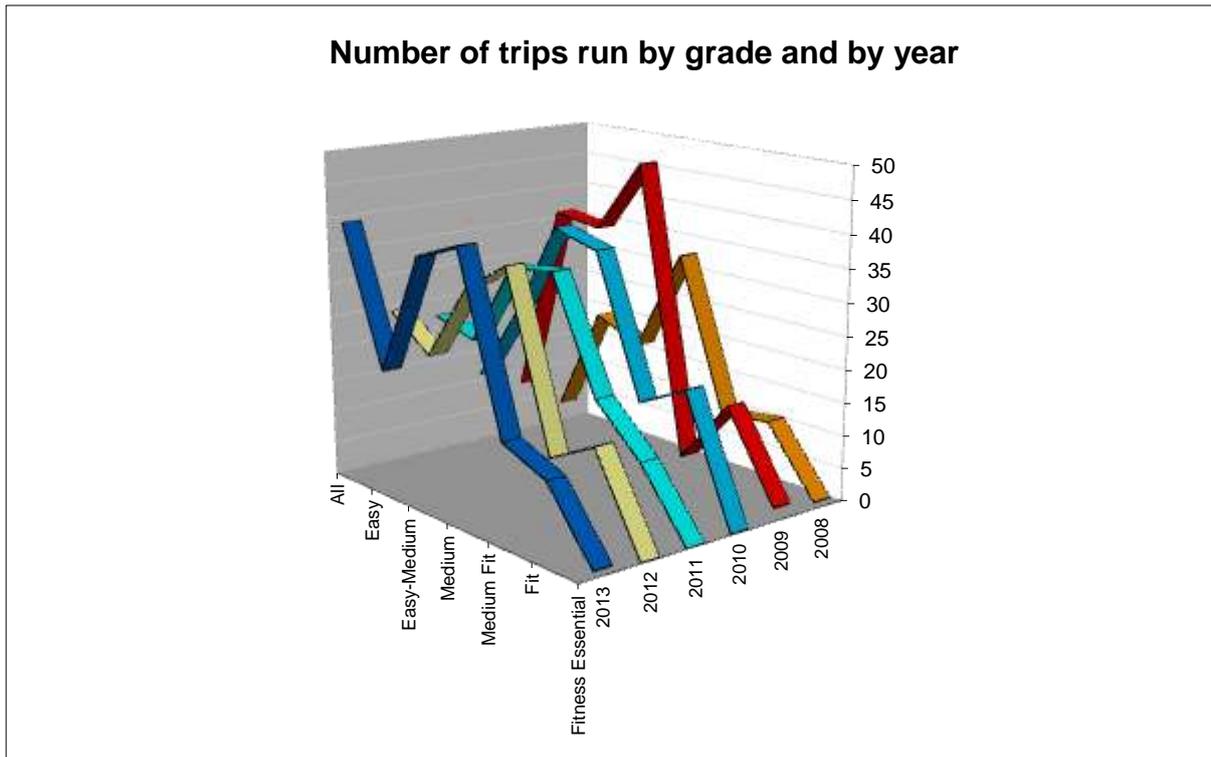
All of our main five activities showed an increase in trip numbers, with mountaineering showing the highest trip numbers in over a decade.



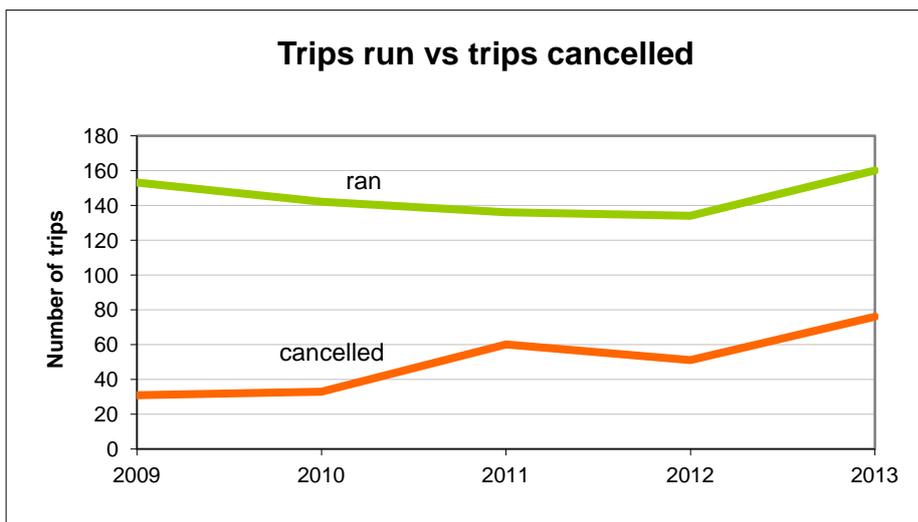


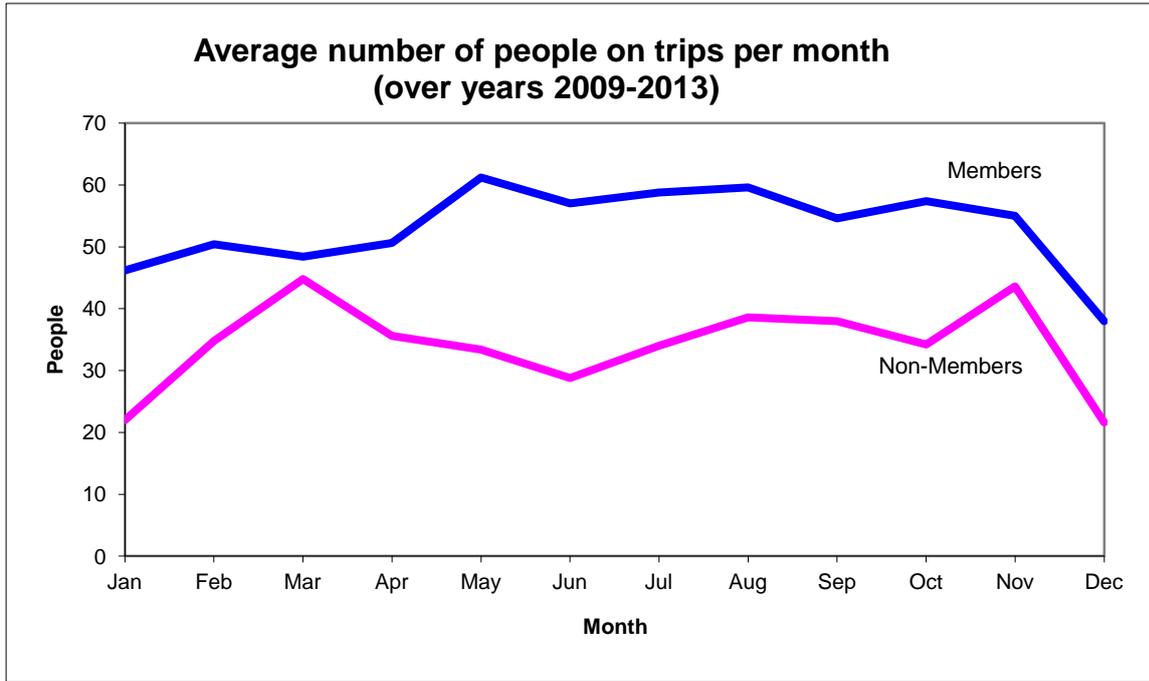
The next graph shows just how popular our family trips are. I believe Sarah Young's family fireworks trip to Paua hut had over 40 people on it!





The other noticeable trend over the year was that a relatively high number of trips were cancelled. The bad weather on too many weekends has quite a part to play in this, safety comes first and we will cancel trips if conditions are deemed too warrant it. Sometimes the best option is to stay at home and visit the backcountry another day. However, a significant portion of trips were also cancelled due to a lack of people signing up. We need to improve our recruitment for some trips. Medium graded trips continue to be the most popular.





Mike Phethean – Chief Guide





Our Assets

Ruapehu Lodge

Lodge booking

We have continued to use an online booking system which is working well and allows users to self-book or the option of contacting the lodge booking officer if required. Thanks to Eric Evans for his patience dealing with punters and efficient operation of this system.

Lodge Utilisation

The lodge utilization remains static with member family groups making relatively more use of our facility compared to younger members who would at one time fill the lodge on weekend trips whether for skiing, climbing, tramping or socializing.

This year we advertised some Lodge trips on MeetUp, a web based events tool. This initiative made a positive contribution to occupancy over a winter season made difficult by a lack of snow. We've had a great response to operating trips in conjunction with a club van, and offering transport/accommodation packages. It seems that the thought of the drive puts off a lot of prospective punters! Winter also coincides with lower van utilisation which is win:win for the club. In 2014 we will look to run more van trips to the lodge, and will be seeking out people who are willing to bring a van to the lodge and host a weekend.

We will continue with the change that we made last year in making it easier for non-members to book for the winter season which gives them certainty as far as being guaranteed a booking. This was achieved by allowing members to book any part of the season from the first of May and then non-members from the first of June. This change showed an increase in non-member usage and helped to maintain the financial status of the lodge.

Unfortunately the ski season ended early last year due to a loss of snow. This resulted in low usage in October, putting us near the breakeven point. Otherwise, this might have been a profitable season.

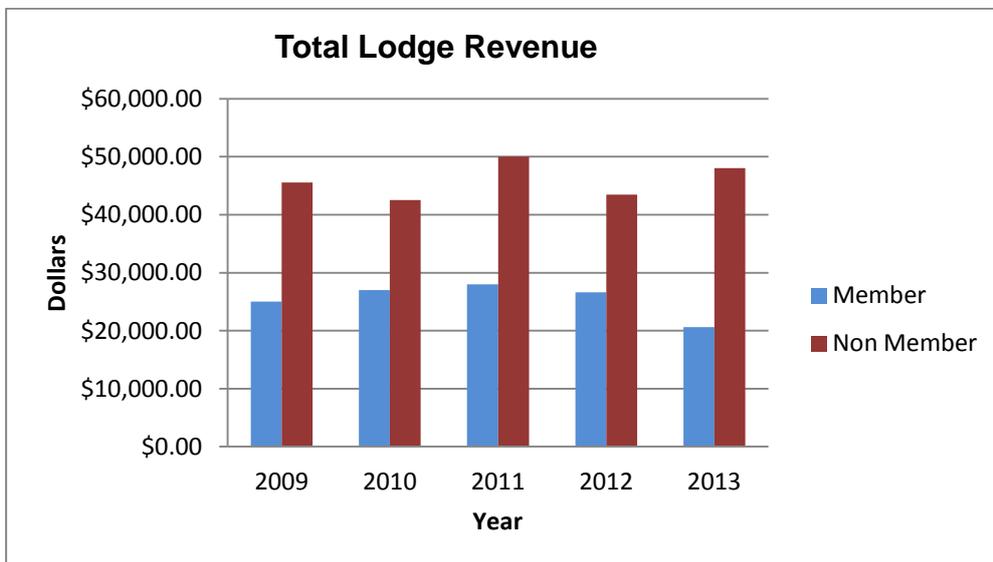
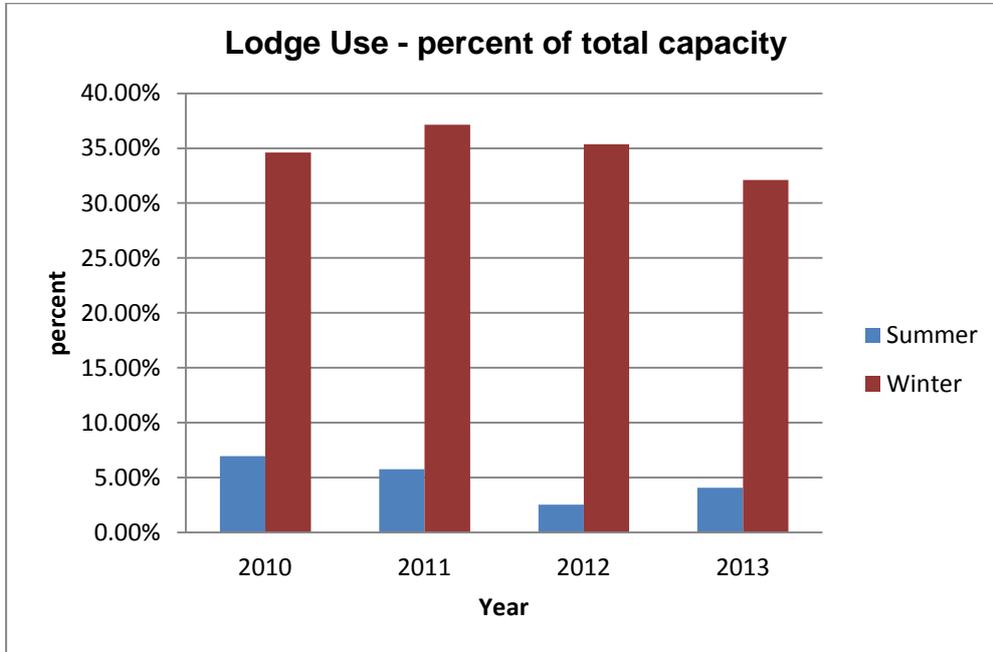
The new year period saw us try out the concept of an "open lodge" where people could turn up at the lodge knowing that the lodge would be open and staffed for a certain number of days and pay for the days of their stay. Traditionally this has been a time when people have stayed but this allowed people to turn up without prior booking. This was a success and hopefully we can do this again at the beginning of 2015. Thanks to those who volunteered to stay at the lodge at various times over the two week period.

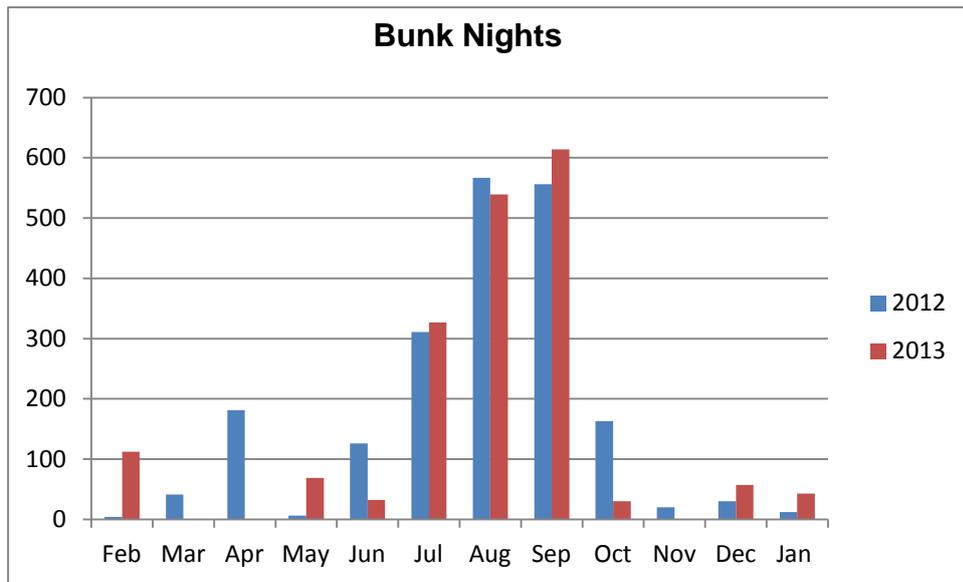




Lodge usage Summer / Winter year ending January 2014

	Possible bed nights	Bed nights members	Bed nights non-members	Total bed nights	% Utilisation
Summer	6880	11	270	281	4.1%
Winter	4800	685	857	1542	32.1%





Relicensing of Lodge

Our lodge was first licensed in 1994 and we have taken up the right of renewal for at least another twenty years. The documents will be signed soon which will give us security of tenure at least to 2053.

Maintenance and improvements

The double glazing of the lodge has now been completed and maintenance / repairs on the roof have been done and there is still more maintenance work to be done on the roof when the weather is right and the crew of workers are available to do this.

On-going maintenance and repairs has been carried out by our Lodge maintenance officer Kevin Griffiths who quietly gets on with work required to keep the lodge in good working order.

Andrew Trembath has continued to look after the bulk food ordering and perishable food orders during the ski season and has done an excellent job again. Thanks to those who have kept him up to date with the perishable food stock take sheets.

The Lodge sub-committee is hoping that more of the younger more active members will direct their interests towards the lodge to do some skiing, tramping or climbing and enjoy this excellent facility and bring along their friends or family to join them.

Brian Goodwin, Lodge Convener





Paua Hut

Paua hut in the Orongorongo Valley in the Rimutaka Forest Park is close to Wellington and a great place to stay for a quiet weekend or as a base for some great day trips such as Mt Matthews or exploring the range behind the hut. The hut continues to be well utilized with bookings for most weeks and some mid-week bookings especially in the warmer months. We also utilize the hut for our Bushcraft courses. Members are able to book and use the hut for free so it is good to know that many are taking advantage of this opportunity, just don't forget to take out everything you bring into the hut. The Orongorongo rats are not fussy. They are prepared to dine on random bars of soap if given the opportunity. Thanks to Ann and Phil Kendon who manage the bookings for Paua Hut and to Mike Pratt who looks after hut maintenance.

Club Vans

The club continues to own two Ford Transit 12-seater minivans. The last financial year has seen a slight reduction in both passenger numbers and van trips relative to the previous year. Altogether the vans were used for 54 trips the last financial year, as opposed to 62 the previous year. The combined mileage driven by both vans within the last 12 months was approximately 26,000 kms. This level of van usage is still considered to be an acceptable level for retaining both vans and Committee is hopeful of an increase in club membership over the next couple of years, which should increase van utilisation. We are always interested in hearing ideas for better van utilisation and welcome any ideas as to how we could achieve this. For example keep in mind that there is an option for club members to use the vans for self-drive trips to the lodge, or possibly other destinations.

There are approximately 60 vetted current club members who have volunteered to drive the vans. This is great, though we are always keen to encourage as many volunteers as possible. We hope to lead a Minivan Familiarisation session again shortly for anyone who is unfamiliar with the vans and who would like to drive them in the upcoming year. Details will be in an upcoming newsletter.

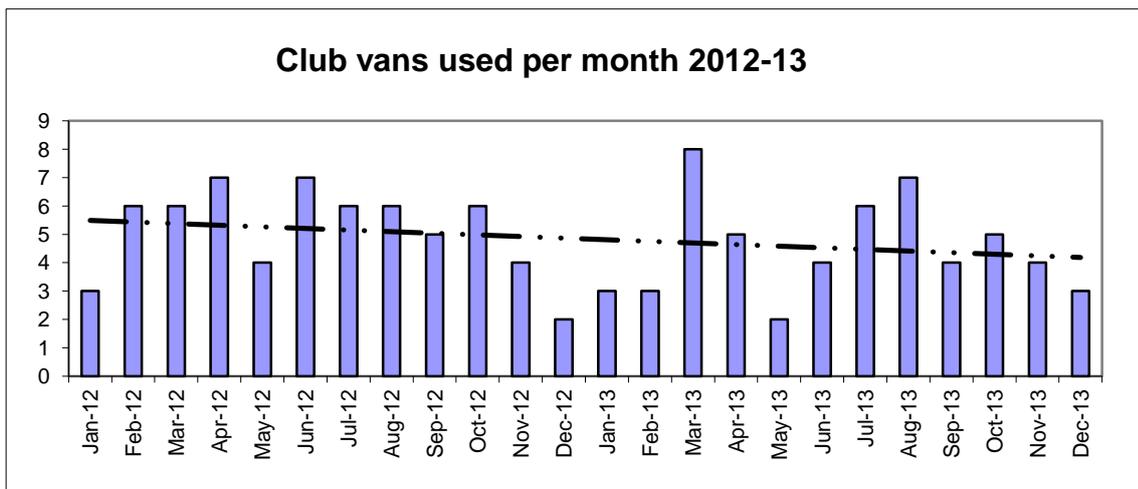
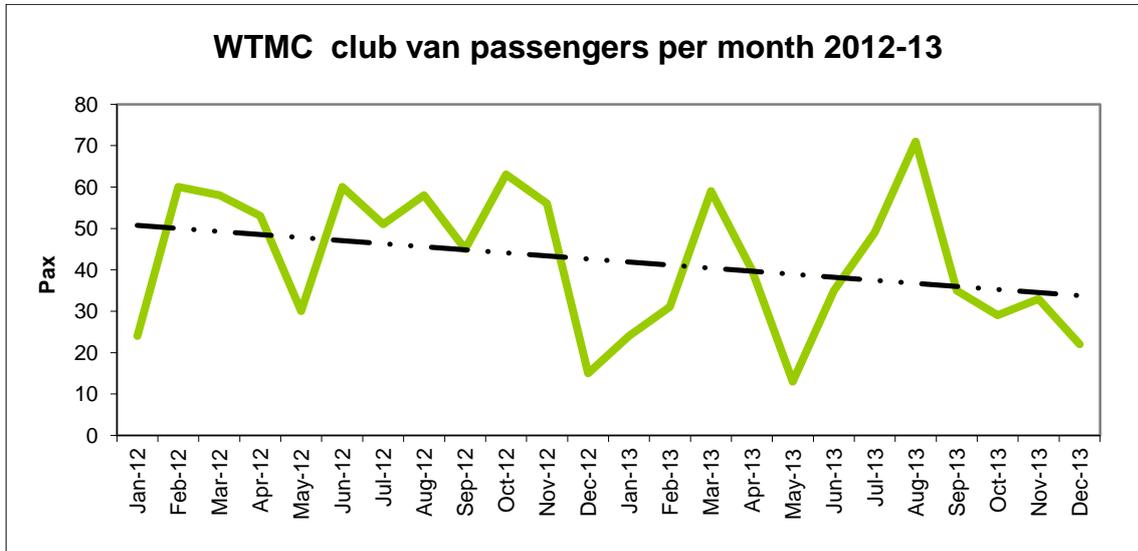
Once again, thanks also to David Bakker and Michael Schier who are cleaning the vans every month – not a glamorous job but an important one! The van storage location at the Interislander ferry terminal is working well for the club and is particularly handy for South Island trips

As discussed in the Treasurers report above, neither van suffered any major damage in the past year, although unexpected maintenance required for one van cost approximately \$1000, and the other van required four new tyres in the past year, at a cost of around \$1300. At the risk of stating the obvious, if you are driving a van and





notice that one of the warning lights is flashing please take note and report this asap so it can be checked out.



Richard Lardner, Transport Officer





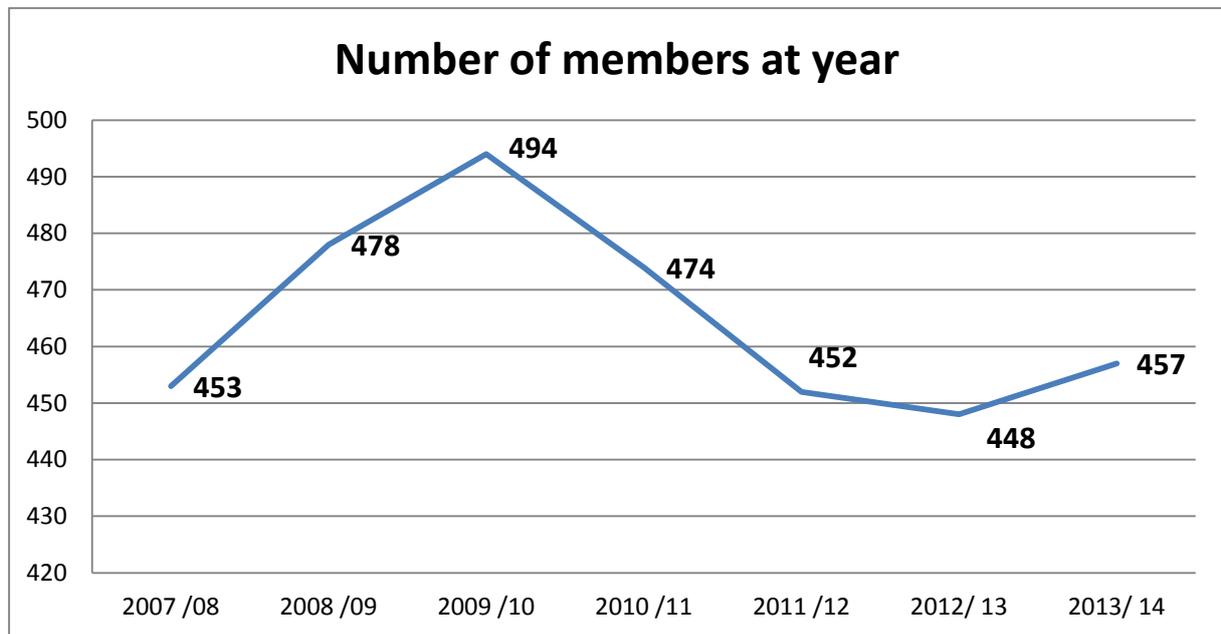
Our People

Membership

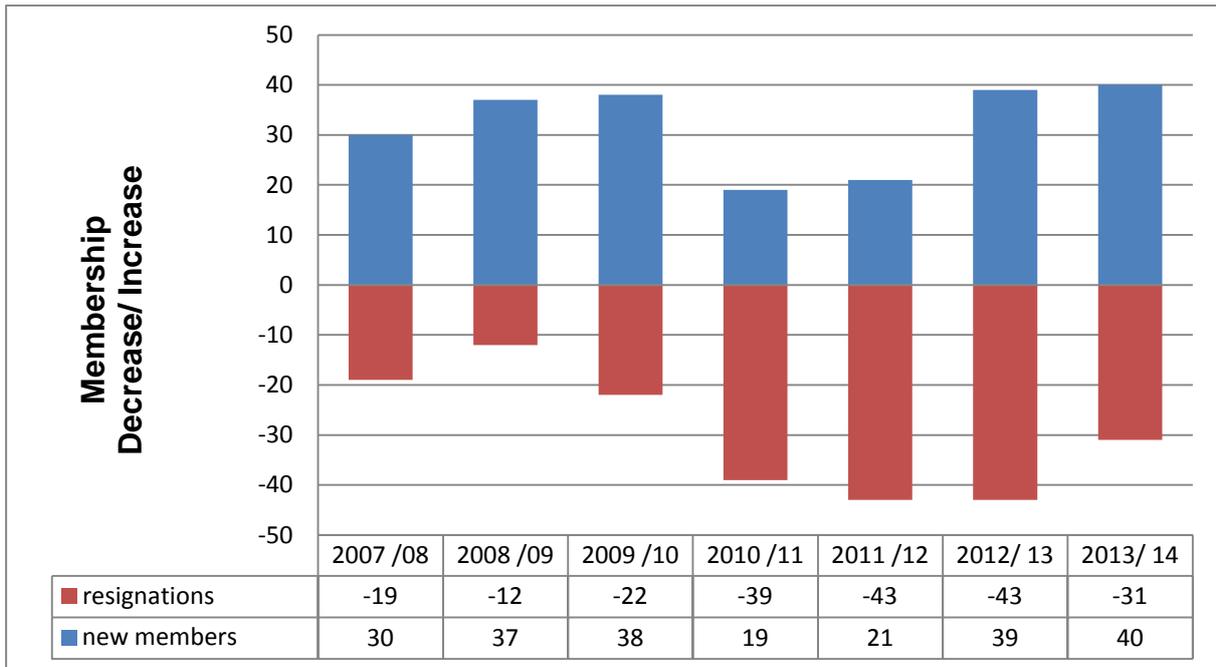
At the end of 2013, we have a total of 457 members.

In early 2013, 31 members resigned their subscriptions, while 40 new members joined the club through the year. This has resulted an overall increase in our membership numbers which has been declining since 2008!

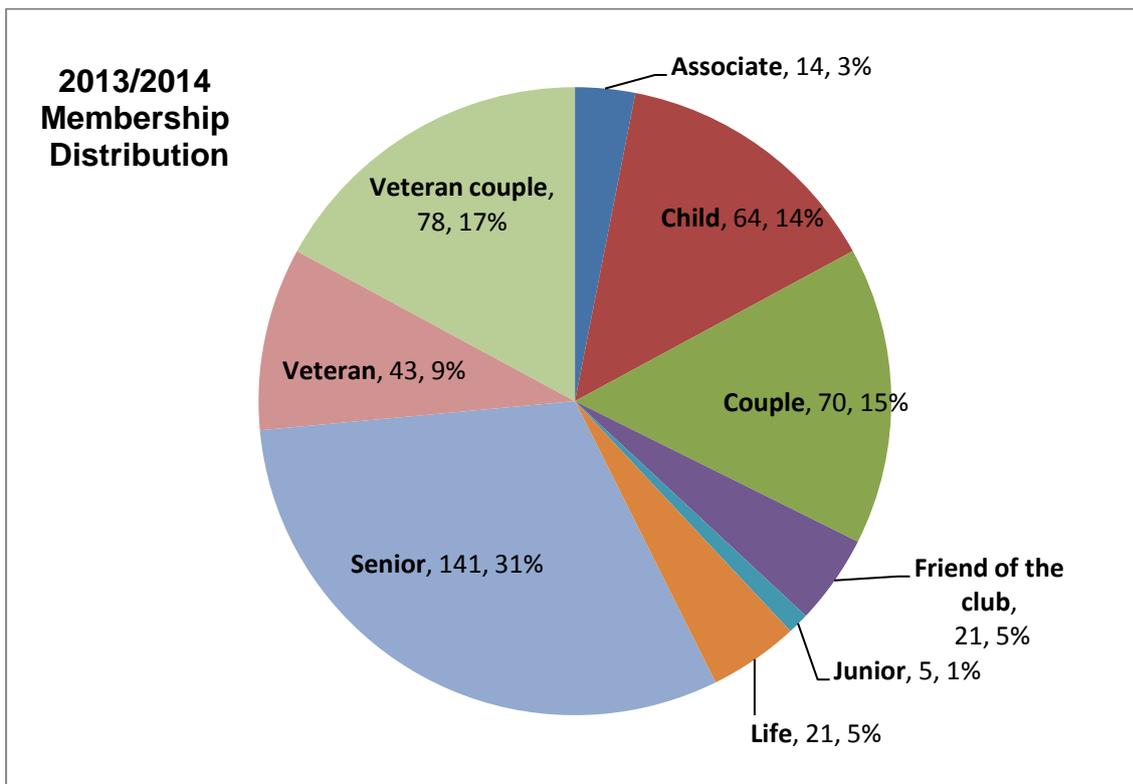
Below is a summary of membership numbers over the last seven years.



WTMC Membership history	2007/08	2008 /09	2009 /10	2010 /11	2011 /12	2012/ 13	2013/ 14
Members start of year	442	453	478	494	474	452	448
Plus new members	30	37	38	19	21	39	40
Less resignations, deletions	19	12	22	39	43	43	31
Members at year end	453	478	494	474	452	448	457



Our membership consists of: 141 senior members, 35 couples (70 individuals), 43 veterans, 39 veteran couples (78 individuals), 5 junior, 64 child/ children, 21 life members (including partners), 14 associate and 21 friends of the club. The chart below shows the distribution of membership types.





Compared to 2012 the number of senior memberships has declined slightly with 31% of the total membership (34% in 2012/13). The child membership category has increased from 11% to 14%. All other categories either remained the same or with slight changes of $\pm 1\%$.

In 2014 we will be taking another look at our membership categories and subscription rates to see if they are still meeting our needs given the context in which we operate. It is important to keep membership categories as simple as possible while treating people fairly. We do not want our membership categories to be a barrier to people joining the club.

Members are encouraged to keep the club's database up to date with any changes in contact details, including your email address. Please send me an email membership@wtmc.org.nz or by notifying me on the club website or by post - PO Box 5068, Lambton Quay, Wellington 6145.

Helen Law, Membership Officer





Our Communications

Engaging with current members and recruiting new members continues to be a significant focus. Without a core group of active members and a constant stream of new members joining, the club will quickly wither and die. The days when club tramping was one of the main recreational choices for those with spare time and money are gone. The challenge for all tramping clubs is to move with the times. This means keeping up to speed with new technologies, social media and on-line tools that both members and potential members are comfortable with.

Of course the whole point of a club is to be a place for like- minded people to get together in person and tramp together. We are all about having outdoor adventures, challenging ourselves, making new friends and having fun with other people. It is really important that we don't lose sight of the face-to-face connections that underpin WTMC.

The need to keep up with social and technological change comes with the associated challenge of coordinating the various club announcements, news, policies and other messages to a range of people. We use a variety of ways to reach our new and potential members, including Facebook, the website, newsletter, our journal, email, Wednesday announcements, our trip sign-up sheet and new ventures like MeetUp.

In response to these challenges the Committee is considering creating a new position of Communications Officer for the upcoming year. The job of the communications officer will be to prepare and oversee the implementation of a plan for effective engagement with new and potential members to help us achieve even better member recruitment, trip participation, club night attendance and utilisation of the lodge and vans.

Website and social media

Facebook

We have been operating a Facebook Fan Page (<http://facebook.com/WTandMC> - like it now!) since 2011. This is currently administered by Meena Khadri, Amelia White, Mike Gilbert and Amanda Wells. It mixes club news and information with other, more informal posts of club members' trips and achievements and activities by other organisations that club members would be interested in. Its intent is to present a more chatty, interactive side of the club with posts that members and their friends will find interesting and respond to; this is also to build the audience of the page, as Facebook will also show posts that people find interesting to others.

In 2013 the Facebook page has begun to provide real benefits to club promotions and communications, with its fan base nearly doubling over the last 12 months to 274





people. 150-250 people see our more popular posts. Interestingly, our Facebook page is most popular with 35-44 year olds, and 35-44 year old women in particular (who make up nearly a quarter of our total audience).

In 2014 we will continue to build on the good work already done. The audience of the Facebook page makes it one of our key communication mechanisms and its best use will be one of the questions a Communications Plan will address.

Other Social Media

The club has explored online trip signup via a trial by listing some easier overnight trips and daytrips on the Wellington Tramping Group of MeetUp (<http://www.meetup.com/WellingtonTrampingGroup>). Results of this trial have been encouraging, with participating trip leaders reporting positive experiences, new punters discovering WTMC through this channel, and some 9% of our total punter nights for the year signing up via this trial.

As a club we still need to decide if the impact of such a change is desirable. In 2014 we will continue to weigh up the pros, cons and effects of online trip signup, and the best way of providing this.

Mike Gilbert, Webmaster

Club publications

Over the last three years, Sarah Young successfully managed to significantly increase the number of trip reports and committee news in the newsletter, as well as create a more clear and readable format. Megan Sety took over the newsletter editor role in May 2013, though Sarah Young continues to be involved with the website and social media activities of the club.

The most significant achievement this year has been the transitioning of the newsletter from an attachment in an email to a blog-style newsletter. Tremendous thanks go to Steve Kohler for making this happen. His countless hours setting up the format and design have resulted in a high-quality web-based newsletter. This new format is far more accessible and more likely to increase traffic to our website because trip reports are easier to find online. In addition, the blog-style allows for a searchable archive of old trip reports.



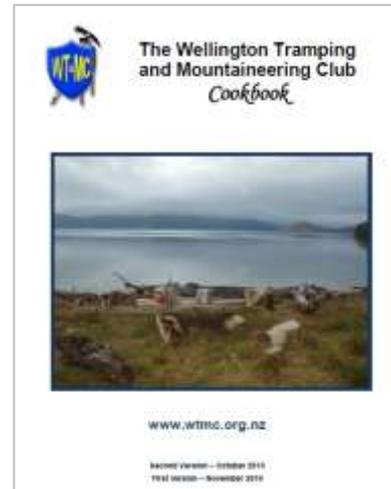
<http://www.wtmc.org.nz/newsletter>



We will continue to send a monthly email to our members listing the latest trip reports and committee news. The first newsletter launched 1 February 2014 and members will find archived content dating back to 1998. The goal for 2014 is to post the entire electronic archive of newsletters dating back to 1948.

Again, thanks go to Tony Gazley for a spectacular journal that was published just in time for the Christmas rush with stories featuring trips across New Zealand and internationally and photos to match. Ian Harrison will take on this role for 2014.

This year Megan Sety and Illona Keenan updated the WTMC Cookbook with new recipes and additional sections on Tararua biscuits and desserts with help from members. The cookbook was launched with a hugely successful WTMC bake off with fierce competition for the best Tararua Biscuit as well as more edible chocolate themed treats. In 2014 we plan to update the famous Schormann-Kaitoke publication which details accounts of traversing the Tararua tops.



Megan Sety, Newsletter Editor





Our Social Events and Promotions

Club Nights

It's been a stimulating challenge to find speakers for our Wednesday nights, especially in maintaining a balance between club and external speakers. The presentations have again covered ground from the sub-Antarctic islands to the Dragons Teeth in the Kahurangi's. We've also visited Kilimanjaro and gone as far north as Svalbard. We had two repeat presentations from a few years ago where the topics were quite special and the photography quite amazing. As well as traditional presentations we also had a film night, an old fashioned slide night and a Tongue and Meat quiz night. From our external speakers the presentations have ranged from Life Flight Trust to LandSAR to the lovely Tuatara.

One of the annual highlights is the photo competition where the considerable talent of our photographers is show cased; many thanks to Ian Harrison for arranging that evening. We also trialled Bivouac coming in and talking about particular gear that new comers to tramping would be interested in. That evening went well and could be repeated in the future. Interestingly enough, there was very little in the way of presentations from our traditional stamping grounds of the Tararua's and Ruahines. It was particularly lovely to have a small number of new members come forward and give presentations too.

The change to having a cuppa beforehand is continuing to work well. It's great to see clubbies congregating around the trolleys and it seems to be a good icebreaker for new folk coming in as well as giving them something to do when they have finished looking at the trip board. I've taken the opportunity to vary the weekly biscuits with other goodies when suitable and this appears to have been well received.

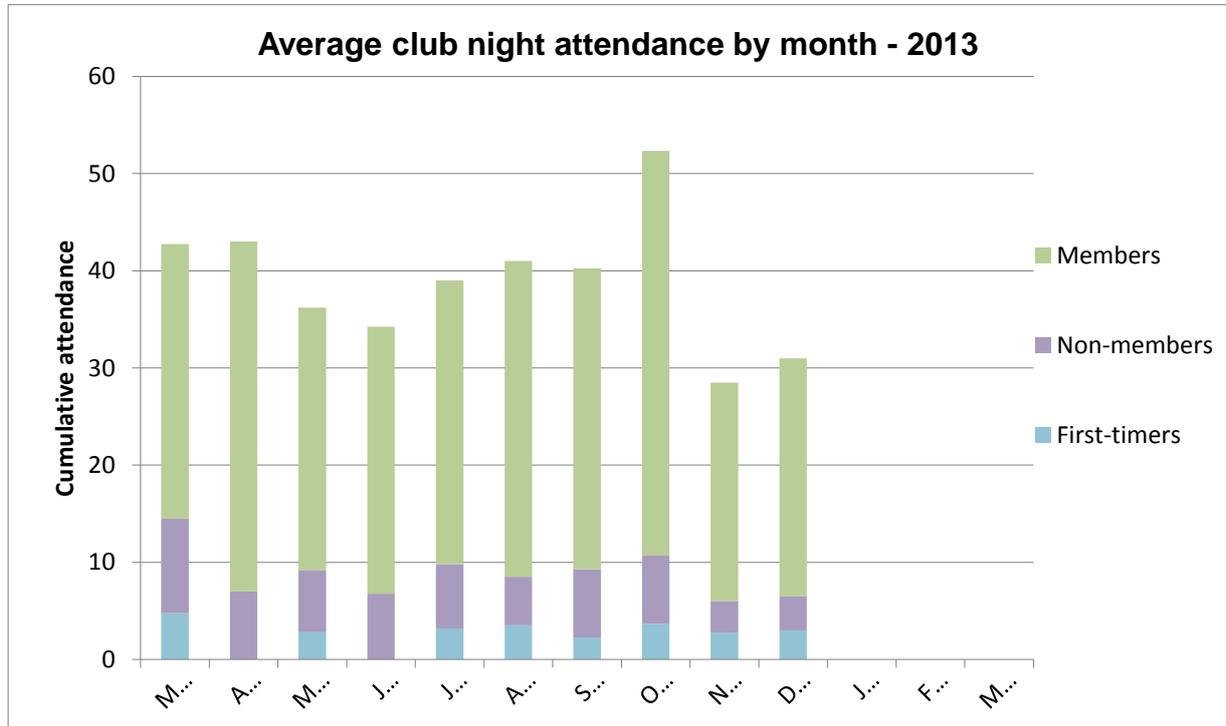
Thanks to Mike Gilbert who has worked with the Social Convenor to provide targeted use of MeetUp to advertise selected talks. This has made a significant impact on Wednesday night attendance, bringing in a younger group of people interested in the outdoors with the potential that they will go on trips and eventually join the club. A huge thank you to everyone who has volunteered their time to do a presentation, and have found presenters and a special thank you to those people who have given me a hand in both setting up and closing down on a Wednesday night.

Club night attendance has been fairly steady over the last couple of years at approximately 39 attendees on average. While there is quite a bit of fluctuation from night to night, the monthly averages are surprisingly consistent, albeit with small drops in November-January. Average attendance is falling slightly, down from 48 in the 2011 fiscal year, and from the high 60s in 2008-2009. We are still getting an excellent number of first-timers turning up, typically three per evening, and they seem



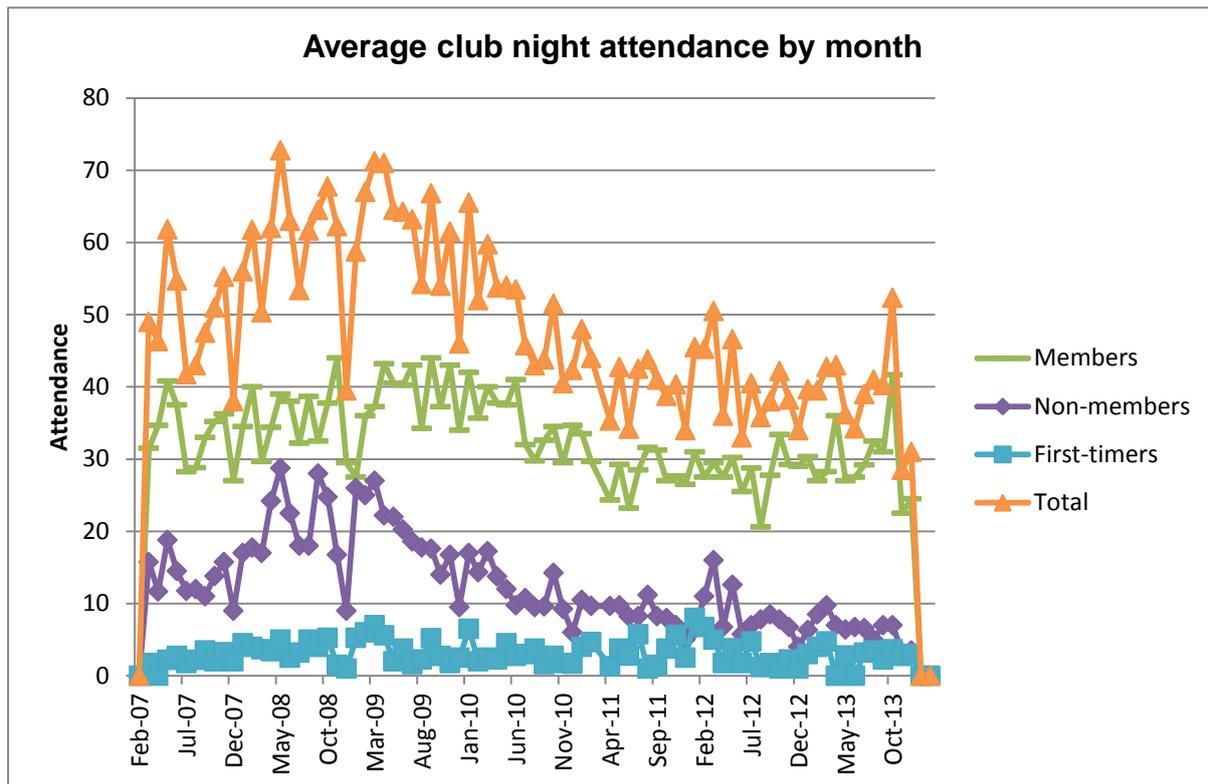


to turn up pretty consistently throughout the year. The actual number of attendees is believed to be slightly higher than calculated though, as some will inevitably slip through the door without signing the register.



The above graph shows average club night attendance by month for the 2013 fiscal year for members, non-members and first-timers (plotted cumulatively). Average attendance by month is surprisingly stable throughout the year, with the exception of lull during the holiday period of November-January which is consistent with previous years.





The above graph shows the trend in average club night attendance by month for members, non-members and first-timers over the last few years. Member and non-member attendance is declining over time while first time attendance has held steady. Overall attendance has dropped visibly from around 60 each night in 2008-2009 to about 40 each night for 2011-2013, although it seems to have stabilised recently. During the same period attendance by members dropped from approximately 40 to 30 each night, and attendance by non-members dropped from approximately 20 to 6 each night, accounting for most of the drop off.

Over the past year the best attended club night was the Bivouac talk on gear for new trampers (16 October), with 74 attendees. Other popular club nights were Shaun Barnett’s talk on his Shelter from the Storm book (31 July, 54 attendees), the photo competition (3 April, 51), and Lorraine and Nina’s talk on Alpine Adventures (21 August, 50).

(All statistics based on the sign-in registers containing information on 37 club nights from March 2013, and excluding new members’ nights, AGM, SGM, social night and gear-only nights.)

Over the year there have been around 15 club members regularly helping on the door welcoming visitors, a slight reduction on previous years. It can be busy at times, and we have started trying to recruit two volunteers to assist each Wednesday, although it has proved increasingly difficult to convince people to help





out. Based on several recommendations we are now asking those volunteering to informally recruit other more-senior members to hang around the door so that they can assist with talking to new people who turn up with questions, and this seems to have gone some way to reducing the burden on those staffing the door. It is an important job which gives members the chance to meet new people and talk to first timers about the club, and our thanks goes out to all the helpers. If you think you can help out occasionally please talk to one of the committee and we will slot you into the roster.

New Members Nights

Over the past year we have held New Member nights on 20 February 2013 and 9 October 2013, and 19 February 2014. Both 2013 events were well attended, with over 50 attendees in February and over 40 in October. Unfortunately things got a bit hectic on the door and we weren't able to get an exact count, but by the time the keynote speech started it was standing room only on both occasions. An informal questionnaire at the door indicated that most of those attending heard about the event through our website or through word of mouth, with MeetUp also contributing to the big turnout in October.

The October event was a new addition to the calendar for the club – in previous years the New Member nights were a once-a-year February event – but we thought it may be useful to try to catch new punters towards the end of the year as the weather started to improve. Given the results we will try to hold the event twice per year in the future.

We have also made a bit more effort to coordinate trips around the New Member nights, making sure that there is a bushcraft course two or three weeks afterwards, and a number of interesting easy- and easy-medium trips, so that those attending have no excuses not to sign up! If we measure the open nights by the numbers signing up to the bushcraft courses immediately afterwards then they have been a huge success, with both of the 2013 bushcraft courses filling up and several of those attending going on to join the club. Big thanks to David Heffernan and the team of member volunteers who promoted and organised these events. They provide an important opportunity to communicate face to face what WTMC is all about to prospective members.

David Heffernan, Promotions Officer and Sue Walsh, Social Convenor

