

THOMAS RIVER HUT REPORT

For DOC, the Consortium, and Permolat.

Geoff Spearpoint update 23.11.16

TRIP 1

February 2015- (3 days)

Sven Brabyn and I crossed over the Thomas Range and descended to Thomas River Hut. Sven scrubbed down the mattresses which were in a very filthy mouldy state. I replaced 4 broken/rotten floor boards near the door. We did some track work with loppers and surveyors tape down the valley to the Haast.

On 17.6.15 I signed an agreement with the department to manage Thomas River Hut near Haast.

TRIP 2

May 2016- (One week)

Liz Stephenson, Hugh van Noorden and I drove down to Haast and flew in with James Scott's pilot Scott to the hut to spend a week on maintenance.

The door latch was rusting and in poor repair. We replaced that.

The hinges were also rusting, particularly the bottom one, which collapsed as we removed it. We replaced all three.

The door design ensured that water ran onto the tin plate sill, and then inside. We added a sloping wooden strip across the bottom of the door and now water will shed to drip beyond the floor edge. I will add some sealant to that when I return in spring/summer to paint.

The door sill flatiron flashing was rusted out badly in places on the floor lip. We replaced it with new coloursteel flatiron.

In the vestibule just inside the door we replaced ply sheets that were badly delaminated.

Using bolts, we added a curved cowling to the chimney to stop rain pouring down it. Works well.

The external wall beside the door had rust holes all the way up it, leaving the stud and inside exposed. We took the sheet off and replaced it with new coloursteel flat iron we had taken in for the job. We will use sealant on this next time we are there. Our sealant tubes, both of them new, were partially set, and impractical to use. However there should be no problem for the next few months.

The ply/wood holding the toilet seat was so rotten it had collapsed under someone. The seat was broken and the wood mushy when I removed it all. We had taken in new external treated thick ply (about 20mm) to replace it with and

made up a new seat, painting it thoroughly before installing it. I also added a couple of externally treated 75x25 boards on edge under it and a little beyond the seat hole and nailed them in securely to add extra support. We cleaned up around the toilet and added gravel to the area under the door and dug a drain to take water away from the door area. Looks a million dollars. The pit is getting full, though with low usage replacement isn't essential yet.

We also built a new woodshed, using 50x100 timber and corrugated iron walls and coloursteel roof. The 100x75 posts are well cemented in. We gravelled the floor and entrance to it. Looks good and sharp. I went over it to make sure all tin corners were folded back so as not to catch anyone, and the design, with wood covering the corrugated iron ends in the front makes it well protected.

We also cut back vegetation around the hut and back from the heli pad.

TRIP 3

October/ November 2016- (One week)

I returned with Liz Stephenson, Tracy-Lee Burkhart, Hugh van Noorden, and Peter Fullerton. We had organised to fly in with James Scott's pilot Scott again, but phonecalls the night before from DOC halted that. Eventually we flew in with Greenstone Helicopters.

Greenstone helicopters had flown in a Wanaka couple to Thomas River Hut hunting and fishing in the valley earlier in the same day. We were all based at the hut and got along well, but 4 of the work party tented.

What the work party did.

Replaced the skylight and underlined it with clear PVU sheeting, which is UV resistant and used for the likes of windows in caravan awnings. Increased the width of the skylight while keeping normal roof laps each side. This meant reboxing up around the rafters, but no rafters affected of course. Added foam at top and bottom of the skylight.

Replaced the ridging on the roof. The ridging (and roofing iron) are still in reasonable nick. However, the ridging has soft lead flashing all along the edges, so this has all been covered over with new wide ridging so it is now kea proof. This is attached with tech screws. We replaced leadheads with tech screws in other parts of the roof as well.

We put in a piece of new coloursteel flatiron flashing behind the chimney where a rudimentary flashing had been put in years ago, but wasn't long enough to do the job, leaving a section unflashed out of sight. Tech screwed it in place and now all covered.

Wire brushed, sanded, scrubbed, sugar soaped all the outside of the hut. Touched up any rust with rust converter. Then painted the whole exterior of the hut with Dulux Quitrust primer followed by 2 coats of Dulux Weathershield gloss

'Porangahau'. The door was sanded down and primed then painted with Dulux Super Enamel hi gloss white.

Wet areas under the end window indicated that it was leaking. We took the whole windowbox out and cleaned, scraped, sanded and primed the window up properly, before completely reflashing the sill and edges before reinstalling it.

Added a flyscreen to this end window.

Inside, we replaced some ply sheets that were delaminating. This was work left from last time that didn't get finished then. In the porch area we added a bit of 50x25mm architrave to give it added strength.

Inside the hut all the walls and ceiling were cleaned and scrubbed with sugar soap and then dried before painting with Dulux Wash and Wear Plus Kitchen and Bathroom semi gloss, Totaranui half. Two coats.

Added a bit more cover at the front of the woodshed to provide more protection from driving rain. It is neat and tidy.

The toilet leaked badly in rain. We have proofed it by sealing holes in the roofing iron, and folded the edges down at roof level to stop water blowing through. We have also used flashing tape in a couple of places where water was blowing through. The toilet was then scrubbed down and sugar soaped before painting.

The toilet vault is getting full but is fine at the moment.

The pilot was keen for the scrub near the helo pad to be cut back and asked for some limbs to be removed from a couple of beech trees extending into the helo landing area as well. We did this.

Trackwork.

Upvalley, we cleared and marked the track up to the first fine-weather gravel crossing above the hut.

Below the hut we cut and marked the track down to about opposite Trig Creek, marking it with red and white permolat.

Still to do.

Nothing vital. We had drizzly weather that prevented us from finishing touches to the painting. Another coat or 2 on the door and windows, and a bit of touch-up on the roof.

The fly screen is fine for now, but I need to take in lugs to make it easy to remove for cleaning. The fireplace is fine and during the week we lit it every day, and

never had an issue with it smoking, despite drizzly weather at times. Peter reorganised and tidied up the billy hooks. I like the open fire. The only thing I might attend to in the hut now is the food bench, which could be replaced with a stainless steel one, but it isn't a priority. DOC had been in since our last visit and replaced the mattress covers which is appreciated.

At some stage I will organise a group to go in and dig a new toilet hole in a dry place not too far from the current site, and then move the toilet over.

Tracks.

The river often backs up in the deep channels above the hut in rain, and I would like to add a wet weather option around a swampy area back to the river further upstream, where there are very good crossings. This would be useful to hunters, fishers based at the hut and trappers approaching the hut from upvalley. The Forest Service had a track around this too, and that continued a few km upstream.

Down valley, when time permits I would like to extend the track to the top of the island in the river a little below Pile Creek. Beyond that, the riverbed can be used mostly without difficulty or river crossing.

And that brings the programme up to date. A big thanks to DOC for their support with paint etc. We talked to Andrew on the way out and he was very helpful.

PHOTOS

Thomas River Hut in Feb 2015





Broken and rotten floorboards by the door, 2015.



Floorboards fixed, 2015.



Hugh investigating behind rusting flatiron. May, 2016.

Below, rusting wall flatiron. May, 2016.





Door entrance, May 2016.

Door handle, May, 2016.





Rusted out door sill, May 2016.



Rusted door hinges, May 2016.



Door, Nov 2016. New doorhandle and latch, doorsills, flashing and paint. Needs final touchup still.



New Hinges, May 2016.



New Cowling, May 2016.



Liz undercoating new ply.
Replacing delaminated ply in the porch. May 2016.



End windowsill, Feb 2015.



Peter with the end window out to reflash it.



Reflashing the end window.



End window cleaned, reflashed and painted with flyscreen. Nov 2016.



Old skylight, inside and out. 2015.



Hugh trimming ply to new dimensions for the skylight. Nov 2016.



Tracy Lee painting the skylight windowbox, Nov 2016.



New skylight in and new wide ridging on the roof. Nov 2016.

Hugh installing a step to access the top bunks. Nov 2016.





Peter and Tracy Lee show off their new entrance step. Nov 2016.



Peter and Hugh adding a strip of flashing to weatherproof the chimney wall. 2016.



New coloursteel strip to flash the chimney wall properly. Nov 2016.



Tracy Lee (top) painting and Liz (below) cleaning before painting. Nov 2016.

The hut interior after scrubbing, cleaning then painting with 2 coats. Nov 2016.





Peter paint rolling and Tracy lee wire brushing the hut exterior. Nov 2016.



Liz scraping down the verandah. Nov 2016.



Toilet after painting. Nov 2016.



Top, the new woodshed, Nov 2016.
Below, after a coat of Quitarust Primer. Nov 2016.

The completed Thomas River Hut looking sharp, Nov 2016.

