

beechleaves

Newsletter of the Manawatu Tramping and Skiing Club



MAIL: MTSC, P.O. Box 245, Palmerston North | WEB: www.mtsc.org.nz

CLUB NIGHTS

7.30 pm, 1st Tue of the month, Rose City Aquatic Club Rooms, 50 Park Road, Palmerston North

1st October (Tuesday at 7:30pm): Interclub Photo Competition

MTSC is hosting the annual Interclub Photo competition between Palmerston North Tramping and Mountaineering Club, Massey University Alpine Club, and MTSC this year. The best photos from the individual club competitions go head to head, a great chance to see some of the best recreational outdoor photos taken in the last year. Categories are Natural History, Above the Bush-line, Below the Bush-line, Landscape, Topical and Overseas.



Royce



Ken



Alla

5th November: Safety, Cautionary Tales, and a Quiz.

This meeting will focus on matters of safety. Overall the club has a good safety record but as the average age of members continues to climb and the mid-week trips continue to attract increasing numbers (35+), the club faces challenges. After a brief presentation about trip preparation and trip leadership from the Chief Guide, Ken Mercer, we will have a series of short accounts of trips that got into trouble and what can be learned from them. There will then be a short quiz on first aid and safety.

This meeting is intended to be both enjoyable and informative!



Contents

Reports, Notices and Information.....	page 2
Upcoming Trips	pages 3-4
Trip Reports	pages 4-9
Club Information	page 10

To receive your newsletter as a colour pdf (instead of by post), or if your phone, address or email change, please notify editor@mtsc.org.nz and membership@mtsc.org.nz.

The deadline for newsletter contributions is **the 1st week of the month**. Photos are welcome and will be included where possible – remember to include an appropriate caption.



MTSC President: Linda Campbell

president@mtsc.org.nz

Sitting here with the wind rattling the cat door and rain pounding on the roof reminds me of times of being in the mountains when the wind makes it hard to stand, hard to breathe-in, and the rain is so hard it stings. One occasion that stands out firmly is a scout trip I had attended on Mt Taranaki some years ago.

We had a great day on the Saturday but during the night the wind got up and it fair blew a gale. The sides of the Tahurangi Lodge, where we were staying, shook and rattled so much that sleep was impossible. At first light I ventured out and quickly retreated as standing up was rather a challenge. We soon made the decision that we were going nowhere. However, after breakfast a couple of others who knew we were there arrived armed with rope. Before long the boys were all roped up and out in the wind. We all made it back safely but it was one trip the scouts did not forget. These days MetService has improved its forecasting, and as part of the Mountain Forecast weather predictions for many more areas are included, including three huts in the Tararuas. It pays to check the forecasts but there are no guarantees. Enjoy yourselves in the hills but take care out there.



MTSC Chief Guide: Ken Mercer

chief.guide@mtsc.org.nz

We have received notices from DOC advising of three possum poisoning operations which will be running in the next few months. Dogs are particularly at risk as they are more sensitive to 1080 than possums. They are attracted to dead possums which can remain dangerous for many months, until decomposed. In brief the areas are in from North Manakau Road, Otaki Forks to Mt Holdsworth and the Gwavas Forest. Please be careful if you take your dog tramping.

NOTICES and INFORMATION

7th September A-Frame (AKA Travers) Hut in Danger of Closure

A recent article in "Stuff" reports the problems DOC is having with vandalism of A-Frame hut, which is on Takapari Road on the Ruahine tops. The options seem to be either to stop access along Takapari Road, which does however get a lot of use from a wide range of people, or to close the hut. (<http://www.stuff.co.nz/dominion-post/news/9137763/Ruahine-Range-hut-may-be-closed-due-to-vandalism>).

9th September Interclub Quiz Night

MUAC hosted the interclub quiz night this year and eight MTSC people turned up to brave the competition and managed second place. Given that this was not a game of thrones, second place was an OK place to be!

Saturday 16th November The Pukeokahu / Aorangi Walk \$45 per person

Presented by the Pukeokahu Hall Committee as a fund raiser for the Pukeokahu School and Hall (east of Taihape). The day will involve transportation to the Eastern side of Aorangi peak, followed by a walk over the summit and down the western side, to finish at River Valley Lodge. A guide-representative of the Aorangi-Awarua Trust will accompany the walk and offer interpretation of the history, flora, and fauna that walkers would seldom have the opportunity to hear. The untracked climb over the summit of Aorangi walk is only suitable for adult walkers with a good level of fitness. For those who might find this too challenging, a second easier option is offered to the Narrows - Te Papa a Tarinuku. This unique rock formation is where the entire volume of the Rangitikei River is squeezed through a narrow chasm of greywacke rock. Numbers are limited for this walk - leave it and you may miss out ! For more information call Heather Gilbert on 06 3880762 or email bh.gilbert@xtra.co.nz, or bevakers@xtra.co.nz if you just want a copy of the flyers!

UPCOMING TRIPS

Trip Intentions

The email address for leaving trip intentions is intentions@mtsc.org.nz

Intentions sent to this address will not be acted upon UNLESS a party is reported overdue (e.g. by a family member, flatmate, friend, etc.). The email is sent to several MTSC members. This information will be provided to LandSAR only if the party is reported overdue.

The email should include: a list of participants and their contact details; a brief description of the intended route and possible alternative routes; starting point; start date; date/time due out; vehicle registration; and any other relevant details.



Trip Grading

The times listed below include tramping, meal and rest stops. In assessing the trip grading, terrain, weather and party fitness (which is as fast as the slowest member) are considered. Consult the trip leader if you are unsure about your suitability for a particular trip.

FAMILY	All welcome, casual pace, any age
EASY	4 hours per day, pace slower than Easy/Med. Does not relate to terrain
EASY/MEDIUM	5 hours per day at a pace slower than Medium
MEDIUM	7 hours per day at a standard walking pace
MEDIUM/FIT	8 hours per day at a pace faster than Medium
FIT	Over 8 hours per day at a pace faster than Med/Fit
TECHNICAL	Qualifying requirements to be announced by the trip organiser

Weekday trips generally range between Easy and Medium/ Fit. Call the leader for details on the destination and trip grade.

October Wednesday Tramps		
Date	Leader	Phone
2	Terry Knight	354 1530
9	Bernard Cobb	328 8088
16	Margaret Gillingham	356 8812
23	Marion Beadle	323 3246
30	Alison Jefferies	358 4895

October Thursday Tramps		
Date	Leader	Phone
3	Alan Cameron	358 3848
10	Richard Ellis	357 6410
17	Nigel & Jill Spencer	329 8738
24	Keith Fisher	357 1724
31	Royce Mills	355 8556

October Weekend Trips				
Date	Trip	Grade	Leader	Phone
12-13	Up and over Ruapehu	T	Adam Matich	359 2796
19-20	Spend a Weekend in the Snow	Lodge	Roger Athersuch	353 0434
26-28	North West Ruahines: Labour week end	M	Mark Learmonth	355 9143
2-3 (Nov)	Mountain Bike the Timber Trail – Pureora Forest Park	MTB/E	Royce Mills	355 8556

For weekend trips, unless otherwise specified, contact the trip leader by Wednesday night for overnights or Friday night for day trips.

Up and Over Ruapehu: 12-13th October

Technical

Adam Matich 359 2796

This is an ice axe and crampon trip, requiring almost perfect spring weather. The intention is to go up over Ruapehu, from the Whakapapa ski-field, to Tukino Ski-field and then cross-country back around the mountain to the top-of-the-Bruce. We may do it in the reverse direction if circumstances, and how one feels at the time, should dictate. It will also be open for discussion as to whether we leave town early on Saturday morning or head up on Friday night!

North West Ruahines: Labour Weekend (26-28th) Medium

Mark Learmonth 355 9143

Labour weekend is fast approaching: time to consider coming on this year's tramp into the N/W Ruahines. It's been a long time since the club tramped in this area, so DON'T MISS this opportunity.

Day 1: From the road end directly to Ironbark hut by sidling the north face of the Mokai Patea Peak, then through to Colenso Hut for the night.

Day 2: Loop south around to Otukota hut for the night.

Day 3: Back through Ironbark hut.

This will be solid MEDIUM tramp.

TRIP REPORTS

31st July: Sunrise Hut and Beyond

Andrew Brodie

A perfect weather forecast encouraged 30 Wednesday trampers to join this trip plus an extra ring in from Hawkes Bay. We arrived at the North Block Rd car park keen to get going by 9:30 a.m. Trip leader blew his whistle – no it was not a school trip – to bring the group to order. The faster trampers were sent on their way with the hope that some might reach the Top Maropea Hut and the rest of us followed roughly in a couple of groups although these soon spread out along the track. There was a bit of icy snow on the shady parts of the track, which was a foretaste of what was to come further up. All of us reached the hut in times varying from less than 2 hours to nearer 3. A number of us were content to sit in the sun having a leisurely lunch while soaking in the great view while others went on to Armstrong Saddle to enjoy views of Ruapehu. A few followed the track to Top Maropea but found it very icy and more suitable for ice axes and crampons. They decided to return back down to the saddle using various techniques, accompanied by whoops of pleasure - one glissaded, one sat on a bit of plastic and one simply on his rear end. All on the trip said it was an absolutely stunning day. Thanks to Liz and Arthur Flint for driving the van and to all the other car owners who drove their vehicles.



Carolyn Brodie, Anne Rush, Linda Darbyshire, and Jill Faulkner on Armstrong Saddle.

Leonie Lowndes

10th August: Kaiparoro Plane Crash

Tim Swale

With heavy rain forecast for the weekend, the planned trip to the Mangatainoka Hot Springs was put on hold as it seemed likely that the ford on the access road would become impassable. After a phone round on Thursday night, a plan was hatched to join Royce's geocaching group from Wellington, and tramp to the crashed plane at Kaiparoro on the Saturday, hopefully before the impending rain arrived.

We met at Kaiparoro Road end at 9-30am on Saturday morning and put on old shoes to wade the Makakahi river. Once across, we changed into dry tramping boots, stashed our wet shoes and headed off up the track. The track climbs steadily for about 500 vertical metres to the bush edge where it breaks out into tussock and dracophyllum just before the trig at Kaiparoro. Along the way several geo-caches were located.

With cloud swirling around the tops, we retreated back down the track to the bush edge where we had lunch. Jim from Wellington had a birthday, so balloons, banner, party blow-outs and lots of cake suddenly appeared. Having eaten rather

more than we should have done, we set out, GPS devices in hand to try to locate the plane crash about half a kilometre down the spur to the south of Kaiparoro. The route descends steadily through bush along a faint track, marked in places with flagging tape, dropping about 150 m to the crash site.

Although it is 61 years since Flying Officer David Leary crashed his RNZAF Airspeed Oxford into the mountainside, the site is much more intact than I expected and is a sombre reminder of the unforgiving nature of the weather in the Tararuas. Wreckage is scattered over a wide area. Most sobering is the cross that marks the young pilot's grave. We spent about half an hour moving carefully around the site locating plane parts, many of which are still easily identifiable.

With photos taken and another geo-cache located it was time to head back up to the track near Kaiparoro summit before making our descent in light rain. This time we took the easterly route to high point 656m before dropping back down a good bulldozed track to the Makakahi river. A final splash though the chilly waters and we were back at the cars just after 4pm. The MTSC contingent were Royce Mills, Doug Lagerstead, Helen Peak, Calem Cooper, Ken and Mary Mercer, Linda Campbell and Tim Swale.



Crossing the Makakahi by the road end

Tim Swale



Calem with the remains of the Airspeed Oxford's instrument panel

Tim Swale

14th August: Panatewaewae Track (Wednesday)

John Ridge

Twenty-six trampers travelled south from Palmerston North by minibus and cars leaving the main highway to drive down North Manakau Road (South of Levin) which leads to the start of the track at a high point a short distance from the car park. The weather was good despite rain earlier in the week which warned us to expect mud, and yes the track had many muddy parts and in places we had to detour flooding across our path. Also we encountered storm damage and some windfalls. Because we had such a large group we divided into two for easy management. The plan was to climb up the hill to the clearing which was an excellent spot for morning tea and a great view out to the ocean.



The Wednesday Trampers on the Panatewaewae track
John Ridge

The first group were just leaving as the second arrived. A short break then we continued our walk passing through a delightful forested area followed by the undulating ridge towards the Panatewaiwai Trig. At midday we came across a hunter's camp site and decided it would be a good place for our lunch stop, seats and cover provided. The first group had climbed to a higher point and would find a suitable spot nearer the trig. We had agreed to be back at the car park at 3 o'clock so after lunch we made our way in that direction. The terrain, plus underfoot conditions at times, made the tramp somewhat testing but all agreed it was a good workout - the scenery and companionship making it all worthwhile. On the return ride home we rewarded ourselves in the usual fashion – a drink of our choice and a cake at the Museum Cafe. Thanks to those drivers who provided transport without whose help we would not manage.

18th August: Tawa Loop Family Walk

Linda Campbell

What a delight this walk was with five year old Lejla leading the way. It was rather lovely to be out walking with a young, enthusiastic and clearly keen to learn young lady. We enjoyed finding a variety of fungi and Tim found a hollow tree which we all explored. We seldom take the time to observe our beautiful bush and the insect life in the hollowed trunk was quite impressive. We saw a number of birds and Lejla's mum, Zuhra being more technologically advanced than us, investigated the QR Codes and we were all excited to see and hear the birds represented and also a clip of the big slip.

The Tawa Loop is well used by runners and walkers of all ages. This walk is less than two hours and a great place to take your young ones.

22nd August: Bruce's Hill (Thursday)

Royce Mills

When I joined the Thursday trampers back in 2006 this was the second tramp that I did with the group. We did it a few times more, then DOC took the bridge out at the start and we understood that this track was closed. However I recently noticed that a series of geo-caches had been placed up this way, now signposted as Braddick's track. Also the Wednesday group had been back there too. So off we set, 16 of us, to return and have a look. We parked in the grassy picnic area just south of Mt Bruce on SH 2. With no bridge, the first exercise was crossing the stream. Most of us had bought a change of footwear so we started tramping with dry feet. We were surprised to find that the start of the track has been significantly upgraded to take walkers from the Wildlife Centre up to a



Five year old Lejla and her mum Zuhra near the lookout on the Tawa Loop.
Zuhra Arnautvic



lookout. On the way up a new signpost directed us southwards and further up Braddick's track. Some of us were slowed by regular stops to find the geo-caches, the final one being at the summit of Mt Bruce, 710m. A pipe marks this high point but we were still in bush with no views. We continued a further 600m to an open clearing we remembered from past tramps and took an early lunch stop. The day was misty and drizzly so the views here were not the best. On the way back down several of us detoured to the lookout. The sky had cleared to show quite an impressive vista. It was good to rediscover this track; it makes for a pleasant 5 ½ hour day with not too much travelling time. The bush was beautiful and many bird songs were heard.

29th August: Not the Bottles track (Thursday)

Royce Mills

John McLeod, our leader for this Thursday tramp was keen to take us up the Bottles track, an alternative route to Herepai hut. John, Gordon Clark and I went for a reconnaissance trip the week before. We received helpful information from Tim Swale and Bev Akers about this route and managed to find our way up without too much difficulty thanks to the tapes that have been put in along the way. Our only point of confusion was where to leave the Mangatainoka River. As we seemed to have lost the tapes we just bush-bashed up the ridge to the main Herepai track. This wasn't hard as the bush was quite open. Eventually we met the taped Bottles track near the Herepai track. After lunch here we followed the taped Bottles route back out and retraced our steps. We had everything sorted for the coming Thursday tramp. Unfortunately very cold, wet, southerly wind-chill conditions hit on 29 August. It wasn't going to be a day for taking people off-track or risking travel in the Mangatainoka River. So instead twelve of us did the regular walk in to Herepai hut and enjoyed its shelter for lunch. We look forward to another go at the Bottles track.

31-1st September: Kiwi Saddle Hut

Nicola Wallace

We arrived at The Lakes car park after a pleasant drive via Fernhill, to find it was cool and raining. This road end really does need a shelter, but we got ready under the pine trees, and managed to stay mostly dry. The initial climb through the bush was pleasant. Adam and I had opted for shorts, but Mark stayed in leggings. Perhaps he had a premonition of what was to come.

As we ascended, the first bits of snow were seen, and by the time we got to the first plateau, it was wall to wall snow, which would have been truly lovely had it not kept raining. Up past Kuripapango trig, a soggy five minute lunch was had trackside, before continuing on. An awkward scramble under a fallen tree saturated my puny woollen gloves. Note to self: get waterproof gloves. As we gained more height, the world became increasingly white, and us, increasingly wet. Sometimes, mercifully, the rain would briefly turn to snow. Adam did a sterling job



Nicola and Mark on the 'picturesque' Kaweka tops

Adam Matich

of leading us through what was to me a confusing landscape of white and grey. How much I rely on being able to see the track to know where I'm going! Also track markers were a bit thin in places. At the Cameron Hut turnoff, not far from the hut, I had had enough of being cold, and I declared a stop to pull on rain leggings. Adam followed suit. The sign said the hut was only 30 minutes away. Even allowing for our slowed progress through the mid calf deep snow, that still wasn't far. And it was all downhill.

A steep downhill followed, dropping us into Kiwi Saddle (thoroughly marked with Waratahs). Through a gap in the trees the hut was visible. Woooopee! It had taken us just over 3 hours to get to the hut. The roof was covered thickly with snow. The first thing I did was check the water tank, and was overjoyed to find water came out the tap. We had the hut to ourselves, and ate “second lunch” before Adam got the fire going. There was lots of dry wood in the woodshed, but much of it was rotten. I could split and saw it easily, but of course it burned up very quickly. Soon the hut was our cosy little haven. No one wanted to go outside, into the alternating rain and snow. Sometime later a screeching was heard, and shortly after that I spotted Percy Possum in a beech tree, nibbling leaves. Maybe he was after the silver beet I’d brought with me for tea, but Mark and Adam (who both eschew silver beet), didn’t think so.



A frozen (outside) Kiwi Saddle Hut

Adam Matich

Tea was cooked before dark. For Mark and Adam it was corned beef & veges, followed by Adam’s fruit & custard dessert. For me it was the aforementioned beet, with tuna, beans and pasta, with a little of the lad’s broccoli as they had surplus food. For the rest of the evening we chilled out in the warm hut, with yours truly hogging the comfy couch. Later, as there was a snorer in the hut, I slept in the hut’s ante room, which contained some firewood, hooks, and a handy bucket. Throughout the night, loud bangs were heard as snow softened and slid off the hut roof, crashing to the ground.



Mark and Adam at the turn off to Cameron Hut

Nicola Wallace

The next morning, the weather was pretty much the same. It couldn’t have snowed much in the night, as our footprints were still visible. The wind hadn’t got up, (which had been forecast) thank goodness. The original plan was to do a loop via Castle Camp, but we decided to go straight back. Conditions were very much like the previous day, with rain and beautiful falling snow up on the high bits. It was nice following our footprints, and as we descended, the snow was softening. Finally, we left the last of the snow behind, and descended into a strange world of varying colours, and two good views of The Lakes. We got back to Mark’s car in under 3 hours. Once again, we got changed in the rain, under the pine trees.

We drove back via Taihape. The road to Taihape was very long and winding, and I soon felt very carsick. Poor Adam had to sit in the back while I took the front spot as far as Taihape. We had a great light lunch at the Brown Sugar Café, before heading back to Palmy.

Thanks to Mark for all the driving, and to both for a really good trip. We were: Mark Learmonth (leader), Adam Matich, and Nicola Wallace.

1st September: Mountain House Loop

Tim Swale

This easy day walk starting from the Holdsworth Road end seems to be constantly being upgraded by DOC as they make the “Front Country” ever more accessible to a wider range of people. Many tons of stone chips have been helicoptered in to make the path up to Mountain House mud free. There is even new seating at the Totara Flats turn off. However, wanting a bit of variety, we cut off the Gentle Annie Track and took the old track up the ridge to the real Rocky Lookout (the one that is actually marked on the map). We therefore bypassed the flash new lookout but could see it below us as well as having long views to the south while we had morning tea. Rather than going down to the rather gloomy Mountain House shelter for lunch, we cut into a clearing in the low scrub at Pig Flat where there seems to some more work going on – not sure what yet. Despite the occasional glimpse of sun, the air was quite cool so it was not long before we headed directly down to the Atiwhakatu Valley, encountering a small amount of track that has not yet been made into a highway. However, a new staircase off the Atiwhakatu Track makes the final drop onto track very easy. From there it was just a short walk back to Donnelly Flats, again with some new upgrades including guard rails and new toilets before finally arriving back to the car. All in all, a very pleasant stroll and good to see the area being so well used. We were: Alla Seleznyova, Linda Campbell and Tim Swale.



Linda and Alla at the real Rocky Lookout



Lituracy aint wot it wunce woz! *Tim Swale*

5th September: Five (+1) go to Table Top (Thursday tramp to Field Hut)

John & Gillian Thornley

A party of eleven members of the Thursday tramping group set off to Otaki Forks in the wake of a southerly storm passing from the South to the North Island. The group had been expecting cold and rainy weather but found themselves betwixt a dying southerly and rising northerly. While the tops had a good coating of fresh snow, there were only trickles of it above Field Hut. The changing weather, with swirling winds and clouds, gave sunny spells and atmospheric views for those who made it to Table Top. The five in the photo (left to right) Judy Swainson, David Grant, John and Gillian Thornley, and Peter Fouhy. The sixth 'summiteer' was photographer Royce Mills. Rest of the party: Graham Pritchard, John Brock, Gordon Clark, Brian and Ruth Evans.





CLUB INFORMATION

New Members

Prospective members must be nominated by a Proposer and a Secunder who are current MTSC members and have been so for at least one year. New memberships are usually confirmed at the next monthly committee meeting.

Prospective members are encouraged to go on a club trip or attend a club night before joining. This is a great way to meet current members who can nominate you.

For further information or an application form please visit:
www.mtsc.org.nz

Club Equipment

Hire equipment: we have packs, 2 and 3 person tents, tent flies (small and large), snow mats, gas cookers, size 8 and 9 boots, billies, food dehydrator and two bivvy bags. Ice axes, crampons, and helmets are also available. We have two personal locator beacons (PLB) for which there is no charge. Contact the Gear Custodian: Peter Rawlins on (06) 356 7443.

Club website | www.mtsc.org.nz

This contains club information, photos, contact details and back issues of this newsletter, Beechleaves.

The club website is maintained by Howard Nicholson (06) 357 6325 and is kindly hosted by **InSPire Net**, a locally based company.

Accommodation at the MTSC lodge on Mount Ruapehu

The lodge is close to Iwikau Village, has power, heating, hot showers and is well stocked with food. Members and their guests are welcome.

For Lodge bookings email Liz and Hugh Wilde lodge.bookings@mtsc.org.nz. If you cannot email then phone (06) 356 9450. To confirm your booking payment must be made in advance by cheque to 179 Cook St Palmerston North 4410 or by cash in person. Internet payment is not available for lodge fees.

	Members	Guests
Adult	\$30	\$45
Secondary School	\$25	\$40
Primary School	\$20	\$35
Pre-school (3-5 yo)	\$10	\$10

The Lodge phone number is (07) 892 3860.

Booking the MTSC Van

For bookings:

- Contact Ken Mercer (06) 356 7497.
- Cancellations should be made as soon as practicable to accommodate other potential users.

A fly (in the passenger door) and a Personal Locator Beacon (in the glove box) are available for use free of charge on trips.

Contact Details

Postal Address: MTSC, P.O. Box 245, Palmerston North

Committee 2013 - 2014

President	Linda Campbell	president@mtsc.org.nz	06 323 3836
Secretary	Tim Swale	secretary@mtsc.org.nz	06 376 6556
Treasurer	Arthur Flint	treasurer@mtsc.org.nz	06 356 7654
Chief Guide	Ken Mercer	chief_guide@mtsc.org.nz	06 356 7497
Membership	Judy Swainson	membership@mtsc.org.nz	06 358 4082
Newsletter Editor	Jean Garman	editor@mtsc.org.nz	06 354 3536
Lodge Manager	John Lyttle	lodge.manager@mtsc.org.nz	027 4336307
Mini-Bus Manager	Ken Mercer		06 356 7497

General Committee

Bev Akers, Ryan Badger, Bob Hodgson, Howard Nicholson, Rob Pringle

Appointees

Lodge Bookings	Hugh & Liz Wilde	lodge.bookings@mtsc.org.nz	06 356 9450
Gear Custodian	Peter Rawlins	gear@mtsc.org.nz	06 356 7443
Ski Captain	Howard Nicholson	ski@mtsc.org.nz	06 357 6325
Social Convenor	Bob Hodgson	social@mtsc.org.nz	06 356 2915
Day Trip Convenor	Bev Akers		06 325 8879