

beechleaves

Newsletter of the Manawatu Tramping and Skiing Club



MAIL: MTSC, P.O. Box 245, Palmerston North 4440 | WEB: www.mtsc.org.nz | FACEBOOK <https://www.facebook.com/MTandSC>

CLUB NIGHTS

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

3rd December: Visit to HELiPRO Hanger and End of Year BBQ

Meet at 7 p.m. at the HELiPRO Hanger, Airport Drive (Between Massey School of Aviation and the Airport entrance).

The visit will allow club members to have a look round the facilities, to be given a helicopter safety briefing, and for LandSAR to make an associated presentation. Following the safety theme of the November meeting, these activities are prudent preparation for the possibility of a helicopter rescue. Travis Chambers, Pilot/Senior Crewman with HELiPRO in Palmerston North, will also talk about the possibility of organising tramps using helicopters for drop off (HELiPRO has a DOC concession). Finally, the plan is to have an end of year "Bring & Share" BBQ at the hanger.

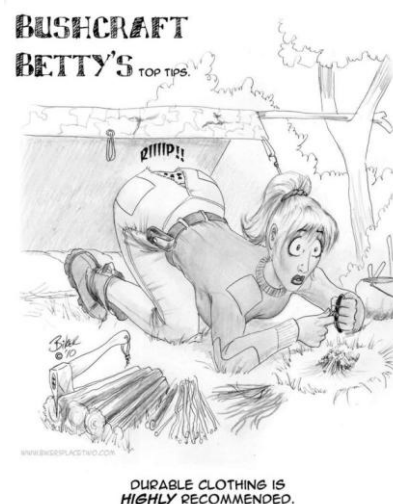


4th February (2014) at the Club rooms: BBQ and Bush Craft evening

Discussion will follow viewing the video: "It was only a Tramp in the Bush."

Then we will look at what you put in your pack when you go tramping:

- Bev will reveal the contents of her day pack
- Tim Swale and Linda Campbell will unpack their overnight packs



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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

I am sure many of us will have been saddened by the recent deaths of three experienced, adventurous young people in our mountains in the last few weeks. It gets one thinking of times when things haven't gone quite as planned so it was timely that our last club night had a focus on 'cautionary tales' – trips that went wrong or that had the potential to go wrong. Experience is a wonderful thing but often in order to develop expertise one has to have been in situations when things didn't go quite right and to learn from these experiences. If we are honest with ourselves we can probably tell many a tale where the "lemons" were building up but fortunately the decisions made turned out to be the right ones. Two of the speakers at our club night talked about club trips and two of private trips. All trips spoken of had the potential to end badly but fortunately they did not. The best advice that came from the evening was to learn from your mistakes and always have gear for any eventuality e.g. always carry some form of shelter even on a day trip and always make sure you have all your gear. A fine beautiful day doesn't always stay that way! And, of course always take a topo-map of the area you are in along with a compass and know how to use them. If your navigation skills need building there are many club members who are willing to help. Enjoy yourselves in the hills but take care out there.

Linda



MTSC Chief Guide: Ken Mercer

chief.guide@mtsc.org.nz

I have a bit of a reputation for, what I will call, innovative thinking and have to confess that it runs in the family. Recently my brother Colin took his two young daughters across the Heaphy track. He didn't want them burdened with packs and neither was he capable of carrying all their gear himself. The solution was lightweight involving a wheel plus bamboo. I had misgivings but his text from Karamea was "Brilliant trip and perfect weather. And a dammed good trolley". If anyone else is similarly inspired he'll be delighted to supply advice and encouragement.



Colin, Olivia, and Hannah Mercer on the Heaphy Track

NOTICES and INFORMATION

Club Nights Next Year

If you have any suggestions and requests for speakers and meeting themes for next year's (2014) club nights then send them to the Social Convener Bob Hodgson at social@mtsc.org.nz.



The Lodge is Not Just for Winter

Have you considered a trip to the club Lodge at Whakapapa in summer?

The lodge is just a 10 to 15 min walk from the Top of the Bruce. It is a great place for a family holiday, for a special occasion, for group activities or for getting away from it all. The rates are the same as winter if you use the food supplied or approximately \$15 less if you supply all your own food (please confirm rates at time of booking). There are a lot of summer-time activities to do in the area like walking, mountain biking, relaxing and socialising. If you need

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Tama Lakes: a nice day trip



more information on what opportunities there are check out the following websites.

For local walks

<http://www.nationalpark.co.nz/27-home/carousel/21-sed-ut-perspicatis-unde-omnis-iste-2.html>

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/tracks-and-walks/central-north-island/ruapehu/>

For mountain biking opportunities

<http://www.visitruapehu.com/new-zealand/Mountain-Biking/>

<http://www.tongarironationalpark.com/activities/tongariro-mountain-biking.html>

DOC also run a summer activity programme

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/national-parks/tongariro/activities/special-events-in-tongariro/>

RAL also has some summer options

<http://www.mtruapehu.com/summer/>



To FMC Supporters & Friends:

The FMC **October Newsletter** is available on our website at

<http://www.fmc.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/Newsletter/Club1310.pdf>.

Unfortunately, due to unavoidable delays, the **November** issue of the **FMC Bulletin** is delayed. Please expect this in your mailbox towards the end of November.

The editor apologies for any inconvenience caused.



The Manawatu Walking Festival runs over the weekend 28th Feb.-2nd March 2014 and is focused on bringing together walkers from around New Zealand to experience the variety of great walks in the Manawatu. There are walks for all ages and fitness levels, including the iconic Manawatu Gorge Track through native bush, a twilight beach walk, an urban art and sculpture walk, a

vineyard tour with tasting, and a farm walk. Hosting this festival is a range of experts including tramping guides, historians, storytellers, nature experts, experienced walkers, and photographers. Take a look through the options at <http://www.mwf.org.nz/> and register your interest today.



Help stop the spread of freshwater pest plants between waterways.

Freshwater pest plants can be sneaky little buggers. Sometimes a waterway is affected but the pest isn't obvious yet. Aquatic pest species can be microscopically small, so unaware, we spread the pest elsewhere.

Tramping is a high risk activity for spreading aquatic pests and it would be easy to inadvertently spread aquatic pests from one waterway to another. Weeds like Didymo clog water ways and affect water quality, out-compete native species and make recreational activities difficult. If you get wet in one waterway and move to another, you're at threat of transferring aquatic pests. Any tramp that involves crossing streams, rivers or any other waterways can risk spreading aquatic pests. The good news is it's easy to take action to protect your patch and stop the spread of freshwater pests. Here's what you need to do to, **Check, Clean and Dry**.



Only getting wet in one waterway:

If you only get wet in one waterway or it's a dry track you're fine and there's no need to check clean and dry, but be mindful that if you do get wet and may get wet in another waterway in the future, dry your gear.

Several days between getting wet in one waterway and another, Check and Dry:

Check and remove any obvious plant debris.

Dry to the touch all gear that got wet and then wait 48 hours before getting wet in another waterway.

Moving between waterways:

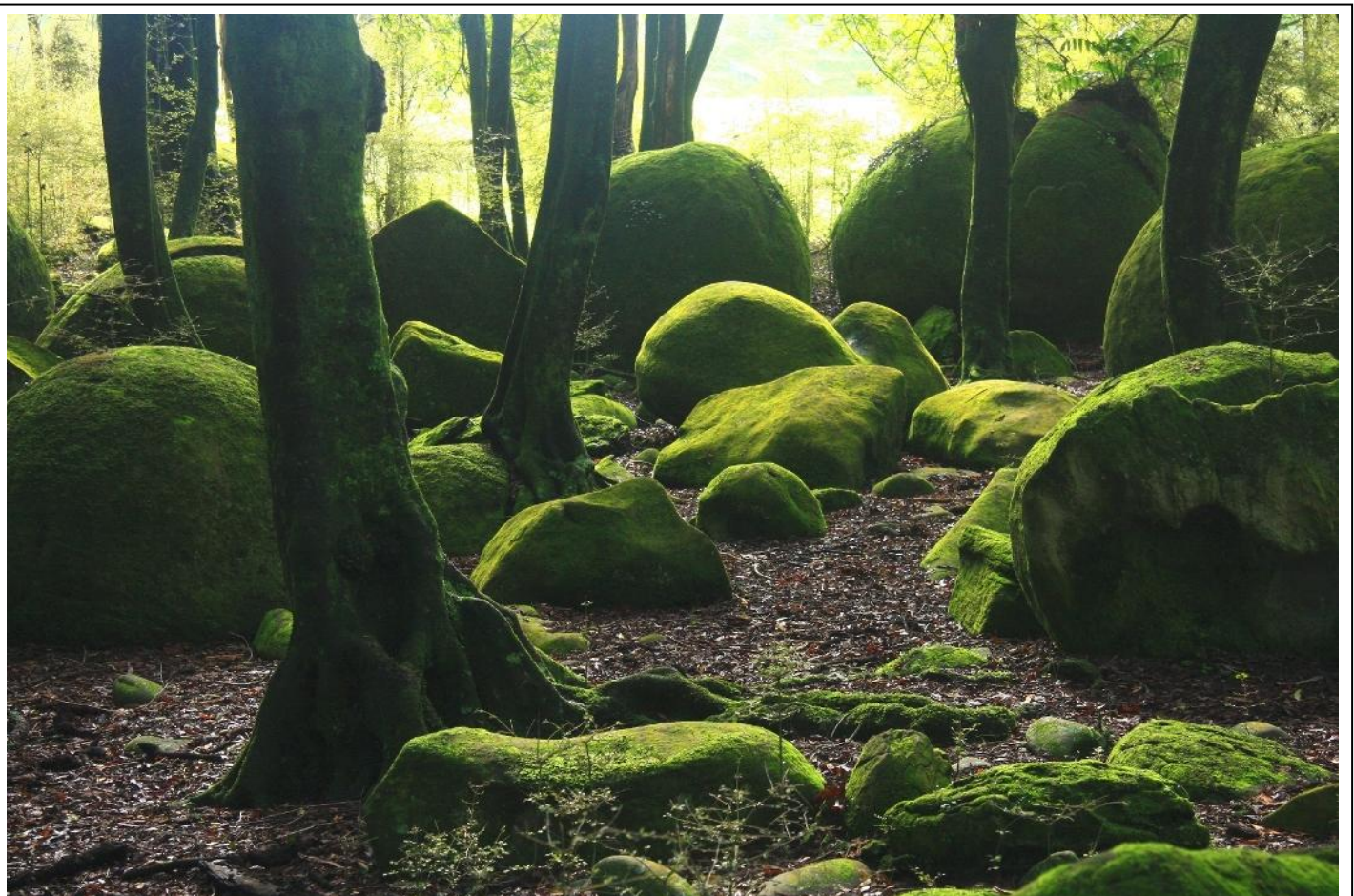
Check and remove any obvious plant debris. **Clean:** soak (either full immersion or thorough spraying) equipment for at least one minute. Make sure it's fully wet, especially if it's absorbent material. Use a solution of water and at least 5% dishwashing liquid or 2% household bleach for cleaning. Clean anything that got wet

For tramping you can carry a small spray bottle and detergent if you are moving between waterways on one tramp. You can email andrew.watt@horizons.govt.nz to get one of these 200 ml bottles designed specifically for tramping. Some local retailers like Hunting and Fishing and Mountain designs also have these available in store at no charge.

If you follow these simple steps whenever you move between waterways you'll do your bit to stop the spread of aquatic pests. Always assume that the waterway you've come out of has pests in it and follow Check Clean and Dry, that way you'll know you've done your bit to protect our precious waterways.

For more information please see: <http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/pests/didymo/cleaning>

If you have any questions please contact Andrew Watt, the Check Clean Dry Advocate for the Manawatu/ Wanganui area, andrew.watt@horizons.govt.nz or call Andrew on 0212277127.



Whitecliffs boulders beside the Rangitikei River

John Brock

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.

| December/January Wednesday Tramps | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------|----------|
| Date | Leader | Phone |
| December | | |
| 4 | Bev Akers | 325 8879 |
| 11 | Mona Webb | 323 4212 |
| January | | |
| 29 | Sue Pither | 357 3033 |

| December/January Thursday Tramps | | |
|---|---|----------|
| Date | Leader | Phone |
| 5 | Judy Swainson | 358 4082 |
| 12 | Geraldine Fovakis | 356 4327 |
| 13 | Xmas Barbeque - phone a regular for details | |
| No trip leaders on the roster for January | | |

| December/January Weekend Trips | | | | |
|--------------------------------|--|-------|----------------|--------------|
| Date | Trip | Grade | Leader | Phone |
| December | | | | |
| 7-8 | Lower Matakuhia Hut | M | Mark Learmonth | 355 9143 |
| 14-15 | YTTY-Oriwa-PanaTTY | M | Adam Matich | 022 358 8062 |
| January | | | | |
| 11-12 | Piripiri Headwater Explorer | F | Jean Garman | 021 176 0209 |
| 18-20 | Anniversary Weekend: Te Totara + Central Wairau Huts | M | Mark Learmonth | 355 9143 |
| 25 | Coppermine to Keretaki | F | Adam Matich | 022 358 8062 |

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



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7-8th December: Lower Matakuhia Hut M Mark Learmonth 355 9143

Lower Matakuhia Hut is a little-known, low usage hut in the Waipunga Conservation Area south of the Whirinaki FP. This will be my second attempt to reach this hut after failing the first time after having trouble finding the start of the Opureke track, which is accessed off Waipunga road up a short four wheel drive. It is approximately three hours to Matakuhia Stream. It's overgrown in places with a few tricky bits to negotiate before reaching the stream; then a further three hours following the stream to the hut. It should be a rather interesting trip. If interested, give me a call.

14-15th December: YTTY-Oriwa-PanaTTY M Adam Matich 022 358 8062
adam.j.matich@gmail.com

This very solid medium-grade trip starts on the western side of the Tararua at North Manakau Road. We will climb almost 800 m to Waitewaewae peak, bush navigate in a generally easterly direction to reach the Oriwa Biv site where we will camp in the trees nearby for the night. Next day we will retrace our steps 1 km west and head north to Panatewaewae peak, then in a westerly and then finally a southerly direction back to the road end.

11-12th January: Piripiri Stream Headwater Explorer F Jean Garman 021 176 0209
jean.garman@fonterra.com

This will (hopefully) be an off track, adventurous, explorative trip all the way up the Piripiri stream, around the tops and back past the Piripiri Biv, and we will try to camp somewhere along the way. There will be waterfalls and leatherwood to get past/around/through, and we may not make it and have to turn back. This one is not for the faint hearted; lots of hard work, scratches, and bruises guaranteed.

18-20th January: Anniversary Weekend in the Urewera National Park M Mark Learmonth 355 9143

I plan to visit Te Waiotukapu, Central Waiiau & Te Totara huts located on the south side of State Highway 38 through the park. Should not be too hard but expect to get your feet wet as there will be numerous stream crossings. This is a first for our club going to these huts, so it's going to be very interesting. Don't miss out as the likelihood of this being on the trip card again is very remote. So if you are interested to give me a call; sooner than later.

25th January: Coppermine to Keretaki F Adam Matich 022 358 8062
adam.j.matich@gmail.com

We will head north from Coppermine road end up and over to Mangaatua Stm, then up-stream a bit before another up and over into Raparapawai Stm, which we will head up 2 km, and then climb out up to Keretaki hut. Finally, we drop into and head down Oruakeretaki Stm and out. We will need an early start and car shuffle for this one.



TRIP REPORTS

Thursday 10th October: Whitecliffs Boulders and Mangaweka Reserve

Royce Mills

In a change from our usual mountain climbing, the Thursday group took a drive to the Whitecliffs Boulders beside the Rangitikei River. We had just a 40 minute walk down to see these big round boulders, "cannonball concretions", just like the more famous Moeraki boulders. Covered in moss and set in beautiful bush; we were all captivated by their beauty and many photos were taken. We were lucky to have a sunny day and enjoyed a relaxed morning tea by the Rangitikei River to fortify us for the steep walk back up to the vehicles. We drove on to Mangaweka, looking for somewhere to sit and have our lunch. There didn't seem to be a park or public seats anywhere until we spotted the school - empty for the school holidays. Sixteen of us spread ourselves along the sheltered veranda steps and ate our lunch. Two teachers who happened to be working at the school came out and were most surprised to see us all.

However they were very welcoming! We then took a one hour walk around the Mangaweka reserve. The kowhai trees were in flower and were just magnificent. Across the road from the car park is an old, disused rail tunnel. We took a walk through to the other end which is almost blocked by a slip. An interesting finish to a varied day out.



Old Mangaweka Rail Tunnel

John Brock

Thursday 17th October: Waitewaewae Track

Graham Pritchard

Sixteen Thursday trampers, lead by Nigel and Jill Spenser, set off along the Waitewaewae track with the aim of reaching our usual destination - the plateau at the head of Saddle Creek. After the continuous deluges of rain earlier in the week it was no surprise to find the side creeks in fairly full flow. This raised uncertainty about the climb up Saddle Creek which was confirmed when we reached the start of the climb and saw the volume of water coming down. Most of us decided that was far enough and we enjoyed a leisurely lunch in a beautiful setting with every surface; tree trunks and branches, boulders and cliff faces clothed with a great abundance of bryophytes, filmy ferns and other epiphytes. Three hardy souls, Dave Grant, John Brock and Judy Swainson took on the climb up Saddle Creek for some considerable distance but eventually they too decided to call it a day and turned back. Despite not getting to our planned destination, the trip provided other sources of challenge and entertainment. One of these was the old boiler which apparently concealed a tiny geocache somewhere in the vicinity of a 'recently rusted' bolt head! You'd have thought that with so many



The Waitewaewae slip

Richard Ellis



Thursday trampers crawling over every surface and orifice we'd have found it. However, even Royce, with many years of experience and skill in finding geocaches, had to admit defeat.

The other challenge was traversing the route at the top of the huge slip a short distance before the boiler. At one point this involved trusting our weight and balance to a bare and very narrow exposed clay ledge no more than 12 cm wide in order get across to the next reasonable foothold. The presence of some very firmly rooted keikei stems, at shoulder level, to hold on to (see photo) gave us some sense of security. With the thought of negotiating this on the return journey we resolved to find a by-pass through the dense vegetation above the ledge, which we succeeded in doing despite a scramble through fallen keikei. This section of a popular track does urgently need attention for safety reasons. DOC has placed an appropriate warning notice on the shelter at Otaki Forks but not everyone would necessarily see this before setting out. I note that the published guide to the Te Araroa Trail (of which this track is a part) makes no mention of this slip.

Thursday 24th October: Panatewaewae

Graham Pritchard

Why would anyone want to climb Panatewaewae? The only answer I can come up with is the response made famous by Mallory when asked why he wanted to climb Everest: "Because it is there". Unlike Everest there is no view from the top and you only know that you have reached Panatewaewae summit (728 m) by checking your GPS! In the earlier days of the Thursday trampers group we often climbed from the North Manakau road to the lookout at the top of the old logging road for the fine view of the Horowhenua plains (now obscured by pine trees on the northern slopes.) To round out the day in those days we made various unsuccessful attempts to see if we could find the remains of the old track to Panatewaewae then very overgrown, a victim of the great 1936 storm. Much more recently we learned that there was now a good track along the ridge line east of the lookout. Indeed there is – wide enough to drive quad bikes along – almost boring. It has few redeeming features mostly up and down with pools of mud in the low bits. An earlier reconnaissance in 2011 following this track had led us to a dead end at some sort of unofficial shelter. We realized that the way to the summit lay up the spine of a ridge which we should have picked up earlier. On last Thursday's trip we



Enjoying the view from Panatewaewae summit

John Brock

followed up this untracked ridge through much more attractive bush to the long, almost flat ridgeline at about 700 m and followed this north, some in the party going all the way to 728 m, the real Panatewaewae summit, while many of us were content to stop at 712 m for lunch and call it a day then. Including the long walk up the North Manakau Road to the logging track start (and the return) it was an eight hour day. The main merit of getting to Panatewaewae is that it opens up the possibility for a future day tramp northwards along the fairly level ridge to Spion Kop and dropping down to Muhunoa Road east for a round trip.

26-28th October: North West Ruahines (labour Weekend)

Nicola Wallace

Day one: Mokai Road End to Colenso Hut

We had a slightly late start, as Alan (who'd come all the way from New Plymouth the night before) did not have Adam's correct address. So after a bit of vehicle shuffling, we left town at 8 a.m., and shortly after picked up our leader, Mark. On reaching Utiku, we turned off, driving over some impressive canyons which warranted further inspection. For now, we kept going, and Adam had us at Mokai Road end at about 9:30 a.m. The last bit to the car park was a gnarly little ford followed by very slippery grass. After getting through the ford, the van wheels just spun round in the mud, so very skilfully Adam reversed, so we parked further away and had a short walk to the track start.



Leaving Ironbark Hut after lunch on day one

Jean Garman

The first bit of the track was reminiscent of the steep farmland bit on the way to Purity Hut, a steep climb with a fence to grab on to. It soon levelled out, and we left the track and climbed Mokai Patea almost to the top, before sidling round its North side. The weather was perfect – light cloud and warm. Mokai Patea's tussock was the highest

I've ever walked in, but I only fell over once. We descended into a saddle, picked up the small stream we could see on the map, and with reassurance from Alan's GPS, found the track to Ironbark Hut. Soon after we reached the Ruahine Forest Park boundary, and had a lovely descent through beech forest to Ironbark Hut.



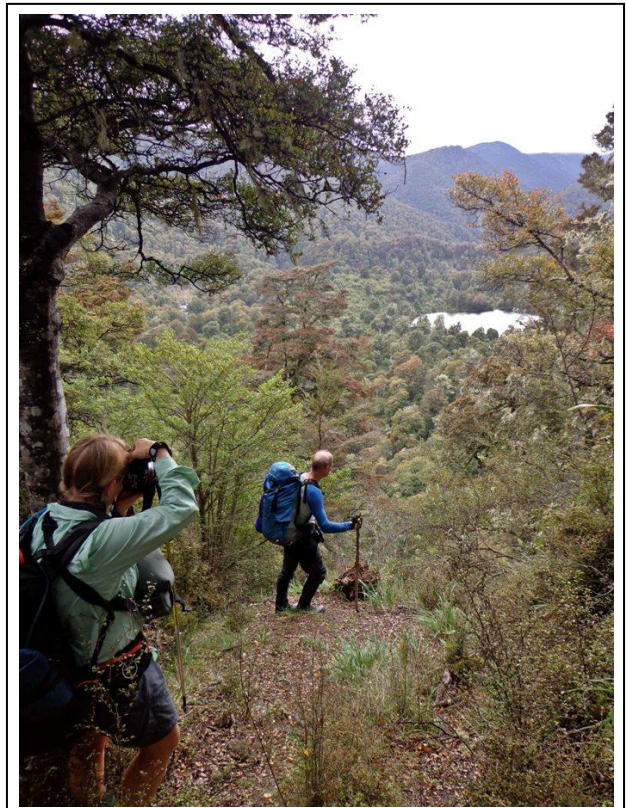
Ivan by Lake Colenso

Jean Garman

We had spread out, and by the time Mark & I got to Ironbark, Jean already had it looking spick & span. After a short lunch outside, we crossed the new swing bridge, followed by the new wooden Unknown Stream Bridge. Then followed a steep climb, and we all spread out again. After what seemed like ages, but was probably less than two hours, I felt sick of walking on my own, and waited for Mark and Adam. Mark was having trouble with cramp, so took his time from here. The going was easier now, with little uphill, but some boggy bits. Soon Adam & I turned off to view the lovely Lake Colenso, and then arrived at the hut. Mark arrived soon after, but wasn't feeling the best. I elected to sleep on the veranda, and just before bedtime (about 8:30 p.m.), I heard who whistling down at the river, only about 100 m away. It was a recipe for a good sleep, after eight hours of tramping!

Day two: Colenso Hut to Otukota Hut

Mark decided to return to Ironbark Hut for night two, rather than do the big loop to Otukota Hut, and a few hours into the day, I decided that for him it was a good decision. After farewelling him at the turnoff 1.6 km from Colenso Hut, we climbed very steeply, and soon had good views of Lake Colenso, and nearby limestone cliffs. Then followed a steep descent into the stream, and a messy dip into a sludgy mud bog for me. I got my left leg out, but it took a lot of pulling! The stream section was less than 1 km long, but I'm slow in water, and I lost a lot of ground. Near the Unknown Campsite, we got onto the track again, and started a very long but mostly gentle ascent. Alan thought it was going to start raining at about midday, so at 11:30 a.m. Jean declared on an early lunch. The rain started at about 1 p.m. When we at last reached the highpoint, Puketaramea (1338 m ASL), which is exposed, it was raining and blowing hard, so there was no stopping to celebrate the highest point of the trip. The next section to the Otukota Hut turnoff felt much longer than it looked on the map, mostly downhill, but a couple of knobs to go over. It went on and on. It didn't help that the map shows the turnoff in the wrong place. From the turnoff it was only an hour to Otukota Hut; a very steep descent into the river, a short walk upstream, and a very steep little climb to the hut. By now I was pretty tired, and the hut was a very welcome sight. It had been another eight hour day.



Jean and Alan looking down on Lake Colenso on day two
Ivan Rienks

Somewhere behind the hut, a noisy bird was singing a song I'd never heard before. I checked out the bush, and the only bird I saw was a North Island Robin, who came very close to check me out. Despite persistent efforts at keeping an eye on him, I never saw him sing, but I think he was the mystery singer. We soon had the hut very cosy, Alan got the fire going, and at about 5 p.m. we had a lovely evening thunderstorm. Intermittent rain continued all night (I think I actually slept quite well). In the early hours a few drops fell on my head in my upper bunk; must be a small roof leak.



Nicola, Alan, Adam, and Ivan on the Mokai Station boundary
Jean Garman



Day three: Otukota Hut to Mokai Road End via Mokai Station

I was happy that we were going back by the shortest route today, as I still felt a bit tired this morning. The steepness of the hills in the last two days had blown me away! It was still showery, so we didn't leave the hut too early. Just before I left the hut, I saw a NZ falcon and heard his "kek-kek-kek". A narrow little track climbed through the Robin's territory, then headed down to a stream. Next was a very tricky bit, and the steepest bit on the whole trip: getting across and up the side of the very steep slip I'd seen from the hut. This was a struggle indeed for me, but we all got up without mishap. The grade soon eased, and eventually we emerged from the bush onto Mokai Station. A gentle ascent up through tussock led to the Mokai Patea range. Up here, at just over 1200 m ASL it was windy and misty, so raincoats were donned. It was a beautiful walk through low tussock up here. Once we got to the steep down-hills, I got waaay behind, but I duly found my way through the farmland by following the poles. I passed a lovely little patch of bush with Tui singing. When I got back to the van people were still changing, and Mark was there, rested from a solitary night in Ironbark Hut.

Jean convinced Adam to stop for a look at the canyons we'd seen on the way in. They were awesome, vertical walls only a few feet apart. One was "Mokai Gravity Canyon" where we saw some people at the end of a bridge swing. Adam drove us speedily home and we were back in Palmy at about 2 p.m. What a hard but great trip it had been.

We were: Mark Learmonth, Adam Matich, Jean Garman, Ivan Rienks, Alan Taylor (from New Plymouth), and Nicola Wallace. You can see more photos at https://www.facebook.com/MTandSC/photos_albums.



Nicola outside Colenso Hut

Adam Matich



1-3rd November: Pureora Timber Trail

Chris Mercer

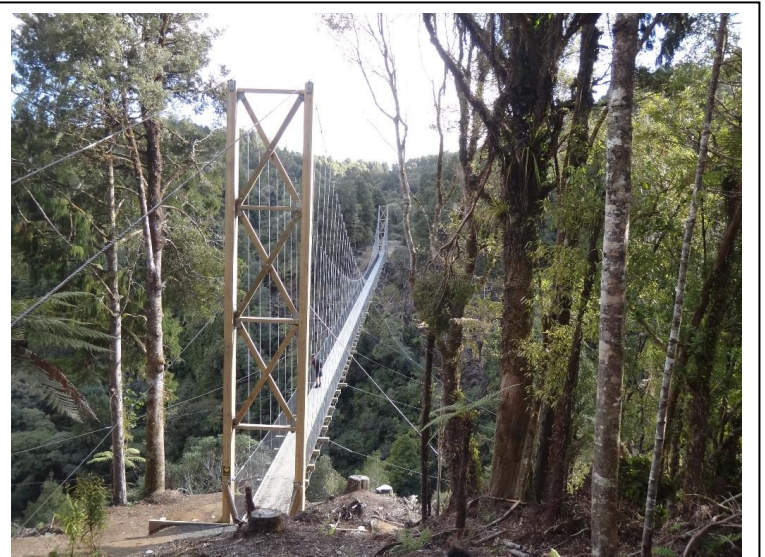
There was an air of excitement as we loaded the club mini bus and a large trailer; I felt all of us were looking forward to an expedition in a new place. Three couples used their own vehicles so we made a party of 12 cyclists and four drivers. After leaving PN in the afternoon, the first stop was for a fine Thai meal in Taumarunui, then onto the DOC Pureora Field Base to camp right opposite the start of the Trail. The dawn chorus was astonishing but so early! It was a remarkable experience to walk in off the open-sky roadside to under the canopy of the podocarp forest just metres away. This is a special place for me as in the 1970's we helped the fight to save this forest from logging.

There are many historical items and sites on the Trail and the first one was only 3 km after our 8:30 a.m. start, it was a 1928 Caterpillar tractor left behind by loggers. DOC has done a great job here and at later sites, e.g. this tractor was protected under a shelter. I loved the ride through the easy gradient in the mature bush but the Trail soon climbed more steeply through regenerating bush (aka cut-over pine forest) challenging my legs. The guide says "this is a sensible point to turn back if you doubt your ability ..."! The Trail climbs up the side of Mt Pureora past a track letting trampers achieve the summit. The Trail's high point at 980 m is on the southern side of the mountain; afterwards the Trail is predominately downhill for the rest of the day.

I loved the suspension bridges! These take a 'maximum of 10 persons' and are wide enough to ride on past a seated camera-buff taking ground-level movies. Our first two bridges were over 100 m long and gave great views of the bush below and the landscapes beyond. That night we stayed in the Piropiro campsite arriving at 2:45 p.m. after a 6:25 hr day (including stops) of 37 km. The campsite had plenty of room for the four parties there; these included the PNTMC!, a stag party with their dirt bikes, and three professional bird counters who had been there for a week. This latter trio was contracted by Landcare Research to count birds before and after a local application of 1080 baits and I lapped up the detail such as application rates, spider and rodent count protocols.



Ken Mercer pedals out of the gloom of the Ongarue Spiral tunnel. DOC has made a big investment here by diverting the stream which had run through it, and by strengthening the roof.
Chris Mercer



The Maramataha Bridge crosses a deep gully which became the northern boundary of the logging operations. These suspension bridges had netting sides which trapped the large, green puriri moths.
Chris Mercer



This Trail is part of the government's cycle trail initiative which aims to bring to other areas, the economic benefits seen around the Otago Rail Trail. The investment has been into bridges, trail construction, shelters and toilets. Some of us worry that the maintenance will challenge local DOC resources as we saw a need for a full-time-equivalent position to clear slips, maintain drains and fill pot holes. Already these aspects challenged us in a few places.

Sunday started at 8:20 a.m. with an easier climb than Saturday's taking us over another lovely bridge, this one the longest and highest of the Trail at 141 m and 53 m respectively, and up to The Terminus clearing. This is where the Ellis and Burn tramway finished during the logging days. There were interpretation boards here as elsewhere, giving us the history of the site, such as detail of a saw mill, or some engineering information such as for a bridge or a jigger turntable. These were done as well as those on the ORT but in contrast, the Timber Trail has lots of bits and pieces lying around, such as rails, wheels, old huts and logs which had fallen off their trolleys. The Trail was all downhill from The Terminus clearing for 39 km and over 18 bridges - both suspension ones and flat ones.

A fascinating feature of the day was the Ongarue Spiral, from the upper bridge we could watch our club mates underneath as they left the tunnel (a torch is advised). We had lunch at the Spiral's lower bridge where we chatted to the DOC worker John Burgess who told us of his responsibilities and shared his concerns. From here we cycled for about an hour to our waiting vehicles and their drivers, arriving at 1 p.m. after a 4.7-hr ride of 43 km.

Sincere thanks go to Royce for leading our trip; thanks also to John McLeod for moving the van around, to other drivers Peggy and Doug and to Rita and Arthur for the use of their excellent large trailer. This was a wonderful bush trip which is now on my list of 'must repeats', I loved finding a new expedition and I'm sure the Trail will benefit the area once the word gets around the mountain bike community. Quote of the trip goes to Doug who on seeing our exhilaration said "I'm going to try this mountain biking".



Our team about to set off from Piropiro campsite to ride day two

Royce Mills



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 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 see the club website.

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.

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.

Facebook | <https://www.facebook.com/MTandSC>

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 | 021 1760209 |
| 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 |