

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

Tuesday 7th April: DOC progress report - Rod Smillie

Rod is the DOC Conservation Services Manager for the Lower North Island Region. Come along to hear what DOC has been up to, what they plan to get up to and take the opportunity to ask those DOC related questions you have always wanted to ask.



Tuesday 5th May: Seven Go Mad on Powder A Japanese Skiing Adventure

On Boxing Day 2014, seven club members flew to Japan, leaving behind a balmy New Zealand summer for the chilly slopes of Hokkaido and Honshu. After 26 ski fields and bit of touring around, there are a few tales to tell. What goes on tour stays on tour, but we can let you know about some monkey business and the intestinal fortitude shown by some. Be spirited away by a dazzling new video production, featuring skiing "styles" quite possibly never before seen on the big screen.

Howard Nicholson, Peter Rawlins, Lynda Hunt, Ken and Mary Mercer, Roger Athersuch and Peter Marley



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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.



ISSUE 3: April 2015



MTSC President: Linda Campbell

president@mtsc.org.nz

For the last few years we have had a very conscientious membership secretary who has done a great job on behalf of the Club. Our thanks go to Tim Swainson for all the work he has done. The committee has appreciated the monthly reports it has received. Tim has decided to stand down from this roll so we are now looking for a keen person with good computer skills to take over from him. If you think you could be interested please talk to one of the committee members.

While I understand it was not been the best summer for farmers it has certainly been great for those who enjoy the outdoors and even now with autumn upon us we are still mostly having some warm settled weather which makes being in the outdoors even more enjoyable. We must, of course be mindful of how changeable autumn weather can be and always check the forecast before setting off. It can be disappointing to postpone or cancel a trip but we must always consider safety first. Don't forget autumn is also a great time to take a trip to the lodge. With the new double glazing it is a lovely spot to be all year round.

Enjoy yourselves in the hills but take care out there.

Linda



MTSC Chief Guide: Ken Mercer

chief.guide@mtsc.org.nz

I have a cautionary tale from the past in which a couple were a bit slow completing a two day trip. They had arranged to be met at the road end by her parents who, not unnaturally, thought they'd enjoy the sunny afternoon and walked in a short way to wait. Later, with the sun dropping, they headed back the 45 minutes to the car. Unfortunately it was even darker under the trees and, not having a torch, they lost the track. Some may have wandered further but they stayed put, huddled together in the dark.

Towards midnight the couple found them as they finally completed their trip. They were really close to the track and cold but OK.

So, always carry a torch and something warm, no matter how nice the day is!

NOTICES and INFORMATION

Lodge News

With the grant we obtained we have now double glazed all the timber frames in the main living areas. This makes a huge difference as we no longer have our great views obstructed by condensation. We have also been able to buy new aluminium frames to replace all the old windows in the bedrooms. These are double glazed and thermally broken. These will be delivered to the lodge at Easter and will be installed next summer.



We have obtained permission from DOC to install steps on the access track to the lodge. These will be similar to the ones leading up the first part of the track from the car park. This work will be done this Easter.



We have lockers available at the lodge for an annual cost of \$5 for a small locker and \$10 for a large locker. These are for regular users of the lodge, just let me know if you would like to rent one. If you have a locker and aren't going to be regularly using it we ask that you give it up for others.

We will be running a work party this Easter, mainly to do the upgrading of the access track. Some of the windows still need to be painted after the glass was changed and there is also the typical cleaning and tidying up of the lodge to be done. As always many hands make light work so let me know if you can help out even if it is for a day. It will be free to stay and eat at the lodge if you help out. Please let me know if you can come by emailing me on buildingsurveyornz@gmail.com. I hope to be able to use the club van and/or car pool.

Our lodge is a great asset and is positioned in a beautiful part of our country. It is a great venue for family and friends to get together where you can either just hang out and relax or take advantage of the many activities that the area has to offer. We rely on members use to keep the lodge viable so please use it.

Be sure to enjoy the rest of the summer and I look forward to seeing you all at the lodge this year.

Many thanks

John Lyttle

Early Bird Season Ski Passes

The Mt Ruapehu Season Pass allows skiing on two major ski fields during some of the longest ski seasons in New Zealand. "Early bird" passes at a reduced cost usually go on sale for a limited time in April. Team up your pass with the great value accommodation at the Manawatu Lodge and you're on to a winner!

Keep a look out for the passes in April at <http://www.mtruapehu.com> for details.



Notes from the Ruahine User Group (RUG) meeting

It is very helpful to DOC if they are informed of any issues with tracks, structures and huts that you come across while out and about in the Ruahines.

Tracks: DOC is aiming to cut all tracks every 5 years - this year the tracks cut are those around Pouranaki, Kelly Knight, Diggers, Sparrow Hawk, Crow, Kiritaki and Rangiwahia huts, the Mania track and Maropea Forks to Wakelings. Every two years the tracks are walked and huts and structures checked.

Huts & Structures: Crow, Sparrow Hawk and the new end wall of Cattle Creek have been painted and Iron Gates is about to be. Gas is being removed from Longview with a wood burner and woodshed (complete with firewood) to be installed. The Crow swing bridge has had maintenance carried out and hopefully the Kelly Knight swing bridge will also be done this year. New meat safes have gone into Mid Pohangina, Ngamoko and Forks. A potential booking system for Rangiwahia and Sunrise huts is currently on hold while a national system is worked on. If you are going to have some spare time when staying at a hut you can ring DOC beforehand and find out if there is anything that needs attention.





Access: When the new route over the Mokai Patea range is formalised (likely in the next financial year) the swing bridge a bit over 1 km upriver from Iron Bark hut will be removed. A reminder, that at the Makarora Road end you should park at the end of the road and not drop down the farm road to park next to the river. From the Sunrise Road end a new track to Smith Stream is being surveyed to the west of the deer fence. At some point the Sunrise car park will be moved, to access this there will only be cattle stops (no gates) and from here there will be walking access only to the Waipawa river.

Ruahine Whio Protection Trust: New traps are going into the Rangiwahia/Deadman Route. New traps have gone into the Parks Peak, Aranga, Upper Makarora, Main Range area. Lots of stoats but fewer rats are being caught and mostly in the tussock. The census is not getting much feedback, so please report any blue duck sightings particularly in the central Ruahines. 16 ducklings have been seen in the Apias and 3 in the Ikawetea Streams.

Ruataniwha Dam: There is a proposal for the project to purchase 140 ha (cut over ex-forestry) of the Smedley Station block adjacent to the Gwavas to swap for the 22 ha that may be inundated by the dam.

A Frame & Takapari Road: DOC is currently conducting a survey of usage [Takapari Road Survey](#)

Notes from the Tararua Aorangi Rimutaka Huts Committee

Powell & Atiwhakatu Hut booking system: Usage of Powell is lower this year, possibly due to DOC being slow in getting the booking system up and running this summer. A lot less tickets have been collected at Jumbo Hut which was on a booking system last summer but not this summer - less use or less compliance? It is likely that a booking system in the area will continue for future summer seasons.

Club work: *Cattle Ridge* – materials bought but work yet to commence. *Nichols & Kapakapanui* – awaiting the hut inspection reports. *Mountain house* – all done, new toilet installed. *Mid Waiohine* – almost completed (roof needs another coat of paint).



Arete Forks and Carkeek have been tidied up. *Mid-King and McGregor* bivs have had toilets installed and been painted. *Dundas* is getting new tie downs.

Waioataru Hut: AREC are gathering funds to do up the hut, there is potential for lots of good mountain-biking in the area if some of the old logging roads are opened up. AREC will also look into Renata Hut which is one of the few remaining example of a traditional club hut in the Tararuas.

DOC work: A face lift for Powell along with a lot of new (frequently large) steps put in between Mountain House and Powell. Benching tracks across some of the slips in the Atiwhakatu valley. The new side track over the second big slip into Waitewaewae Hut is bedding in well but now have more issues with the first big slip.... The Cow Creek to Arete Forks track has been re-cut (although there are still a few windfalls that require a chainsaw). The Marchant Ridge and Tauherenikau valley tracks are to be re-cut. Access at the front of Tutuwai hut is to be improved with a staircase and boardwalk.



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.

April Wednesday Tramps		
Date	Leader	Phone
1	Linda Derbyshire	354 6171
8	Andrew Brodie	358 6576
15	Robert Bellmont	323 2495
22	Chris Brunskill	354 2511
29	Evan & Coralie Davies	357 6288



Everyone likes a bit of sun

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.

April Thursday Tramps		
Date	Leader	Phone
2	Judy Swainson	358 4082
9	Geraldine Fovakis	356 4327
16	Graham Pritchard	357 1393
23	Merv Matthews	357 2858
30	Hugh Wilde	356 9450

April Weekend Trips				
Date	Trip	Grade	Leader	Phone
3-6	Easter: around the mountain	M	Ken Mercer	356 7497
11-12	Leon Kinvig Hut	M	Dave Mitchell	329 2803
18-19	Lake Dive Hut	M	Mark Learmonth	355 9143
19	Field Hut	E/M	Alla Seleznyova	355 0862
25-27	Camping Lake Tarawera hot springs	E/M	Royce Mills	355 8556
30-1	Queen's Birthday: South Kaimais	M	Mark Learmonth	355 9143

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



3-6th April: Easter: Around the Mountain Ken Mercer Medium 356 7497

This will be a four day trip, weather permitting, staying at the lodge Thursday evening for an early start. We'll stay near Blyth, Rangipo and Waihothonu huts but it will be necessary to carry tents as it's probable the huts will be full.

11-12th April: Leon Kinvig Hut Dave Mitchell Medium/Fit 329 2803

Leon Kinvig hut is one of four huts next to the Pohangina River. The intention is to tramp in from the Norsewood road end along the Apiti track. The next day we will come out via Makaretu hut using an old route to get there. This means we do a partial round trip for the weekend. This doesn't add much to time to get out. Depending on who comes on the trip we could consider doing a crossing from west to east as an alternative.

18-19th April: Lake Dive Hut Mark Learmonth Medium 355 9134

Lake Dive Hut is a 3-4 hour tramp from Dawson Falls Visitor Centre. My intention is to do a loop depending on the weather using both the lower & upper Lake Dive tracks. A favourite hut of mine nestled just above the shore of Lake Dive. On calm days there are great reflections of the mountain in the lake. If you are interested give me a call.

25-27th April: Camping at Hot Water Beach, Lake Tarawera Royce Mills Easy/Medium
355 8556 021 0552527 owen.royce@paradise.net.nz

A recently-opened trail gives trampers access to a superb natural feature for the very first time. Te Rata Bay (Hot Water Beach) at Lake Tarawera, near Rotorua, has until recently only been accessible by boat. But now the 11 km Tarawera Trail has been completed and trampers can expect to get to the beach in around four hours. The beach allows you to bathe in your own relaxing hot bath and the lake is excellent for swimming (Wilderness Magazine Feb 2014). For this club trip the plan is to depart on Saturday morning, 25th April (allowing attendance at the Dawn Service) and drive to the start of the track, near Rotorua. We will camp for two nights by these warm pools and return on Monday the 27th which is a statutory holiday this year. We will take the club van which limits the numbers to 12. Campsites need to be booked online in advance and payment is to be made at the same time. Cost is \$10 per adult per night. This makes organisation a little complicated. I suggest you phone or email me if you are interested and as soon as we have six starters (which I think is the minimum number in the van at the usual rates) we will coordinate the booking of campsites. Some weekends are already quite booked so we should not leave things until the last minute. For more information see [this website](#). Note there is no fresh running water at the campsite.

TRIP REPORTS

11th February (Wednesday): BUSH, SKY & SEA - The Skyline Track

Robert Bruce

Our supplications for perfectly fine weather were answered when 13 "fleet of foot" Wednesday trampers plus two pukka invitees Murray and Andrew, headed for Woodmancote Road, Khandallah. Ahead of us was a 14 km slog up to Mount Kau Kau (445 m) and across the tops on the Skyline Track to Karori. We made a short detour to the Gorsey Knob hillock to gain a panoramic view of the serene, hill country suburb of Khandallahisthan ("abode of the gods"). Then it was through the splendid, regenerating broadleaved forest up onto Mount Kau Kau, for some sun plus 360 degree views of Wellington and its harbour ("Suprema a Situ"), Ohariu, Makara and across Cook Strait to the South Island - brilliant!



Wellington Harbour Views

Maureen Naylor



The journey was hot on the exposed ridge but the winds kept us in a comfortable equilibrium. There were more grand views when we had lunch in the lee of Colenso Hill and observed workers cleaning patina off the power pylons associated with the wind farms to the west below. Mountain bikers were grinding upwards in the direction of Mount Kau Kau but stretched out for a sun - drenched lunch, I reckon we had it better. In the event of adverse weather, our plan B was to exit into Otari-Wilton's Bush the native tree arboretum of national significance. We were soon rewarded in reaching the fringes of Karori-ville whereupon we boarded a trolley bus for a Gold Card jaunt into the city. Alas, we just missed another baksheesh trip on the train back to Khandallah.

We also skipped a dip in the non-tepid Khandallah Baths preferring to head back happily to the mighty Manawatu. Thanks to our camel drivers Chris and Ian and to Maureen for the photographs. I enjoyed leading this trip of Wednesday worthies. My family's home was on Woodmancote Road that enabled superlative opportunities in my youth (!) to explore and enjoy the hills, bush and baths of the Khandallah Reserve.



A sunny spot over-looking Wellington Robert Bruce

14-15th February: Mangahao Flats Work Party

On yet another stunning forecast Ivan, Jenny and Jean drove into the Mangahao dams. As there were just the 3 of us and we weren't expecting a lot of work to do at the hut we decided to do most of the track maintenance on the way in. We followed the track all the way from the car park and cut numerous small windfalls along the way. We noted that the access onto the slip about 15 minutes before the hut on the "inland" route was decidedly dodgy even when using the rope that

Jean Garman



Mangahao Flats Hut on a sunny day Ivan Rienks



Jenny approaching Harris Creek Jean Garman

is there to assist. Unfortunately, as we were not carrying track markers it was not possible to re-route it. While the track is often an endless trudge through mud and roots and pretty dull if it is raining this time the sun was shining, there was almost no mud, the bush was lovely and varied and we got lots of neat views of the river along the way. It is definitely a much nicer tramp in the summer/autumn season. We reached the hut around 2 p.m. and soon set about cleaning the gutters, leaf filter, windows and toilet. Then spent a bit of time clearing plants from the helipad/clearing below the hut and cut a little firewood – although the absence of an axe made this rather difficult. It was then time for drinks/dinner/desert and afterwards as there was still daylight we did a bit more weeding.



Come Sunday morning we figured now was a good time to do something about the “inland” track as there were markers, nails and a hammer in the locked cupboard so we went back down valley and moved the track to get onto the slip a little higher. It is now quite a steep descent from the lip of the slip down to the track across it but it is on stable vegetated terrain and not so steep that the rope was required. There is also a track that goes right the way round the top of the slip, which has some steep sections too but is an option if people don’t like the slip. Of course the best option is the river route but that is not always feasible. We also did a bit of marking on a few other bits of the track between the slip and the hut. As this had taken most of the morning there was just time to pack up



Jenny and Ivan doing track-clearing Jean Garman

(including carrying out other people’s rubbish) and do a final tidy up before we headed for home. My original intention was for a sunny summer swim out down the river but Jenny and Ivan are both hydrophobes. Still it was such a glorious day that we decided to part ways and they went out via the track and I went down the river planning to meet up at the Harris Creek picnic table.



Clear enough to see the man-eating eels Jean Garman

The river was stunningly beautiful. Initially through big open river flats then the bush came in a bit closer, still with good rocky banks to walk on, and there were amazingly clear deep green pools. There were a few waist deep wades and one wade where I only just managed to keep my feet on the ground. The water was so clear it was impossible to judge the depth without walking through it. I arrived shortly after the others at the picnic table where we had lunch and then carried on down the river aiming to meet up again at the Mangahao swing bridge. The river is a bit more gorgy below Harris Creek but can mostly be sidled, I had one short pack float and then just after where the track comes down to the river there is a long pack float which even though it was a very warm day started to get a bit chilly by the time I got through it. That is the last deep bit however, and not too long after that the swing bridge came into view and the others had again beaten me there by a few minutes. For the rest of the way out we all went down the river and round the dam. Then it was off to Shannon for ice creams and milk shakes. Mangahao Flats is a large spacious sunny hut with a great outlook in a very pretty valley (when the weather is good), well worth a visit.

18th February (Wednesday): Burn Hut Loop Track

Allan Hardacre

On a beautifully sunny and rather hot summers day sixteen Wednesday trampers headed off to the Mangahao dams area to walk the Burn Hut track. Twelve did the complete loop and four did a there and back. From the Number 2 dam to the hut the track is a bit challenging in parts and even in the last year has become very over



At #2 Mangahao Dam



The group at Burn Hut

grown in the stretch just before the hut. From the hut on though, the well marked track wanders along the tops before dropping steeply into College Creek. The walk down the creek to the top dam was very refreshing. My thanks go to trip leader Suzanne Clark and the drivers Chris Brunskill and Bev Akers.

18th February (Wednesday): An Alternative Tramp in the Totara Reserve Regional Park

Bob Hodgson

On a warm summer's day, at 8:30 a.m., 14 Wednesday Trampers converged at the start of the Fern Walk and were challenged by a list of the 29 bird species recently monitored in the reserve. Needless to say, a party of gregarious trampers had the predictable effect on the bird life and so the observed score was roughly five! It was a great day to be in lowland bush with an enjoyable morning tea taken at the second viewpoint seat. After two hours, and views of the old totara, rimu and rata, not to mention the ferns, the party emerged to gather around the large table like tree stump at the entrance, to enjoy a birthday cake and sing "Happy Birthday" for Andrew who was enjoying his last day as a 69 year old - well done Andrew and thanks for the cake! We then motored to the upper entrance of the Pettifar and Gilchrist loop tracks that were tramped by most of the party as the single large loop that includes the old Coach Road. We enjoyed the Kahikatea dominated forest in the wetter areas and the old totara dominated forest in the drier areas (but not the hook grass). The various groups merged and emerged by around 2 p.m. to depart in search of coffee. We all enjoyed the day which also served as a practice run for several club member who are to host the Fern Walk in the Manawatu Walking Festival on Sunday. Thanks to our drivers and Andrew for the cake.



Group photo

Maureen Naylor

20-22nd February: Not Quite a Heavenly Host: Manawatu Walking Festival

Bob Hodgson

For the second year running I have acted as a Host on walks in the Manawatu Walking Festival. This year I was the lead host on two walks. The first was **The Twilight Beach Walk**, this, the inaugural event of the Festival, started from the Foxton Beach Surf Club and terminated 10 km later at Himatangi Beach. This year, 2015, in the perfect conditions of evening sunshine and no wind, there were 43 walkers including the seven hosts. Most of the hosts on this walk were current or past MTSC (Manawatu Tramping and Skiing Club) members. The role of the hosts is to keep a safety



eye on the other participants and to offer friendly commentary and encouragement. For some walkers the 10km role was a challenge; for all it was a pleasure. After about two and a half hours of steady walking, on arrival in Himatangi, the Beach Store provided excellent and well-appreciated fish and chips.

The second walk for which I was lead host was **the Fern Walk in the Totara Reserve Regional Park**. On this walk there were seven participants plus three staff from the Horizons Regional Council who acted as commentators on the forest vegetation. It was a treat to have knowledgeable and enthusiastic guides. After a very pleasant three-hour ramble we emerged to board the bus up to the Totara Reserve camping/BBQ area where three Horizons Staff cooked a well appreciated BBQ lunch.

There were no health or safety related incidents on either walk but the presence of the hosts gave reassurance to those walkers unused to outdoor activities. The participants in both cases were an interesting mixture of national and international visitors and young and old locals. The Hosts enjoyed the experience and the good spirits of the participants.

After the Friday Beach walk, on return by bus to Palmerston North, the Hosts and participants joined a fireside welcome at Te Manawa complete with drinks, bush tea, BBQ sausages, a repeating slide show of scenes from last year's festival and gentle live music. This event acted as an informal/formal launch of the festival. Once again I enjoyed assisting what is to be an annual event: not tramping but personally rewarding. Thanks also to Anne and Ian Shipman, Chris Teo-Sherrell, Beryl Brown and Carole Kennerley, my fellow MTSC hosts.

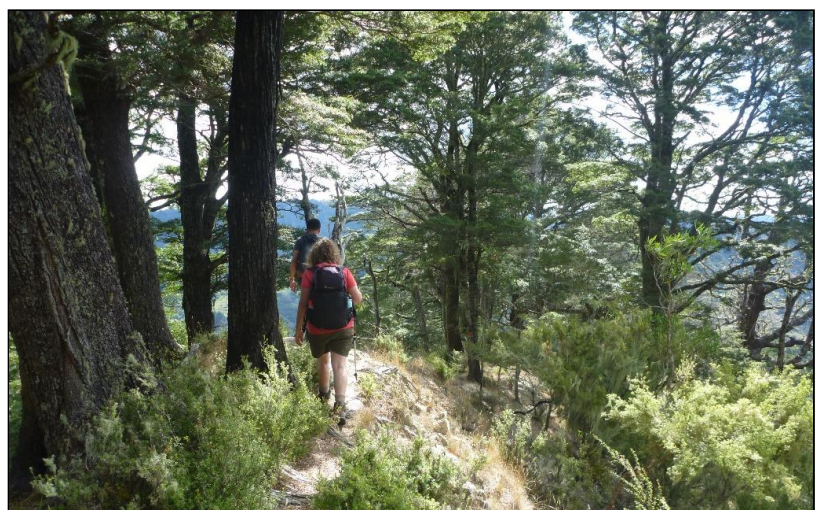
Bob Hodgson, MTSC Representative to the Manawatu Walking Festival.



21st February: Atene Skyline

Linda Campbell

Things always change and change they did for this trip. Firstly I needed to change the day of the trip from Sunday to Saturday as Tim Swale and I were representing our club at the Have a Go Sunday in Feilding as organised by Sport Manawatu and Makino Rotary. I then found out that the Mt Egmont Alpine Club trip also scheduled for the Sunday had been changed to the Saturday. On Thursday there were four MTSC members going and one Mt Egmont Alpine Club member. By Friday night there were two from MTSC and three from MEAC. We met at the end of the track, approx 34 km up river from Whanganui, and as there were



A sunny day on Atene Skyline

Tim Swale

five of us we all hopped in one car and drove a further 2 km to the start. The Atene Skyline track is an interesting walk along an old road and a narrow ridge with some great views of the old river course (the former bed of



the Whanganui River). You travel up some reasonably steep hills as you walk in a horse shoe type shape and end up two kilometres down the road from the start.

The highest point on the track is the Taumata Trig at 572 m which is after the mid-way point where there is a shelter, water, a camping area and a toilet. There was a lot less goat and pig sign from when we last went in 2009. There is a range of vegetation and bird life as the track goes on. Our greatest delight was a morepork that flew in front of us and then alighted on a branch to keep an eye on us as we kept an eye on it. What a great day we had and it was lovely to catch up with Maria and Alistair from MEAC and to meet Miko.

25th February: Wednesday Trampers Ascend Urchin, Plus.

Bob Hodgson

About once a year Wednesday Trampers visit the Kaimanawa Forest Park. This year the tradition of good weather was maintained. A party of 15 converged on the park to make an ascent of Urchin, starting at about 10:15 a.m. It is not a long tramp as tramps go, but the 7 km ascent and descent to the trig involves a climb of about 560 m, mostly through classic beech forest with the final 100 m or so in open rock strewn



The Plus-Party at Lunch Maureen Naylor



The Trig Party Maureen Naylor

scrub. As the photos confirm the views from the trig are

rewarding with a wide vista of Lake Taupo and the volcanoes of the Tongariro National Park. About half of the party called it quits and lunched at the Trig while the rest tramped a further 25 minutes. All were safely out by 2:15 p.m. to then reconvene at Le Cafe Telephonique in Taihape for coffee and tall tales. Thanks to trip leader Sue and our drivers, especially Chris for driving the van.

26th February: Thursday on Carrington Ridge

Royce Mills

A group of 16 Thursday trampers set off from the Holdsworth car park and made quick work of heading up the Lookout Track - probably in anticipation of an early morning tea at the lookout.

Very few of us have done this track before, but Bev and Suzanne who had been here before were surprised to find a well-formed track with triangles leading on to the Gentle Annie saddle. Here we took another morning tea, or was it an early lunch? The saddle is marked with a rather quirky sign - someone is taking an interest in developing this track. Enjoying the bush and the track, we continued along to point 801 m. The only incident along the way was Royce (who happened to be at the back of the group) getting stung in the face by a wasp. At point 801 there is a cluster of historic signs - interesting. Here we took another snack stop and then headed eastwards, following an old, eroded track towards



Old signpost from 1948 Royce Mills



the main Gentle Annie Track. This part of the track is not marked and becomes increasingly overgrown, but it is easy enough to follow. Another “lunch stop” was had at Rocky Lookout and we enjoyed the views before returning to the car park. All up this 10 km walk took five hours with generous stops and was a very pleasant outing. Another three in our group chose to walk the Mountain House loop.

28th February - 1st March: McKinnon Hut

Jean Garman

There was surprisingly little interest in this opportunity to visit McKinnon Hut despite a lovely forecast and the fact that this hut doesn't get a lot of visits these days. Maybe something to do with the uncertainty of the routes chosen.... Ivan and I left from the twin bridges at about 9 a.m. rock hopping up the Hikurangi stream - a wide open rocky streambed with mostly no deeper than ankle deep, occasionally knee deep water. After an hour and a half we reached the park boundary, as this was quicker than we had expected we thought we were at a stream junction lower down and consequently



McKinnon Hut in the evening

Ivan Rienks

headed up the wrong branch of the Hikurangi Stream. We became suspicious that we had made a mistake but as the branches have very similar bearings for quite a while it took a wee while to confirm this and by that point going back to pick up the right branch seemed like too much effort. Instead we studied the map and came up with an

alternative plan. We carried on up the stream to about 900 m then took a side stream on the true right, at 930 m we again took a side stream on the true right. This may sound a bit random but the streams we were following were well slipped out so offered very easy if steep travel up towards the ridge line.



Jean coming down the big slip

Ivan Rienks

This continued all the way up to around 1200 m where we had to exit stage left and grovel a short distance up onto the ridgeline. Unfortunately the grovelling didn't finish there. For a while the ridge was mixed kaikawaka and scrub; so patches of OK and not so OK travel. Although we spotted a few cuts in the vegetation they must have been old as there was no definitive path. Eventually, when the kaikawaka became sparse, and the leatherwood dense, the going got harder. At one stage we were crawling in a trench under the leatherwood pushing our packs in front of us, then the leatherwood got short enough that we could stand up and push through, then suddenly it was over and there was just tall tussock and dracophyllum to wade through up onto the main range. We turned north and headed along the ridge line stopping for water at the tarns on the other side of Hikurangi, before continuing on to the track down to



McKinnon Hut. The hut was lovely and warm having been in the sun all day. Even better there was a bag of chippies there begging to be eaten and as it was around 6 p.m. and we were a tad peckish we granted them their wish.

The hut gets the sun very early in the morning so we were off and heading back up the hill before 8 a.m. From the sign post we headed south for a little bit then off down the ridge to the west, scaring a hind along the way. As the head of the slip came into view it looked a bit daunting to get into but when we got closer there was an easy route in from the low point on the ridge line. Down a slope of scree with some small alpine plants followed by a large rock staircase which then got progressively less steep as we descended. About half way down we were most surprised to come across a hunter coming up, after an exchange of pleasantries and apologies from us for frightening all the deer where he was heading he carried on up for a kip in the tussock and we carried on down to the Hikurangi stream. The gravel from the big slip carries on down in the Hikurangi stream for a bit and where it starts to run out, there is a fresh slip on the true left and the valley closes in. At this point there is a cairn on the true right which marks the start of a sidle around a waterfall. The sidle track isn't marked but there is enough of a ground trail to follow and it comes out on a little terrace just below the waterfalls. Downstream it is a little bouldery to the junction on the park boundary (where we went wrong) and from there it was just flat wide open river bed back to the car.

4th March: Some Wednesday trampers do the the A Frame - Stanfield Hut loop

Bob Hodgson

On a calm and sunny but not scorching day, about thirty trampers assembled at the Tamaki West Road entrance to the Ruahine Forest Park. A third chose to tramp up to the Stanfield Hut and to return via the river, their tramp the subject of a separate report. The remainder of the party under Leonie's



Above the descent to Stanfield
Maureen Naylor

leadership, chose to tramp up to A Frame, then along the Takapari Road to pick up the maintained



At A-Frame Hut
Maureen Naylor

track to the Stanfield Hut. Here most of the party chose to tramp out down the river while the famous five chose to tramp out up and over the hill. With an 8:45 a.m. start all were safely out by about 4 p.m. At 14 km in length and with a steep, 700 m in 2 km, initial climb to A Frame and the equally steep descent to the Stanfield Hut, this tramp is acknowledge to be demanding but rewarding with some fine views. Track conditions were good but even so, on the descent from Takapari road, we were astonished to meet a mountain biker and his dog! See the photo to the left (for the record the dog failed in his attempt to snatch Linda's lunch!). Thanks to Leonie as trip leader and our drivers including van driver Chris.



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 stocked with food. Members and their guests are welcome. For Lodge bookings email Liz and Hugh Wilde lodge.bookings@mtsc.org.nz alternatively phone (06) 356 9450. To confirm your booking, payment must be made in advance by cheque to 179 Cook St Palmerston North 4410, by cash in person or internet payment Westpac account number 03 1521 022035300 (please email to confirm).

	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

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Committee 2014 - 2016

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General Committee

Bev Akers, Bob Hodgson, Howard Nicholson, Rob Pringle, John Beech

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