

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 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



Tuesday 2nd June: "50 Shades of Grey" Tramping in We(s)tland

The Westland Conservation Area has an interesting mix of well maintained (by DOC) tracks and huts and minimal maintenance tracks and huts that rely on volunteers to stay functional. Ivan and Jean spent 9 days in the area behind Hokitika and are keen to go back for more. Come along and see why.



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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

Easter was a great time for a walk and I was lucky enough to be part of the around Ruapehu trip. Members of our party either had annual hut passes or hut tickets, but not so all those using the huts. The hut wardens had finished for the year so compliance levels had obviously dropped. We noted there were both New Zealanders and foreign trampers who had no intention of paying. When I think about what we have available to us with regard to huts and the track network, the hut fees are extremely reasonable. I think we all need to realise that we are in a very privileged situation in New Zealand to have huts for both locals and tourists to use. So, if you are staying in a hut please make sure you either have an annual hut pass or hut tickets and encourage others to do likewise. Perhaps even remind other hut users to purchase tickets in future if they are in the group that does not want to pay. Club members can purchase tickets through Howard.

Enjoy yourselves in the hills but take care out there.

Linda



MTSC Chief Guide: Ken Mercer

chief.guide@mtsc.org.nz

I spent last Saturday attending the Ruapehu Mountain Huts Association meeting. This is the umbrella group representing all 50 lodges and the agenda included insurance, sewage, DOC requirements and electric power. Afterwards I cadged a ride back up with Gerry, from the Scouts lodge. He is an interesting man who has retired from the navy and asks the scouts (and me) the question, "When is a mountain dangerous?" The answer is "when we forget that it is dangerous". *Be safe!*

NOTICES and INFORMATION

MTSC's membership is steadily growing – we welcome Karin Thomas to the membership.

	2014/2015	2013/2014	2012/2013
Family Heads	99	85	80
Other Family Members	194	164	154
Adult Single	111	100	83
Life Members and Associates	20	21	21
Schools and Clubs	13	13	13
Total Membership	437	382	350

DOC's Conservation Management Strategy (CMS)

- identifies how to manage places to achieve national conservation outcomes
- aligns with DOC's strategic direction to clarify priorities for managing conservation resources
- guides decision making, e.g. on applications to undertake commercial activities and for our own purposes
- guides where recreational activity can occur
- describes conservation outcomes to be achieved through milestones and actions
- provides the basis for reporting to conservation boards

This CMS applies to a vast area from Wellington, up the east coast through the Wairarapa and Tararua Districts, across the Ruahine Forest Park, from Taihape out to the mouth of the Turakina River and back down the Rangitikei and Horowhenua-Kapiti coast to Wellington. You can be involved by submitting a survey which you can find at: www.doc.govt.nz/wellingtoncms. A draft publication is scheduled to be produced for public consultation later this year.

For more information contact: wellingtoncms@doc.govt.nz or our Palmerston North office on 06 3509700.

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.

May Wednesday Tramps		
Date	Leader	Phone
6	Bob Hodgson	356 2915
13	John Ridge	357 3744
20	Christine Finnigan	329 7822
27	Russell Poole	022 658 0661



“Stairway to Heaven”

The new steps to access the MTSC lodge *John Lyttle*

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.

May Thursday Tramps		
Date	Leader	Phone
7	Judy Swainson	358 4082
14	Brian and Ruth Evans	323 7614
21	Chris Mercer	356 2635
28	Merv Matthews	357 2858

May Weekend Trips				
Date	Trip	Grade	Leader	Phone
2-3	Herepai via Bottles Track	Easy	Tim Swale	06 376 6556
16-17	Mid-Waiohine Loop	Med/Fit	Jean Garman	021 176 0209
23-24	Holly-Pouakai Loop	Medium	Jenny McCarthy	06 376 8838
23-24	Iron Gate Hut	Easy	Tim Swale	06 376 6556
30-1 (Queen's Birthday)	South Kaimais	Medium	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.



2 – 3rd May: Herepai Hut

Tim Swale

Easy

06 376 6556

This is a good opportunity for anyone new to tramping to try out an overnight trip, test out their gear and learn a few navigation skills along the way. There may be some young people involved but don't let that put you off! Our plan is to start from the Putara road end near Eketahuna, cross the first swing bridge, then after a couple of hundred metres leave the track and head up to highpoint 655m. A bit of compass work is required as the route is quite vague. We emerge from the bush at a low saddle in the headwaters of the Mangatainoka river before heading downstream to join the Bottles track. From there we make our way up to Herepai for the night. The next day is an easy walk out down the main track and back to the road end, probably by about lunchtime.

16 – 17th May: Mid Waiohine Loop

Jean Garman

Medium/Fit

021 176 0209

jean.garman@fonterra.com

My good weather preference is to head in via Atiwhakatu (could go there Friday night), Raingauge spur, Jumbo, Angle Knob, Shingle Slip Knob (can visit the aircraft wreck) and down into the Waiohine river for the last couple of km's to the hut, coming out via Mt Holdsworth and the East Holdsworth track. There are less exciting options if the weather is not kind enough which will most likely still include some navigation, bush bashing and/or wet feet. If this isn't your cup of tea but you still wanted to overnight at Mid-Waiohine hut we may be able to run two groups with one sticking to DOC tracks.

23 – 24th May: Holly-Pouakai Loop

Jenny McCarthy

Medium

06 376 8838

The Holly Pouakai loop is in Egmont National Park and offers varied terrain with (weather permitting) fantastic views of Mt Taranaki. It will either be an early start Saturday morning from Palmerston North or we may choose to drive up on Friday night. We will be staying at Pouakai Hut and as both days are about 5-7 hours the direction we go in will depend on the weather forecast.

23 – 24th May: Iron Gate Hut

Tim Swale

Easy

06 376 6556

Another easy overnight trip with young people in mind, this time in the western Ruahines following the Oroua River. There are a few ups and downs as we cross various side creeks and possibly wet feet at Tunupo creek. This is a 7 bunk hut so it will be a good idea to take a sleeping mat and tent fly just in case. We will return by the same route on Sunday. We may even see some of the blue ducks that are intended beneficiaries of the extensive stoat and rat trapping in the area.

TRIP REPORTS

Wednesday 5th March: Stanfield Hut, A-Team Report

Andrew Brodie

On 5th March 12 trampers chose to do the Holmes Ridge, Stanfield Hut, Tamaki River loop rather than including A-Frame Hut in their day (see Bob Hodgson's report in last newsletter). The trip was organised with military precision by trip leader, Leonie. At the start we were separated into our two groups and we all set off in our separate directions. It is always a bit of a slog up the first part of the ridge but at various speeds we made it to the top and along the farm track to our favourite morning tea spot. Then it was on to the hut. We were surprised to be passed by a



Dot negotiates the Tamaki River

Andrew Brodie



mountain biker and his dog who said he had come up the ridge with his bike - pushing it, not riding it! Each to his own I say. We enjoyed a lazy lunch at the hut in the sun and then all decided to take to the river rather than going back along the ridge. The river was very low but the slippery rocks under the water meant you could not relax. Most of the short cuts through the growth at the sides of the river bed were overgrown but there was only one place you had to scramble over tree trunks. The last part of the trip in the river was rather tedious and we were pleased to see the festoon of ribbons left by Chris and Dennis that morning to guide us back into the marked track. One of our party cut her leg rather badly on a sharp stick. Nurse Patsy bandaged it up in a professional fashion and suggested medical attention would be essential. I found out later it was a very serious wound, requiring daily visits from the district nurse. The incident made us realise that some first aid packs were not well stocked. We all need to check that we are carrying a bandage, some saline, gloves and other first aid essentials and ensure that they are in good condition still. This river is no longer a doddle to travel down but that is the story in so much of the Ruahines now. Since we had travelled in separate vehicles from the A-Frame group, we were soon on our way without having to wait. Overall an enjoyable day. Thanks to trip leader, Leonie and the car drivers.

14-15th March: Tarn Ridge Hut

Dave Mitchell

With the weather looking much better than last weekend, Jenny and I decided to have a go at getting to Tarn Ridge. We left Jenny's place in Pahiatua on Friday evening and parked at the Pines at the end of Waingawa Valley road. It was a fine evening but we were soon using headlamps, eventually arriving at Mitre Flats hut in just under 3 hours. Another family there were already in their sleeping bags after climbing Mitre that day.

On Saturday it was fine so we made an early start. It didn't take long to break out of the bush and wander our way up onto Peggy's Peak. From Peggy's Peak it is a short climb onto Mitre where we had a snack stop. There were good views in most directions with cloud billowing into some of the valleys below. The route off Mitre is a steep drop down and then an easier climb back up onto Brockett. We changed direction on Brockett as we headed down again and then up on to Girdlestone. By this time the clouds were swirling around as we headed down onto Tarn Ridge, it was still warm though with light winds. Once the steeper part of Girdlestone is negotiated the track flattens and you



Mitre emerging from the mist

Jenny McCarthy

Tarn Ridge hut

Dave Mitchell

walk past a small cairn with a stick in it. This is the point where you would turn to go on Dorset ridge. It is often hidden with cloud but once on the ridge it is easy enough to follow. Tarn Ridge hut is a further 10 or 15 mins past this point. We reached the hut in about 5 hrs so it left the rest of the afternoon to take in the views. Jenny cleaned quite a few mouldy mattresses. I later found the grave site which isn't far from the hut. From this point you can look across and see the roof of Carkeek hut shining in the distance. The cloud descended after dinner but sometime during the night it cleared again. We got up early and hit the track while the weather was clear. We carried out a



bag of rubbish that other people had left. As we got up on Girdlestone there were good views out to the east and west. Then the cloud raced in again but it was no problem getting over Mitre. We had morning tea when we reached the bush line again. We reached Mitre flats hut just after 12pm which was good timing for lunch. Then we just had to clamber out on the sidle track. I managed to fall over numerous times on the slippery roots; it's not an easy track. We passed a group of five Wellington women who had left earlier but were just taking their time, which was probably a good thing. We were back at the car in good time and it was off with the smelly old boots and into Masterton to our favourite ice cream shop. It was a good Tararuas weekend as it is unusual to get 3 days of no rain in a row. We were Dave Mitchell and Jenny McCarthy (Fred had to stay home this trip)

14-15th March: Ngatiawa River, Kakanui Peak

Adam Matich

Soon after leaving the Kapakapanui road end the Kapakapanui track crosses the Ngatiawa River, which we stayed in from then on. David expected we would be camping in the upper reaches of the river for the night, but this turned out to be one of the easiest rivers we have ever travelled. We never went beyond knee deep, there were no waterfalls, and the gorge bits were more gorgeous than gorgey. No near-death experiences were enjoyed; not even a single near, near death experience. Much to David's chagrin, we reached our planned campsite for an early lunch. To stop the troops getting too bored, David decided we would continue all the way up to the headwaters, onto the logging track, and along to Renata Hut for the night as it was bound to be empty; no one ever stays there. The upper 200m of the river finally got steep and was filled with shingle but wasn't difficult. 100m below the logging track the river ended and we climbed out of the river to make our way up through the forest to hit the logging track only 200m from the beginning of the track to Renata Hut. So we reached the empty Renata Hut after a 5½ day and started sweeping up all the rat poo and discussing whether we were going to sleep in or out. It was a bit smelly. Fortunately, the decision was made for us when a party of five turned up from WTMC, followed by a DOE party of four being shadowed by Warren Wheeler. David found us a spot to camp down by the dunny; the old dunny site. It wouldn't be often that 13 people stay at Renata Hut.



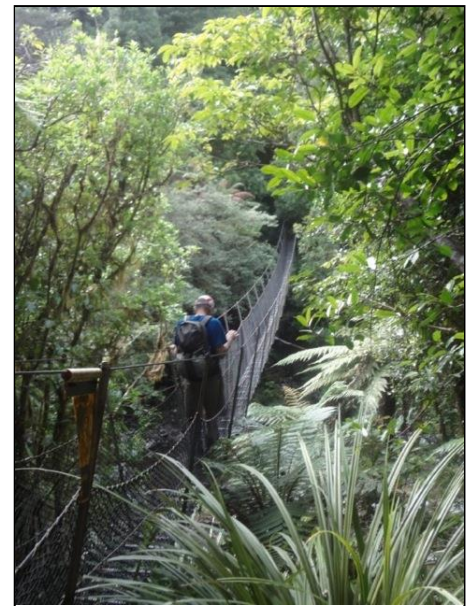
The easy Ngatiawa River *Jean Garman* Synchronised scree climbing *Adam Matich*

Next day we headed back along the logging road towards the Akatarawa Saddle. The plan was to visit Kakanui Peak and beyond that navigate down a spur into the Ngatiawa River 1½ km upstream of the road end. Well, it was all rather a non-event. The spur of interest sported a logging track which took us all the way back down into the river; not at the end of the spur but off the side of it around 2½ km up river of the road end. We weren't complaining...well we were actually as it forced another short day on us. Even with a relaxed early lunch we still got back to the vehicle just after mid-day. The logging track had been very easy going, apart from a drop-out near the bottom where we had to walk carefully across a narrow ledge. This river would provide a really nice day loop in summer, exiting via the southern Kapakapanui track. We were David Harrington, Jean Garman, and Adam Matich.

Wednesday 18th March: Waiotauru Valley

Bob Hodgson

On a beautiful but initially chilly late summers day, 21 Wednesday Wilderness Walkers {www.dotty}, plus a potential search and rescue dog, assembled at the car park near the end of the Otaki Gorge Road. With a 9.30am start two groups formed, the first to depart were intent on reaching the Waiotauru Hut and the second intent on seeing how far they got. For the record, of the 21 starters 4 reached the hut, all reach the grassy area above and beyond the swing bridge and for most, turn around points fell between the two. This is an exceptionally beautiful tramp that sidles along the river. It includes many narrow sections high above the river across old and new slips. Two sections, both on recent slips, required close concentration. Sadly, the hut was in a damaged and run down state, much worse than when visited last year. The dog met his first swing bridge and made several, satisfactory practice crossings. All trampers plus dog, returned safely to the vehicles by 4pm and it was a happy, well exercised group that paused for coffee and ice creams in Levin. Thanks to Chris (trip leader and van driver) and our other drivers.



Crossing the bridge *Maureen Naylor*



Secateurs Spur *John Brock*

Thursday 19th March: Sheridan Creek

Royce Mills

Our day started with a crossing of the Waiotauru River - the weather was fine, the river was very low and the crossing was easy. We made our way up Sheridan creek - mostly in the creek, until spotting the large orange triangle on the true left that led us out of the creek and along the old bush tramway route. Here parts of the tramway have been restored and we were soon at the old boiler which has been covered with a roof for protection - a good place for a morning tea stop. Suitably refuelled we retraced our steps back to the stream and chose a point to head up a spur to eventually reach the Field hut track. Twelve of us set off from here, fortunately two were carrying secateurs which were much needed to snip through dense tangled supplejack on the steep slope. It was slow going, particularly on the lower half of the spur (now named "Secateurs Spur"). It took us 2 hrs 45 mins (including a lunch stop) to reach the Field hut track. Just an easy one hour walk back to the main car park, making it a tramp of just under 6 hrs. Four other Thursday trampers had done other walks at lower levels and had kindly brought the vehicles around for us. Thanks to John McLeod for leading a good day out.

21-22nd March: MTSC Bushcraft Course

Tim Swale

Firstly, a big thank you goes out to Ken and Mary Mercer, Helen Peek, Jill Faulkner and Linda Campbell who gave up their weekend to pass on their knowledge of tramping to 7 youngsters from Tararua College. These young people are starting out on their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's Award and have to be suitably trained before they can undertake an expedition. With the demise of the Mountain Safety Council as a provider of outdoor training, it is becoming increasingly difficult for young people to get the training that they need without incurring considerable costs from a commercial organisation. It is great that we have members who are willing to give up their time to help the youngsters of today to experience the pleasure of the outdoors and hopefully sow the seed that will encourage them to venture into the outdoors more safely in the future.



Our weekend started in bright sunshine at the road end shelter with an introduction to using a map and compass. While Ken and the others went over map symbols, grid references etc., I set up a compass course around the extensive camping area. This consolidated skills in walking on a compass bearing before we moved on to Donnelly Flat to select and set up camp. After lunch we covered environmental care code, leadership and then had a practical map and compass session including a bit of off track navigation on a compass bearing across the Loop Track. Emergency communication, first aid, use of stoves and food for tramping were also covered before everyone went off to cook their dinner. With a fire ban in place we were unable to have a campfire this year, so after a night walk around the Loop Track we headed off to bed. The sound of moreporks was however slightly overshadowed by the excited chatter from the kid's tents!



River crossing practise



Cooker instruction

Tim Swale

On Sunday morning we packed up everything apart from the tents and headed off up the Gentle Annie Track for a while before taking off on some old and little used tracks to Rocky Lookout. Lots of stops to let our young people recover from the strains of walking with a pack allowed us to cover topics such as route finding, loss of route procedure etc. They all took a turn at leading and being "tail end Charlie" and became quite an efficient team. After lunch we returned by an old track to Donnelly Flat to dismantle tents and have our final session on river safety. Linking up to cross the Atiwhakatu Stream was a fun way to end the weekend with only a short walk back to the car park where we could get out of wet boots.

Overall, the weekend was very successful with the youngsters getting a great introduction to tramping whilst we as adults were able to consolidate our own skills.



En-route

Maureen Naylor

Wednesday 25th March: Wednesday Wilderness Wanderers progress towards Mid Pohangina Hut **Bob Hodgson**

On a fine late summers day 28 Wednesday trampers made their way into the Pohangina valley along the Mid Pohangina Hut track. Leaving at about 9am from the parking area, we followed a steep, pugged but dry farm track into the Pohangina river flats to first skirt an unstable mudstone cliff whilst tramping through shoulder high Buddleia. The Buddleia had recently been trimmed by an earlier advanced party, so progress was rapid. In about twenty minutes, after a minor river crossing, we gained the Forest Park Boundary and the

start of the sidle track to the hut. In his invitation, trip leader Dennis described the track as "well marked and not too strenuous": DOC label it as an "advanced tramping track." The track was less strenuous than many recently tramped by the group by virtue of the lack of sustained climbs but it did certainly require concentration; in many places more of a clamber than a walk, even on a dry day justifying the DOC advanced label. Most of the time we were in the bush with no views but when the viewing spots were reached the views were spectacular. Nobody reached the Hut but the advanced guard turned at about a km from it. All stopped for lunch at about noon then turned. At least one group took an easy day as a consequence of their viewing the Blackcaps v South Africa cricket match late into the previous evening. Soon after 3pm all trampers had safely emerged, all having all found the final climb up the steep farm track up to the car park from the river bed to be irksome! The consensus was that the Hut track is a "real trampers' track." Coffee in the garden of the Herb Farm rounded off a rewarding expedition. Thanks to trip leader Dennis, the Buddleia bashers and the drivers.

28-29th March: Waitewaewae Hut

Linda Campbell



Waitewaewae Hut *Linda Campbell*

After checking the forecast all week before the trip two of us set off with some confidence only to meet rain before Otaki which remained with us most of the day. The new section of the trail was not what we expected; it was longer and more challenging due to large trees across the track and a few rather large 'steps' that required a bit of pushing and pulling to get up as neither of us is very tall. The constant rain took some off the shine of the inward trip. There was a lovely gentleman at the hut who immediately got the fire going when we arrived. He decided that rather than walking out alone the next day he would walk out with us due to the amount of rain which continued throughout the night and also the number of streams we had to cross. All was well though and we had a pleasant walk out in mostly fine weather. The large 'steps' were easier to negotiate as we could sit and slide down. There was a lot of bird life along a big section of the track which added a lot to the trip. Thanks to Helen Peek for her company and Pat for lighting the fire and sharing the outward journey with us.

Wednesday 1st April: Rangiwahia Hut / Deadmans loop

Linda Darbyshire



The faces say it all!! *Linda Darbyshire*



A 7.30am start ensured all trampers wishing to complete the full Rangiwahia Hut / Deadmans loop would have plenty of time to do so at their own pace. The group, totaling thirty, were greeted early by clear blue skies and a windless day; perfect for visibility meandering through tussock on the top of Whanahuia range. After meeting at the track car park, eight of the group doing a shorter day up to Rangiwahia Hut and back set off. Planning to tramp the loop clockwise the remaining 22 were instructed to regroup at Rangiwahia Hut and again at Mangahuia Trig. The upgraded track to Rangiwahia Hut was easy to follow and well maintained, so after 1 hr 40 min we were all at the Hut, a good place for a toilet stop and topping up water bottles as the day was hot. The tussock walk across the ridge was dry under foot and the track clearly marked with poles up to the trig where we enjoyed lunch and the views. After lunch we followed the poles down to re-enter the bush at the Deadmans track. Coming down Deadmans the track presented lovely fern gardens and was quite picturesque with distant views of the lower land. We could all appreciate the sights without the huffing and puffing of an uphill slog! The only ailments were a couple of cases of cramp. Thanks to each in the group for your communication and patience in enabling all to enjoy and complete the trip. The faster trampers were back at the car park in about 5½ hrs and all back in 7 hrs. Thanks also to Andrew Brodie for leading the smaller group, Chris Brunskill our van driver and other car drivers.

4-7th April: Round the Mountain

Mary Mercer

Friday: 6 hrs, ~15 km. After just one trip each from the lodge to the bin to dump some of the rotten meat from the freezer, Ken, Linda and I abandoned John, the only member of his work party on site on Friday morning, and set off in glorious sunshine to the Whakapapa Village car park. We were all packed up by about 10am and joined several other groups heading for Taranaki Falls/Tama Lakes. It was perfect tramping weather with fabulous views of Mt Ngauruhoe and Mt Ruapehu and just the faintest breeze. It didn't take long to reach the turn off to Waihohonu Hut and we ambled over little hills past gradually diminishing heath-like vegetation to reach the historic Waihohonu hut (built 1905) around 4.30pm. We also visited the new, most impressive Waihohonu Hut about 15 min down the track. It was fully booked so we headed south to visit the nearby Ohinepango Springs and Stream. The vivid green weed under the clear, fast flowing water looked very beautiful in the late afternoon sunlight. A bit further on, we found a nice flat camp site for the night.

Saturday: 5½ hrs, 12 km. Next morning we woke to find an amazing amount of condensation on our tents, the day was fine but a bit misty early on. We set off up the dry stream bed through some quite high bushes and more little hills. As we progressed the bare patches got bigger and eventually we were walking through "the only true desert in

the North Island" in the rain shadow of Mt Ruapehu.

We crossed the Mangatoetoenui Stream and then headed up past quite large boulders to the Tukino Road for a rendezvous with Tim and Ben Swale. From there we made our way down and up the gulch cut by the Whangaehu River and on to Rangipo Hut for afternoon tea and an early stop. It was a good opportunity to dry our tents even though we could see rainbows further south. Tim, Ben and Ken entertained themselves by walking up the adjacent hill while more and more people arrived at the hut. The



moon looked huge as it rose in the early evening but it disappeared into cloud around 8pm so we missed the eclipse.



Sunday: 7½ hrs, ~13 km. It was quite misty as the five of us set off for Mangaehuehu Hut. Luckily the cloud lifted just after we got to the very deep Wahianoa Gorge so we could see the river right down the bottom and the dramatic rocky sides. We had views of the mountain in one direction and out to the Desert Road and Lake Moawhango in the other. From there we continued our traverse around the edge of the mountain and gradually the vegetation increased from low alpine plants to bushes and, eventually beech forest. After a brew up at the hut we walked on for a bit over an hour to find a pretty camp site in the middle of the beech trees.



Monday: 10 hrs, ~20 km. An 8.10 am start meant that we arrived at 9.33am at the Mountain Road car park to be met by Dan Swale. Here we left Tim and Ben who returned to Waiouru after Dan drove us 3 km up the road to the next track section. Soon after we set off down the rocky track we donned our rain coats, partly due to light rain but mainly for the wind. The Cascade Springs looked lovely in the morning light and here we encountered two very different attitudes to the surrounding terrain - a woman trumper who was clearly terrified by the rock climb while, a few hundred metres above us, canyoners enjoying themselves roping down through the middle of the springs. Luckily for us the woman and her friend spotted Linda's tent which had unleashed itself from her pack during a tricky squeeze past some rocks. The track took us down a rocky stream and on to Mangaturuturu Hut in time for an early lunch. The view of the mountain from here is truly spectacular with huge rocky bluffs and lots of waterfalls.



We had just finished our lunch when the only significant rain on our whole trip fell and two rather bedraggled trampers arrived shortly after that. They told us they had left Whakapapaiti Hut just four hours earlier. By contrast we took 6½ hrs for the next section of the track which was by far the most challenging piece. There are 12 streams/ivers to cross and most have cut out quite deep valleys so lots of steep down and up. The rocky bits are fine but much of the track is very muddy and slippery and, in many places, eroded down to leave head high muddy walls. DOC's term for the track 'undulating' can only be described as wishful thinking! To be fair, there are many kilometres of board walk and wooden steps on this circuit but the

difference in track standard for this section is all the more noticeable. Officially there are two river valleys, the Manganui-o-te-Ao and the Makatote, and the scenery is magnificent with the upper mountain towering to the east and big valleys sweeping to the west into vast pine forests and native bush. Fortunately the last hour of the track is relatively easy walking because we did it in the dark.

Tuesday: ~3 hrs, 8.7 km. We finished our tramp down the Whakapapaiti Stream and through lovely beech forest in slightly misty conditions with the mountain shrouded in cloud. On a personal note, I was delighted to complete this tramp without mishap, given the decrepit state of my knees just two months earlier. We were slow, especially compared to the young bloke we met at Rangipo Hut, who ran the whole 70 km in 14 hrs, and another couple doing the circuit in two days but we had a great time enjoying the amazingly diverse scenery. Thanks to my companions, Linda Campbell and Ken Mercer for the whole trip and Tim and Ben Swale for two days.



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

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		membership@mtsc.org.nz	
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, Bob Hodgson, Howard Nicholson, Rob Pringle, John Beech

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
Wednesday Trip Convenor	Bev Akers	bevakers@xtra.co.nz	06 325 8879
Thursday Trip Convenor	Merv Matthews	merv6817@gmail.com	06 357 2858
Facebook	Ivan Rienks	facebook@mtsc.org.nz	