

beechleaves

Newsletter of the Manawatu Tramping and Skiing Club



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

Issue 4: May 2016

CLUB MEETINGS

Club meetings are held on the 1st Tuesday of the month at the Rose City Aquatic Club Rooms, 50 Park Street, Palmerston North (next to the Lido). Meetings begin at 7.30pm.

Tuesday 3rd May: Mundi Biddi Cycle Trail, Australia

Ken & Mary Mercer



The Munda Biddi
Trail Foundation

WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S
WORLD CLASS LONG DISTANCE,
OFF-ROAD CYCLING TRAIL

The Mundi Biddi cycle trail runs for 1000 km in Western Australia through a series of national parks from Perth to Albany. It is a mixture of single track, forestry roads, and disused railways with occasional sections on actual roads. Over the summer Ken and Mary Mercer rode 700 km of the trail. And, yes, it was hot!

Tuesday 7th June: Foot Work – Podiatrist Murray MacDonald



Tramping can be all about your feet but shouldn't be. If they hurt, things become pretty miserable and if they are not correctly aligned and sufficiently supported then the flow on effects to ankles, knees and hips can cause considerable issues. Come along to learn how better to look after, support and protect your feet to make your tramping more enjoyable!



REPORTS AND NOTICES

MTSC President Report: John Beech

president@mtsc.org.nz



Hi all, autumn is upon us and I must say I am thankful that the hot weather has passed. This time of the year can often provide the best weather conditions for tramping, with cooler conditions yet still reasonably settled.

I was up at Gold Creek hut on Easter Monday preparing the site for the new long drop. The hut was full of hunters so my friend and I got on with the job and returned the same day instead of staying the night. The group were a friendly bunch with a couple of kids and a dog in tow. Throughout the day we could hear stags roaring as of course it is that time of the year. I must admit that I felt a little nervous as we tramped with all the activity going on. Two days later we heard about the hunter who was accidentally shot on the Sparrowhawk track although not from the same group we had met. It was with some apprehension that myself and 2 colleagues took a group of students up the Oroua valley for a tramp the following weekend. Indeed, with the new Health and Safety paranoia sweeping the country, I wasn't sure we would be allowed to go. However, we were, and so spent the Friday night at Heritage Lodge. It was empty and we saw only one other person on the way out Saturday afternoon. Maybe the poor weather forecast and the hunting accident had put a few off. Nevertheless, we enjoyed a walk up the track and then back down the river. Again, I felt nervous, particularly with students, in the bush at this time of the year. It is a shame that many of us feel that this time of the year is too dangerous to go bush. I suppose the main point is that one hopes that hunters make sure they follow the rules at all times, as I expect most do. However, it is disconcerting that there are still those out there that, for whatever reason, make such terrible mistakes. My sympathy goes to all those affected by this tragedy.

For those of us who are heading out into the hills at this time do take care and make sure you can be seen. At least that will reduce some of the risk.

John

Robert Trevor Vernon

17 August 1941 – 4 March 2016



Bob Vernon will be remembered by older club members and former members. He was a committee member during the 1980s and served as gear custodian for several years. Trip leaders will recall visiting Bob in Parkland Crescent before club trips, getting the necessary tents, billies, ice axes etc.

Bob did a lot of tramping, both privately with friends and family, and with the club. I can recall Bob out on a number of rather arduous trips in the 1980s and early 90s. One such was a trip we made in the eastern Ruahines to Howletts Hut and across the Sawtooth Ridge, exiting down Government Spur whose track had largely overgrown during the previous 20 years. I recall his ringing me the next day enquiring how stiff my legs were and we compared our mobility. But he was certainly fit and did a number of other trips of mine including a trek across the Reporoa Bog to Ruahine corner, and trips to Ruapehu. Unfortunately, Bob

later suffered a serious back problem forcing him to put tramping on hold. Bob eventually overcame the problem and became an enthusiastic cyclist and walker.

Club members who were also Search & Rescue volunteers during the 1980s will remember Bob as the SAR Sergeant and police contact with the various clubs for callouts etc. Bob was a leader in local SAR. Funding was always scarce in the 1980s – there being no lottery grants at that time. Bob, however, was also a CIB member and in a position to collect diversion money from first-time petty transgressors of the law who could offset their misdemeanours by making a charitable donation to one of several groups – ours included. When successful, our treasurer would go up to the CIB office in the old police station and collect the reward which was put toward equipment and the occasional petrol voucher for transport. Similarly, Bob managed to get the then SAR caravan cleaned regularly by diversion candidates anxious to avoid the court system.

Bob was away cycling recently and, sadly, had a mishap that put him in hospital. An operation on his hip was necessary from which he did not recover. The MTSC passes its sincere condolences to Suzanne, his children Sally and Blair, and to their families.

Hugh Wilde



Map Updates on Facebook

Updates on changes to official LINZ topo maps are now available on Facebook. Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) has launched its own Facebook page and is sharing news on the latest updates to its Topo50 and 250 maps. You'll also find facts about surveying the land and sea, historic aerial photos that show how New Zealand has changed over time, as well as updates on LINZ's work to manage biosecurity pests on Crown land.

Check out LINZ on Facebook at www.facebook.com/landinformationnz

We welcome Graham Slater to the club

Congratulations to our President, John Beech, in his appointment to the FMC executive.



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/RCC only if the party is reported overdue or a PLB is activated. 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			May Thursday Tramps		
Date	Leader	Phone	Date	Leader	Phone
4	Harold Pettersson	357 4248	5	Chris Mercer	356 2635
11	Ian Ritchie	328 9618	12	Glenn Pendergrast	356 7487
18	Bob Hargreaves	357 0734	19	John & Gillian Thornley	356 9681
25	Denise/Chris Brunskill	354 2511	26	Richard Ellis	357 6410
May Weekend Trips					
Date	Trip	Grade	Leader	Phone	
7 - 8	Dundas Loop	Med/Fit	Jean Garman	021 176 0209	
14 - 15	Sigley Falls, Ruapehu	Med/Fit	David Harrington	06 839 5766	
21 - 22	Cape Palliser walks	Easy/Med	Alla Seleznyova	027 308 9583	
21 - 22	Coppermine - Kiritaki	Med	Jenny McCarthy	06 376 8838	
28 - 29	Herricks and Dead Dog huts	Easy/Med	John Beech	354 9310	

7th – 8th May: Dundas Loop

Medium / Fit Jean Garman 021 176 0209 trampski.cave@gmail.com

This is a classic Tararua loop tramp starting from the Putara road end, heading up to Herepai hut (possibly via the alternative route) then around the tops to Dundas hut for the night. Sunday sees a few ups and downs; down to the Ruamahunga River, up to Cattle Ridge, down to the Ruamahunga River and Roaring Stag lodge, then just one more up and down to return to Putara Road end. Good exercise and a chance to visit four huts in a weekend.

14th – 15th May: Sigley Falls, Ruapehu

Medium / Fit David Harrington 06 839 5766

Starting from the bottom end of the Old Blyth Track from the Ohakune Mountain Rd we'll follow the track a short distance then head cross country through bush towards the east to the Sigley Falls (20m) on the Mangaehuehu Stream. We'll continue east for a couple of kms then head up to Mangaehuehu Hut for the night. Sunday we'll return via the 'Round The Mountain Track' and the 'Old Blyth Track'. If the weather is great I may slot in something else as well. If anyone knows how the Falls were named please let me know. In 1901 there used to be a track up past them.

21st – 22nd May: Cape Palliser Walks

Easy / Medium Alla Seleznyova 027 308 9583

There are several campgrounds to stay overnight and several walks we can do depending on the weather and energy levels. A basic DOC campground at Putangirua Pinnacles is handy to Putangirua Pinnacles loop via Te Kopi, while free camping at Ngawi is closest to the Lighthouse and a coastal walk along Ngapotiki road. There is a camp at the Kawakawa station with a shower and a small kitchen and from there (given we get permission from the station) we can take a day walk in a river bed to Kawakawa hut (DOC). We can also visit a seal colony and climb the Lighthouse at night. I will probably go there on Friday, 20th May to have an extra day and you are welcome to join.

21st 22nd May: Coppermine to Kiritaki Hut

Medium Jenny McCarthy 06 376 8838

This can either be a day trip or weekend depending on the weather and the trampers who join me on the trip. The March 2014 Beechleaves has a trip report on this route done as a day trip. This is an old route which starts on the loop track up to the ridge and then down into the Billy Goat Creak (Mangaatua

Stream). We will follow the stream for about a km and then look for the old trail into the Raparapawai stream which we will follow up until we get to the track up to the hut. Having arrived at the hut I have no idea at this stage which route we will use to leave the hills.

28th -29th May: Herricks and Dead Dog huts North Eastern Ruahines

Easy / Medium John Beech 354 9310

The plan is for a departure of 7.30am from PN as it is about a 2 hour drive to the road end. These are a couple of huts that rarely get visited as permission has to be gained to access them across Kereru station. Should this not happen we will have an alternative. We will tramp into Herricks first then, depending on weather, could either leave out gear there and walk in and out to Dead Dog in the afternoon, or go all the way to Dead Dog and spend the night there.



New Years Day: Fit for Fun Run on Old Coach Road

Report: Raj Palanisamy

I never knew there was a place like the Old Coach Road until Derek mentioned it the day before he was travelling on business towards Ohakune. He thought we should do the run from end to end. When I realised the distance from end to end is about 15 km I was a little hesitant. Knowing my hesitance Derek told me that it was not going to be that hard as the terrain is almost flat (Yeah right!!). We decided to go on New Year's Day. What could be a better thing to do than this on a New Year's Day? We arrived at noon at the Horopito road end car park after parking one vehicle at the Ohakune car park end. We did not know how long it would take us to finish the run so we thought we should not have any fixed time plan but to run as fast as we could, no pressure what so ever. Derek said he was feeling fit, which made me worried as I thought I would be competing with not only a very fit Derek but a very excited Derek too. We started not exactly on the starting point of the Old Coach road but drove until the DOC reserve entrance and started our run. It was a gorgeous day. So many people with families and children of all ages were there, but mostly riding the bikes, even a 4-5 year old child was riding an electric motor bike suitable for his size in a professional race rider suit outfit with a proud smile on his face. Of course the terrain is not that flat, ups and downs with gentle slopes among the bush and native trees and ferns. Among them the informative sign boards explaining past events and the ruins of mega steel structures of viaducts and bridges. Enlightening us of the past life of settlers and their ingenuity with some remarkable engineering. There is a tunnel approximately 200 meters and we explored that too.

We enjoyed running among friendly cyclists and walkers who appreciated our effort. We ran approximately 12 km within 1 hour 15 minutes. I must tell that we did not stop anywhere in the middle except giving way for the cyclists once in a while, though we slowed for a quick read of the information boards. When we ran over the abandoned railway bridge we returned via the gully on a very steep road below the bridge which tested my age, indeed!! Also it was interesting to run inside the tunnel that was very dark, like an air-conditioned long rest room, very cool inside which felt comfortable on the hot sunny day. Derek did not complain that he was "roasting" (feeling hot). It was a relief when I finished the run. At one point of the run there was a freely hanging board on a fallen tree with a big question mark following the words "how old" to identify the age of the tree trunk by counting the annual rings. While we crossed the spot, Derek who ran a few meters ahead of me, pointed out the sign to tease me to indicate that I am older. Of course I am older but I still kept up with him. I told him it is not age that matters but

determination. I am sure my fellow members of the “fifties club” will agree with me! It was a fun run after all, on a beautiful track with lots of history, thanks to Derek for asking me to go.

Thursday 3rd March: Kaiparoro and the crash site of NZ2124

Report: Hugh Wilde

Photos: John Brock and Richard Ellis

Twenty of us in the van plus three cars, as well as a visitor (and dog) from Masterton departed the road end at 9.15am in very good weather, hardly any breeze. Climbing through the forest after one hour we soon reached the turnoff to the track to the remains of the wreck of the Airspeed Oxford aircraft NZ2124 that crashed on Mt Kaiparoro in 1952 with the loss of the pilot. We turned off the main track to the peak to visit the crash site; about 40 minutes walk southwest from the turnoff. Although we had the GPS track from previous club trips there, we didn't really need it as the route to the crash site is marked in places and the trail reasonably easy to follow.



Aircraft wreckage and the pilots grave marker

After Merv cleaned the cross over the pilot's grave so his name could be read, and after we examined the various pieces of the plane (engines, fuel and oil tanks, part of the wing, fusebox, plus various bits of metal) and when the photographers had done their stuff, we returned to the main track and headed up to the trig, a few hundred metres further up the track. Out in the open above the bush the day was clear and sunny with only a very slight breeze, contrasting to the rather gloomy crash site within the bush.

After lunch we returned to the road end but this time taking the alternate loop track down that runs a little east of the main track, taking about 1.5 hours down from the top and reaching the road end around 2.30pm, departing for Palmerston North at 3pm. We didn't arrive in Palmerston North until 5pm, thanks to a motorcycle crash on the Pahiatua Track, caused by a combination of speed and some loose gravel on the tar seal.



Kaiparoro Trig

Weekend 12th – 13th March: Mangahao Flats Work Party

Report: Jean Garman

Photos: Jean and Ivan

Most impressively for a weekend trip, there were ten of us packed into the minibus bouncing our way into the Mangahao Dams. We were to be joined by a party of four from PNTMC so we were kind of hoping no one else was planning to spend the night at the hut. There was some painting to be done on the boards below the deck so we sent Ivan and Brian off to gallop (under 3 hours) in and get started while the rest of



us took a bit more time, completing any necessary track maintenance along the way. At the big slip about 20min before the hut there used to be three route options – cross the river twice (best option if the river is low), cross the slip (often a bit dodgy on the downstream side) or a track right round the top of the slip. Now there are only two options; either the river or right round the top as a part of the slip we had thought was stable has dropped out quite dramatically.

Slip options: cross the river or climb round the top

cleaning (guttering, toilet, windows, etc), painting, vegetation clearance and firewood gathering/cutting.

Once at the hut we carried out various tasks;



Much was achieved before it was time to stop for communal nibbles/drinkies of which there was considerable variety and quantity. When we were all much merrier, it was time for a light salad dinner followed by a dense boozy chocolate cake to celebrate my half century. Luckily no one else had turned up at the hut as we rather took it over. Finally exhausted (more from the eating and drinking than hard work) we all crawled off to bed in the hut, on the deck or camped some distance away for those who preferred a more peaceful night.

Sunday saw us spend more time on vegetation clearance and weeding to maintain the view and the lawn below the hut. Then it was time to head out with the hydrophobes taking the track while the water babies headed down the river. The section of river between the hut and Harris creek is getting deeper each year, I could



only just keep my feet on the bottom for one crossing. Below Harris creek it is as it always has been – several swims required. Despite the ups and downs the track is actually quicker but the river is a beautiful option on a nice day.



The very beautiful if not somewhat wetting Mangahao River

Many thanks to all the hard workers; Ivan, Brian, Malcolm, Doug, Jenny, Bernadette, Dave, David and Adam. And to the helpers from PNTMC; Janet, Graham, Warren and Richard.

Wednesday 16th March: Wednesday Wilderness Wanderers Tramp the Kiritaki Hut Track

Report: Bob Hodgson

Photos: There are no photos of wet bush, the muddy track and the clouded in views, these are to be imagined!

18 Wednesday trampers rendezvoused at the Pinfold Road Top Grass Road junction then made their way to Mike Long's Farm. We found him finishing milking. As the track across his farm to the steep paddock that gives access to the Ruahine Forest Park was pugged up he used his 4WD ute to give us a ride. He cheerfully made three round trips to do this as four of us tramped up. Having gained access to the Park by climbing under or over the fence we split into two groups. The smaller Fast Group was provided with a supply of pink ribbon and assigned the task of finding and marking the track for the Main Group. The track finders deviated several times in performing their task. It was a wet day through which, it either rained or drizzled. As we climbed the southerly asserted itself and it got progressively wetter and colder. After about three hours of steady climbing on a track that was getting steadily muddier we were met by the leaders of the Fast Group who announced that they had decided to turn because of the deteriorating conditions. (There was some talk of mutiny.) After a long hot summer the conditions were much colder and wetter than expected. So at 11.30am, after three hours, we all turned and tramped back down the churned track. The steep, wet, grassy paddock was the final challenge, several packs shed to scramble under the fence rolled off down the hill and several trampers were seen to try bum sliding. We were all safely back at the vehicles by 2pm.

Thanks to trip leader and to drivers John, Carole and Marion. Thanks also to Mike Long, the friendly farmer (who even offered showers to anybody in need!) and farmer Bev who contacted him for permission.

Weekend 19th – 20th March: Bushcraft Course

Report: Hamish Gay (Taranua College student)

Photos: Tim Swale

On Saturday morning, at about 8:30 am, I arrived at the Taranua College bus park just as our ride came to pick us up for the Duke Of Edinburgh bushcraft trip to Mount Holdsworth. Mr Swale and five other members from the Manawatu Tramping and Skiing Club arrived in the club's 2005 Ford Transit 12 seater. To me, personally, the interior of the van looked ugly. The style of the side panels were what made the van interior ugly and the window tints had a green tone to them which made my eyes feel really weird.

Other than that the ride was smooth. I didn't seem to feel the road bumps as you would in the back of a Toyota Hiace.

We got there at about 10am. We had morning tea at the Mount Holdsworth road end and did some map and compass exercises before heading to Donnelly Flats to pitch our tents and have lunch. We then learnt about first aid and other things to do with tramping before doing a compass exercise on the loop track and cutting through the bush on the way back to camp.



Camping and river crossing

When we got back to camp we had afternoon tea and went down to the river to learn about river crossing in groups before coming back to camp to learn about ways of cooking, how to use different types of cookers and types of food you can take when tramping. After that it was free time and dinner time. I had tea first. I had brought along a Continental Mac and Cheese meal. I then did my dishes before having free time where I found two sticks and with a pencil sharpener, I sharpened both ends of both sticks to make spears. Murray actually brought his fishing rod as he was keen to go eeling, so we went down to the river and had a look. However, not long after that we had to pack up our food and stuff and get our torches ready for going on a night walk. Everyone got dropped off at 50 metre intervals in the dark and had to wait on the track for ten minutes with torches off until Ken picked us up.

When we got back, we went and had another look for eels. We found one but Mr Swale told us not to catch it. Not long after that, we were then told to head back to camp and get ready for bed.

The next morning we got up at about 7am and we packed our bags and had breakfast before leaving the tents back at camp and heading up to Rocky Lookout which took about 2 hours. We came across a few wasp nests along the way. At least nobody got stung.



The new DOC Rocky Lookout platform

We arrived at Rocky Lookout for lunch and I managed to get full phone signal so I rang home to see if anyone could guess where I was. We then left Rocky Lookout to go to the brand new DOC Rocky Lookout which was back down the track a little way. We took some photos on the new lookout platform before leaving and heading back down the track towards the shortcut back to camp. We then packed up the tents and just before we got to the road end, we did an actual river crossing in groups of four. We then walked the home stretch back to the van in wet boots.

After arriving back at the van we took our packs

off at a table and had a quick rest where I took my wet boots off and put them in the van. After all the gear was loaded into the van we got in and we finally hit the road. I fell asleep after we had gone through Masterton until we got to Eketahuna. We arrived back at the school bus park at about 4.30pm. I had to wait about ten minutes until my mum arrived. Murray and Nicholas stayed and went in the van and were dropped home in the van on their way back to Palmerston North.

I would really love to thank: Mr Swale for going out of his way to organise this trip, Ken for providing transport and helping on the trip, Mr Swale's partner for helping me with problems with my boots and encouraging me to handle the painfully steep tracks, and Murray for putting up with my snoring on Saturday night, sharing the cooker for Saturday night's dinner and handling the fact that I accidentally burnt his wooden spoon.

This trip was AWESOME. It's probably the first time I remember tramping. I am going to have very good memories about this trip for a very long time. I am glad that I have now experienced tramping and I am hoping I get another opportunity to go tramping very soon.

Wednesday 23rd March: WWW enjoy Holdsworth Day Tramps

Reports: Jill and Bob

Photos: William and Evan

The day dawned clear and warm. A day that said anything was possible. There were 31 happy trampers who rendezvoused at the Mt Holdsworth car park in the Tararua Forest Park. Powell Hut was the expected destination for one group who set off enthusiastically for the tops. The other group were eager to meander along the Atiwhakatu Stream towards Atiwhakatu Hut.



The approach to and the achievement of the Mt Holdsworth summit

Jill: The high-flyers wasted no time, in order to savour the many views that kept magically improving the higher one climbed. A few found the heat and humidity most energy sapping and so decided to gladly stay at Powell Hut (1160m) for a leisurely long lunch. The sure-footed seven kept going and achieved a first for some when they climbed to the Mt Holdsworth trig (1470m). The weather was kind all day with occasional gentle breezes. The tussock along the tops shimmered in the sunshine. The views were special. We could see as far as the eye could see. Was that Australia? As we descended to the bush-line we were more aware of the passing leatherwood, different native grasses, then onto the taller beeches, rimu and the spying of an unusual olearia. The many steps were quite frustrating and tiring ascending but hardly noticed on the way down. I'm sure there is an environmental/scientific explanation for that phenomenon. When we arrived at Mountain House shelter a cool wind was a bit too refreshing.

We carried on descending but as we still had plenty of time before we were expected out, being early autumn and day-light saving, we discussed going off-track. As I was leader, the final say landed with me. Such power. As 'leader of the pack' I was good to go and decided we had enough survival skills amongst us

all. Christine and Linda took our party of 9 to the original Rocky Lookout. Practising the compass training that they had learnt from the previous weekend of bushcraft knowledge, they took us down a ridge that was overgrown and dark and had the feel of the original bush track, even discovering the old Holdsworth intersection signs. Thanks Linda and Christine for those navigational reminders and Bev for her reassurance.



The old Holdsworth track intersection signs



The original Rocky Lookout

The last ones were out to the cars not long after 4pm and all thinking they had had a delightful day and some even feeling positively rhapsodic. Onto Masterton for ice creams.

Bob: Eleven Wednesday trampers opted for the tramp to the Atiwhakatu Hut.

After the recent rains the bush was at its beautiful best and the track was in apple pie order except for the slip. We investigated both routes through, i.e. 1) over the slip and 2) under the slip along the river bed. With the river in low flow and a dry day both routes were easily navigated. As the slip appeared to be still active, after heavy rain neither route would be attractive. The walk in and walk out were made in under two and half hours, a total distance covered of 13.74km and a height gain/fall of 169m. This was a leisurely tramp with both morning and afternoon tea stops in addition to a half hour lunch at the Hut. By 2.45pm all “the lively eleven” were safely enjoying the balmy weather at the park entrance.



So many good places to sit and chat

Thanks to van driver John Ridge, Linda, Anne Rush, Rita and Chris B for their cars and to leader Jill.

Easter 25th – 28th March: Round the Ruahines *Couldn't resist the alliteration though we just did a loop from west to east and back!*

Report: Mary Mercer

Photos: Mary Mercer

Tim Swale, Linda Campbell, Ken and Mary Mercer set off from the Rangi car park in warm but somewhat misty weather on Friday morning. We met our first group of three hunters and their dog when we stopped for an early lunch at Rangi Hut. They were still contemplating their next moves when we set off for Mangahua (1583m) and then headed north initially on the track to Triangle Hut. By this time the mist had gone from light drizzle to wetting rain which came and went as we made our way over or around the tussock, trying hard to avoid the deep holes which seemed to have formed for no good reason. After the first tarn we got back on the ridge up to Mangamahue (1661m) and, just a bit further on, spotted the tarn where we planned to camp. The walk down over the tussock again proved to be harder than it looked but there were nice, spongy, flattish plants right next to the tarn - perfect for two tents.



It did clear during the night but by Saturday morning we were back to cloud and then quite heavy rain just as we were packing up. We went east now along the tops with intermittent views of distant hills and lots of mist-filled valleys below us. Luckily the outlook did get better as the day wore on. Around 11am, Ken and Tim speculated that we were about as far from civilisation as it was possible to be in the Ruahines. Almost immediately, we spied a couple, Fiona and Anthony (clad in a kilt) coming along the tops behind us. Then three

hunters appeared in front of us carrying the carcasses of two deer they had just shot and retrieved from way down a slip. It turned out that these five were also heading for Howletts Hut.

The track along the tops was quite easy to follow all the way up to Te Hekenga (1695m) but then it suddenly vanished just as we reached a rather intimidating slip. Here bare dirt dropped off very steeply on both sides and it looked like one misplaced step would spell your death. After some hesitation and scouting by Tim, we convinced ourselves that we really did have to cross this slip. Ken and Tim nobly offered to carry the packs of Linda and Mary across this section and their offer was accepted without



hesitation. In fact, it wasn't quite as bad as it looked but Ken nearly killed me anyway. As he was coming across with my pack he dislodged a rock which went crashing down the slip and made me think he had fallen. I am sure my heart actually stopped in fright!

Reunited with our packs, we then climbed around a rocky outcrop and down a steep section to a scree slope composed of big chunks of rock. This had to be negotiated one person at a time because it was impossible not to send a stream of rocks down with every step. Luckily we all got across without mishap and continued on along the tops to Tiraha (1668m). Then, thanks to Tim's careful navigation, we dropped off the ridge at just the right spot to get onto the saddle between two creeks (way below) that led to Daphne Ridge. It started to rain quite heavily just as we began this descent so this part of the tramp was very slippery and difficult for dodderly knees like mine. As we headed down we were passed by the three deer hunters and their dog and, a while later, by Fiona and Anthony. These two had been ahead of us but were misled by the cairns, so had continued down the ridge well past the turn off before they realised their mistake. As we made our way towards the hut, we passed from tussock to bare dirt and rock then to alpine plants, leatherwood and finally small trees before we got to Howletts hut about 7pm. Since this is only a ten person hut, we were delighted to find that there were still four mattresses free. Two of hunters and the dog opted for their tent while Anthony and the other hunter volunteered to sleep on the floor. All were asleep early but at one stage during the night, when I woke briefly, the moon was shining straight through the window so the whole hut was bathed in light.

Easter Sunday dawned rather overcast, misty and windy. We could see a bit as we wended our way southish along Daphne Ridge through leatherwood and other low shrubs towards Taumatataua (1415m) where we had a pleasant break in sunshine in a little hollow out of the wind. The next peak (1452m) was nameless and then came Otumore (1519m). Altogether we passed three groups of trampers that morning and saw another two hunters. It even cleared enough for Tim and Ken to dry off our tents during our lunch stop below Otumore. Soon after another nameless peak (1519m) – more joy for Linda! - we turned westish and eventually got on the track down to Iron Gate Hut. It was nice to be back in the beech trees surrounded by thick moss and other beautiful flora in spite of the relentless gradient down to the Oroua River. To our amazement, Iron Gate hut was empty when we arrived just before 6pm though a young man, Greg, did turn up a bit later. We four all had a bathe, of sorts, in the river but a mere rinse was not enough to dispel the three day old wet sock aroma so Greg wisely chose to sleep in his tent.



Monday was the clearest day of the four and it was great to be able to see all the tops and our route over the previous days. We set off up the river for a short distance and, after a visit to an island, managed to cross the Oroua to the start of the track to Triangle Hut. It rose quite steeply alongside a creek and then onwards and upwards to 1037m. There we left the main track and continued on up the ridge towards Mangahuaia, largely following the trail left by the stoat trappers. It was relatively easy walking under the

beech trees but as we climbed up into the leatherwood the track got steeper and less distinct. All up, the

883m climb to Mangahuia took us till 4pm. Then it was down, down, down another 760m to the Rangi car park which we reached at 7pm. Luckily for us, the Kimbolten Hotel did not stop serving meals till after 8.30pm and their fish and chips and beer/wine tasted fantastic!

Wednesday 30th March: WWWs Tramp Mount Doom to Rangipo Hut

Report: Bob Hodgson

Photos: Maureen Naylor

After a 7.30am start, 29 Wednesday Wilderness Wanderers rendezvoused in Waiouru to then travel north in convoy along SH1 to pick up the Tukino Ski Field road. After an 8km drive along the ski road and a height gain from 349m to 1409m, we all parked adjacent to the telecommunications relay towers and building.



It was a beautiful autumn day with a light, cool breeze that immediately demanded beanies and extra layers. At about 10.10am the group set off in single file along the Round the Mountain Track. The views were spectacular and as the sun rose higher, above us on the Mountain, the colours softened and the shadows shortened and sharpened; it was a visual feast. About two thirds of the way to the hut we entered the valley of the Whangaehu river with the DOC directive not to linger as it is the path of a potential lahar from the crater lake. Incidentally, lahar in its origin, an Indonesian term. The area has the sulphurous, volcanic odour appropriate to Mount Doom. The river is crossed by a high, impressive and challenging swing bridge. Previous bridges had all been swept away by lahars so linger we did not!



On route to the hut we had seen multiple helicopter trips taking volunteers and supplies to do painting and hut maintenance. The Hut is at about 1580m. By 12.30pm the volunteers were amused to be joined by 27 MTSC trampers, for lunch (but not maintenance). Two trampers turned back in the vicinity of the swing

bridge. In the afternoon sun and intermittent light breeze, the tramp out was a delight. By about 3pm we were all back to the vehicles where there was a relaxed party atmosphere as we chatted, changed and snacked.

On the return journey most of us then gathered in the courtyard of the Cafe Telephonic in Taihape where we were invited to help ourselves to ripe, black grapes; a fitting end to a day that really was one out of the box!

Thanks to trip leader Rita, our drivers including Evan who coaxed the van to gain 349m up the ski road.

Sunday 3rd April: Atiwhakatu Hut Orchid hunting

Report: Alla Seleznyova

Photos: Alla Seleznyova

Yes, have we found a lot of orchids! We went on Saturday and camped overnight at the Mt Holdsworth campground. The first orchids we saw were near my favourite swimming hole where we went for afternoon tea, just a few meters from our campsite. The weather forecast for this weekend was not very promising and it was raining during the night, but the rain had cleared by Sunday morning and the clouds had gradually dissolved by the time we started our walk to the Atiwhakatu hut. The river was brown and turbulent and we saw a group of excited teenagers practicing river crossing. After the rain, the greenery looked fresh and the kidney ferns were glowing in the sun. The orchids were easy to spot due to their strong fragrance. Overall it was a very enjoyable weekend. My companion was Jinny Andersen



Orchids and Fungi

Wednesday 6th April: WWWs Witness the Roar in the Park

Report: Bob Hodgson

Photos: Maureen Naylor

It was lovely autumn day. After a 7.30am start and a subsequent muster at the Royal Conveniences in Eketahuna, 26 trampers entered the Tararua Forest Park via the Putara Road entrance.

Although the Mangatainoka River was in low flow, as a result of recent rains and lower daily temperatures, the bush was "perky" and a joy to behold (!). At 8.55pm the fast group set off at, yes, a fast pace, determined to reach the Roaring Stag Hut or as near as the 12.30pm turn back time allowed. The rest of the party followed with a range of goals determined by fitness and state of mind. All made it across the second swing bridge and up the steep slope to The Junction. By 3.40pm all were safely out after a memorable tramp.

For the record, six made it to Roaring Stag Hut, about the same number turned and lunched at the river near the hut, seven made the Herepai Hut their destination and the balance turned at intermediate points. Most of us heard at least one stag roar and, on the tramp in, met with two emerging empty handed hunters.



Enjoying the sunshine at Herepai hut



Great season for fungi

Thanks to Trip Leader Anne and to our drivers including Evan who drove the Van.

Thursday 7th April: Ruahine Adventure

Report: Merv Matthews

This was a newly-opened loop track which begins with the Coppermine track in the southern Ruahines, Some of it was cut by a few energetic Thursday Trampers in 2001/2 to form a loop reaching to 'Pretender' at spot height 967, and returning via the Wharite track. They also did some clearing on a hunters' trail further north with the aim of reaching spot height 1015 from the Coppermine track, but never completed that portion. However, a group from the Wednesday Trampers has now enlarged the loop to include spot height 1015 by cutting through the leatherwood between 967 and 1015.

There should have been great views from the main ridge heading south, but we were too occupied trying to keep to our feet while battling the strong nor-westerly winds sweeping across the tops. The tall leatherwood gave us shelter for most of the way, but once we were out in the open saddle it became very unpleasant.

There were a few grumbles from some of the party, and I admit it *was* quite a challenge and a slow trip (18km and 8 hours) so next time we will probably skip the Wharite section and make our escape from the tops by following a shorter route from 967 directly down the spur to the Coppermine track.

We were 11 Thursday Trampers.

Weekend 9th – 10th April: Cattle Creek

Report: Helen Peek

Photos: Helen Peek and Jean Garman

It was a mild, windless, but drizzling Saturday when four experienced and two "trainee" trampers set off for Cattle Creek Hut via the Homes Ridge track to Stanfield Hut and along another ridge. Good time was made; the hut was reached by early afternoon. The drizzle had turned to clag and rain so all were happy to settle in for the afternoon enjoying shared snacks, a bottle of lovely Cherry wine – thanks Adam we'll keep you on as a winemaker- and camaraderie. Some embroidery was even accomplished.



Impromptu track work



Outside Standfield hut

After a tasty meal – thanks Jenny – all turned in early for the night, and all were up early Sunday morning. The rain had eased again to heavy drizzle and rather than tackle the steep and muddy track from the hut to the saddle we waded off up the river until it was decided it was time to bush bash up until we found the “Lost Track” and followed it back down to the junction. After a quick snack it was back down to Stanfield Hut where Adam and Jean carried on down the river to the car park while the rest walked out via the track arriving at the cars early afternoon. The rain had stopped and we even had a little sun. As it was the roar we met a total of six hunters during the weekend.



Looking down on Cattle Creek hut through the mist



River travel

For the trainees it was a great trip and a feeling that some “real tramping” had been undertaken with surviving river travel and bush bashing, and we thank our experienced companions for their patience and for giving us the experience.

We were Jenny McCarthy, Bernadette Heaphy, Adam Matich, Dave Mitchell, Jean Garman and Helen Peek



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Committee 2015 - 2016

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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. 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 or phone (06) 356 9450. To confirm your booking, payment must be made by cheque to 179 Cook St Palmerston North 4410, by cash in person or internet payment (please email to confirm before depositing) Westpac account number 03 1521 022035300.

	Members	Guests
Adult	\$35	\$50
Secondary School	\$28	\$43
Primary School	\$23	\$38
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.