

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 7: August 2016



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 2nd August: The Aorangi Restoration Trust - Bob Burgess



The Aorangi Restoration Trust was established in 2011. Our project covers the Aorangi Forest Park and its surrounds south of Martinborough to Cape Palliser, an area of 80,000 ha. We are working to restore the indigenous lowland, montane and sub-alpine forest, coastal and marine ecosystems, streams and wetlands. Currently our major effort is on predator trapping to complement the use of 1080 poison in August 2014, the first of three aerial drops over 10 years.



Tuesday 6th September: Annual photo competition

- be WOWED and INSPIRED by an evening of exceptional outdoor photography

- Categories:
1. NZ Landscapes, no people;
 2. NZ Above Bushline, predominantly alpine scenery (rock, snow, tussock, etc), may include people;
 3. NZ Below Bushline, predominantly bush/scrub (lowland to sub-alpine areas), may include people;
 4. NZ Natural History, NZ flora, fauna or detail (geology, ice formations, etc);
 5. NZ Topical, people or detail related to tramping, climbing, skiing, hut and camp life, etc. in NZ;
 6. Overseas, photos taken overseas.

Submit entries to Howard by Thursday the 1st of September

- Using Dropbox or OneDrive (preferred) - email photocomp@mtsc.org.nz and I will send you a link that you can use;
- By email to photocomp@mtsc.org.nz ;

Unless you notify us otherwise, by entering this competition you grant MTSC the right to: use submitted images for MTSC publicity purposes; submit your entries into the local Interclub competition; submit your entries into the Federated Mountain Clubs photo competition.

MTSC will also be hosting the Interclub Photo Competition on Tuesday 4th October 2016.

REPORTS AND NOTICES

MTSC President Report: John Beech

president@mtsc.org.nz



Hi all, winter is well upon us and we have certainly had a wet June. Tramping has taken a back seat for me since our Milford trip. Although myself and two friends spent a couple of days at Gold Creek installing a new long drop over the last couple of days.

As I said at the start it has been a warm and wet June and that probably doesn't mean the ski season will be getting a good start. As I write this there appears to be few facilities operating and I hope that as the school holidays progress there will be a little more of the white stuff for those of you that are heading up to the lodge for a bit of R & R.

Recently DOC has been in the spotlight again for all the wrong reasons. The decision to increase helicopter landings on the Ngapunatoru plateau in Fiordland from 10 to 80, a 700% increase, has angered many in the tramping and climbing fraternity. This is in contravention to the Fiordland National Park management plan and was without consultation to many affected parties. Unfortunately, it seems that some managers in DOC have not learnt the lesson from the Routeburn guided walkers debacle where they were criticised heavily by the ombudsman for not following their own plans. It is a shame that this sort of thing keeps happening given that the outdoors community, by and large, support DOC in all they do. However, as I mentioned in my last report they are under intense pressure from the tourism industry to open up more opportunities for tourists. Although this is something that can benefit us as a country we cannot let tourism ruin the experience for kiwis that live here and basically, kill the golden goose. It is up to DOC, as guardians of the conservation estate, to try and find the balance. Unfortunately, this is proving to be very difficult. One can only hope that they can do their job without caving into commercial pressure. A recent article in the Otago Daily Times quoted a NZ Aviation representative as complaining about trampers leaving the biggest mess in terms of faeces and other mess. This is a ridiculous statement and demonstrates their desperation in trying to justify the 700% increase in helicopter landings. The biggest mess that I have seen are on the Great Walks, Te Araroa and places like tracks near Mt Cook village. It is no surprise that these areas are where the heaviest tourist presence exists. Therefore, do the numbers of tourists need to be regulated further rather than increased? I'll leave you, the readers with that thought to ponder.

I often find it difficult to comment on this type of stuff as it is usually quite negative but it is so important for us all to realise what we stand to lose if we let all and sundry do what they like in our parks.

On a positive note we have such beautiful national and forest parks where it is a pleasure to observe the flora and fauna that is so unique to our country. In the last couple of weeks whilst tramping I have come across two wonderful specimens of our wildlife. Last week I managed to rescue a rather large stick insect from being trampled on the Manawatu gorge walk and the weekend just gone a native worm from the track to Gold Creek. Although, to some they will be regarded as little more than insects or worms they are part of the richness of species diversity that we often take for granted in our bush. This is what I spend my time in the bush for.

Till next month. *John*

First Tracks – MTSC Ski Captain: Howard Nicholson

It's cold, and it's finally here. Slip on the fleece, slap on the goggles and slop on the sunscreen. The long-awaited white stuff is falling and now it's time to get into it. Make your lodge bookings by emailing your details to lodge.bookings@mtsc.org.nz for a few nights away for not a lot of dosh.

Some useful links to help you plan your trip are:

MTSC Lodge information: <http://mtsc.nz/lodge.php>

Ruapehu Alpine Lifts web site: <http://www.mtruapehu.com/winter/>

Avalanche forecasts (vital if you are heading backcountry):

<http://www.avalanche.net.nz/forecasts/detail.asp?m=5>

Metservice weather: <http://metservice.com/skifields/whakapapa>



See you on the mountain!

Howard Nicholson

Mob 027 294 1941

The Rain

It rained and rained and rained the average fall was well maintained and when the tracks were simply bogs it started raining cats & dogs.

After a drought of half an hour we had a most refreshing shower and then most curious thing of all a gentle rain began to fall!

Next day but one was fairly dry save for one deluge from the sky which wetted the party to the skin and then, at last, the rain set in.



Trip Card Time is Looming Again



It is time to start thinking about the summer (November 2016-April 2017) trip card. We need to have all the trips sorted by the end of August so we have time to send it off to The Printery. We have produced a spreadsheet covering this six month period and made it available online on Google Sheets. It already has a few trips entered, but could do with some more, particularly to cover from "family" through to "medium". You just double-click on the cell you want to enter your data into, and type. The spreadsheet saves automatically. Once finished you just close your browser.

The link is: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=18mz-5fAFwspTrTfooWzu6fuaC8u1mGamGiVZOfxVEE>

Kashmir Road, Ruahines, update

Kashmir road is OK until the last hill up to the car park at the end. The first hill is fine although some front wheel drive cars find it hard to get up. The road has many potholes but it's the last hill where water has got on the road, one culvert is exposed, where there are more issues. A couple of weekends ago a two wheel drive hi-lux scrapped the bottom of the running boards to get to the car park. It would be no problem in a four wheel drive ute.

New Ruahine Toilets

Two new toilets have been installed in the Ruahine – one at Gold Creek hut (thanks John) and one at Toka Biv. A great excuse to visit and make use of the facilities!



the Gold Creek longdrop



the Toka Biv thunderbox

Arete Forks Hut, Tararuas

the hut has been restored to its original condition

The Ex NZFS Deer Culler group has restored Arete Forks Hut to the original S70 NZFS 6-Bunk Hut design, including the re-instatement of an open fireplace. Restoring an open fireplace is somewhat of a milestone which required a change of thinking. Hopefully the outdoors people of the future will enjoy the opportunity to sit in front of and to cook in an open fireplace. So slap on you woolly bushshirt and take a tramp back in time.

Derrick Field has also prepared extensive historical information regarding this and other Tararua Huts.



[Read here](#) (or wait until you get in there!)

The Otaki Forks road is OPEN 😊

TIMELINE

- July-August 2015: A slip occurs at Blue Bluff after the June floods, and 5500 m³ of material is removed.
- September-December 2015: A further 2500 m³ is removed from the site.
- December 2015: Major cracks are discovered. About 1000 m³ is removed in further remedial work. The road is closed.
- February 2016: Another slip occurs after heavy rain, about 5000 m³ is cleared. Geologists, surveys and consultant engineers join council in inspecting the site. Council issues a warning after half a dozen walkers crossed, or attempted to cross, the slip face. None were injured.
- April 2016: Major earthworks begin.
- July 2016: Road is reopened.

BY THE NUMBERS

- The road was closed for seven months.
- The work cost about \$500,000 to undertake, with almost half coming from the NZ Transport Agency's emergency works fund.
- 55,000 m³ of material (solid measure) and 70,000 cum (loose measure) was removed from the site, weighing about 100,000 tonnes.
- This equates to 9300 truckloads in a 7.5cum truck, or enough material to fill the Coastlands Aquatic Centre 25m pool 47 times.
- The top batter slope is 33m high, and laid back at a 45deg angle. The three lower slopes are 25m and laid back at a 53-degree angle.
- The three benches, formed to catch debris should it fall, are all 7m wide.
- Nine pieces of equipment were used, including three 40-tonne dump trucks, two 20t excavators, a 15t excavator, a 36t excavator, a 21t super reach excavator and a 20t bulldozer.

We welcome John Brock, John Dymond, Reuben Harland, Stephanie Hunter & family, Andrew McIvor & family, Hazel Phillips, Richard Willetts & family and Peter Wilson & family to the club.



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.

August Wednesday Tramps			August Thursday Tramps		
Date	Leader	Phone	Date	Leader	Phone
3	Allan Rae	358 3962	28 July	David Grant **	328 7788
10	Russell Poole	022 658 0661	4	Gordon Clark	359 2500
17	Ian Brookes	358 7974	11	Christine Scott **	354 0510
24	Leonie Lowndes	359 5005	18	John Brock **	329 4834
31	Robert Bruce	329 7858	25	Judy Swainson	358 4082
			1 Sept	Hugh Wilde **	356 9450
** Please note the change of leader					

August Weekend Trips				
Date	Trip	Grade	Leader	Phone
6 – 7	Weekend in the Snow	All	Ken Mercer	027 364 6475
14	Iron Gate Stoat Line	Med/Fit	Adam Matich	022 358 8062
20 – 21	Weekend in the Snow	Ski	Robin Lane	021 105 8580
27 – 28	Ski from the Crater Lake	Technical	John Lyttle	027 433 6307

6th – 7th August: Weekend in the Snow

All Ken Mercer 027 364 6475

Perhaps you have an acquaintance who would enjoy staying ON the ski field? This is an opportunity to “try out” the lodge. The snow is right outside the door for children to build snowmen or slide on a sledge (yes, there's several at the lodge). Get the first runs of the day too!

14th August: Iron Gate Stoat line

Medium/Fit Adam Matich 022 358 8062 adam.j.matich@gmail.com

This day trip follows the Oroua River track through Alice Nash Memorial Heritage Lodge to Iron Gate Hut and is around 3-3½ hours each way, we'll retrace our steps on the way out. Unfortunately, Janet Wilson (PNTMC) found out that I was taking this trip and has told me that I have to deal to the stoat traps on the track. There will be one every 100 m or so, and Janet wants us to take out the dead and reset the traps. I think that something was said about putting an egg in each trap as well, so we may have lots of past-their-use-by-date eggs to carry. A 10mm ring spanner is useful if you have one. Of course this trip is weather dependent as there are stream crossings, but otherwise it is all pretty safe and lunch can be had at the hut.

20th – 22nd August: Ski Weekend at the Lodge

Ski Robin Lane txt 021 105 8580 robin@robinlane.co.nz

Ski from the Lodge at the height of the season. There should be snow by then! There are 35 beds available, so bring the family and make the most of our club facilities. Contact Robin by email or txt to join the trip - but please remember that you have to book your own beds at the lodge as well.

21st – 24th October: Labour Weekend South Island Trip

Medium/Fit Adam Matich 022 358 8062 adam.j.matich@gmail.com

I am taking a trip in the South Island on Labour Weekend; it will cover Friday to Monday, leaving Wellington on the Friday morning ferry and getting back to PN on Monday night. At the moment what I intend to do is visit the Cobb Valley. On Friday I hope to make it to the road end and tramp up to Sylvester Hut (2hr) for the night, or if the weather is ideal then continue on and camp somewhere near one of the many tarns. On Saturday we will head NW along the Lockett Range and drop down the Waingaro Peak Track to stay at Fenella hut for the night. Sunday we head back down the valley to the road end, go up through Myttons Hut to the tops and follow the track system through to Asbestos Cottage for the night. On Monday morning we will bush-bash up onto the ridge track from Asbestos Cottage and follow said track back to the road and the car and hopefully get back to Picton in time to catch

the ferry. I am going to book the ferry early August so I will need financial commitment from people who want to go; so contact me before then. If the car is not full, then there is the option for people to decide at a later date. If the weather is dodgy I will think up an alternative destination that does not have so much open tops travel.



Queen's Birthday Weekend 4th – 6th June: Walks around Wellington

Report: Alla Seleznyova

Photos: Alla Seleznyova & Helen Pick

On Saturday morning six of us Tim, Linda, Ken, Mary, Helen and myself set out for Welly in Tim's van. On our way, we decided to do the Paekakariki Escarpment track, a new section of Te Araroa. The track has been popular with club members and has been described in great detail by Bob in July's Newsletter. I will only add that "The Stairway to Heaven" did not appear as lethal as Bob suggested (steep with no rails), but I would certainly recommend using tramping poles. The day was unusually warm and calm and we enjoyed a long lunch at a high spot above the track taking in the great views and watching a steady stream of people walking in both directions. On arrival to Pukerua Bay, Tim caught a bus back to Paekakariki to retrieve the van, while the rest of us had ice creams at the Bay shop.



A beautiful day on the Paekakariki Escarpment track

We did the Skyline track on Sunday starting from the Makara Road entrance in Karori. For the beginning of the walk, we were joined by John Little and Ben Swale, who together with Tim took a turnoff to Wilton Bush; while the rest of the party continued on to Mount Kaukau and, eventually, to the Old Coach Road near Johnsonville. There were a lot of people around the Mount Kaukau lookout, coming from Khandallah Park. The day was very sunny but very windy. From the track, we enjoyed marvellous views of Wellington and the Makara wind farm. After finishing the walk we were picked up by Tim.



Limbering up for the group photo on Mt Kaukau

On Monday some went to museums and some met up with friend/relatives while Helen and I decided to do a part of the City to Sea Walkway. We started at the Parliament House and walked via Bolton Street Memorial Park and the Rose Garden where we visited the Begonia House with lush colourful vegetation. On the way up to the Planetarium, we came across an impressive marble sculpture – Rudderstone, a metaphor of passage to another realm, which symbolises our migrant cultures. “The vivid blue and white stripes of the reverse side are abstracted panoramic streams of sea and sky. The turquoise blue Azul marble from Brazil and the crisp laundered white of the Carrara marble from Italy glow luminously in this position where the sunlight is quite filtered”. Going through Aro Valley took me 25 years back in time; I used to live near Aro Street and walked this street every day when I first came to New Zealand. It’s amazing how much the street has changed over the years: spotting beautifully restored old villas and new trendy shops... We had lunch at the Central Park and then wandered to the waterfront to meet with the others and go back to Palmy. Overall it was a wonderful weekend. Thanks everyone for great company and especially Tim for taking his van and driving.



The beautiful Rudderstone

Wednesday 15th June: WWWs do Burton’s Track as a Walk Through

Report: Bob and Christine

Photos: Maureen and William

On a day that started with low grey clouds, 29 enthusiastic Wednesday Wilderness Walkers made their way via Scotts road and through the locked gate to park about a kilometre from the style at the start of the bushed track. At the start of the tramp, at 9.25am, there was a cool wind and the promise of rain. More than half of the party set off to walk the length of the track, four trampers, including three drivers, turned back and up at the first stream to climb the 300m back to the style. Others turned at intermediate points earlier on the track down all to return to the vehicles. The bush was superb, several flowering Rata were spotted, and a number of Tom Tits were noticed shadowing the tramping groups.



Rata in bloom



Is it Wet?



WWWs Try Line dancing

The through trampers crossed our first and deepest stream at the bottom of the valley. We meandered up, down and along the Tokomaru River for another 90mins, crossing tributaries and the Tokomaru twice. On our final crossing we practiced river crossings, linking together by holding pack straps. This was a fun activity that created a fair amount of discussion post event. Dennis was the sole tramper with dry feet thanks to tall boots and neoprene gaiters! We lunched at Burtons Whare. The pungas, grassy clearings and bush along the valley are beautiful

although I did spot a patch of Tradescantia about half way. This is an interesting, sheltered walk through mature and regenerating bush with the track ranging from steep bush to 4 wheel drive and a little gravel road, 17km in total.

Meanwhile the drivers' cohort had returned to the vehicles, one of which immediately left with its four occupants who were perhaps in search of coffee. The bus and three vehicles departed at about 1.15pm and drove to Shannon, then up the shingle roads above the Mangahao power station, to the pickup point where, to the surprise of trip leader, a new car park had been constructed since reconnaissance in the previous week. The convoy picked up three fast through trampers en-route to the car park and finally arriving at about 2.40pm. This was timely, as the main body of the Goldilocks group of trampers (not too fast, not too slow) all tramped out within the next 15 minutes or so. The discussion over coffee in Shannon led to a strong consensus that this is an excellent winter tramp.

Thanks to trip leader Christine, to Bev for arranging a key to the locked gate on Scotts Road and to our drivers Chris, Bernard, Arthur and Bob for providing the shuttle service.



Lunch at the Whare

Thursday 16th June: The Escarpment walk

Report: Royce Mills

Photos: John Brock & Craig Ross

Second time lucky... our Thursday tramping group had tried to do the Escarpment walk a few weeks earlier but severe rain warnings meant we did the Manawatu Gorge walk instead. This time we were fortunate to have a fine, sunny breezy day. It was a good choice to walk southwards from Paekakariki to Pukerua Bay - we had the low sun and the breeze at our backs. It was a three hour walk including many stops for photos and morning tea. As we walked through one old bush remnant we spent time admiring the masses of kohekohe flowers - it flowers in winter. Thanks to Craig Ross our leader today (seventeen in the group), this is such a spectacular, scenic walk with interesting sign boards along the way - highly recommended!



Craig Ross photographing Kohekohe flowers



Another beautiful day on the Paekakariki Escarpment track

Weekend 17th – 18th June: ~~Elder~~ Alpha Hut Southern Tararuas

Report: Dave Mitchell

Photos: Jean Garman

By Thursday Jean and Ivan were the only ones coming on the trip. On Saturday we travelled down to Upper Hutt with it being a fine and frosty day on the eastern side. There was cloud pushing over the Tararuas from the west but

we were undeterred. The tramp starts just past the caretakers hut on the Kaitoke waterworks road. Initially there is climb up an access road and then a steep descent down to the Eastern Hutt River. A pig hunter with dogs had a pig bailed up as we walked by, he didn't have to go far for that one.

We crossed the bridge and there was a short walk down to the forks where the Eastern meets the Western Hutt river. From here it was straight up Quoin ridge following an old tramping track. After 400m the track becomes less steep and we followed sporadic old markers on a trail. One open section is vague but we found our way by scouting around for markers, it is easier to find the track when going uphill.

We continued to push through scrubby stuff and then started breaking out into more open patches. It was getting quite cold and windy so it was time for parkas after a brief stop. We carried on through progressively stunted forest till we broke out into the sub-alpine grasses. We stopped next to a weather station and I realised I had left my GPS behind. So I left Jean and Ivan to shelter the best they could. I went back and forth but it was difficult finding where we had come up. Because Jean and Ivan were waiting and getting cold I abandoned the search and we carried on.



Battling the wind on Quoin Ridge



Scary looking cloud to the west

From there we climbed again and the track also swung to the east. This section involved us sidling an overgrown up and down ridge for a while. Eventually we could see Alpha so after more climbing we made our way along to the peak. It was 4pm by now and it had been fairly tiring from battling the wind and to carry on to Elder hut would have meant battling the wind and rain for another 1½ hours.

We decided to head for Alpha hut for the night and it was only 35 minutes away. The hut was empty and cold, so I just managed to coax a fire into life but it didn't warm the hut much. Alpha hut is a great place to get to when it is bad on the tops; however, it's now in need of some painting maintenance to keep it ship shape.

On Sunday the conditions were still about the same and I would have liked to have tried to find my GPS but instead we took the ridge down to the hut in the Eastern Hutt river. The map and compass was useful to keep us on the correct spur. The lower part of the ridge is quite good walking with an occasional track marker here and there. At the bottom we dropped into the river then about 15 minutes downstream the hut is located in the bush on the true left. This "emergency" hut is really tidy and well looked after, an ideal hunting base. From the hut we criss-crossed the river all the way down to where it leaves the river. It then is another 3-400m climb up and over down to the bridge.

All we had left was another up and over on the access road to get back to the car. The weather was almost sunny again which highlighted the sort of westerly weather we had encountered. I was pleased to have covered some new ground this weekend.

Thanks to Jean and Ivan for the company and driving us down there.



Eastern Hutt emergency hut

Wednesday 15th June: WWWs approach Tunupo

Report: Bob Hodgson

Photos: Linda and William

The 22nd June was a misty, moist morning, when cloudy was the weather as 23 Wednesday trampers converged on the car park at the start of the tracks to Heritage Lodge and Tunupo. We made a start at about 9.20am with the aim of all returning by 3pm. Sadly, on the descent from the car park to the high arched bridge, a trumper slipped over in the mud and jarred a hip. With a little help from his friends that included an anti-inflammatory and a Panadol he was able to continue.

About a third of the party opted for the track at the lower level in the direction of the Iron Gate Hut and, as far as they ventured, found the track mostly in good order though quite narrow and rather overgrown.



*Beware of men bearing ice axes
(especially if you are called Trotsky!)*



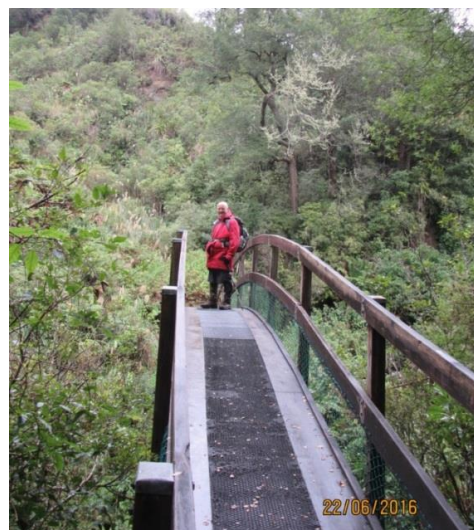
*WWWs + Libocedrus bidwillii, Pāhautea,
Kaikawaka or New Zealand cedar*

The main party headed up the Tunupo track and split into a fast group aiming for the Tunupo high point and the Goldilocks Group aiming to go as far as they went. The air was moist and as it is a steep climb up through the bush, with most of us dressed for a winter's day we were soon dispensing with layers. This bush on the track up as far as the tall cedars is amongst the most beautiful in the ranges with Deadmans Track a close second. Some bird life was in evidence but eluded the photographers. The track was mostly clear but rather overgrown in the dips between knobs, and the usual windfalls had to be circumvented. Apart from a brief shower calling for raincoats, the day improved as we climbed up the track. The fast group got to within a view of the high point but on the tops wind and rain deterred them from making the final climb. Here a mystery unfolded as it was observed that on the high point a timber structure was in view -- a mystery to be resolved on a softer day! By 3pm we were all safely in the vehicles to make our way to a warm welcome at the Kimbolton Cafe.

Thanks to trip leader Linda and drivers including van driver Chris.



Happy to be (almost) there!



*After an enjoyable tramp the reporter contemplates
the 'sting' - the 100m final climb to the car park!*

Thursday 23rd June: Blue Range hut or Mikimiki tramway

Report: Royce Mills

Photos: Royce Mills & Craig Ross

It was the shortest day, and a wet one too. We headed to the Kiriwhakapapa road end in the eastern Taranukas. Ten walked up to Blue Range hut, and eight walked part (or most) of the Mikimiki tramway. Not a day for many photos, but a good day to check the status of our rain gear.



Mikimiki tramway: raincoat clad Hugh, Merv and Gordon In Blue Range hut (after sharing persimmons for lunch)

Wednesday 29th June: WWWs tramp to the Cone and Tutuwai Huts

Report: Bob Hodgson

Photos: Maureen and Royce

The day dawned dark and damp, but undeterred, 21 WWWs (Wednesday Wet Wanderers!) made an early start to rendezvous opposite the Royal Loos in Eketahuna then to drive in convoy to the end of the Waiohine Gorge Road. With a 9.30am start in overcast but rain-free conditions, two tramping groups were marshalled and briefed by tramp leader Bev.

The first to depart was a group of nine intent on Cone Hut or as far as they chose. There is photographic evidence that six plus a photographer lunched at the hut before making the return tramp with 3pm as the intended departure time for the van.



Bev herding cats



Daytrippers at cone hut



Daytrippers atmospheric return

The second group of eleven, consisting of nine female trampers, one male tramper and a bag lady (!), followed the first group over the magnificent Waiohine swing bridge. This bridge was completed in 2007. It is 124m long and 40m above the river bed and replaced the first, and less substantial bridge that was built in 1989. The group was intent on tramping to Cone Hut for lunch, then onwards down the Tauherenikau track along the river bank to Tutuwai Hut. So this group hauled their overnight packs up the 514m climb in the muddy footsteps of the earlier group. Although the day was damp it was not cold and there was negligible wind, so layers were rapidly discarded and a drink stop called at the top of the steepest section. About two thirds of the way to Cone Hut, a minor collision between trampers led to the tragic loss of a single pearl earring, a futile search and new metaphor “like searching for a pearl in a forest park.”



Happy to lunch at Cone Hut



Your reporter anticipates coffee after a classic overnigher

Lunch was enjoyed at Cone Hut and a little over an hour later our advance party arrived at the Tutuwai Hut. We were all relieved to find the Hut unoccupied, as a school mini-bus parked at the Waiohine road end had led to dark speculations about sharing the hut with a large group of adolescent boys. The Hut proved to be clean and once the fire was lit warm and dry. Almost as the last of the party arrived it started to rain and continued until about an hour after our departure at 8.30am the following day.

The return along the Tauherenikau track was enlivened by a series of stream crossings made challenging by the 20mm or so of rain that had fallen overnight. With care and good teamwork, all made it across them safely and soon after we arrived at Cone Hut for the second time. We then made our way up the 317m to the top for the 514m descent to the bridge. Although the track was muddy and very slippery in places there were no serious falls, just a few muddy bums. The tramping was pleasant; we almost saw the sun and enjoyed several tuis en route. We had heard a kokako on the tramp in. By 2.15pm we were all safely out and by 2.30pm on our way to Masterton for well-earned coffee and cakes.

Ratings - The Tramp Overall 5 Stars. Weather 4 stars. Team Work: tramp in 3 Stars, tramp out 5 Stars (we kept better together). Good hut humour and no snorers 5 Stars!

All in all a classic winter tramp in damp but mild conditions through lovely bush in all its variety. Thanks to tramp leader Bev and car drivers Bev, Linda, Bob and van driver Chris.

Sunday 26th June: Holdsworth Area Navigation Day

Report: Tim Swale

Photos: Tim Swale

Seven MTSC members plus three Tararua College students set off in rather dubious looking weather for the Mount Holdsworth Road end on Sunday morning. The plan was to practise navigation skills with map, compass and GPS over a mix of terrain both on and off track. A few days earlier I had had a chat with Murray Johnson in Masterton who has many years of doing navigation courses for Mountain Safety Council and decided to use his navigation course up the Gentle Annie Creek to Rocky Lookout before dropping down an untracked spur to the Atiwhakatu Valley and then back to the road end. However, with lots of rain having recently fallen, it was decided to do the loop in reverse to avoid wet feet until the end.

Our team of Ken, Mary, Helen, Pak, Jill, Linda and the three boys did a great job of keeping track of our exact location up the valley and then leapfrogging on a compass bearing Southwards up the spur to join the Gentle Annie track. Lunch was had under a hastily erected blue tarp as it was just starting to rain. After lunch we continued climbing, but increasingly slowly as the tall forest trees gave way to tight scrub. By the time we hit the Gentle Annie track near Rocky Lookout it was looking as though the off track option down the Gentle Annie Creek was going to get us back a bit late for dropping off the boys on time, so the decision was made to head down by the main track. However there was lots of energy left in the boys for running ahead and hiding, testing out their parkour skills and generally ignoring the increasingly damp weather. They were all very keen to head out into the bush again and were greatly enthused by their success in using a map and compass and conquering the slightly challenging vegetation. A big thank you to the adults who supported the kids and put up with their youthful exuberance.



The group at the Rocky Lookout

Thursday 30th June: Te Mara trig

Report: Norman Cooper

Photos: It was too much work to take gloves and pack off. Wind doesn't show on photos.

The Te Mara trig or Old Tram track is off the Kiriwhakapapa road end just past Mount Bruce. This is more a report so that the Thursday trampers that that did not go on this tramp can really **LOL** with the rest of the club. We had been promised rain all week for Wednesday and Thursday and as the tramp started it was raining a bit (rain easing, looking good). As we turned off the Old Tram track heading up the ridge to the Te Mara trig, the southerly really tore into us. A nice steady climb as the Southerly blew even stronger (the southerly was supposed to come in the afternoon – it was early, heard it was down to Minus 11°C at Powell hut at 3pm). We did not stop for morning tea, to bloody cold. Te Mara trig to Cow Creek track; still freezing but the southerly was not hitting us directly. On to junction of Blue Range hut, still bloody cold, so we decided to carry on down another 20 minutes before lunch. Nine minutes for lunch. Then off again flat tack as we gradually warmed up (some trampers had 4 layers of clothing on). Went past the redwood trees thinking what Sid said “we will not die of starvation today but if we stand still too long hypothermia will get us”. Van to Van took 5 hours. It took 50 minutes to the turn off to go up ridge, one hour 55 minutes to the trig and two hours 15 minutes back to the van including our extended lunchbreak (Ha Ha). Loved the route we tramped and would like to put another hour on it and better weather but there is always next time. Thanks Merv (Merv had the G.P.S tracking device which you did need to go up the ridge) and the other 5 trampers. Two did the Old Tram track and had smiles on their faces at the weather they knew we had encountered. Thanks John for driving. Sid for my boot laces. Peter for my gloves. Malcolm for van cleaning.

Back at the coffee shop at Eketahuna felt really good with the milk shake and carrot cake. PS ate the rest of my lunch the next day (keeping morning tea for the following week).

Wednesday 6th July: Makairo Track

Report: Andrew Brodie

Photos: Andrew Brodie

On a cloudy day with a promise of sun, 28 Wednesday Wilderness Walkers assembled at the small road end car park to tramp the Makairo Track. This is an old road so the gradient is not steep and mostly in good order although very muddy in parts. The bush has grown a lot since we were last here about 3 years ago. All of the group reached the saddle and most huddled out of the wind for an early lunch. About a third of the group continued on down to the quarry where they lunched. The freezing cold wind was whipping across the saddle and there was no sign of any sun so a quick departure was in order. It was so cold trip leader did not stop long enough to locate a geocache! All were back at the car park around 2pm and we headed off to the Tui Cafe where a welcome log fire welcomed us for a

coffee/tea stop. For many this was the first time they had done this trip and all enjoyed it as a good winter trip. Thanks to Evan our trusty van driver and also to Dennis, Marion, Russell and Ian for driving their cars.



28 WWWs assembling at the car park



Well wrapped up for a cold lunch

9th – 10th July: Iron Gate PLB activation

Many thanks to the MTSC people who turned out on a wet and wild Friday evening in response to a PLB activation near Iron Gate hut. Team one was made up of 3 MTSC people and team two had another MTSC person while back at base there were 3 MTSC people in management – most impressive to see such strong support from the club to SAR.

The PLB activators (a 7 year old boy and his uncle) had very sensibly decided not to try and cross a swollen Tunapo stream. Team one only just managed to get across (with a few bruises and considerable wetness) and were extremely pleased to find the activators had made it back to the hut where they all spent the night. In the morning team two confirmed that the Tunapo was still too swollen to attempt getting a 7 year old boy across it and the lovely Simon from Rangitiki helicopters was dispatched to uplift all those in the field.



Peter Rawlins escorting the young lad to the helo



Contact Details

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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.