

# beechleaves

Newsletter of the Manawatu Tramping and Skiing Club



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

## Issue 8: September 2016



Club meetings are held on the 1<sup>st</sup> 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 6<sup>th</sup> September: Annual photo competition

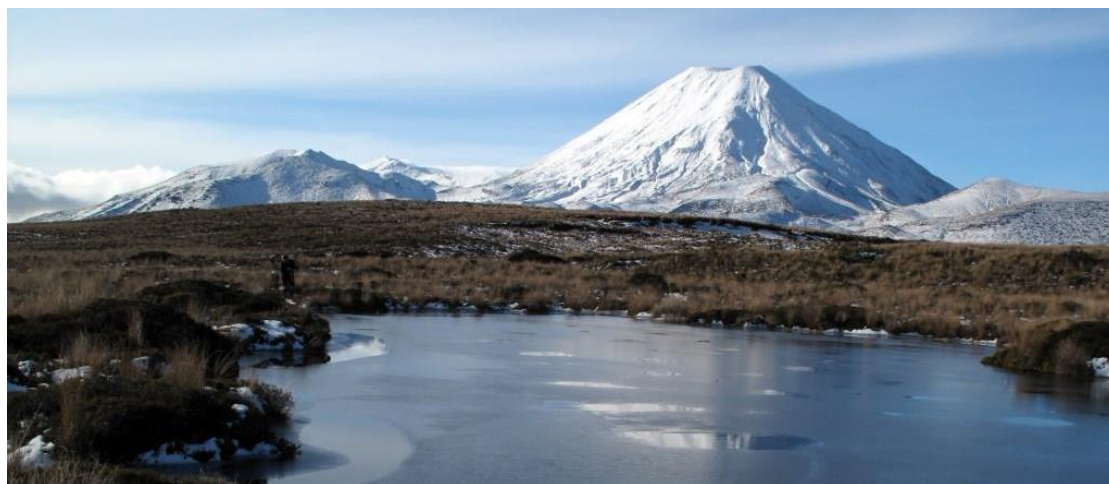
Categories:

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 1<sup>st</sup> of September

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



2015

1<sup>st</sup> place in "Above the Bushline"

*David Harrington*

### Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> October: Interclub photo competition

This year MTSC is hosting the Interclub Photo Competition where the best photographs from the MTSC, PNTMC and MUAC photo competitions go head to head to see which are the best photos overall.

# REPORTS AND NOTICES



## MTSC President Report: John Beech

[president@mtsc.org.nz](mailto:president@mtsc.org.nz)

Hi all, as I sit here writing this it seems that the snows have finally turned up on the mountain. The forecast for the next few days is for more snow with a cold snap enveloping the country. By the time you read this, I hope the weather has improved enough for some of you skiers to make the most of the conditions.

There is nothing like enjoying the snow whether on skis or tramping through snow shrouded bush. One of my more memorable experiences was taking a Gold Duke of Edinburgh trip around Ruapehu a couple of years ago. A Gold tramp needs to walk 65km over 4 days and the Ruapehu RTM track fits the criteria well. This trip was in the October school holidays and that year there was little snow left on the mountain.

Our trip set off from Whakapapa village with the first destination being Mangaturuturu hut. However, from the start things began to unravel with one student finding it too difficult to continue. Another adult and I walked the student out to the Bruce road and caught a ride down to the Chateau for a parental pick up. It was getting late in the day so we got the parent to take us round to the Ohakune mountain road where we walked into Blyth hut, planning to meet the rest of the party at Mangahuehue the following day. The following day they arrived minus a parent who had also found the going too tough and had elected to walk out down the Ohakune mountain road. What else could go wrong? Overnight the weather deteriorated considerably with a forecast of snow down to low levels.

The next morning it was decision time for our group and the D of E student leader made the decision to turn back, spend the night at Blyth hut and escape via the Ohakune mountain road. By the time we reached Blyth, the weather had turned to custard with rain and strong winds. It was great to get the fire going and enjoy the cosy hut. She had made a good decision and probably learnt more than if all had gone to plan.

The following morning, we awoke to a Narnia like scene with calm conditions, thick snow and zero visibility. Myself and the D of E student leader elected to walk out whereupon her father would pick us up and take me back to the Chateau to get the van and return for the rest. It was one of the most memorable walks I have experienced. The scenery was stunning and ours were the first footprints. When we got to the Waitonga Falls car park, we realised that the road had been closed and we had to walk all the way to the bottom. I had not spent much time with the student prior to the walk out and I thoroughly enjoyed the time as we chatted away about all sorts of different subjects. There was something quite special about the silence as we walked, the only sound being our conversation.

Although winter can be quite dreary down on the flats, up in the mountains it can be enchanting. I hope you can find a bit of time to get up there and enjoy it over the next month or so whether in the bush, or on the slopes.



A reminder for all of you to dust off your photos for the annual club competition in September.

*John*

## MTSC Chief Guide Report: Ken Mercer

[chief.guide@mtsc.org.nz](mailto:chief.guide@mtsc.org.nz)



Deciding to pull the pin on a trip or a destination is one of the responsibilities of a trip leader. The snowcraft course this year was heavily booked and the weather forecast indicated that it was unlikely the skifield would operate. I was keen to go as one can still stomp around in the snow without chairlifts. However wiser heads than mine decided it was so bad they'd cancel the course. And, they were right! Over that weekend the snow level more than doubled and the road was mostly closed. Indeed, the few vehicles still on the mountain are being escorted down at hourly intervals by RAL. But the good news is there's plenty of snow and the Snowcraft 1 course wasn't cancelled and only postponed until the 20<sup>th</sup> August.



*Rob Pringles photos from a better day*



*Howie's unsuccessful attempt to get to the lodge*

Two weeks ago I was wondering where the snow was? Tonight, as I sit in a hotel in National Park, I can answer that question. The "Eternal Optimists Department" of the club drove to Whakapapa Village to find the snow spectacularly bucketing down and the road closed. One person made it up the road earlier in the day, dug their way into the lodge and was happily enjoying the warmth and comfort. Other club members ended up camped(?) out in motels in Taihape and Ohakune. The weather can get rough at times and it pays to be prepared with plenty of warm gear and supplies in the car. Occasionally you may find that you cannot reach the lodge as expected.

The good news is this. When the weather clears, the lifts are de-iced, and the avalanche control teams have done their magic, there will be some AWESOME skiing, boarding and sliding to be had. "There's always sunshine after rain" as the Dire Straits song goes, and I want to be at the lodge when it comes right.

For those people heading to the back country, please take the advice of the professionals when it comes to avalanche warnings. We are lucky to have this service available, and I for one will take heed of the warnings issued by those in the field and in the "know". See <http://www.avalanche.net.nz> for up-to-date forecasts during the avalanche season. Better yet, hunt down an avalanche awareness course. Even if you only ski "in bounds", the information may prove to be lifesaving one day, avalanches sometimes occur on managed ski fields too. That said, great care is taken to ensure the inbound punters have a good time in safety.

Have fun!

### Trip Card Time is Looming Again

Last chance to get your trip into the summer trip card (November 2016-April 2017). We need to have all trips sorted by the end of August so we have time to send it to The Printery. We have produced a spreadsheet covering this six month period and it is available online on Google Sheets. It already has a few trips entered, but could do with some more, particularly "family" through to "medium" trips. 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-5fAFwspTrTfooWzu6fuaC8u1mGamGiVZOfxxVEE>

*We welcome Roger Levy & family, John McLeod and Erynn Rule & family, to the club.*

**Trip Intentions:** The email address for leaving trip intentions is [intentions@mtsc.org.nz](mailto: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.

September Wednesday Tramps			September Thursday Tramps		
Date	Leader	Phone	Date	Leader	Phone
7	Dennis Jensen	329 3229	1	Geraldine Fovakis	356 4327
14	Margaret Foot	357 8003	8	Graham Pritchard	357 1393
21	Bob Hodgson	356 2915	15	Merv Matthews	357 2858
28	Jill Faulkner	323 6094	22 **	Brian & Ruth Evans	323 7614
			29	John & Gillian Thornley	356 9681
			<b>** Please note the change of leader</b>		

September Weekend Trips				
Date	Trip	Grade	Leader	Phone
3 – 4	Ski Ngauruhoe	technical	John Lyttle	027 433 6307
4	Coppermine Loop	easy	Tim Swale	06 376 6556
11	Tokomaru No 2 Stream	fit	David Harrington	06 839 5766
17 – 18	Ski Te Heu Heu	technical	Ken Mercer	027 364 6475
17 – 18	Mangaehuehu Hut	med/technical	Adam Matich	022 358 8062
24 – 25	Ski from Crater Lake	technical	John Lyttle	027 433 6307

**3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> September: Ski Ngauruhoe**

**Technical    John Lyttle    027 443 6307**

A good level of fitness and competency with ice axe and crampons is required. Please contact John for more information.

**4<sup>th</sup> September: Coppermine Loop**

**Easy    Tim Swale    06 376 6556    022 134 8384**

A short walk involving a bit of puffing and blowing as we will be climbing 300m out of Coppermine creek up to a ridge with great views over Whariti and the Tararua District. Return is over farmland and across the creek to the car park. Should take about 3 hours with lunch stop.

**11<sup>th</sup> September: Tokomaru No 2 Stream**

**Fit    David Harrington    06 839 5766**

An off-track explorer for the courageous.

**17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> September: Ski Te Heu Heu**

**Technical    Ken Mercer    356 7497    027 364 6475**

Ruapehu has many peaks and Te Heu Heu is the northern-most, overlooking Pinnacle Ridge. Skiing off the top is not as dramatic as it sounds although messing up and falling off the southern cornice would be very unpleasant. We'll only do it if the weather cooperates!

## 17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> September: Mangaehuehu Hut

Medium/Technical

Adam Matich

022 358 8062

[adam.i.matich@gmail.com](mailto:adam.i.matich@gmail.com)

Even though this will probably only be a medium day length trip, it does have some technical aspects; i.e. we will be navigating cross-country in the snow and possibly ice. The intention is to do some sort of high sidle from the Ohakune Mountain Road before dropping down to Mangaehuehu hut for the night. We may even start as high as the Turoa ski field. Our return trip will be back along the around-the-mountain track, up to Blyth Hut and then back up from there to wherever we left the vehicle.

## 24<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> October: Ski from Crater Lake

Technical

John Lyttle

027 443 6307

A good level of fitness and competency with ice axe and crampons is required. Please contact John for more information.



## Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> July: Mania Track

Report: Rod McKenzie

Photos: Maureen and Evan

Despite a forecast severe weather warning for the day we woke to clear skies, a brilliant sunrise and cool temperatures. Twenty-five Wednesday trampers were heading (van and four cars) to the Mania road end by 8am.

Mania Road is north of Rangiwahia and leads into the western Ruahines; one ridge north of the Rangiwahia Hut. The track is wide and was in excellent condition, apart from two or three muddy places near the beginning, having been cleared by DOC about twelve months ago. It crosses farmland then enters the bush, working its way gently up to a well-established hunters' camp. From there it rises steeply up to the bush edge and gently into the tussock.



*Herding cats*



*Forest giants*



*Snow on the track*

With the day gradually clouding over from the southwest but no wind we made our way along the track, with the group splitting into three, depending on fitness. Five members made it to a small knob about half an hour into the tussock, experiencing snow patches for the first time this season, before stopping for lunch. A further group stopped near the top of the steep climb, and the remainder enjoyed the hunters' camp. On the way down many comments were heard about the fine bush and the amount of bird song heard in it.

We arrived back to the vehicles still with no wind or rain and were able to get to the coffee house in Kimbolton before it closed at 4pm. Over coffee, members of the group inspired by the day, discussed plans to organise a summer daytrip that would start at the Mania road-end and go around to Rangii Hut via the tops. Everyone had had an enjoyable day.

Thanks to the van driver Chris, car drivers Marion, Denis and William.

## 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> July: Tutuwai hut

Report: Adam Matich

Photos: Adam Matich

A happy gap in the bad weather saw two of us heading for Tutuwai Hut on a cool, almost sunny morning.

After crossing the Waiohine Gorge swing-bridge we ignored the track up towards Cone Saddle and kept heading SSW to follow the closed section of the Reeves Track, which someone is keeping open. It is not hard to follow and we even kept our feet dry while crossing Coal Stream. Curiously, this section of non-track is on the current [topomap.co.nz](http://topomap.co.nz). Coal Stream is really the only part of the route that prevents it from being completely winter-safe. Lunch was had in the sun before the final 200m climb to Mt Reeves and then it was mostly down to reach Tutuwai Hut after a 4 hour day, which we didn't notice because Dave was talking so much.



*Lunch in the sun on the side of Mt Reeves*

We spent an hour sawing and chopping firewood so we would have a cosy evening; using our own bow-saw though. The other seven people who turned up appreciated the fire. Even though one of the other parties consumed quite a bit of alcohol they were disappointingly non-disruptive; very hardened drinkers perhaps. They did almost recompense us for their good behaviour by making us aware of an unusual drink; Buckfast Tonic Wine which is a caffeinated fortified wine, originating from the Buckfast Benedictine Abbey in Devon. It would seem the ideal drink to get one started in the morning. They were drinking it at the wrong end of the day.

Next morning we had an easy three hours back to the car via Cone Hut, getting back home with plenty of time to mow the lawns. We were Dave Mitchell and Adam Matich.

## Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> July: Coppermine to Wharite Peak

Report: John Ridge

Photos: Maureen and Evan

After a number of stormy days the morning dawned clear and free of wind. What a relief!! It was cold but the sun was bright, the sky blue and cloudless and remained so for most of the day, although we did encounter some cool wind and cloud on the tops towards the Peak.



*Rearing to go*

We left the Memorial Park car park at 8.00am and all vehicles with eighteen trampers arriving at the road end in good time for a 9.30am start. The first 30 minutes of the track is wide with a gradual climb so the going is reasonably easy despite being very muddy in parts. We also had to make our way round a couple of slips/windfalls but these were manageable. Along the way we were able to read a number of information boards outlining the history of the area, when copper was first discovered etc., although there was never enough found to make the enterprise commercially viable.

The track passed through lowland podocarp forest and some tall Totara and Rimu could

be seen towering above the lower canopy. When we left the Coppermine Track to climb Wharite, it was extremely muddy. The track now climbs steeply to the leatherwood tops where it becomes easier tramping. The views were amazing, more so before actually reaching our destination as cloud gathered around the Peak. The majority decided to seek shelter in the bush for lunch out of the wind and with some sunshine.



*On top*



*Out of the wind and in the sun*

After lunch we set off in groups for the return journey. We were all aware that the mud could be treacherous and needed great care. Some resorted to actually sliding on the steeper parts. A number of stops were taken on the way to re-group, admire the views and have a drink. All agreed we had a good day's tramp, most enjoyable. Our trip was topped off with coffee and cake at the Cheese Cake Café in Woodville. A well-deserved treat.

Thanks to our van driver Chris and car drivers Linda and Bernard.

## **Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> July: Makahika Hill**

Report: Royce Mills

Photos: Peter Wilson

Our Thursday tramping group headed up the Makahika track in behind Levin. After an hour's walking along the Te Araroa trail we turned off track and up a ridge to Makahika hill, 658m. The bush is surprisingly open and the route is mostly well taped.



*Out in the sunshine at Archey's Lookout*

The destination could hardly be called a hill, although a spot height it is in the bush; flat and boggy with no view. A large deer wallow and a short pipe in the ground with a few pieces of tape indicates the 'top'. From here we traversed at a similar height to rejoin the Te Araroa trail above Archey's Lookout. After enjoying the sunshine and views here we walked back out on the Te Araroa trail to our start at the car park, a walk of 6½ hours with several stops. Fourteen of us were fortunate to have a fine, calm day for an adventure in the bush off the main trails. Another three chose to walk the Makahika track from the northern end and managed to reach the Horowhenua Lookout before turning back. They had a good day too. Special thanks to Suzanne Clark and Dennis Jensen who accompanied me on a reconnaissance trip the week before.

## 23<sup>rd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> 21<sup>st</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> July: Weekend in the Snow

Report: Carl Pester

Photos: Carl Pester

Poor weather meant we had to cancel this weekend in the snow. I put the offer out to go Thursday and Friday instead and got one taker. One of our new members Steph and I headed up for two wonderful days on the slopes. The only decent days in the whole of the holiday period it seems.



*The Lodge*



*The Pinnacles from the top of the express chair*

## Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> July: Kiriwhakapapa

Report: Maureen Naylor and Russell Poole

Photos: Maureen Naylor and Ann West

We made an early start from Palmerston North and had light rain on the drive down till past the Mt Bruce saddle, arriving at the road end by 9am. Eight trampers did the Tramline and eleven went up to Blue Range Hut.

Maureen writes: Some of the original sleepers on the Tramline Track were still visible. The weather was fine. By 10am we had reached the high point of the track with a convenient seat for morning tea. The



*Lunch in a sunny spot*

way was blocked by a fallen tree and supplejack which was cleared by Ian and his saw with help from Chris



*A bit of track work*

and John R. We continued on our way down to the river which was low and easy to cross, then on to the stile just before the road end. We made our way back to a sunny spot, noticed earlier, for an early lunch. We started our return journey at midday and were back at the cars before 2pm, 15km all told.



Russell writes: We "blue rangers" found it a nice vigorous climb up to the Hut, which a few of us had not visited before. It is indeed intensely blue -- supplies of the standard orange paint must have run out at the time of its redecoration -- and the Masterton trampers do a dedicated job of maintaining it. A feature of the decor is obsolete signage salvaged from one or other hospital. A picnic table outside the hut gives a fine view of the surrounding ranges, which were sporting some snow.



*Enjoying the sunshine*

Marion adds: Overall an enjoyable trip, cold wind at the top around 11am but on return from the Hut the balance of the group were found sitting comfortably in the sun just below the rock.



Russell and Marion's pest report: At the hut, we caught up with some Masterton Tramping Club members on a trapping check. They told us that when they started trapping some years ago there was a sizable kill of the usual pests -- rats, stoats, possums. Recently, the catch has declined markedly and on some trips to the hut they have found only four or so animals all up, pointing to a radical decline in the pest population. They also commented on how much seed/mast/rat food they had observed lying about on the ground, good evidence there are not many rodents about to eat it. They attributed this mostly to the 1080 poison drops. They didn't mention mice but noted there are not many deer in the area now. DOC supplies the necessary equipment and toxins. A local supermarket in Masterton supplies the eggs (usually of the past best-before sort, though presumably not too far gone for a stoat to notice). They also join DOC staff at Holdsworth once a fortnight on Thursdays to go around the trap lines there. The winter overnights' trip last year met them having lunch at the Mountain House shelter on a very wet Thursday. A benefit from all this work by the Masterton volunteers was a rapidly developing understory of mixed

species, very different from the dominance of leatherwood and horopito we so often see (e.g. on Wharite). We noticed some bird life along the way -- a possible "hearing" of a kaka, definite for one or more kereru.

All down by 2.30pm and off to coffee at Mt Bruce, with a sighting of a takahe to round off a very good trip.

Many thanks to drivers Chris, Marion and Bev.



Image of 'a dog in stone' a few hundred metres from the back of the MTSC Lodge towards the waterfall.

*Peter Erhard*



## Contact Details

**Postal Address:** MTSC, P.O. Box 245, Palmerston North

### Committee 2015 - 2016

President	John Beech	<a href="mailto:president@mtsc.org.nz">president@mtsc.org.nz</a>	06 354 9310
Secretary	Tim Swale	<a href="mailto:secretary@mtsc.org.nz">secretary@mtsc.org.nz</a>	06 376 6556
Treasurer	Arthur Flint	<a href="mailto:treasurer@mtsc.org.nz">treasurer@mtsc.org.nz</a>	06 356 7654
Chief Guide	Ken Mercer	<a href="mailto:chief.guide@mtsc.org.nz">chief.guide@mtsc.org.nz</a>	06 356 7497
Membership	Sue Nicholson	<a href="mailto:membership@mtsc.org.nz">membership@mtsc.org.nz</a>	06 357 6325
Newsletter Editor	Jean Garman	<a href="mailto:editor@mtsc.org.nz">editor@mtsc.org.nz</a>	021 176 0209
Lodge Manager	John Lyttle	<a href="mailto:lodge.manager@mtsc.org.nz">lodge.manager@mtsc.org.nz</a>	027 433 6307
Mini-Bus Manager	Ken Mercer		06 356 7497

**General Committee:** Bev Akers, Bob Hodgson, Howard Nicholson, Rob Pringle

### Appointees

Lodge Bookings	Hugh & Liz Wilde	<a href="mailto:lodge.bookings@mtsc.org.nz">lodge.bookings@mtsc.org.nz</a>	06 356 9450
Gear Custodian	Peter Rawlins	<a href="mailto:gear@mtsc.org.nz">gear@mtsc.org.nz</a>	06 356 7443
Ski Captain	Howard Nicholson	<a href="mailto:ski@mtsc.org.nz">ski@mtsc.org.nz</a>	06 357 6325
Social Convenor	Bob Hodgson	<a href="mailto:social@mtsc.org.nz">social@mtsc.org.nz</a>	06 356 2915
Wednesday Trips	Bev Akers	<a href="mailto:bevakers@xtra.co.nz">bevakers@xtra.co.nz</a>	06 325 8879
Thursday Trips	Merv Matthews	<a href="mailto:merv6817@gmail.com">merv6817@gmail.com</a>	06 357 2858
Facebook	Ivan Rienks	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/MTandSC">facebook@mtsc.org.nz</a>	

### New Members

Prospective members must be nominated by a Proposer and a Seconder 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](http://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](mailto: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
<b>Adult</b>	<b>\$35</b>	<b>\$50</b>
<b>Secondary School</b>	<b>\$28</b>	<b>\$43</b>
<b>Primary School</b>	<b>\$23</b>	<b>\$38</b>
<b>Pre-school (3-5 yo)</b>	<b>\$10</b>	<b>\$10</b>

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.