

beechleaves

Newsletter of the Manawatu Tramping and Skiing Club

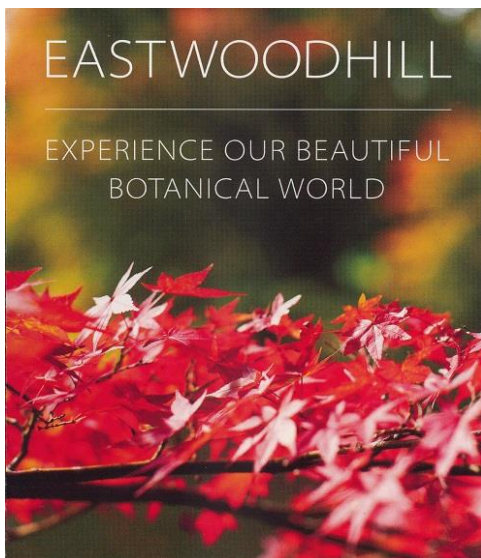


P.O. Box 245, Palmerston North 4440 www.mtsc.org.nz <https://www.facebook.com/MTandSC>

Issue 2: March 2017



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 7th March

Eastwoodhill, New Zealand's National Arboretum

Jenny and Alex Davies

Eastwoodhill is New Zealand's National Arboretum. Planting began over 100 years ago on a farm near Gisborne. Today it contains more woody exotic species than anywhere else in New Zealand, including the largest collection of Northern Hemisphere trees South of the equator. There are 135 hectares with over 25 km of tracks and walks. The largest trees are near the visitor centre, as are the extensive homestead gardens. The year-round beauty of this place can be easily appreciated by all. There is also excellent self-catering accommodation. Two years ago, Dan Haliday was appointed curator. He is our nephew. Dan and his wife Monique both rejoice in this dream-come-true. Because the national awareness of this treasure is quite low, we are eager to spread their enthusiasm, and appreciate this opportunity to do so.



Tuesday 4th April

Views of the Cobb Valley, Kahurangi National Park

Adam Match

Over an extended Labour Weekend 2016, a club trip circumnavigated, for the most part, the Cobb Valley. Starting from Sylvester Hut we travelled up the Lockett range to Fenella hut, then took two days to travel the little travelled (and sometimes frightening) Peel Range all the way to Balloon Hut. The tramp finished with an easy day out to the Sylvester Lakes track car park on the other side of the dam wall. We were extremely lucky with the weather; for the views we were afforded, navigational visibility, and the fact that the Peel Range really did require dry, low-wind weather. The good weather also allowed for lots of stunning photos. Come along to see a selection and hear the tale.

REPORTS AND NOTICES

MTSC Chief Guide Report: Ken Mercer

chief.guide@mtsc.org.nz



GPS Travails I have had a GPS for 8 years now and find it useful both for navigation and to log our trips. Consequently I leave it running all day, using a rechargeable battery. On the 7th of January I was running across the Gillespie Stream to keep my boots dry, a few minutes later I noticed my GPS was missing. It had bounced out of its pocket on my pack strap and flicked the gate of a small carabineer open. We searched in vain across and down the stream for an hour, my boots became thoroughly saturated! I figured it could have floated down to the Siberia, Wilkin and Makoroa Rivers and through to Lake Wanaka.

However, that's not the end of the story; on the 11th of January my GPS was found by an Auckland woman. She dropped it into Tony Savage in Christchurch as his KiwiGPS sticker was still inside. Tony clearly enjoys a challenge and after examining the recorded tracks had a guess at our address. Google Street View has the club van parked outside with our URL on the back. You can imagine my surprise when I received Tony's email! After further emails and little more than the courier fee, I now have it back with an updated operating system and maps. My address is now displayed on the screen when it turns on. This would have to rate as the best after-sales service ever! Enjoy the summer.

Very sad to see vandalism of a local track!

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/manawatu-standard/news/88739924/Vandals-destroy-new-bush-track-that-took-two-years-to-create>

MTSC Web Site

The club web pages have been updated recently. Please let us know if you have any problems viewing the new pages, and feel free to make suggestions for improvements or content that you may wish to contribute. The pages are intended to be complementary to our Facebook page.

Web: <http://www.mtsc.nz/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MTandSC/>

Provide feedback by using the web site contact form or via email to web@mtsc.org.nz.

A Philosophy of Walking

Bob Hodgson

Bob is active member of the Wednesday Wilderness Wanderers

Recently on impulse, I walked the Palmerston North City Circuit, a route of slightly more than 26km long*. When I was preparing myself I briefly considered taking a headphone radio, but soon abandoned the idea. Although I anticipated five or more hours of walking in my own company, I knew that on my journey I would be neither bored or lonely. So what is it about walking or tramping that makes the activity so absorbing and satisfying? This is a question that is the subject of a beautifully written and recently discovered book "The Philosophy of Walking" by French philosopher Frederic Gros. The book was first published in 2011 and is translated from the original French. Here I will share a few of the treasures to be found in this gem of a book. To learn more, go online and read some of the published reviews or better still, get your own copy.

The activity described in the book as walking has more in common with tramping than simple walking or strolling. The French call the activity *la randonnée*. For the record here is the Wikipedia based definition of tramping; "a recreational activity involving walking over rough country and known elsewhere as backpacking, rambling, hill walking and bushwalking".

Gros's true walker leaves the pavement far behind. Less organized than a sport and more profound than a voyage, a long walk, Gros suggests, allows us to commune with the sublime. He insists that walking is not a competitive sport although I not sure that some of the trampers of my acquaintance see it that way! Through sheer force of continuous effort, the views we contemplate become more beautiful than if we had simply pulled over by the side of the road to admire them. By physically covering the terrain, we make it ours: the beauty of the world is inscribed in us, and we in it. We shed our identities with the course of the long, rhythmic movement on two legs across the landscape. Gros says "all other ambitions fall away as we give ourselves over to the transformative powers of physical exertion".

In chapters on Nietzsche, Rousseau, Rimbaud, Thoreau and others, Gros considers the inspiration they each found in walking. Nietzsche even advised aphoristically "Do not believe any idea that was not born in the open air and of free

movement". Gros takes this to mean that books bear in their very DNA the circumstances of their conception; a review that appeared in the New York Times implies that we can tell when they have been composed entirely at a desk, their authors hunched and squinting over a stack of books.



So as nicely diagnosed by Gros, I enjoyed my solitary walk around my hometown. Was it a walk, a stroll or a tramp? I am not sure what to call it but I can record that I returned home relaxed and hungry with only a small blister as an unwanted memento.

*The Palmerston North City circuit is a flat walk connecting three elements; The River Link walkway, the Mangaone Stream walkway and the Manawatu Riverside walkway. In total the loop is a route of slightly more than 26km. For the record, on the day I walked it, the temperature was in the low twenties with a mainly overcast sky and I completed it in a little less than six hours at a "contemplative pace."

Isle Royal National Park

Dave Baker

Dave is currently residing in the USA (an international sub-section of the MTSC).

This trip report is from last July when 2 MTSC members combined with kids and friends had a fun week on Isle Royal National Park.

The island: Isle Royal is the largest island in Lake Superior, being 72km long and 14km at its widest point. The national park is made up of Isle Royale itself and approximately 400 smaller islands. The backbone of the island is the Greenstone Ridge, with the highest peak, Mount Desor, at 424.9m. Greenstone Ridge is the most popular hiking trail, which extends the length of the island. Minong Ridge offers an alternate hiking trail that runs along the northern part of the island. The island is dotted with hundreds of small lakes. One notable feature is Ryan Island – famous as the largest island, in the largest lake (Siskiwit Lake), in the largest island (Isle Royal), in the largest lake (Lake Superior) in the world.

Our trip: Our trip to Isle Royal National Park was over 1-6 July 2016. We travelled to the island using the national Park Service boat "Ranger III", a four hour trip departing from Houghton Harbour in northern Michigan. The boat berthed at Rock Harbour towards the northern end of the island. We hiked 6 days and camped 5 nights, covering 85km, an approximately circular route around most of the eastern end of the island. Camping is only permitted in designated areas; relatively undeveloped areas with little more than an established water supply. Water required filtering or boiling because of the risk of giardia and water-borne parasites.



Awaiting the ferry; Connor & Logan McDonald, Dave Barker, Todd & Rachel Hitt, and Shane McDonald



Ryan Island; the largest island in the largest lake, in the largest island, in the largest lake, in the world!

Wildlife: Isle Royal is famous as having one of the few remaining natural wolf populations in USA. The current population is only two wolves, both infertile from inbreeding. Genetic influx to the wolf population only occurs when Lake Superior freezes during winter allowing new wolves come to the island, however, that has not happened in recent years. The moose population is healthy at over 1000 animals. Despite this abundance, we were unlucky not to see any moose. We were 'lucky' however, to only see several wolf prints in some soft mud and not see a live wolf!!

Copper: The island geology has several deposits of natural copper. Historically this was mined by the ancient Indian tribes approx. 2000 years ago and by Europeans during the 1850's. The remnants of mining still remain, and we were able to find small pieces of native copper that had been too small to smelt.

Isle Royal is reminiscent of Stewart Island, with similarities including the relative isolation, and boat trip for access. Both are sparsely developed with some remnants of private ownership but dominated with large tracts of land in national park protection. The hiking trails are predominantly forested, with interesting wild-life, and occasional

outcrops allowing spectacular coastal views. The trails tend to be relatively flat, and although muddy in parts have long sections in board-walks.



Taking a break near Mt Franklin, Greenstone Ridge Trail



Exploring the abandoned Minong Copper Mine



March Wednesday Tramps			March Thursday Tramps		
Date	Leader	Phone	Date	Leader	Phone
1	Rod McKenzie	357-0136	2	David Grant	328-7788
8	John Ridge	357-3744	9	Judy Swainson	358-4082
15	Dennis Jensen	329-3229	16	Geraldine Fovakis	356-4327
22	Andrew Brodie	358-6576	23	Merv Matthews	357-2858
29	Chris Teo-Sherrell	355-1816	30	John McLeod	323-5785

March Weekend Trips				
Date	Trip	Grade	Leader	Phone
4 - 5	SAREX – Tararuas	Technical	Howard Nicholson	357-6325
11 - 12	Lodge Work Party	All	John Lyttle	04 374-5300
11 - 12	Waikamaka Hut	Medium	Howard Nicholson	357-6325
18 - 19	East Waitewaewae River	Fit	David Harrington	021 240-9056
18 - 19	Bushcraft	Easy	Tim Swale	06 376-6556
25 - 26	Eastwood Hills Arboretum (Gisborne)	Family/Easy	Helen Peek	021 065-0754
Sunday 26	Coppermine-Kiritaki Hut	Medium/Fit	Jenny McCarthy	021 215-2197

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.

The Next Trip Card: Winter (May-October) 2017

Now that the Summer trip card has been printed, it is time to start thinking about all the exciting trips **you want to see or to lead** on the next Winter trip card. At random times, people think of trips they would like to go on or lead but forget about them before it is trip card compilation time again. To get around this problem, we have put a form for the next trip-card in a Google Drive folder; you can enter your trips or trip suggestions for the next trip card before you forget what it was you wanted to do, and well ahead of the next deadline. The link is <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/18mz-5fAFwspTrTfooWzu6fuaC8u1mGamGiVZOfoxVEE/edit?usp=sharing>.

11th - 12th March: Lodge Work Party

All **John Lyttle** **027 433 6307** buildinsurveyornz@gmail.com

This work party will be about general maintenance and cleaning of the lodge and its surroundings along with the installation of some new windows and doors. This is a great time for members to contribute to the club and just a willingness to help is required. The club van will run from Palmerston North on the Friday evening and the cost of this is shared by the users. Staying and eating at the lodge is free. Let me know if you have any questions or would like me to book you a seat in the van and/or a bed in the lodge.

11th – 12th March: Waikamaka Hut

Medium **Howard Nicholson** **357 6325**

This classic overnight Eastern Ruahines tramp involves a picturesque boulder hop up the Waipawa River, then a climb up and over Waipawa Saddle and down into the Waikamaka River. An opportunity to admire the new deck and veranda recently installed by Heretaunga Tramping Club at Waikamaka hut. If people are willing, we can return via a different route on Sunday. Expect 5-8 hours of medium-level tramping per day.

18th – 19th March: East Waitewaewae River

Fit **David Harrington** **021 240 9056**

From North Manakau Road, which we may need to walk from the gate, we'll follow the track up to Waitewaewae, then East to spot 969, then drop East into the head of East Waitewaewae River. From here we'll travel the full length of the river starting with pleasant travel at first with a few waterfalls before entering the gorge proper that will be full on for the next 5kms. On reaching the West Waitewaewae, we'll travel up this a little way then take the leading spur WNW up to spot 828 and follow the ridge track N past Thompson and back to North Manakau Rd. It's possible I may make this a 2.5 day trip to avoid having really long days.

18th – 19th March: Bushcraft Course

Easy/All **Tim Swale** **06 376 6556** theswales@xtra.co.nz

This instructional weekend will be based at Donnelly Flat near Masterton's Mount Holdsworth Road end. After an initial briefing and some map and compass activities, we will walk the short distance to Donnelly Flat and set up camp. This is a good opportunity to try fly camping if you have not done so before. Saturday's programme will be based on the Mountain Safety Council / Outdoor Training New Zealand course which prepares young people for their Duke of Edinburgh's Award expedition at Bronze level. Topics to be covered will be: clothing and equipment, route finding, campsite selection, stoves, food for tramping, water safety, outdoor communications, leadership, environmental care code, trip planning, first aid, etc. There will be a night walk on the Loop Track. On Sunday we will walk some of the old tracks in the vicinity of Rocky Lookout. Conditions permitting we will finish with a river crossing. There are likely to be a small number of young people participating in this activity so feel free to come along to either brush up on your own skills or to support the youngsters as they start out on their tramping journey.

25th – 26th March: Eastwood Hills Arboretum (Gisborne)

Family/Easy **Helen Peek** **358 9470 or 021 0650754** vegnz001@gmail.com

The date that bed numbers needed to be confirmed by has passed but if anyone else is interested please contact me ASAP and I can check with Eastwood Hills in case there are still beds available.

Sunday 26th March: Coppermine-Kiritaki Hut

Medium/Fit **Jenny McCarthy** **021 215 2197** jmccarthy1.nz@gmail.com

We will head North from the Coppermine road end, climbing up and over into the Mangaatua Stream, then up-stream a bit before another up and over into the Raparapawai Stream. We head up this for 2 km and then climb out up to Keretaki hut. Finally, we drop into and head down Oruakeretaki Stream and out. We will need an early start and car shuffle for this trip. The last time we did this trip it took us nine hours, if you want to read about the last trip it is in the March 2014 newsletter. <http://www.mtsc.org.nz/news/MTSC-2014-03.pdf>



14th – 15th January: Not 'Dundas Loop the hard way'

Report: Jean Garman

Photos: Adam and Jean

Not only was there a heavy rain warning predicted for Sunday in the Tararuas, but this was also accompanied by gale-force winds so although we most likely could get to Dundas hut, we would probably have been stuck there for

several days waiting for the weather to improve. Instead David came up with an intriguing day trip for Saturday, a 'once in a lifetime' off track trip so that looked to be a much better/safer option. Adam and Fiona came along too. On the map it looked quite straightforward; up the Makopua stream to the Colenso high point then back to the start point through the bush. David organised access, not a request the farmer would get very often if ever. As stream travel goes there was nothing really difficult - not a single waterfall, deer trails through the sub-alpine scrub, reasonably open forest, however almost the entire trip was a bit awkward which resulted in it taking us 9½ hours and we were all knackered by the end of it. The stream started out as a papa slot and would have been quite straight forward except for the assorted windfall in it which made for very slow travel.



Thankfully after lunch we left the papa zone behind and the travel was easier, the worst it could throw at us was stinging nettle and bush lawyer. Where the stream died out we took to a narrow steep side spur that was pretty abrupt in places but once we were up on the tops there were lots of alpine flowers and impressive views of the surrounding ranges and valleys to admire.



Fabulous views of the Colenso High point and beyond



Open forest and dense fern

Heading down, we had 10 minutes of track which was really appreciated, unfortunately after 10 minutes we had to leave it and drop off the side down through nice open beech forest with lots and lots of fern underneath. The first part of the descent was not too bad and we started to get hopeful that it wouldn't be a really long day. Then lower down it flattened out; there was not a definitive ridgeline for quite a while and thanks to the dense fern and windfall progress slowed once more. Our rest breaks became steadily more frequent as energy levels flagged but persistence paid off and eventually we emerged into emerald green pasture and got back to our start point. We figured that in all probability no one has ever done this trip before and there is a pretty good chance no one will ever do it again. Many thanks to David for organising such a special experience and to the farmer for allowing us access.

Thursday 19th January: Northern Tararua Crossing

Report: Merv Matthews

Photos: Merv Matthews

A small team of workers led by Ian Argyle formed this new track along the route of an unformed extension of Naenae Road which reaches to the eastern boundary of the Tararua Forest Park. From the park boundary it was just a short distance to connect with the Otangane loop then exit via the Sledge Track. The project has had the support of the Walking Access Commission, the Tararua District Council, and DOC. When fully completed it could become a popular alternative crossing of the Northern Tararuas, particularly due to the quite thrilling climb past several waterfalls. We were lucky with the weather - no rain, just an overcast sky until mid-morning when it cleared to a calm fine day with great views along the tops. John Doolan dropped us off at the Naenae road end and then drove the bus around to Kahuterawa Road to meet up with us for lunch in the sun at the Toetoe Junction. We were 14 Thursday Trampers - eleven completed the crossing while three met us at the Junction.



21st – 23rd January: Wellington Walks

Report: Alla Seleznyova

Photos: Alla Seleznyova

On Saturday Linda, Jinny and I headed to Wellington for our walking weekend. The first walk we did was "The City to Sea Walkway" which started at Bolton Street Memorial Park and ended at the south coast 12km away in Island Bay. We walked through the Botanical Garden to the top of the Cable Car and descended into the Aro Valley, passing through 14 parks walking through bushy areas and exposed ridge tops of the Town Belt. The walk was sign posted with white poles but the writing on many poles was completely faded. As a result, at the Berhampore golf course, we ended up on a local walk with equally faded signs and reached our final destination, the Island Bay water front via an alternative route. Although Linda and I used to live in Wellington in the past, on this walk we discovered many interesting places we've never been before. The weather on Sunday morning was terrible with very strong wind and rain; we spent the morning checking out the tramping gear shops and visited Zealandia in the afternoon. Zealandia is the world's first fully-fenced predator-free urban eco-sanctuary with a vision to restore a Wellington valley's forest and freshwater ecosystems and it currently has over forty species of native birds. The 225ha Zealandia valley has 32km of routes, ranging from wheelchair friendly to tramping grade. We spend about 3 hours there sheltered from wind and rain, wandering around the lake, chatting with helpful staff and bird watching. On the way out we saw a Tuatara. We loved our visit, and if you want to treat your family or amuse your visitors, this is a place to go. On Monday, it was still and sunny and we went to Makara and did the coastal loop walk before heading back home. On some of the walks we were joined by Tim and Ben Swale.



Dress code for this summer's walking



Makara Loop walk



Zealandia Takeke

21st – 23rd January: Kawekas

Report: Adam Matich

Photos: Adam Matich

We stayed at Makahu Saddle Hut on Friday night, it being a 2 minute walk from the car park. A couple of hunters turned up late and left very early; they were quite considerate trying to not make too much noise. Saturday morning was calm and clear for our climb up Makahu spur to Kaweka J. After climbing for an hour we stopped off at Dominie Biv where there was another hunter; they were all over the place. This one we advised against staying at Ballard Hut that night as there were forecast gale-force winds the next day; he wasn't carrying enough beer to make it through a day doing nothing at the hut. Another hour saw us on Kaweka J after which we started down Back Ridge, visiting Back Ridge Hut as a side trip, where we collected a couple of not very artistic porno magazines, to be burnt at Jean's soonest convenience. We managed to reach Back Ridge Biv in time for lunch, after which it was mostly downward through the forest to Rocks Ahead Hut (8 hour day).

Unfortunately the hut was full but the occupants were off chasing deer somewhere. There was a great big iced carrot cake on the table; it was very difficult to resist its siren call. Forlornly, we headed on to the cable-way across the river to Rocks Ahead Biv. This required some effort as the crank-handle was missing from the cage. We had to crank each other across the river, which was especially difficult for short people like Jean, and near the other side the person in the cage needed to help by standing up and pulling on the cable. After the trauma of the cake-less crossing we were glad to spend a pleasant afternoon reading in the sun. Jean particularly enjoyed burning the porno magazines. I thought there were better things to do with them.



Beautiful Kaweka ridgeline



Relaxing outside Rocks Ahead Biv

While we were eating dinner, the five occupants of the hut across the river returned from the Manson tops and took a while cranking each other across the river to the hut. Later, after it had started drizzling and blowing a bit, one of them came across to say hello and offer us some beer (what we really wanted was cake).

It was windy and slightly rainy overnight, but it was more drizzle than rain and next morning the river did not seem to be up. However, it was still windy and overcast; not a good day for river travel down to Kiwi Mouth as we would certainly end up wet and cold. So we chickened out and headed up-ridge to Tira Lodge, normally a 2 hour trip that we managed to drag out to 4 hours as there was lots of track clearing to be done. It was unpleasantly windy on Venison Tops, so we were glad to settle in for an afternoon by the fire, reading and eating all the junk food left behind by others; that was after we cleared out all of the blowflies. It rained on and off during the day.



Beautiful Kaweka beech forest



A cold and windy day on the tops

The wind dropped and the rain moved off overnight so Monday was looking pretty good. Fortunately it was still cloudy so we didn't overheat. We did a bit more track clearing as we headed through the forest towards the Ballard tops. Out in the open, the wind was not too bad until we started heading South after the Whetu intersection. Some of the saddles were rather windy; we had all our windy-weather clothes on and the wind was strong enough that we had to lean into it and stumble a little bit when the gusts died. But we have had worse up there, and the saddle north of North Kaweka, through to Kaweka J, and down Makahu Spur suffered less and less wind. We took Trials Spur on the way down, which is in the process of becoming a problem as there is a section where a lot of the track width has dropped away. Some careful sidling was necessary. However, all you hunters out there, less than 200m above the car park we encountered a hind; looked like a red. It was around 5½ hours back to the car, partly because it was too windy to stop on the tops. We were Jean Garman and Adam Matich

Wednesday 25th January: Blue Range Hut or Mikimiki Track

Report: Linda Darbyshire

Photos: Linda Darbyshire

24 trampers gathered at the Kiriwhakapapa road end to enjoy either a walk to Blue Range hut or the Mikimiki Track.



Absorbing natures garden



Blue range hut patients



Relaxing lunch

28th – 29th January: Mangahao Flats Work Party

Report: Jean Garman

Photos: Jean Garman

Six keen souls headed up the track to Mangahao Flats Hut spending lots of time along the way clearing windfalls from the very muddy track (anyone would think it had rained a lot recently.....). Once at the hut it was the usual cleaning, thistle grubbing/gardening, firewood gathering/cutting to fill in what was left of the afternoon. A nibbles and wine session was followed by smoked chicken salad for dinner topped off by a peach and nectarine pavlova and port.

Sunday morning was spent finishing off any outstanding jobs along with a small track re-route where the river had undercut the track near the hut. The walk out was more pleasant than the walk in and we even braved the river for the section between the last swing bridge and the dam in an attempt to clean off all the mud. Howies excellent driving avoided 3 head on collisions on the way out - who

drives into the Mangahao dams on a Sunday afternoon?? We were Howie, Peter, Adam, Jenny, Ivan and Jean.



Working Hard

Wednesday 1st February: A tale of Two Tramps

-Wednesday Wilderness Walkers (WWWs) tramp the Deerford and Toka Loops

Report: Bob Hodgson and Marion Beadle

Photos: Bob and William

Our second tramp of the year and memorable as a day on which we were not rained on! After a 7.30am start, four vehicles and 22 trampers assembled for trip leaders briefing and by 8.50am the caterpillar of trampers queued to climb the style and cross the paddocks leading to the park entrance stream crossing and then to make their way up Shorts Track.

Six of the group sped ahead, hoping to reach the ridge and return down Knights Track. As the leatherwood thinned we piled on coats and gloves and travelled on into the clouds. It was not cold or raining and all seemed well until we reached the ridge. Although some shelter could be found on the eastern side, most of the track is on the West or on top where considerable extra effort was required to stay upright. The wind certainly added to the day's adventures. To stand at the signpost, it was necessary to hold onto the signpost. The track above the bush is now overgrown with fern and flax and the leatherwood is growing well this year. Fresh growth on leatherwood is surprisingly soft and fluffy. We made it round in 6 hours wind burnt but dry.

The majority of trampers assumed a more leisurely pace and enjoyed the bush made unusually green and lush by the frequent rain that has been a feature of summer this year. All made it to the junction and most tramped on up Shorts Track and into the leatherwood to a maximum height of 1189m and about 300m below Toka at 1500m. Conditions here were much more benign than the windy cool conditions experience at the top by the Windblown Six! On returning to the junction, the group collected several leisurely lunchers and took the track across to Knights Track, then a short detour to a beautiful picnic spot by the stream. After a short break and photo opportunity, we tramped out to the road end car park arriving at about 2.30pm. By 3pm we had been joined by the Windblown Six.



So 22 trampers enjoyed classic tramps and apart from a few bloody bush lawyer scratches and tired legs, we all emerged uninjured and in good spirits.

Thanks to wind-blown trip leader, Marion, less wind-blown deputy, Jill and to our drivers Chris, Bob, Allan and Rita.



Five of the Windblown Six being wind-blown!



A Brief Rest at the Picnic Spot

4th – 5th February: not ‘Waiohine River Headwaters’

Report: Jean Garman

Photos: Jean Garman

It's starting to feel like tramps into the more remote parts of the Tararuas are just not going to happen this "Summer". Even if we could have dealt with Saturday's gale winds to get over Mitre into the Waiohine headwaters, the river was running too high to consider it a viable option despite Sunday's forecast looking great. The forecast for Monday, however, wasn't the best either. So instead we headed further North to the more moderate Ruahines for a trip down the length of the Pourangaki river.



A stunning day on the Whanahuia range



Morning at the campsite on the slopes of Te Hekenga

We started from the Mania road end and sweated our way up through some pleasant bush following two sets of footprints. We caught up with the owners of the feet above the bush line as they were having lunch so we joined them and learnt they were a couple of Thursday trampers doing a reconnaissance trip. After lunch we carried on up to the Whanahuia range and headed towards Te Hekenga. We were hoping to find somewhere on the tops to camp but needed to find water, if not it would be a very long day getting far enough down into the Pourangaki to find somewhere flat to camp. Half way up the last climb to Te Hekenga we found a little shelf on the Northern side which had a couple of little tarns (puddles). A tarn in the hand is worth a maybe further along the ridge so we settled in to our little sheltered hollow. While not the flattest site for camping we managed to make ourselves pretty comfortable. We were looking forward to a glorious spread of stars overnight and catching the first rays of sun in the morning, alas it was not to be as we awoke to solid greyness and damp tussock. Feeling a little cheated as this was not what had been forecast, we readied ourselves for the day and as we did the cloud around and above us disappeared leaving only fluffy blankets in the valleys below. A bit more climbing, then we headed down the spur heading towards Triangle hut before dropping down to a very prominent deer trail that took us around Te Hekenga and back to the main ridge line. By now the cloud in the valleys had evaporated and it was shaping up to be a stunningly hot day. We were very pleased we would spend most of it splashing around in the Pourangaki river.



Deer trail round Te Hekenga Heading down into the Pourangaki river A friendly part of the Pourangaki river

We opted to not be purists and find the first trickle of water instead heading down a broad open tussock and scree slope into the very early stages of the river. The bounce in the alpine vegetation and the give in the scree meant it was a very knee friendly way to lose a lot of height. The river was very friendly and easy going in the upper reaches. We easily bypassed a waterfall/cascade by sidling on the true left. There were signs that the river had been recently running a lot higher and although it was clear and manageable we thought it was still a bit higher than normal. It seems people are not the only ones who can get into trouble in swollen rivers as we passed the reasonably fresh carcass of a stag who looked like he had been tumbled in the river probably snagging his nice big rack of antlers which did terrible things to his neck. Further down we still had dry shorts but then the valley cinched in and while we easily/dryly climbed down the first step in a little gorge, the second step resulted in wet shorts – it had to happen sooner or later. A similar spot a bit further on required a jump into a waist deep pool. The valley was now tighter and more bouldery so progress was slower. We were pleased to see the swing bridge to Pourangaki hut as we knew it would be a bit easier going below this and it was as we reached the Kelly Knight swing bridge even earlier than we had expected. The hut was full of young hunters so we carried on down the river searching for somewhere to camp. A wee while later there was an obvious ledge in the bush on the true right and when we climbed up there were lots of places to put up a fly for a comfortable night.

The next morning the river just got easier and easier and we made good time down to the junction with the Pari stream which was equally easy to travel up. We paid very close attention to the map as we wanted to pick up the 'bottle top' track (marked with plastic bottle tops) to get back to the road end. It took a bit of searching around in the area to find the start of the track but once we did it wasn't too hard to follow and took us back to where the track from the road end enters the forest. Lunch was had back at the ute and we got home at a reasonable time.



Camping amongst the trees



River travel fun

Wednesday 8th February: (WWWs) default to Hihitahi* Forest Sanctuary and Zeikes Hut

Report: Bob Hodgson

Photos: Maureen, William and Bob

Twenty-two trampers assembled in the minimal provision made for car parking at the road side at the start of the track to the Hihitahi* Forest Sanctuary. We left the car park area at about 9.30am, and made our way down the side of the large paddock currently carrying a crop of a brassica to the swing bridge. On the far side we assembled for trip leader's briefing.

Once over the fence into the sanctuary proper, we met the challenge presented by the first boggy section, now (sadly) diminished from its legendary state of repair from several years ago. The next challenge was the steep cliff

section, the most demanding part of which has a 52m rise in 100m. A welcome morning tea stop was taken at the top of the cliff before the start of the tramp onwards along the ridge to the trig point.



Briefing with Misty tops in view



Along the Overgrown Track

The track was overgrown because of wet weather and lack of use as it had been closed since October following a poison-drop (DOC had confirmed it was safe to tramp). Again, as a result of the wet summer and recent rain, the bush was beautiful in its green lushness but in the early stages it did make for very a wet walk.

By 11.50am all of the party had achieved the trig point at 1111m from the lowest point at 740m. We were denied grand views by the low clouds on the mountain but as the morning progressed the local clouds lifted. Most chose to have their lunch and turn at the trig point on what was a warm and windless day. Six trampers chose to tramp onwards to Zeikes Hut, arriving for a brief lunch at about noon.

All trampers were safely out by 2.40pm but there were many muddy bums sustained on the steep and challenging descent. One unfortunate trampler (me) slipped off the lower track but sustained no reportable injury. The consensus was that this was a rewarding tramp. It was rounded off by our now traditional visit to Le Café, Telephonique in Taihape.

Thanks to trip leader Sue and to our drivers especially van driver Chris.



Zeikes Hut



Lunch at the Trig

We welcome Kate Blundell Glen Brewerton and Jill Stewart to the Club



Contact Details

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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.