

# 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 11: December 2017



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 28<sup>th</sup> November: End of Year Function

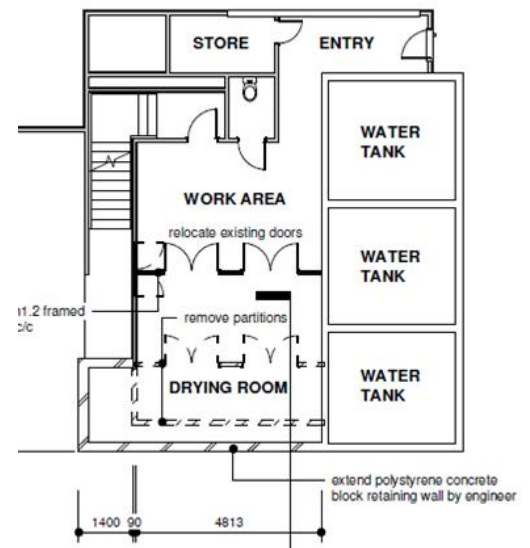
The MTSC End of Year Function will again take the form of a stroll followed by a convivial meal. We will meet at the car park of the Esplanade Railway at the park entrance off Park Road, adjacent to the Lido, at 6.15pm. We will then make our way at a conversational pace along the riverbank and then over the Bridge and up the road and track to ANZAC Park where magnificent views of the Manawatu and beyond can be enjoyed. After admiring the view, we will retrace our steps down to and across the bridge and through the bush tracks back to the car park. By 7.15pm we will arrive at **Gengy's Mongolian BBQ on Broadway** where we will have a convivial dinner.

### Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> December: MTSC Lodge upgrades – John Lyttle

John Lyttle (lodge manager) will be presenting proposed upgrades to the lodge and this meeting will be for members to discuss and comment on these changes.

To the right are the proposed changes to the ground floor of the lodge and members can go to the link below to see all of the proposed changes.

<http://mtsc.nz/lodge/lodge-20171010.pdf>



### Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February: Memorable Tramps - John Beech, Linda Campbell and Tim Swale

John Beech will speak on a recent trip to the Hollyford track which runs up the river of the same name from its mouth at Martins bay to the Hollyford road end. The intention is to fly into Big Bay, 1 bay further north, then walk out visiting 7 huts over 5 days.... Highlights include seal colony between Big Bay and Martins Bay and Lakes McKerrow and Alabaster. Linda Campbell will speak on a club trip around the Pouakai Circuit in Taranaki National Park and Tim Swale will speak on walking the Queen Charlotte Track. Great opportunity to pick up some ideas and information for future tramps!

**Due to other commitments, the first newsletter for next year will not be out until the first week of February (hopefully).**

# REPORTS AND NOTICES



## MTSC President: John Beech

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

Hi all, with Spring finally arriving it may be time to dust off the boots and spend a bit of time in the hills. The warmer weather should be an encouragement for us to start getting into some sort of fitness regime to do that elusive Christmas trip. This is certainly the case for me as I have a couple of week long trips coming up that require a bit more fitness than I currently have.

Since the last newsletter, the political landscape has changed considerably with the new Labour/NZ First/Green coalition taking up the reins for the next 3 years. From what I understand, there looks to be a reshaping of priorities for DOC with the incoming minister suggesting that DOC needs to make protecting our biodiversity a priority. Under section 6 of the Conservation Act 1987, the priorities are listed as conservation first, then promoting recreation, and allowing tourism, provided these are not inconsistent with the first priority of conservation. Over the last few years, it has been apparent (in my opinion) that the last priority has become the first. I am sure we need no reminding of the pressures that the department has been under to cope with the increasing tourist pressure, case in point being the new rules for the Tongariro Crossing. Unfortunately, when tourism becomes the priority, conservation and recreation for kiwis tends to be sidelined. Whatever our political leanings, I am sure most of us would welcome a fully resourced department that can get on with the priority of conservation as outlined in the act. Nevertheless, there is still a long way to go to provide the right balance so tourists can enjoy our National and Forest Parks without putting so much pressure on that the environment that the experience suffers. Let's hope the new minister can give the right direction and that DOC senior management can deliver the results that all of us desire.

On the local front, the Sunrise/Rangi huts booking system has been implemented. FMC have commented on the trial and this has been relayed to DOC Manawatu. It remains to be seen how this will pan out. If any of us plan to visit these huts over the summer months, I would appreciate hearing from you on how you found the experience. DOC will be continuing to monitor the system as well, and any information will be welcomed I'm sure.

On the social front the end of year function is coming up on the 28<sup>th</sup> November. Unfortunately, I will be away walking the Abel Tasman Coast Track with a school group. I am sure you will all enjoy the meal at Gengy's whilst I'll be having the standard fare of freeze dry or pasta.

I wish you all a happy Christmas/New Year break and I hope you can all get out and enjoy the outdoors. Till next year.

*John*



## MTSC Chief Guide Report: Ken Mercer

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

Lots of years ago Mary was tramping with three others in the South Island and they were faced with a short two wire bridge over a deep chasm. It seemed reasonable secure so they cautiously crossed, one at a time. The wires were attached to a tree on the far side which was set back from the edge so they were all across before anyone noticed the end of one of the cables was completely unfastened. In hindsight we wonder if the tree had grown and burst the clamps and perhaps the wire was trapped in the bark. Regardless, they were somewhat shocked and improvised a repair for the next person.

DOC now has regular inspections and load tests of bridges so such incidents should be in the past? Well, two years ago, a group fell 8m when crossing the Hopuruahine Bridge on the Lake Waikaremoana Track. We just learned at club night that it was caused by a manufacturing fault in a chain link. Needless to say DOC has replaced all similar chains although none revealed any defects.

On a recent trip we were mildly inconvenienced by the Totara Creek Bridge being undermined and close to failure – DOC is taking no chances! However the old track on the west bank is in good condition and that's the route we took. I'd like to see it kept open once the damage is repaired as the combination would make a nice loop.

Lastly DOC is looking for workers to stay in a hut for a week and paint it. Everything will be supplied including flying the heavy stuff in. ☺ Royce Mills is keen and will coordinate volunteers - 06 355 8556.

## Request for information on track details for a North Island West to East crossing

One of my ambitions after completing the Te Araroa (TA) walk was to do a walk West to East from New Plymouth over Mt Taranaki, through the Whanganui National Park to the Central Plateau and into the Kaimanawa's. Then onto Whirinaki Forest Park, past Lake Waikaremoana, onto Matawai, and then the Raukumara Range, finally reaching Hicks Bay on the East Cape. Probably about 600km in total. Sounds easy writing it down but there are some difficult sections like from Central Plateau to Lake Waikaremoana. I will have Linley's support in our camper van when the time is right.

Plenty of researching maps and tracks is needed by me and there will be some private land to complicate things. There are plenty of tramping trails to find I'm sure – Exciting! I cannot find anything much specific on the net and I am wondering if there are some contacts in the Manawatu Tramping Club that may have heard whispers or done sections.

Murray Faulkner

reply to [mandfaulkner@gmail.com](mailto:mandfaulkner@gmail.com)



December Wednesday Tramps		
Date	Leader	Phone
6	Marion Beadle	323 3246
13	Denise/Chris Brunskill	354 2511
January Wednesday Tramps		
31	Sue Pither	357 3033
February Wednesday Tramps		
7	Rita Hodson	323 5491

December Thursday Tramps		
Date	Leader	Phone
7	Peter Wilson	357 2403
14	John Doolan	027 466 8740
15	Barbeque	
No January Thursday Tramps Scheduled		
February Thursday Tramps		
1	Christine Scott	354 0510
8	Royce Mills	355 8556

December Weekend Trips				
Date	Trip	Grade	Leader	Phone
2 – 3	Ruapehu Walks	Easy/Medium	Tim Swale	022 134 8384
2 – 3	Ski Tour Ruapehu	Technical	Ken Mercer	027 364 6475
9 – 10	Roaring Stag Lodge	Easy/Medium	Helen Peek	021 065 0754
9 – 10	Leon Kinvig Hut	Medium/Fit	Adam Matich	022 358 8062
Sunday 17	Tree Trunk Gorge	Fit	David Harrington	021 240 9056
January Weekend Trips				
Sunday 7	Kohitere Trig, Levin	Easy	Helen Peek	021 065 0754
Sunday 28	Te Ekaou Stream	Fit	David Harrington	021 240 9056
February Weekend Trips				
3 – 6	Queen Charlotte Walkway	Medium/Fit	Adam Matich	022 358 8062
3 – 6	Lodge Work Party	All	John Lyttle	027 433 6307

**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 Land SAR/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.

**2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> December: Ruapehu Walks**

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

This weekend will be based at our club lodge at Whakapapa and will be running alongside Ken Mercer's ski touring weekend. My intention is to have a pleasant social weekend where we align the walking we do with the people who turn up. If necessary we can split the group if some want to go up onto the snow while others wish to walk easier tracks lower down the mountain. Suitable for everyone, including families with young children. If there is lots of enthusiasm there may be limited space at the lodge so an early commitment to avoid missing out would be helpful.

**2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> December: Ski Tour Ruapehu**

**Technical** **Ken Mercer** **06 356 7497** **027 364 6475**

The ski season might be over but there is still heaps of “spring corn” on the upper mountain. To borrow a phrase off the web “corn skiing is much like carving turns on perfect, soft groomed snow, with perhaps a little more noise and

warmer temps". If we get good weather, we'll take the chair to the cafe on Saturday, skin/walk up and have a few runs then camp somewhere safe. Hopefully we can climb to a summit to watch the sunrise. Crampons and ice axes are required but skis are optional. The fall back plan is to stay at the lodge alongside Tim's trip.

### **9<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> December: Roaring Stag Lodge**

**Easy/Medium**

**Helen Peek**

**021 065 0754**

**358 9470**

Here is a chance to miss a bit of the pre-Christmas madness and have a relaxing tramp. We'll head into the hut and chill out, but if time allows and/or for those inclined we can leave our packs at the hut and pop up to check out the changes to Cattle Ridge Hut. Or anything else we decide to do at the time.

### **9<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> December: Leon Kinvig Hut**

**Medium/Fit**

**Adam Matich**

**022 358 8062**

We will be heading into Leon Kinvig Hut from the west, using the Knights Track on the way in and the Shorts Track on the way out. So on both days we will have some good, healthy climbing to do; just because I really do care about your health and well-being! I expect the day lengths to be 5-6 hours and the weather will be wonderful (or at least nearly so) as I am too old and wise to go tooling around on the tops in bad weather. So I would expect us to reach the hut in time for an extended afternoon tea and firewood gathering, and to be back at the car on Sunday before afternoon tea.

### **Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December: Tree Trunk Gorge**

**Fit**

**David Harrington**

**021 240 9056**

We'll leave a vehicle at the Tree Trunk Gorge and drive round to the start of the trip at the end of Rangipo Intake Rd. The intention is to head down the Tongariro River to the Tree Trunk Gorge which we'll sidle around and continue down the river to the Pillars of Hercules. Depending on how things are going, we may pack float through and continue down so far then climb out on to the road. We'll then return via the Tree Trunk Gorge Track back to the first vehicle and shuttle back to the start. Trip is very dependent on weather and river levels.

### **Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> January: Kohitere Trig, Levin**

**Easy/Medium**

**Helen Peek**

**021 065 0754**

**358 9470**

This Trig is behind Levin and meant to be an easy walk with good views on a clear day and in an area that offers cycling tracks as well, so exact details can be sorted closer to the day, but the Trig is likely to be just the start of doing a little exploring around that area, maybe checking out some side roads that we normally drive past while on the way to other places.

### **Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> January: Te Ekaou Stream**

**Fit**

**David Harrington**

**021 240 9056**

Hopefully we'll be able to drive through the farm to start at Te Ekoau Hut. The intention is to drop into the Te Ekoau Stream and follow the southern branch up to near the source. The first part may be slow travel due to waterfalls etc. but hopefully it's reasonable travel after that. We'll return via the ridge system on the SW side of the catchment. Expect a long day.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> February: Queen Charlotte Walkway **CANCELLED****

**Medium/Fit**

**Adam Matich**

**022 358 8062**

I have had to postpone/cancel this trip due a scheduling failure. However, I may still explore doing some other trip somewhere in the northern part of the South Island, if anyone is interested in something else please contact me.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> February: Lodge Work Party**

**All**

**John Lyttle**

**027 433 6307**

This weekend will be a general tidy up and sort out in and around the lodge with time for a walk or two if people also want to stretch their legs. This is a great chance to come up, check out the lodge and enjoy the company of like-minded people and the wonderful ambience of the lodge during the summer months.



### **23<sup>rd</sup> October: Not the Mangaturuturu Hut, but the Waitahinga Trails**

Report: Helen Peek

Photos: Helen Peek

After talking with the farmer and other considerations, the trip at Labour weekend to Mangaturuturu Hut and environs didn't take place, however a Monday outing to the Waitahinga Trails past Bushy Park was done instead. As what seems to have been common this year, the weather was better than forecast and we had a dry, nearly windless and warm pleasant day.

I do like these trails. They are great for giving the young and newbies a taste of what it is like to experience tracks that aren't like State Highway 1, and bush that has lots of interesting trees to explore, things to photograph, and of course the dam as a point of historical interest.



*View of the dam*



*on top of the dam*



*every tree deserves a hug*

I was surprised at how much growth there had been in parts since the last visit, lots of bird song too - wondering if these are spreading out from Bushy Park. Saw no goats on the trails but quite a number ran across the road in front of us and down into land with lots of "No Shooting" signs when we were leaving.

There were several other groups on the trail, one large one made up of parents and children from quite young to about intermediate age, so it is really good to see that these trails are being well used.

It was a pleasant outing with my companions: Annalise, Donna, Zoe and Hannah.

### **Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> October: Little mud but..... Wednesday Trampers to Sunrise Hut**

Report: Allan

Photos: William, Raewyn and Judith.

As I write this the sun is streaming in my study window from a near-cloudless sky. But this is Thursday and yesterday was Wednesday – what a difference a day can make!



*Onward and Upward*



*Our goal in the mist and a cool 4 degrees*

So despite my best intentions, we approached the Sunrise car park (along a rather **un**maintained 'road') to emerge into low cloud, mist and the occasional drop of moisture. To add to the general mood, we were informed that the forecast for the hut was 4°C! So it was on with rain coats and pack covers, and 25 of us commenced the walk just after 10am. The beauty of the bush soon made up for the weather conditions, as we admired the fresh new growth and some stunning large clematis flowers. Also appreciated was the almost complete absence of the soft and wet brown mushy stuff (aka mud) which seems to have followed us around all year. Most of the party reached the hut, including two who hadn't been there before which is always nice to see. Some were heard to comment that the track has got longer and steeper since last time, lending credence to my belief that the hills are still geologically active! We enjoyed the cosy comfort of the hut, which thankfully was not as cold as we



*My Uber car has not arrived...  
--txt to Nigeria Uber Cars (NZ)--*



*Beauty in the bush*

had been warned.

The descent was also achieved without incident, some making it a race to the bottom, while others took their time to observe nature's show. Coffee etc. at BP Dannevirke completed an enjoyable day out.

Apparently we walked 11.8kms, and reached an elevation of 1310m. Interestingly, even though we started and finished at the same point, we climbed 814m and descended 809...

Thanks to van driver Chris and to Charles, Bernard and Rod for offering their cars.

## Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> October: Transmission Gully/Puketiro Loop

Report: John Thornley

Photos: Craig Ross

On Winston Peter's BIG DAY, fifteen of us travelled to the Battle Hill Farm Forest Park, off the back road that runs from Pauatahanui/Paremata Harbour to Paekakariki. We entered from the Pauatahanui southern entrance, as it is kinder to the van. As the route crosses a working farm (500 hectares), not all the walk options are available (sections were closed for the lambing season) but the longer Puketiro Loop track is open all year round. 'Puke' = peak, and "tiro" = view. It is 10km in length and rises to around 450m in height. Five minutes from the car park you cross a gentle rise and drop down to the tunnel that takes you under Transmission Gully. This gives an impressive and close up view of big trucks at work, lowering the higher ground and filling up the valley. At the risk of gender stereotyping, it's a 'small boy's paradise'. It is an easy steep walk up but gentler stroll down on the pine needle track, through pine forests with regenerating native bush emerging underneath and on the edges of the pines.



*Walking to the tunnel under Transmission Gully*



*On the summit of Puketiro*

We were lucky with the weather, giving excellent views to the Paremata/Mana/Porirua suburbs and from Mt Matthew in the East to a tip of Kapiti Island to the West. Hazy skies prevented views of the South Island. There is a Park Information Centre, where you can pick up pamphlets outlining the early history, the tracks and educational developments of the Park. Fifteen of us enjoyed the day, and gave patronage to the Paekakariki coffee cafes on the way home. This was a new trip for many and can be recommended.

## 22 - 24<sup>th</sup> October: Labour Weekend in the Richmond Range

Report: Adam Matich

Photos: Adam Matich

On day one we had a hot (26°C) 2 hour climb up an old but serviceable farm track to Red Hills Hut. It appears that the area around Red Hills Hut, and the plateau above, may once have been used for grazing. The hut is a tidy, fairly new 6-bunker without any heating. Near dark two young guys turned up as well; we felt sorry for them as some of us tend to snore when tired.



*Porters Creek hut*



*Hunters hut*



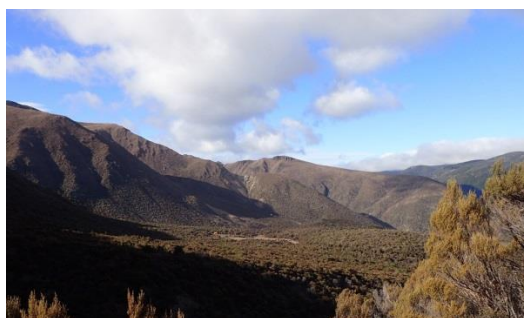
*Red Hills hut*

Next morning was overcast and cool so we were not in fear of overheating as we followed the track down Maitland Creek. Initially it was tussocky and wet, not a good start to the day. Because this part of the Forest Park is on

ultramafic rock, the vegetation was poor scrubby/manuka, whilst to the west of us it looked more like beech forest, so we were probably on a geological boundary. We had a steep descent into the right branch of the Motueka River but the crossing was easy, the water levels being low. After morning tea we had a 300m climb up over a saddle and then down into the bouldery Lowther Creek which we rock-hopped up for about 300m. The morning did seem to be dragging on; the sign at Red Hills Hut claimed 4 hours to Porters Creek Hut, we weren't going to make that. After a steep 100m climb out of Lowther Creek and a walk along above some bluffs, we dropped down to Porters Creek Hut for lunch. It had taken 4½ hours instead of the advertised four and it was supposed to be another 4 hours to Hunters Hut (not 2-3) for the night. We didn't want an 8½ hour day as day 3 was going to be excessively long. We needed the exercise but not so much as to tire us out before the big day, so we decided to have a nice afternoon in the sun at Porters Hut and another easy day the next day to Hunters Hut, from where we could climb up onto the Porter Ridge instead of climbing from the originally destination of Top Wairoa Hut.



*Porters Creek nap*



*Looking back to Porters hut*



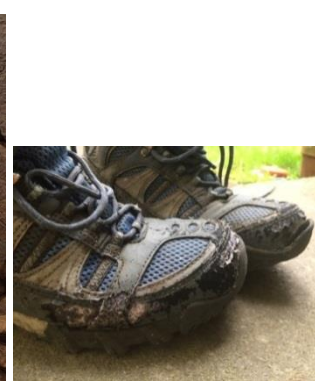
*On the way to Hunters Hut*

We shared the hut with the two guys who were at Red Hills Hut, spent the afternoon collecting firewood and then basking in the sun. There was a bit of rain in the night, but the next day was dry and so we did a cushy 3½ hour trip to Hunters Hut. This was a nicer section of track, with varied terrain ranging from barren shingle, through scrub to beech forest. The track sidled around the end of spurs and over some little saddles and probably had 350m of climbing. On both days there were suitable spots for camping, should one so desire. When climbing up Dun Creek we stayed in the creek instead of on the track which looked nasty and on our descent before our climb to the last saddle for the day we met a couple of trampers heading south from Hunters Hut. They informed us that the helicopter we had seen landing at Porters Hut, 45mins after we left, was on a SAR mission looking for a missing Canadian tourist. We speculated about what saleable items he might have been carrying should we come across his remains.

Hunters Hut (8-bunk) was occupied by two other people so again we weren't cramped; although the toilet needs relocating before the Te Araroa season starts. To entertain ourselves that afternoon we went for a walk up the left branch of the Motueka River. Again there was a bit of rain in the late afternoon. On day 4, our loooooong day, we rose early and climbed directly up from Hunters Hut to the Porter Ridge tops via pt. 1488, a total height gain over the day of around 950m. Maybe 50m above the hut there is a tussocky opening in the scrub which we followed to eventually find ourselves on barren ground and in the clouds with a cold, but not strong, wind. We were supposed to loop around to the north onto pt. 1642 but poor visibility and complacency saw us heading south towards pt. 1667. Half a kilometre in the wrong direction a GPS check (smart phones are wonderful) brought us up short and we headed back north to commence a day of mind-numbing boulder hopping; starting with crossing pt. 1642. Every high point, and some that weren't marked on the map, was a pile of jagged igneous boulders that we had to clamber and hop over in the mist. We had a brief respite at the very headwaters of the right branch of the Motueka River, as we were passing from the Porter to the Red Hills Ridge, but then on the approach to pt. 1710 it was onto rock again. Red Hill was one big pile of broken rock.



*ROCKS, ROCK, ROCKS.....*



*very bad for soft boots*

We didn't go right over the top of Red Hill, but sidled 20m below on the south face from where we spotted the remains of the trig above us; 4 x 4 posts sticking up out of the rock. There was some rain, hail and snow but only for short periods, not enough to make us miserable and the wind had not yet become troublesome. As we were about

to drop off the main peak we again consulted the smart phones. This caused some concern and a compass bearing was even more troubling. In the mist, we had sailed on past the spur we were supposed to be taking South. We retraced our steps back past the trig and while doing so the cloud cleared enough for us to spot our South-heading ridge. We could see it well enough to know we were not dropping onto that. The beginning of it consisted of you-are-going-to-die grade rock spires. A little West of the ridge-of-death, we descended down a steep boulder strewn slope, veering to the right as we did so to avoid the small bluffs below us. It looked nasty from the top but was actually quite good for most of us. It was on this section that Garry managed to slip over on the only slippery rock on the ridge and come rolling down the rocks. Fortunately his head stopped him just short of falling on trip leader. If we were going to have an accident this was the place to do it as the bench we were dropping down onto was a good place for a helicopter to land, or to camp if necessary. Unfortunately no damage was done so we had to continue on. We traversed the bench and climbed back up onto the ridge-of-death just north of 1770, having passed by the rock spires.



*Swamp next to Red Hills hut*



*Plateau above Red Hills hut*

It was 3pm by then and we were half way after eight hours travel with very few stops and a brief lunch. Everyone was getting tired of rocks; especially Jenny whose non-leather boots were rapidly abrading away. From pt. 1770 (inclusive) South life got easier, in that route-finding was straight-forward and the terrain was getting friendlier; even with the bouldery high points. The wind was freshening though and at times we were blown more off-balance than usual. Fortunately the ridge was now broad and we could use the lee slope when it was nasty. South of Chrome the footing, and our pace, improved markedly, which was just as well as we still had a long way to go. Underfoot degraded once we dropped onto the Plateau which was wet and spongy. We stayed on the higher northern side, which had better drainage, until north of the trig and then took a bee-line for the rocky pillars, which are not at all blatantly-obvious geological features. Daylight was fading and so we had to use the phone to find our way to the start of the track down to Red Hills Hut. Eventually we spotted cairns and a faint ground trail. There was no large orange triangle. Once it became a 4WD track we knew we were home and hosed, and arrived at the hut at 8pm, after a 13+ hour day of trial and trauma.



*Looking back to Red Hill and the sidled bench*



*Looking back to the right branch of the Motueka River*

When trip leader retrieved the food cache it was discovered that the two guys we had shared Red Hills and Porters huts with had found it. The note they left on top said so. Fortunately, they were being playful and not larcenous as they hadn't touched our bottle of port. It was the next morning back at the car that we discovered someone else had not been playful. Both our car and theirs had been broken into, perhaps we should have parked in St Arnaud and used the Nelson Lakes Shuttles or similar. One can only hope for some excessive karmic retribution!



All told, it was a very good trip; nothing wrong with the tracks or the huts. Although it would be inadvisable to travel there in the Te Araroa season as in January and February the huts are over full! DOC will have to shell out lots of cash to provide suitable facilities for the ever increasing number of tourists, and the locals are going to become increasingly resentful over the back-country becoming more like rush-hour Auckland. Personally we don't go tramping to encounter lots of people! The off-track section (Porters and Red Hill Ridges) is a long way and the only way to ameliorate that is to camp somewhere on the tops. The bench below Red Hill would work well if it is not too far down the stream to get water or if there is water in the temporary tarn. While we did have problems, it was largely route finding in the poor visibility. I wouldn't class it as being particularly dangerous; the footing was always good and I do not recall any sections where we were dangerously exposed. We were Garry Grayson, Jenny McCarthy and Adam Matich.

## Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> October: Waitarere Beach Forest (North Block)

Reporter + trip leader: Richard Ellis

Photos: Richard Ellis

Driving through light rain after leaving Palmerston North, we were very pleased to see blue sky as we approached Waitarere. We had a good turnout considering this was a walk rather than a tramp: there were 17 walkers and 5 dogs ready to go at 8.30am. Two cyclists left an hour later and caught us up for morning tea.

We entered the forest at the main gates just off Waitarere Beach Road, and headed northeast on Road No.11. For two thirds of this road, to our left, we had young pine trees mixed with more mature trees: to our right, farmland. At times cattle came towards us sloshing through muddy puddles to check us out.



*Pine trees on one side farm land on the other*

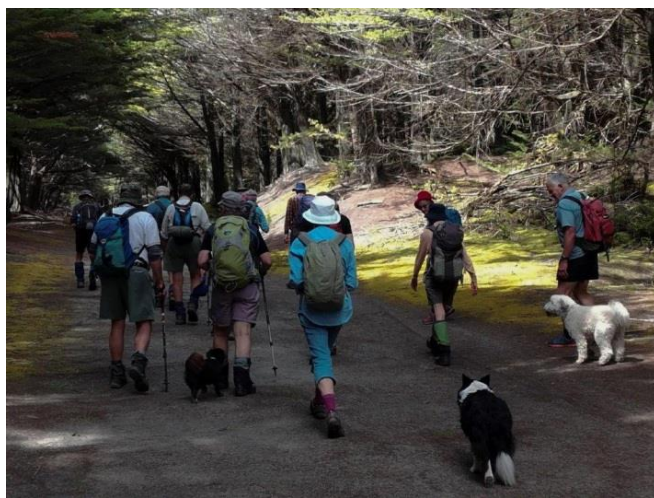


*In under the shade of the pines*

We made good progress on the flat gravelled road, ticking off all the side roads to our left, from No.16 to 32. We were all taking layers of clothing off by this time as the day was warming considerably. We arrived at the huge bend in the Manawatu River at 10.15am and stopped for morning tea in the warm sunshine, with a different perspective of the Foxton Estuary. We were too far away to spot any godwits though.



*away from the rotting jelly fish*



*people and dogs enjoying the day*

Carrying on, we headed Northwest along Road No.35, which after passing a couple of intersections, turned into a pleasant undulating grassy track. It was cooler under the cover of the pines. Before too long we arrived at Road No.13, and turned South for one block before heading Northwest again, and heading out of the forest onto the Lupin covered dunes. We then proceeded down onto the beach where we were greeted by the very pungent smell of millions of rotting Velella (blue jellyfish). Luckily the tide was only half way in so we were able to continue our

Southward walk upwind of the stench. At around midday we stopped for lunch, finding a log to sit on that was free of the nasty smell.

After 17.87km taking 5hrs 10mins, including a stop at the Foursquare for ice-creams, we arrived back at the cars. Everyone enjoyed the day, and I hope the dogs did too.

### Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> November: Pukeatua or Mangaone Walkways

Report and trip leader: Anne West

Photos: William, Raewyn & Peter

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 33 trampers assembled at the end of Mangaone South Road. Twelve chose the Mangaone Walkway, and the remaining 21 trampers set off uphill on the Pukeatua Track. Conditions were perfect; a mild day with no wind, no rain and no mud underfoot. Some of our party reached the summit of Pukeatua at 812m; according to our statistician they had climbed 908m. We did not start below sea level, there were some descents as well as ascents along the way! Others were happy to turn back at various points on the route. We enjoyed the bush, which seemed more beautiful than ever, especially the ferns. It was a delightful day to be out in the Tararuas. Everyone had returned to the car park well before the agreed 4.00pm time limit. Ice-creams were more popular than coffee when we paused at the Otaki BP on the way home.

Many thanks to Coralie for leading the Mangaone group and to drivers Chris, Linda, Bev, Rita, Bernard, Charles and Carole.



*Enjoying the sunshine*

*Stunning tree and rata vine!*

*Well-deserved rest up on top*



### 4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> November: Rangī Hut and tops Totara Flats Hut

Report: Nicola Wallace

Photos: Nicola Wallace

Ken hadn't had much interest in his trip to the Rangī tops, and I had a desire to return to Totara Flats, so a couple of phone calls and a trip to Totara Flats Hut was arranged instead. It was drizzling a little on the drive down to the Holdsworth Road end, which we reached around 9.30am. My visit to the loo on the hill led to a conversation with a DOC guy cleaning the loo next door: on hearing that we were heading for Totara Flats, he told me the old Totara Creek track had been reopened and remarked. He also said that he hoped "they'd hurry up and fix the bridge".

Light drizzle followed us up the Gentle Annie track. It was a humid day, and on the steep parts sweat was pouring off my head. We had morning tea at the seat, noting that it was a very quiet track today, only the odd runner coming past. I heard the distinctive screech of a Kaka to the North. The descent of the tree-rooty hill was helped by the track's dryness. So intent was I on watching where I put my feet, I missed seeing the turnoff (now closed) to the "new" track. When Ken pointed it out, I had to go back up and have a look. It was quite well concealed, with



*The undermined bridge*

branches across the track and a "track closed" sign on a tree a little way back.

We crossed Totara Creek and immediately had lunch. It was years since I'd been along the Totara Creek track, and I looked forward to it. It turned out to be much as I remembered it, but not far from the lunch spot, the creek had chewed out a short section of track. Further on, the track was right on the very edge, that bit will probably go next winter. It is a very pretty track, with easy bits alternating with tricky sections of steep downhill. We stopped at the closed bridge and had a good look. Looking at the undermined bank at the other end, it was immediately obvious why it was closed.

About 5 minutes before the hut we got real rain for the first time. Encouraged by the sight of the hut through the rain, I didn't don coat. Crossing the swing-bridge was a little exciting, as it was windy by now – a strong Norwester. We arrived at the hut at 4pm, about 6 people were already there, and over the coming hours more kept arriving! All the people were young, we were the oldest ones there, and the vast majority were from overseas.

An interesting aspect of this hut stay was the hut water. I heard people saying it tasted of smoke, but to me it wasn't like smoke at all, more a chemical sort of taste, strange - dead possum? Ken and Mary didn't like it either, so from then on we got all our water from the Waiohine River, just outside. Much better!

At about 5pm we went for a stroll to check out the Totara Flats, as it had stopped raining. They were of course beautiful as always, but with more Manuka trees than I remembered. Back to the hut, and among the new arrivals was a Lithuanian woman with 3 little boys, the youngest one still a baby who she would have had to have carried. All the people I talked to had come in on the track from Waiohine Road end.

By bedtime it was very windy indeed, and my attempts to sleep outside the hut were foiled by the strong wind. So I slept happily in the kitchen where I had a little space around me. For such a full hut, it was very quiet. There was plenty of ventilation in the hut, as the wind was blowing under the hut and coming up through the plentiful floor vents.



*Carefully crossing Totara Creek*



*Totara Flats hut*

The next morning the sun was shining! We headed off just after 8am. It was still very windy, and crossing the bridge was even more exciting than yesterday. Ken noted that in recent times it has been stabilised, with new cable running from the bank to the top "handrail" of the bridge.

We'd been debating whether to go back on the "new" track. We would not go across the bridge, I didn't fancy scrambling up the bank, and Mary wanted to keep her feet dry. We ended up going back along the Totara Creek track, which was even prettier this morning with the sun shining. Funny thing was though, it was still raining on and off. For a change, we headed to Pig Flat (very sunny), and down the Mountain House track to the Atiwakatu Valley. This is a really good way to return, all the downhill is done before a lovely walk along a very easy track. At Donnelly's

Flat there were buttercups galore. Just before we reached the car, the rain hosed down. We headed to a substantial shelter where Ken boiled a brew for us all.

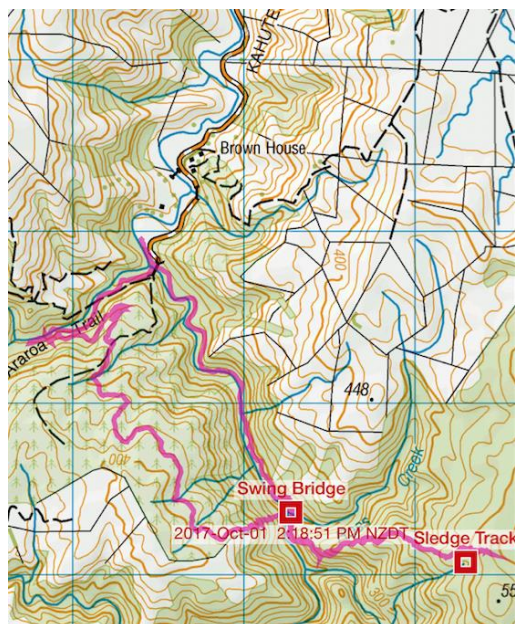
It was a really good weekend that we all enjoyed. Many thanks to Ken and Mary. We were: Ken, Mary, Nicola

## Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November: A Tale of Two Bridges, Much; Mud, Wind, Rain and Sun

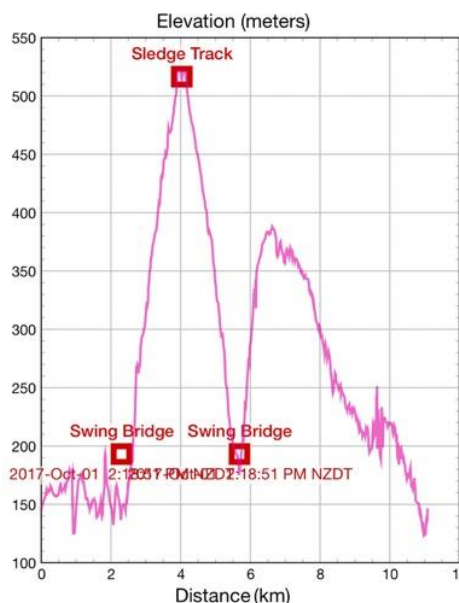
Report and trip leader: Jill Faulkner

Photos: William & Raewyn

A group of 29 hardy Wednesday Trampers (plus 3 late comers) met at the Sledge Track road end to contemplate what the day would bring. Would the weather hold? It looked promising and the Trip Leader kindly promised no mud. So duly heartened, various groups made off to tackle the mountain and to use up to 2500 kcal.



*Tramp via the two bridges*



*The profile for William's tramp (not an ECG)*



*Mud, Glorious Mud!*



*Leisurely lunch at the swing bridge*



*Peter, why do we do this?*

It looked a bit like Brown's cows as most groups wandered with a purpose, to find new tracks to explore. The birds were singing, the river roaring and the wind was bitter only some of the time. Hail made a brief announcement but the sun weakly shone most of the day.

The adventurous trail blazers were quite surprised to find..... mud. Really? The trip leader and her trusty companion, made the best decision by going clockwise round the track, crossing the new upper bridge and returning along the river edge in pleasant surroundings.

Everyone seemed to enjoy their particular walking option and returned to the cars happy to be out and about. We then departed to the Rendezvous Cafe where the day was discussed including thoughts about how deep the mud was!

Thanks to van driver Chris, drivers Bob, Bernard, Rita, Raewyn, Linda and Russell and trip leader Jill Faulkner.



## Contact Details

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### Committee 2015 - 2016

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Mini-Bus Manager	Ken Mercer		06 356 7497

**General Committee:** Bob Hodgson, Howard Nicholson, Linda Campbell, Karen Tutt, William Laing

### Appointees

Lodge Bookings	Hugh & Liz Wilde	<a href="mailto:lodge.bookings@mtsc.org.nz">lodge.bookings@mtsc.org.nz</a>	06 356 9450
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Facebook	Ivan Rienks, Karen Tutt, Howard Nicholson	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/MTandSC">facebook@mtsc.org.nz</a>	

### 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](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 **InspireNet**, 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 0220353 00.

	Members	Guests
<b>Adult</b>	<b>\$36</b>	<b>\$51</b>
<b>Secondary School</b>	<b>\$29</b>	<b>\$44</b>
<b>Primary School</b>	<b>\$24</b>	<b>\$39</b>
<b>Pre-school (3-5 yo)</b>	<b>\$11</b>	<b>\$11</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 tent fly (in the passenger door) and a Personal Locator Beacon (in the glove box) are available for use free of charge on trips.