

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 5: June 2018

CLUB MEETINGS

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

Tuesday 5th June: Riparian Plantings



Protecting waterways and a great habitat for birds – what’s not to like!

Tuesday 3rd July: Skiing in Japan

We’re quite lucky living in Palmerston North with our ski mountain an easy drive away and relaxed on-mountain accommodation in our lodge. However, skiers can be fussy and Ruapehu isn’t known for dry powder snow, particularly in our summer. This Club night will feature the Rawlins Studio video of a group of 9 MTSC members getting a powder fix in Japan.



REPORTS AND NOTICES



MTSC President: John Beech

president@mtsc.org.nz

Hi all, I hope you have all had an enjoyable time out there in the outdoors over the last month. Winter is almost upon us but the weather is still very warm, ideal for getting out and about.

I had the pleasure of walking the St James in the Canterbury high country over the school holidays. The weather was sunny for the majority of the time with only one morning cloudy with a cool breeze. For those of you that have not been there, it is an easy 4 day tramp through 3 stunning valleys surrounded by snow speckled peaks. That plus the wild horses at Christopher hut made for a scenic experience par excellence that our Duke of Edinburgh students enjoyed.

This brings me to a topic that is dear to my heart but one that has had me perplexed since my time in teaching. How do we encourage our young people to join clubs? We know they are out there in the outdoors but most do not belong to clubs. Is it that they don't do clubs anymore? Or is it changes in young people's activities? Are they not interested in hanging out with older people, are we not welcoming, or is it that the club system is not what they want? After all, the club format has remained relatively unchanged for many years.

Obviously, being a teacher, I have a passion for our teenagers, however I know that there are likely to be a few out there who couldn't think of anything worse than arriving at a hut full of teenagers. Our experience on the St James saw us mixing with a number of other groups and the kids and the other parties all enjoyed each other's company. Of course not all groups are supervised and well behaved but then I have seen many older groups whose behaviour and hut etiquette left much to be desired.

I have no answers to the above questions even though I have racked my brains over the years trying to think of ways to encourage them in. I like to think that by taking the younger ones into the hills, they will learn how to be self-sufficient, how to help one another, work as a team and behave appropriately whilst interacting with strangers. All without the need for constant screens and Facebook interactions etc. What I have found is that most of the kids I have taken bush have thoroughly enjoyed their time, and have gained an appreciation for the outdoors. Yes they can be messy and sometimes noisy, but they certainly energise you, and they are our future club members - hopefully.

I encourage all of us to take the time to engage with the next group of rowdy teenagers we come across in the hills or ski slopes.

By the time you read this the club will have a new president (Rob Pringle). I would like to thank you all for putting up with my ramblings over the past three years in the newsletter. I have enjoyed my time as your president and I wish my successor and the new committee well. I would also like to thank the committee that I have had the pleasure of working with over my tenure as you have made my job relatively easy.

Hope to catch you in the hills sometime. *John*



First Tracks – MTSC Ski Captain: Howard Nicholson

027 294 1941

There is snow on the mountain. OK, it is a small pile of machine-made snow sitting in Happy Valley waiting for a bit of pushing and shoving, but it's there and I have seen it. Time to scrape off the summer wax and ensure your gear is ready for the Winter.

The Lodge Food Carry is coming up on 22-24 June 2018 (see the trip preview elsewhere in this newsletter), which signals the start (hopefully) of the snow season. Make your lodge bookings early to ensure you have a comfortable place to stay at the time you want it and get the best value on the mountain. See you up there.

Dome Shelter no longer exists

This structure has now been removed so don't venture up to the top of Ruapehu and expect to find a shelter.

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/news/media-releases/2018/dome-shed-to-be-removed-from-ruapehu/>

Notes from the Tararua Huts Committee Meeting

Powell-Jumbo-Atiwhakatu circuit: Powell Hut has suffered water damage and is planned to be replaced, starting December 2018. The old hut will be demolished as the new hut is being built, therefore no public hut accommodation will be available at the hut site once construction starts. Jumbo hut has been strengthened to cope with 200 km/hr winds. This is expected to extend the life of Jumbo for 3 to 5 years, by which time there will hopefully be funding to build a larger replacement. These three huts can be booked (except for Powell during replacement) by users from Labour Weekend 2018 to Easter 2019. People who do not want to book can still use the huts either utilising unbooked bunks or can sleep on the floor - hut fees still apply. Annual Hut passes can also be used.

Club hut work carried out or planned for: **Cattle Ridge**, NZDA (Wellington) have cleaned the hut and they intend to paint and put up a plaque to Tony Macklin in November 2018. **Roaring Stag**, NZDA (Wellington) has given the hut a clean-up inside and out with plans for alterations to plumbing and painting next summer. **Kapakapanui Hut**, NZDA (Kapiti) have done work on the Kapakapanui Track, and repaired a window at the hut. **Waiotauru Hut**, ARAC plan to build a new Waiotauru Hut within the old hut, with steel girders along the length of the hut (DOC has still to approve this plan), hopefully this Winter/Spring. **Field Hut**, TTC is hoping to paint sometime in late spring. **Waiopehu Hut**, LWTC held a 5-day work party last Labour Weekend, with some passers by helping. **Alpha Hut**, NZDA (Hutt Valley) have signed up to be the custodian for Alpha Hut.

Issues with trees around huts: Arete Forks Hut (ex NZFS) the trees that have grown up since the hut was built (1960s) now breach DOC's safety requirements of at least a 10m cleared area around a hut. Cone Hut (TTC) has massive trees around the hut.

Tararua Forest Park leg of the Te Araroa Trail: Te Araroa have decided shorten the time to Te Matawai hut by using the Gable End Ridge track from the Ohau River instead of going through Waiopehu Hut. Dracophyllum Biv (2 bunk) is getting a lot of use with concerns about muddy tracks, dampness of the biv and overcrowding. Nichols Hut (6 bunks) needs more tent sites.

The Paekakariki Escarpment track continues to be popular, with some 30,000 people walking it in the first year.

FOR SALE

Macpac Cascade Pack,

A 70L pack with a quantum adjustable frame.

A classic tramping pack, in great condition, hardly used.

\$200

Contact Dennis on 0274-371-021 or dennis.d@inspire.net.nz



We welcome Sam & Megan Dixon and family, Chris & Liz Ricketts and family, Joanna & Kane Rogers and family and Melissa Blackwood to the club.



June Wednesday Tramps			June Thursday Tramps		
6	Bob Hodgson	356 2915	7	Craig Ross	355 3445
13	Jill Faulkner	323 6094	14	Nigel & Jill Spencer	329 8738
20	Anne West	357 5716	21	Norman Cooper	357 5531
27	Christine Finnigan	329 7822	28	Peter Wilson	357 2403
June Weekend Trips					
2 - 4	Rangitoto Range – Queens B'day	Easy/Medium	Mark Learmonth	355 9143	
9 - 10	Orongorongo Valley Atiwhakatu Hut	Easy	John Beech	354 9310	
9 - 10	Putaputa Stream Hut, Karariki	Fit	David Harrington	021 240 9056	

Sun 17	Baber – Dick Creek Loop	Medium	Garry Grayson	027 269 5934
Sun 17	Manawatu Gorge	Easy/Medium	Linda Campbell	027 333 4493
23 - 24	Cattle Ridge Hut	Medium	Dave Mitchell	329 2803
23 - 24	Lodge Food Carry Work Party	All	Howard Nicholson	027 294 1941
30 - 1	Cow Creek Hut	Medium	Garry Grayson	027 269 5934

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 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.

Please Note: Swap of dates for the following weekend trips in June, dates are now

- 9th – 10th June: Putaputa Stream hut – Kakariki David Harrington
- 17th June: Baber – Dick Creek Loop (or maybe Burns Loop) Garry Grayson

2nd – 4th June: Rangitoto Range

Mark Learmonth **Easy/Medium** **355 9143**

If you want to explore somewhere a little different, why not come to the Rangitoto Range? It is in the Pureora Forest Park; the main peaks are Ranginui (978m), Mt Baldy (855m) and Rangitoto (873m). It has the headwaters of the Waipa, Puniu and Mokau Rivers while the streams on the Eastern slopes drain into the Waikato River. The plan is to base ourselves at an easy access point and explore the area with day trips.

9th – 10th June: ~~Orongorongo Valley~~ Atiwhakatu Hut

John Beech **Easy** **354 9310** beech1960@icloud.com

The Orongorongo trip is going to be changed to Atiwhakatu hut as I cannot get any accommodation in the Orongorongo valley on that weekend. The trip involves an easy walk from the Holdsworth road end meandering along the Atiwhakatu river to the hut. Stay the night there and if any are keen, we can tramp up to Mountain house and back via Gentle Annie track on Sunday.

9th – 10th June: Putaputa Stream hut – Kakariki;

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

Starting from the Kaitoke Regional Park, we'll follow the Swing bridge Track westwards to the second swing bridge, then head north up and along the bush ridge to spot 641 before heading down the spur to the A frame shelter. Crossing the Putaputa Stream, it's then up to point Kakariki and along the track north to the Putaputa Stream to camp. Sunday, if the river level is ok, we'll return to Kakariki and continue along the ridge / spur south to the Hutt River, cross and return via Ridge Track to start. If the river is not ok, we'll return via the ridge between Putaputa and Kerekere catchments.

Sunday 17th June: Baber/Dick Creeks Loop

Garry Grayson **Medium** **027 269 5934**

This tramp is mostly off track requiring wet feet and a bit of navigation. Starting with a drive to the Mangahao #1 Top Dam, we'll park our vehicle, walk across the dam and follow the track leading to College Creek and the Burn Hut circuit. After jumping off this track at some point along the way to College Creek, it's then a wander up Baber Creek to reach a saddle leading over into the Dick Creek headwaters. Continuing on down Dick Creek we should meet up with the Mangahao Flats Track and return to the car via track and/or river.

Sunday 17th June: Manawatu Gorge

Linda Campbell **Easy/Medium** **027 333 4493** lindammc@xtra.co.nz

The plan is to walk the beautiful Manawatu Track starting from the Ashhurst end, to have lunch at the Balance end then walk back through to the car.

23rd – 24th June: Cattle Ridge Hut

Dave Mitchell **Medium** **329 2803**

A fabulous Winter destination as it can be reached in all weathers. Used to be a bit of a dive but has had a complete makeover. Come and check out how it looks now.

23rd – 24th June: Lodge Food Carry Work PARTY

Howard Nicholson **ALL** **027 294 1941**

The lodge at Mt Ruapehu will be stocked with food in preparation for the upcoming Winter season of skiing, riding, climbing and sliding. This involves carrying the food from the Top 'o the Bruce Road to the lodge, and usually takes

just a few hours to complete. Load bearers, inventorialists, stackers and scone makers are all welcome. There are some general cleaning and maintenance jobs to be done also, but there will be time for a bit of play as well. Transport from Manawatu will be by club minibus (Friday night) and private cars. Travelers from other locations may be able to car pool. Please let me know ASAP if you are coming along; maybe we can arrange transport with others from your region. Enjoy some pre-season mountain delights before heading home. All welcome!

30th June/1st July: Cow Creek Hut

Garry Grayson

Medium

027 269 5934

A classic 'weekender' to a cosy little hut on the upper reaches of the Waingawa River (Eastern Tararua's). No river travel or navigation required and it can be made in pretty much any conditions the 'Weather Gods' wish to throw at us. Beginning at Kiriwhakapapa Road end, it's a steady 600m (ish) climb, then a small detour to Blue Range Hut and lunch stop. Backtracking slightly to the main track again, we'll continue on to eventually reach the impressive Waingawa River swing bridge and Cow Creek Hut nearby. A return trip via the same route is the intention for Sunday, however if there are adventurous factions among us, there could be an option to travel down the Waingawa River Track a short distance, cross the river at some point and make an uphill 'bash' towards Point 910 or Te Mara area and meet up with the main track.



Thursday 12th April: Fern Walk and Totara Reserve

Report: John Thornley

Photo: John Brock

Following the early wintry storm that hit our country April 8 to 11 we chose to play it safe, and take local trips. The sun shone on sixteen of us through Fern Walk to lunch by the Manawatu River in Totara Reserve. We appreciated the recent installation of signposts for the variety of ferns in Fern Walk and gazed in awe at the ancient Rimu, Rata and Totara. We were home by 2 pm, just as the rain clouds descended on the city. Sometimes, you get a lucky 'window of opportunity'.



Lunch by the Pohangina River

Saturday 14th April: Waihohonu Loop

Report: Adam Matich

Photo: Adam Matich

Fortunately it was a cool overcast day as we had a long way to go. We steamed past Waihohonu Hut (1¼ hr) and continued on towards Tama Lakes for another 45min before stopping for lunch. Fifteen minutes after lunch saw us directly south of Lower Tama Lake, from where we skirted around the eastern side of both lakes. We dropped down to Upper Tama Lake and walked along the beach for a short while, but soon found the route was problematic. So we climbed back up to do a steep sidle around to the small saddle on the NE side of the Lake. None of this was difficult, although it was a bit misty and so there wasn't much to see. As per usual, the small lake beyond the saddle was almost non-existent.

Thereafter, we circled north around pt 1562 and followed the valley down to Waihohonu Springs, which is where we sidled up through some not very difficult scrub onto the ridge, to the South, and continued along it until we reached the Waihohonu - Oturere Track.



Heading around the Tama Lakes



Waihohonu Springs

We met a couple of unlucky hunters up on the ridge; it was the other hunting party that scored an animal. When we got back to Waihohonu Hut (4 hrs) they were boiling up the head in a big pot as they wanted to keep the antlers for a trophy. Eventually, we made it back to the desert road as it was getting dark (8½ hr day) and we were rather sore-footed after having pounded over a distance around 27 km; not something that could be managed for many days in a row.



The super flash Waihohonu Hut



The colour co-ordinated team

We were David and Deb Harrington, Fiona Bruin, Julia Mackie, Adam Matich, Jean Garman, and Jenny McCarthy.

Wednesday 25th April: Makahika to Mangahao or Mangahao to Makahika

Report: Bob Hodgson

Photos: William and Maureen

Wednesday April 25th was a fine autumn day; ideal for tramping. At 11am or thereabouts a high resolution reconnaissance satellite monitoring the Te Araroa trail would have noted two ant-like columns moving towards each other and converging on the Horowhenua lookout. At high resolution, a party of 12, known as The Faster Group, would have been counted tramping from Makahika in the South and a party of 8 would have been detected tramping towards them from the Mangahao valley in the North. This was the self-named Relax Group. The two parties met about 20 minutes south of the Lookout where greetings and car keys were exchanged. The Relax group completed the 14km tramp in just over 7 hours, nicely within the DOC advisory time of 7 to 8 hours. At less than 5 hours, the Faster group were even faster! All emerged safely after what was a vintage tramp. A third group of four also did an in-out tramp from the South.



Stepping out boldly from Makahika



High/Happy trampers



A fungus to carry fire with!

The bush was in fine condition, especially the northern reaches. Parts of the track were very muddy leading to speculation that this was, in part, due to the ever-increasing through traffic on the Te Araroa Trail. The distance covered was about 14km and the calories consumed 3279kcal. All ants were reported to have safely completed their trails! Thanks to Trip Leader Bev, Southern Contingent Leader Leonie and our numerous drivers Bev, Chris, Christine, Bob and Rod.



Lunch and a Welcome Respite at the View Point



The Track is a Bit of a Scramble in Places

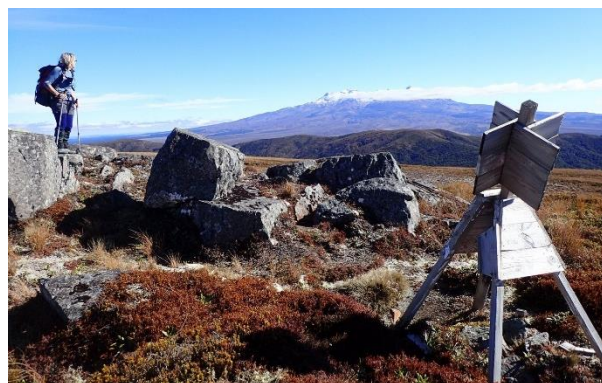
Wednesday 25th April: Castle Rocks

Report: Pak Lam Yu

Photos: Pak and Adam

Total ascent and descent 1400 m; max height 1450 m. It was the first time for all of us to do this tramp. The weather was fantastic and the scenery spectacular (I have taken more panoramic shots than any other one-day trip).

It took three hours of drive from Palmy to the Southern Kaimanawa Poled Route access (1050m, opposite the Tukino Ski Field access road) on the Desert Road. We drove a little further along a bumpy track, but after forty meters or so the going was just too tough, Garry turned (wisely) the car (a Suzuki SX4 Cross) around and parked safely near the entrance. Up the track, we saw three huge Utes with big cargo bays (enough to hold a quad bike, which turned out to be the case!). From there we followed the trail markers through dense shrubs up the first climb to 1350 m. The cloud covering Ruapehu, Ngauruhoe and Tongariro started to clear and we enjoyed the expansive view. To the right of the trail, there were many danger-warning signs from the NZ Defence Force. Obviously this is the boundary line, crossing it will mean the risk of "Live firing may occur at any time". On the way up, two hunters drove down the track on a quadbike; they were hunting for deer.



Enjoying a lovely sunny day up at the castle rocks

From the top, we descended into tussock grassland which led to a gully of beech forest. The change of scenery was breath taking: from open alpine tussock to thick green forest. The soft forest track was nice to walk on; we came across fallen trees covered with green moss, little trees (Bonzai) and mushrooms. Out of the forest, we walked over peat bog and did the last 250 m climb to reach our destination. The sun was shining and we could see a great distance. Castle Rock (1450 m) gave us a grand 360-degree view of the forest park, and was a great spot for having lunch. The rock formation is of a metamorphic schist composition dating back possibly 175 million years and once lying on the ocean floor.



Looking towards Ruapehu

On the return, we came across two more hunters on foot with a hunting dog (a black and white Foxhound?). They were planning to hunt for several days. Most likely, they will take water that flows down the gully inside the beech forest. This is an interesting trip, combing great scenery with flora and fauna. As we drove along the Desert Road towards Waiouru, I reminded myself that the Kaimanawa Forest Park has a lot to offer as it sits just across the popular Tongariro National Park.

Trip members: Jenny McCarthy (trip organiser), Adam Matich, Garry Grayson, Pak Lam Yu

Thursday 26th April: Mitre Flats Hut

Report: Chris Mercer

Photos: Chris Mercer

Driving South towards Masterton we could see the clear tops of the Tararua Range under a blue sky and a few of us kicked ourselves for not making the trip an overnighiter. We were headed for Mitre Flats Hut and could easily have stayed the night and climbed to Mitre Peak the day after – my past summit attempts have been thwarted by the wind. There were 20 of us setting off on a there-and-back tramp, one the Thursday group has not done for a few years. After 20 mins of farm land with its views of the impressive Waingawa River, we entered the bush. We believe this area has never been logged and there were some lovely big podocarp trees; the lancewoods were numerous. Species palatable to deer were easily found indicating successful control of deer and possums in this valley just outside the Project Kaka zone – I didn't see a deer footprint all day. The track follows the Waingawa River but well above the water; after about 3 hours, 15 of us descended to the bridge and achieved the hut 3.25 hours from the carpark. The bridge crosses the river just above its confluence with the South Mitre Stream so from the middle of the bridge we had fine views upstream and down. Lunch was a glorious chill-out in the sun at a fine hut.



Farmland



Bush



and River

It was a longer day than usual but a good work out and a lovely destination. We didn't stop for ice creams but had time to look over our shoulders at the tops and to think what a rewarding overnighiter we might have had.

Wednesday 2nd May: Ross Peak

Report: William Laing

Photos: William Laing

The target for the tramp today led by Chris was Ross Peak, involving a steep climb over pasture then bush and finally leatherwood. We 15 trampers assembled at the last stile, build by Chris, a great improvement over his portable stile used previously.



Over the stile



and up the hill



while being watched

Stiles, and single person bridges, slow the party down so we waited at this last stile for everybody to gather and then started up the steep paddocks to climb about 350m vertically to the bush line. On the way up, we were watched by an inquisitive mother and child who Chris reported had been on station for several weeks, becoming more friendly

each time. The weather was mostly sunny with some cloud and wind, but cool. That was good for this demanding climb.

At the top before the bush we had morning tea along a sheltered log although Chris and two others had stopped about 100 (horizontal meters) further on and waited there to ensure that everyone entered the bush and found their way to the established track. The track is a bit ambiguous at the start of the bush, but soon improves and becomes clear. Chris has worked hard on the track and improved it considerably.



Time for a break in the sunshine



The Trig achieved



Misty view of Wharite

Then the party set off through the bush and leatherwood to the top. Not too muddy, but a relatively rough track with fallen logs and slippery sections. Finally the top came into sight. Six people then finally reached the Trig and admired the rather misty view South to Wharite. The rest had lunch near the top and returned. This tramp was a great success, enjoyed by all and the bush was beautiful

Thanks to the drivers (Bob, Rod and Bernard) and to the trip leader Chris

Thursday 3rd May: Castle Rocks, Kaimanawa Range

Report: Chris Mercer

Photos: Chris Mercer

Thursday group has had a series of fine Thursdays and the 3rd May was another blue-sky day. The Castle Rocks tramp car park is 500 m north of the Tukino ski field access road from where a 4WD track leads up to a poled route off to the right and then a short steady climb to a high point at 1261m ASL where we had a snack. We had spectacular views of the volcanoes from the steam plume of the Tangiwai pulp mill to the SW, right up to Lake Taupo. More special for me was being able to see to the East across the high tussock of the Kaimanawa Range to Ngamatea Station and the head waters of the Rangitikei and Ngaruroro rivers. I hope to tramp in there one day.



Climbing up to the Rocks



Destination achieved

From here, we followed the tracks on the northern boundary of the NZ Defence Force to the Castle Rocks. We could hear the army banging away on their range, both the 25-mm canon and the 7.62-mm machine guns. We took a little over two hours to reach the Castle Rocks; a spectacular place for lunch. The botanists enjoyed naming the berry plants around us. This is the "Volcanic Plateau" and we saw pumice and charcoal, but the Castle Rocks are actually schist from the ocean floor. We returned the same way noting that the atmosphere was a little more hazy giving another angle to our mountain photographs. Great day out and home in time for dinner.

5th – 6th May: Upper Matakuhia Hut

Report: Nicola Wallace

Photos: Nicola Wallace & Adam Matich

After a long drive, near Tarawera on the Napier-Taupo road, we turned off to the right and headed up a sealed but very potholed road that time seemed to have forgot. A faded dotted line up the middle told of its importance in times past. From there we progressed to unsealed but very good forestry roads which took us North. Adam was navigating from the map on his phone, but these roads weren't well detailed on the map, and after a wrong turn or two, we reached our road end just after noon. Two other vehicles were present, and we thought we'd likely have company at the hut.

Our nearly 3 hour walk, which headed South, took us gradually downhill through beautiful lush beech forest on a well-defined and maintained track that led us to the Matakuhia Stream for lunch. A large log over the river had steps cut into it, and was covered with netting, an alternative route if the stream was up. Adam found a full bottle of bright green energy drink sitting in the stream, after examining it he decided it had been placed there deliberately, so with good judgement he replaced it, and fed and watered we carried on.

The track followed the stream now, and there was a huge amount of storm damage – fallen trees lying like bridges over the river, and in places the bush was a mass of tangled branches. Our track was not affected by any of this, clearly someone loved it and looked after it. Shortly after lunch we met this man – Ron Davis, and his friend William, who were heading out. Ron, the owner of the green drink, was very chatty, and told us he comes into the hut every couple of weeks, and looks after the hut and track. He and Willy had spent the previous night at the hut, and he spoke of rats at the hut and Whio in the river (seen if one went looking at dusk). The storm damage was from the winter of 2016, and I wouldn't mind betting that there was some from the snowy 2017 winter also.



On track



Resting by a tree-bridge

The track was cut into the side of the true left bank, and while it was mostly very good, there were a couple of dodgy bits where the narrow track threatened to give way. Branches were placed over side streams as bridges, but as they were wet, I mostly didn't use them. I thought I heard Whio, but didn't see them. We all made it safe and sound to the hut after 3pm, Adam a bit sooner than the rest of us. Upper Matakuhia is a character 8 bunk hut, well stocked with Ron's food, a good selection of cookware, and a 4-burner stove that runs from a 9kg gas bottle (we didn't use the burner). There were also mattresses (some old, some newer ones supplied by DOC). A wooden rat trap lay set under the benches.

As the day ended, I went outside a few times, but couldn't hear or see any Whio. We all had tea, and gradually the world got ready for bed, it was so incredibly quiet outside, not a breath of wind. But something else was just coming to life.....

The gnawing of rats started soon after we retired to the comfort of bed. They weren't in the hut, but were either in the wood porch, or in the wall. Mark was closest to the noise. Thankfully, the gnawing was not continuous, they would take a break to rest their jaws, then return to gnaw again. In the early hours I got a good long stint of sleep, thanks to earplugs. Thankfully Adam, Dave and Mark were not snorers.

Rain was falling the next morning, but it stopped when we left the hut at 8am. I couldn't keep my coat on for very long anyway, as it was a very warm, humid day. I was extra careful today, as everything was very wet and slippery. Most amazing today was the song of robins all along the track; I had only heard a few the previous day. This felt like



Upper Matakuhia – loads of character!

a special place, you could feel that few people come in here. As we climbed the hill from yesterday's lunch spot, we headed up into mist. This last part of the track seemed long, even though it was very beautiful, and I didn't feel tired. It was raining lightly at the car, and by the time we reached the Napier-Taupo Road, the sun shone.

We had lunch in Taradale, and were back in Palmy at about 3pm. The driving time each way was 5 hours, and the walking time 3 hours, but if you want to go to special places, sometimes the long drives are necessary. Many thanks to Mark for all the driving, and the others for their good company.

We were: Mark Learmonth (trip leader), Adam Matich, Dave Mitchell and Nicola Wallace

Sunday 6th May: Rae Ridge

Report: Garry Grayson

Photos: Garry and Jean

As usual for a Tararua trip, it was a last minute waiting game to see if weather conditions turned out as forecast, and fortunately they were not entirely accurate. The predicted rain was brief and so the trip was a 'goer'.

After a 7:30am pickup of J & J from Jeans place we drove to Otaki Forks overnight carpark, not the far campground as planned, this after consensus was reached on NOT getting wet feet so early in the morning. Rae Ridge was therefore going to be tackled 'downwards' meaning a dry walk over the Waiotauru via the swing bridge and off up on a steady climb to Field Hut and beyond to the Dennan turnoff down Rae.

Enroute a group of 10 including adults and smallish children who had spent the night at Field Hut wandered past while we were taking a short smoko stop, and after observing the very slowish/small child pace we joked that given their speed we may beat them down via our Rae Ridge route (wrong prediction!).



Historic Fields Hut



Checking the map and heading off down Rae Ridge

After a brief stop at Field so Jean could sweep the floor, and push all the hut ticket butts back down into the holder which were hanging out, due to overflowing quantities apparently not being regularly collected by DOC, we continued up via Table Top to Dennan.

By 12:15 we had started down Rae Ridge which had evidence of a slightly worn route, albeit possibly animal track, in most places all the way down, quite straight forward above the bush line. I should point out that we had decided to use map and compass navigation for this route, although GPS Phone apps were always a temptation, and in fact became very useful near the broad bottom sections of the ridge.

Upon reaching the bush line, a short lunch stop was taken then real navigation started. Shortly after continuing on, we spotted the first of many types of track markers which included old white strips, blazes on trees, various coloured tape and sticking plasters.

Navigation became harder as we got further down and this was mainly due to many large windfalls requiring deviation off route and around resulting in position relocation and in some cases backtracking to last known position. Markers were sparse in this area, however, our combined 'team' effort of position location and eventual tape marker spotting slowly got us down the hill and on to what appeared to be old logging tracks, although pretty overgrown now. With time 'ticking away', it became a possibility that headlamps may be needed for the remainder of the lower section where an exit from the ridge near Sheridan Creek was our goal.

Near the bottom where the ridge was very broad, my friendly GPS App was required to guide us on a course directly to drop off the ridge exactly where we wanted at Waiotauru – Sheridan Creek confluence.

After crossing the Waiotauru River, the next trick was to find the Waiotauru Track on the other bank, which proved a little elusive in the dark. After we eventually located it, we had a wander back to the campground and up the road back to our vehicle by 6:45pm.

Another slightly long Med/Fit day of 10hrs but had we decided to go the opposite way and 'up' Rae I think times would have been a lot quicker due to route finding uphill is always easier.

This was a great example of 'Team' involvement with navigation and spotting and really worked well in this situation to produce good result.

Our 'team' members were Jenny, Jean and Garry.



Contact Details

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Committee 2018 - 2019

President	Rob Pringle	president@mtsc.org.nz	027 426 2176
Secretary	Tim Swale	secretary@mtsc.org.nz	06 376 6556
Treasurer	Arthur Flint	treasurer@mtsc.org.nz	06 356 7654
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Lodge Manager	John Lyttle	lodge.manager@mtsc.org.nz	027 433 6307
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General Committee: Bob Hodgson, Howard Nicholson, Linda Campbell, Karen Tutt, William Laing, John Beech

Appointees

Lodge Bookings	Hugh & Liz Wilde	lodge.bookings@mtsc.org.nz	06 356 9450
Gear Custodian	Peter Rawlins	gear@mtsc.org.nz	06 356 7443
Ski Captain	Howard Nicholson	ski@mtsc.org.nz	06 357 6325
Social Convenor	Bob Hodgson	social@mtsc.org.nz	06 356 2915
Wednesday Trips	Bev Akers	bevakers@xtra.co.nz	06 325 8879
Thursday Trips	Merv Matthews	merv6817@gmail.com	06 357 2858
Facebook	Ivan Rienks, Karen Tutt, Howard Nicholson	facebook@mtsc.org.nz	

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

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 021 054 2560. 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	\$37	\$52
Secondary School	\$30	\$45
Primary School	\$25	\$40

Pre-school (3-5 yo)

\$12

\$12

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.