

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 April 2019

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 2nd April, 2019: Introducing High School Students to Tramping by John Beech

Taking high school students into the mountains can be an extremely rewarding activity. It is where they often step up and demonstrate incredible resilience and stamina. Students love the camaraderie of each other plus enjoy the camping or staying in hut experience. Of course, there are some that struggle from time to time but most agree that spending time in the bush is a valuable experience that stretches them and provides a sense of accomplishment.



Tuesday 7th May, 2019: The Timber Trail, Pureora Forest by Ken & Mary Mercer

The Timber Trail is an 84 km track which skirts Mt Pureora, NW of Lake Taupo. Te Araroa walkers typically take four day while cyclists can do it comfortably in two. The track passes through very beautiful bush, along historic tramways and over many spectacular swing bridges.

Tuesday 21st May, 2019: Annual General Meeting 7.30 pm Rose City Club Rooms, 50 Park Rd, PN
The MTSC is your club so do come along!

REPORTS AND NOTICES

MTSC President: Rob Pringle

president@mtsc.org.nz



As the summer draws to a close and the autumn leaves start to fall, I'm reflecting on how many trips I wanted to do this summer versus how many I actually did. The ledger usually unbalances itself to the side of all the trips I meant to take and didn't, and this summer is no exception – life tends to take over, and many of us have been busy with the lodge renovations.

However there's one very special trip I did manage to make: taking my three kids on their first ever overnight tramp. Those of you who are parents will understand the trepidation with which I approached the task of introducing my kids to

the joy of tramping. But I'm pleased to report it all went far better than I could have imagined when I took Xander (9), Isaac (6) and Charlotte (5) into Alice Nash Memorial Heritage Lodge in the Ruahines.

Some of the things I learnt?

Firstly, kids are far more resilient and tenacious than we adults tend to think they are. It's just a 45-minute walk for short legs and small humans to get to Alice Nash, but I was worried it could be too far while carrying a pack and there could be tramping tears. Not to worry – they bounded back and forth along the track, only stopping to examine items of interest.

Secondly, the wilderness presents an incredible learning opportunity – education doesn't stop at 3pm on Friday when they skip out of school. We took everything as a chance to talk about the conservation estate in New Zealand (did you know one-third of our land is conservation land?), how to treat it (take only pictures, leave only footprints), and how to stay safe in the bush (always stay on the track, stay put if you get lost).

We also took the opportunity to cement the Pringle Family Treaty, which features doctrines such as 'stick together', 'find solutions to problems', 'being a leader means putting other people first', and mostly importantly, 'have fun'. Tramping lends itself well to many of these edicts.

Another important takeaway from the trip was to have plenty of excellent snacks on hand. (In particular, marshmallows work a treat for toasting after dinner.) All in all, their first overnight trip was a success and we're already planning where the next one will be.

In other news, the lodge renovations are going well and are on track to be completed to the appropriate stage by the time winter users are knocking on the door in June/July. An important milestone was reached this month when the concrete works were completed. This now leaves us with the task of piecing the lodge back together. A massive thanks to all those who've got behind the project, and special mention to John Lyttle for tirelessly championing the works. He's rallying around to encourage work party participation, organizing relevant industry experts and engaging in ongoing conversations with lodge users as to what is



important to us. I'm encouraged by the depth of support, enthusiasm, and diversity within the club, and the fact that people from all walks of life can band together to assist with a project of this magnitude. I think in John's own words, the project has been physically much more daunting than any of us ever imagined. However we've overcome adversity, and set backs to be where we are today – looking forward with fresh enthusiasm towards completing the project. Likewise the Whakapapa gondola (called Sky Waka) is on track for completion, although RAL CEO Ross Copland has warned people they won't be 'cutting the cable' to the existing Waterfall Express until the very last minute, as it's used to ferry materials and people up to Knoll Ridge. (Taking out the Waterfall Express is the point of no return for access to the lifts higher up, and the Express represents a contingency plan in the event the gondola doesn't get completed on time.) I hope your summer trips fell on the right side of the tramping ledger. Check out our trip card to see which ones you could join this autumn.

Lodge Manager: John Lyttle 027 433 6307

lodge.manager@mtsc.org.nz

Lodge Upgrade Project



The final concreting crew, tired but happy, in the basement of the lodge beside the floor extension & surrounded by polystyrene blocks full of concrete.

The concreting is finished thanks to the hard work of a small pool of dedicated volunteers. Never fear though! You can still contribute! There is plenty for additional helpers to do regardless of abilities. Three more work parties are scheduled as listed below. This is a free weekend with the club providing transport from Wellington and Palmerston North with free bed and food. Please contact me if you are interested in helping or have questions.

John Lyttle
027 433 6307

john@bcsltd.co.nz

Upcoming Lodge Work Party weekends:

23-24 March (postponed one week)

6-7 April

19-22 April, Easter



UPCOMING TRIPS

| April Wednesday Tramps | | | April Thursday Tramps | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|--------------------|------------|
| 03 | Linda Darbyshire | 354 6171 | 04 | Syd Easton | D 356 7462 |
| 10 | Bob Hodgson | 357 2915 | 11 | Richard Ellis | 357 6410 |
| 27 | Ewen Cameron | 022 034 1180 | 18 | Geraldine Fouvakis | 356 4327 |
| 24 | Bev Akers | 325 8879 | 25 | David Grant | D 328 7788 |
| April Weekend Trips | | | | | |
| 6-7 | Lodge Upgrade Work Party | All | John Lyttle | 027 433 6307 | |
| 7 (Sun) | Sayers Hut | Medium | Jenny McCarthy | 021 215 2197 | |
| 19-22 Easter | Lodge Upgrade Work Party | All | John Lyttle | 027 433 6307 | |

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.

30th-31st March: Wellington Hike and Bike

Tim Swale Easy 022 134 8384

Wellington has a vast array of walking and mountain biking opportunities. At this stage my plan is to have a day biking and a day walking but can be pretty flexible depending on who comes and what they would like to do. I am keen to spend a day exploring the Makara Peak Mountain Bike Park as there has been a lot of track development there in the last year. These are mainly intermediate (grade 3) type tracks. There are also plenty of walking options, of which a loop out to Red Rocks or a circuit around the Korokoro dam and Belmont trig are possibilities. Trainers rather than heavy tramping boots will work fine.

7th April: Sayers Hut

Jenny McCarthy Medium 021 215 2197

The route to Sayers Hut will be decided closer to the date depending on who is interested. It will either be from the Holdsworth Road or the Mangatarere Road.



TRIP REPORTS

Thursday 14th February, 2019: Tangata Maunga

Trip Leader & Reporter: Ewen Cameron

Photos: Audrey

Ten members of the Thursday trampers explored the route to Tangata Maunga starting from the road end across farmland past the Waitohu quarry (off Waitohu Valley Road at the back of Otaki). With the farmer's permission we saved about 20 minutes of walk across a farm road and commenced our tramp directly on to the "four wheel drive track" through gorse initially and then into regenerating bush. The weather was

excellent being sunny but not too hot. As we progressed up the track we took advantage of the broad track to chat and relate experiences from our festive season activities. From time to time we also had excellent views of the Otaki River and flats and of Kapiti Island. A few hundred meters past the turn off to Waitohu Lodge, after the four wheel drive track stopped, we followed a reasonably well marked route up to the Leatherwood. Once we got into the leatherwood we carefully followed the route across toward Tangata Maunga. (The track is there, but is a little overgrown, so we were careful since the track was easily lost).



Getting through the Leatherwood

Lunch was spent just past the hydrology station on a relatively open area. We did not achieve the summit, but rather enjoyed the view. Some amusement was had when a couple of us sat on a nice soft mound of moss, which contained a large ant nest. The two of us who managed this found ourselves covered in ants very rapidly. A prompt relocation was necessitated.



View from lunch spot

On our return we dropped past Waitohu hut and again appreciated the view before returning to the van in plenty of time to enjoy a little time blackberry picking and then an icecream at Shannon on our way home.

Wednesday 20th February, 2019: The Wellington City to Sea Walkway

Trip Leader: Rita

Reporter: Bob and Plots: Bob and Bev

Photos: Royce and Maureen

On Wednesday February 20th six cars delivered twenty eager souls to the Waikanae railway station. Their achieved aim was to catch the 9.01 train to Wellington it being the first of the day to offer free travel for the majority as holders of Gold Cards. Once in Wellington our first goal was the Bolton Street Memorial Park and the start of the walkway. This is how the official leaflet summarises the walk.

"The City to Sea Walkway starts in the heart of central Wellington near Parliament and ends at the south coast, 12km away in Island Bay.

Along the way, you will:

- *visit the Botanic Garden and two historic cemeteries and pass several observatories*
- *see the famous Cable Car, Victoria University and a plant nursery*

- walk through part of Aro Valley with its turn-of-the-century cottages, 14 parks and reserves, several children's play areas, and public golf course
- walk along bushy Town Belt tracks, exposed ridge tops and through native and exotic vegetation
- get spectacular views of central Wellington, the southern suburbs of Newtown, Berhampore and Island Bay, Government House, historic Erskine College, the Brooklyn wind turbine, Mount Victoria, Mount Kaukau and Cook Strait
- see the more distant views of the Tararua, Rimutaka and Kaikoura ranges.



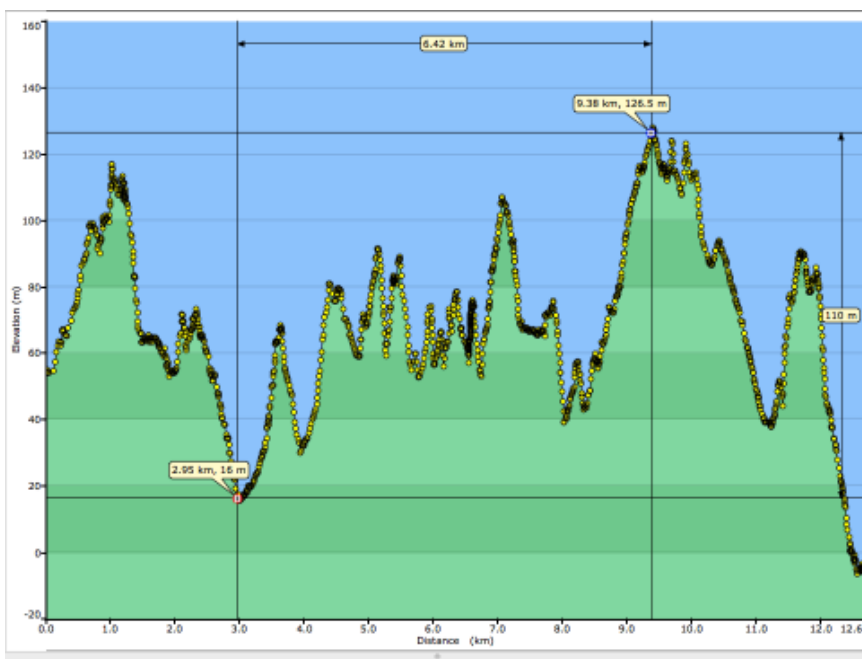
The walk takes about 6–7 hours but can be done in stages. To complete the entire walk in 1 day you will need a good level of fitness.”

Most of the party completed the full 15 km of the track in under 5 hours and by 3pm to then enjoy free travel by bus to the railway station. By some miracle, after an enjoyable day reminiscent of a high school trip, we all ended up on the same 4pm train back to Waikanae!

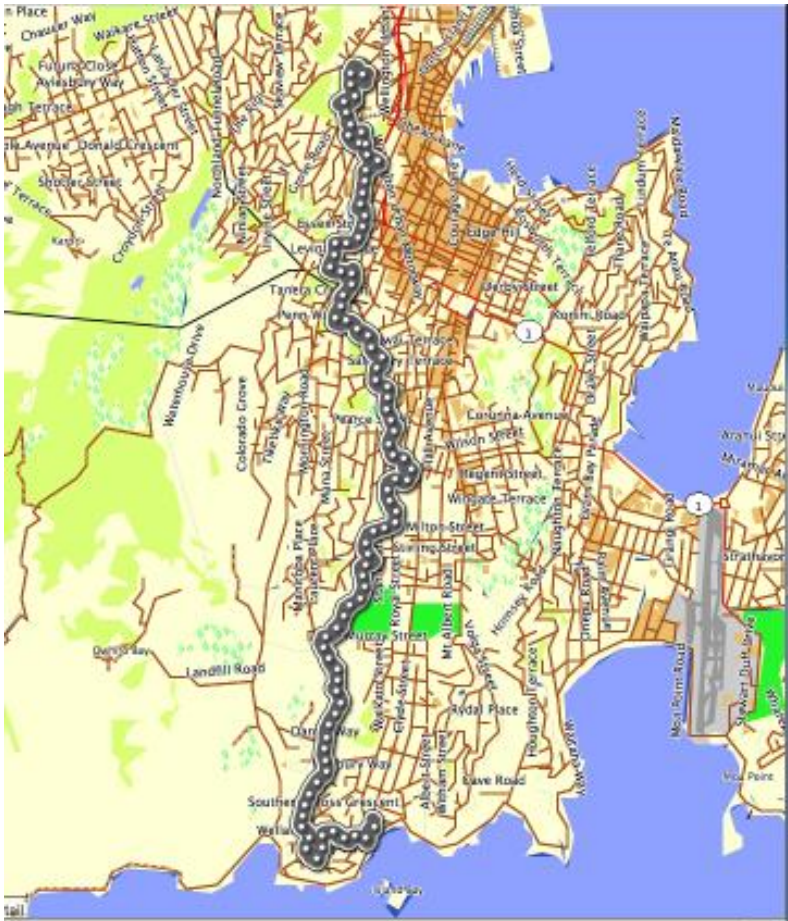
The profile below shows almost no flat sections in the ~15km walk, the total climb was 513m which compares with the Atene Skyline walkway of 14km and a climb of 787m. The City to Sea includes an astonishing number of steps to climb and ascend and we all felt the challenge to our fitness. Completed on a fine, warm day this was a tramp with a difference but no easy day out in the capital.

Thanks to our busy and caring trip leader Rita, to our six drivers and for most, to the Gold Card.

The Profile From The Bolton Street Memorial Park Onwards



From the Bolton Street Memorial Park to The Sea



Saturday 23rd February, 2019: Bushcraft- Tamaki West

Trip Leader and Reporter Tim Swale

This weekend was intended to give participants an opportunity to develop their outdoor skills and in particular, practise navigation and route-finding. Tamaki West was chosen as the venue as we often use it with Outdoor Training New Zealand for bushcraft courses and it has a good mix of bush and open tops terrain. Unfortunately the weather forecast for the weekend was dire, with gale force southerlies and huge amounts of rain. With this in mind and the fact that there were some school age students involved, the overnight fly-camp was abandoned in favour of a day trip on the Saturday.

Seven of us arrived at the campground shelter on Saturday morning with no signs of the predicted rain and spent some time discussing maps and how they can be oriented with a compass. Following some instruction in using different types of stove, we converted river water to delicious hot chocolate. This gave me time to set up a compass course to give participants practise at finding locations using a compass.

With this knowledge we set off to test it by heading off on a route that involved a mix of on and off track navigation. One section took us into the supplejack zone which was an eye-opener as to how long it can take to get through this sort of vegetation! We then headed up the Roki track to the saddle before going off-track





again to a high point on farmland (with the farmer's permission). There are long views from here over the ranges and down to Dannevirke enabling us to see very effectively how the map relates to the land.

We finished the day by heading down to the campground and practising the mutual support method to make river crossing safer. With such low water it was not much of a challenge. With still no signs of the predicted rain and wind we thought we had been duped! However, Sunday was a different story with some fairly unpleasant weather over the ranges which justified the decision to shorten the activity.

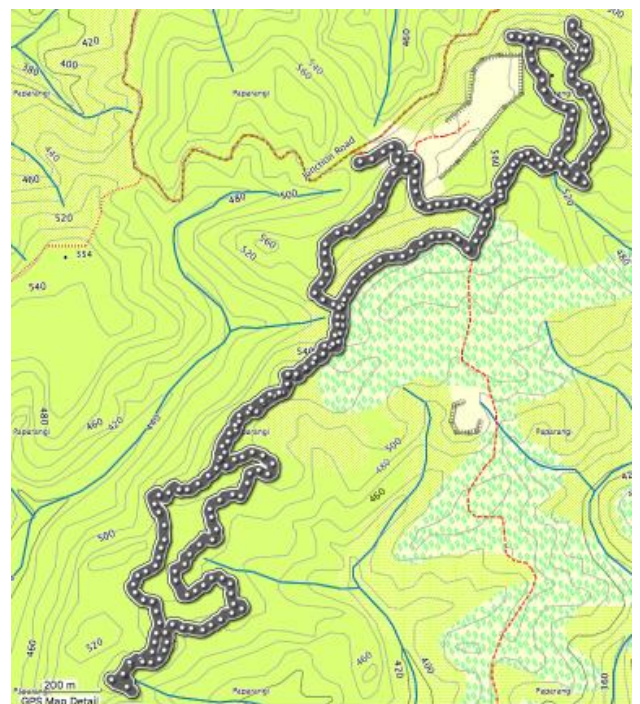
Wednesday 27th February: The Waitahinga Dam Trails

Trip Leader and Reporter: Bob

Photos and Plots: Bob, William and Bev

As a group we have been tramping these trails since shortly before their formal opening in 2013. In that time they have gained an unfortunate reputation with us because of the lousy weather we have experienced in the past; one visit coincided with a cold southerly and a rainfall of 22.8mm in nearby Whanganui. On that day, the descent from Tom's Ridge near the dam, was slippery beyond belief! Our most recent visit described here, was a pleasant exception, we enjoyed fine autumn tramping weather. Twenty two of us rendezvoused for a comfort stop and leg stretch at Virginia Lake in Whanganui prior to our drive from State highway 3 to Quarry road via Rangitatau and Junction roads.

On arrival we all tramped in to Cropper's Clearing, a popular spot for morning tea. Here we split in to two parties of approximately equal size. The first party opted to tramp across to Harry's Ridge* with its easier descent to the dam and after lunch, to tramp up the more slippery slope to Tom's Ridge* and return to the Quarry car park. Under the direction of Bev (see image to right) the second party opted to tramp all the other tracks including the Chicken run with its separate view points for Taranaki and Ruapehu. The tracks are now very well marked even being colour coded. Captured on a cell phone camera the trails map makes an effective guide. Both parties returned to the car park at about the same time for a ~3pm departure with a stop for coffee at the welcoming Pukeko's Nest cafe on state highway 3 near to Whanganui. But for a few scratches and fine bruising, all emerged safely. It was a good day of tramping under the sun screen of the bush canopy with only a single, short, light rain shower that barely dampened brows.



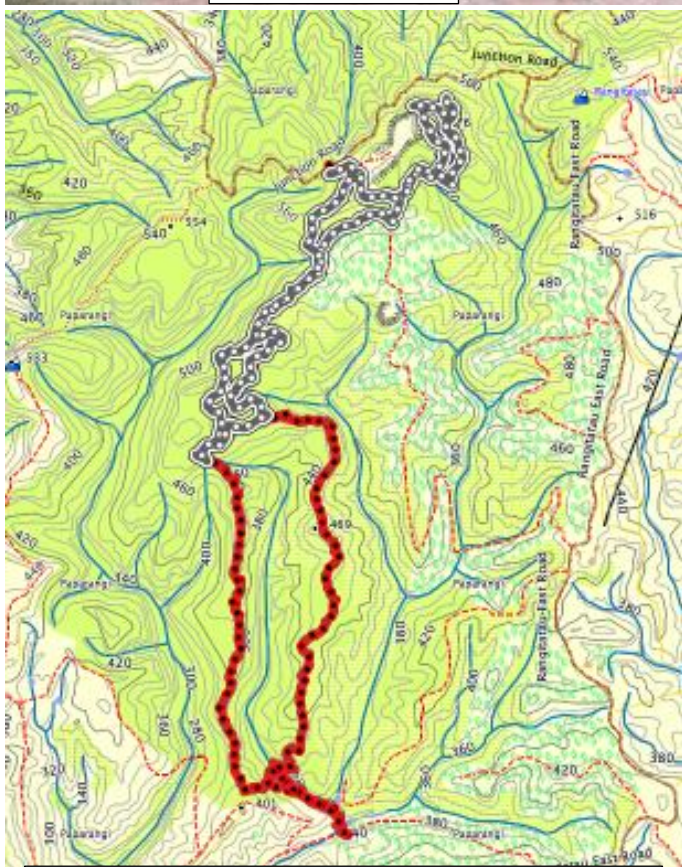
About the Trails-This area was purchased by Whanganui District Council in 1903 in what had to be a visionary plan to solve the burgeoning town's water problems. Incidentally, Virginia Lake was the original supply



Richard at the dam



Bob at Chicken Run View Point with a Small Dragon



The Chicken Run is the loop at the top of the map

subsequently augmented by Westmere lake. The Waitahinga dam was built in 1904 and its height was increased in 1926. It was decommissioned in the 1990s.

Whanganui Tramping Club approached the Council and gained permission to create and maintain these trails for public use as community project to mark the 60th anniversary of the club. Harry's ridge* and Tom's ridge* are named to commemorate stalwart club members, Harry Stimpson (1930-2011) and Tom Luff (1935-2011).

Thanks to our drivers, Chris, Bev, Marion, Coralie and Robyn.

1st-2nd March, 2019: Timber Trail

Trip Leader: Peter Rawlins

Trip Report: Ken Mercer

Photos: Lynda Hunt

The Timber Trail is an 84 km mountain track which skirts Mt Pureora, NW of lake Taupo. As part of Te Ararua it takes 4 days to walk but cyclists generally take two. Carol Walkley's tandem trailer was tightly packed with 11 bikes and John Doolan drove us up Friday evening so we made camp in the dark near the Pureora Forest HQ. The night was brilliantly clear without a breath of wind to disturb the smell from the toilet.

We woke with dew on the tents to a beautiful day. The first third of this section is a well graded 460m climb. Most of us were too lightly dressed in anticipation because it was quite cool in the forest. Later we warmed



up though. I managed to break my chain early on and was unfortunately behind everyone but was relieved to have packed my chain tool. The group was waiting at the next trail junction sending out searches and wondering what had become of me. Howie made a heroic dash to catch Rick who raced off down the road to find me about 30 seconds before I caught up. They were both quite warm by the time they got back.

The trail skirts Mt Pureora 150m below the summit then follows a ridge generally descending and great fun. The occasional climbs made for short changes of pace. There are two large swing bridges with wonderful views, both out and down, but they're easier to appreciate when stationary. After a lunch stop in a clearing we continued to the Piropiro campsite to find John relaxing under an apple tree next to the van, having spread out the tents and and dried them. Others were also on the trail including a 35 strong school group which arrived an hour later and camped at the opposite end of the clearing. We were entertained by their top riders wheelstanding across the clearing.

In the morning there was frost on the tents so we broke our fast wearing puffer jackets and hats while the sun gradually rose. After a few kms the longest bridge, 141m across the Maramataha stream, is crossed and we all warmed up climbing 150m to the ridgetop where the old tramway system terminated. From there the trail continued through hand dug



cuttings with mature punga growing in the sides, past rocky bluffs and over more bridges. From one such bridge, members of the school group dropped several large boulders into the stream bed where they either shattered or splashed spectacularly. Near the end is the spiral, an engineering feat combining a large cutting, a tunnel and a bridge.

John was waiting at 2pm when we arrived at the busy carpark. It was a great trip which I thoroughly enjoyed. Sincere thanks to Peter for his organization, Carrol for his trailer, John for driving and Stephen King who led the 1978 tree top protest which saved the forest. There will be a talk about this in an upcoming club night.



Contact Details

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

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 |
| Chief Guide | Ken Mercer | chief.guide@mtsc.org.nz | 06 356 7497 |
| Membership | Sue Nicholson | membership@mtsc.org.nz | 06 357 6325 |
| Newsletter Editor | Mary Mercer | editor@mtsc.org.nz | 021 176 0209 |
| Lodge Manager | John Lyttle | lodge.manager@mtsc.org.nz | 027 433 6307 |
| Mini-Bus Manager | Ken Mercer | minibus@mtsc.org.nz | 027 364 6475 |

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 | 021 054 2560 |
| 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 cash to 179 Cook St Palmerston North 4410 in person or internet payment (please email to confirm before depositing) Westpac account number 03 1521 022035300.

| | Members | Guests | The lodge phone number is (07) 892 3860. |
|---------------------|---------|--------|--|
| Adult | \$37 | \$52 | |
| Secondary School | \$30 | \$45 | |
| Primary School | \$25 | \$40 | |
| Pre-school (3-5 yo) | \$12 | \$12 | |

Booking the MTSC Van: For bookings: Contact Ken Mercer 027 364 6475. 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.