

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 1. February 2020



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 4th February, 2020: Navigation



It is important to know where you are and where you are heading when you are out tramping.

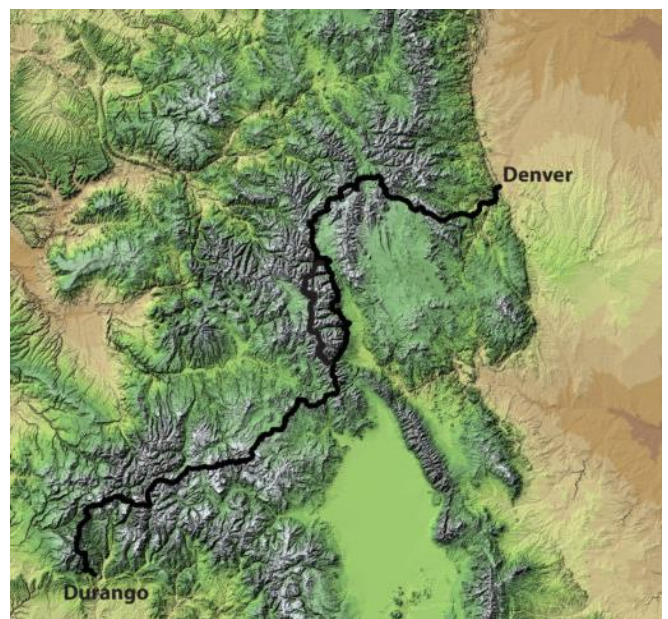
Tim Swale, club member and Outdoor Training New Zealand instructor, will share navigation tips to help you in the hills. He will cover basic map and compass skills. Maps and compasses will be provided to use on the night.

Tuesday 3rd March, 2020: Glenn on the Colorado Trail

In August of 2019 Glenn Pendergrast hiked the 800 km long Colorado Trail. From the mile high city of Denver to the town of Durango, the rugged trail travels through the Rocky Mountains with 27,000 m of climbing and an average elevation of over 3,000 m, reaching a high point at over 4,000 m. An excellent adventure.



*Orchid on Rangiwahia Track
by William Laing*



REPORTS AND NOTICES

MTSC President: Rob Pringle

president@mtsc.org.nz

Happy New Year to you all! I trust that you were able to get some well-deserved time off over the Christmas / New Year period and enjoy some of the wonderful terrain on offer.

I was fortunate enough to spend a couple of lovely weekends away camping, exploring both the Pohangina and Castlepoint regions, finally breaking the drought and catching a fish large enough to filet and eat - albeit as an appetizer - but made a welcome change from the catch and release that is normally the extent of my fishing.

While out exploring, I managed to get a quick look into the Atiwhakatu Hut over in the Holdsworth area; this hut is accessed from a well graded track which meanders its way up the river valley. With no significant altitude gains, it makes it a great trip for those with smaller humans. I was lucky enough to bump into a family from the Wellington region enjoying their first overnight trip with their 4 and 6 year olds. Despite the walk in they were still full of energy, enjoying a lovely evening dining outside. As their meal was being reheated, the younger of the two engaged in some Yoga while he waited between snacks. Great to see families with young people out and about exploring and enjoying walks in the region. The campsite at the Holdsworth road end was pleasantly busy too, with campers from many demographics, ranging from the basics to those at the upper spectrum of glamping. While there, we were amazed to see the effects of the Australian bushfire; our thoughts were turned to all those impacted as we woke to a rather sombre-looking sunrise.

If you're over that way, Castlepoint is only another hour from Masterton, offering a selection of coastal walks, great swimming, and superb views. A short walk from the beach puts you at either the lighthouse, with panoramic views back towards the settlement and out to sea, or for the little more adventurous, a 20 minute climb puts you on top of Castle Rock. From the beach the lighthouse looks like a very impressive structure. However from Castle Rock, a different impression is gained altogether. With the altitude gain and sheer drops from the top, the lighthouse is dwarfed. A great trip out despite the drizzle.



Hope to see you out there doing it as the year progresses.

Rob

Lodge Manager John Lyttle 027 43363

lodge.manager@mtsc.org.nz

We had a successful work party back in November 2019 and were able to get a lot of paint on walls and ceiling which has really tidied up the lodge.

I recently applied for funding to continue with improvements to the lodge but was declined as the amount of money I requested was greater than that available. A lesson learnt so our Lodge Sub Committee agreed that we would reapply for a reduced sum which I have now done. We will not hear about whether our recent funding application is successful until early February 2020 and, as our next work party was organised for this time, we have decided to reschedule this when we hear about our funding application. We will advertise this on the Club's website and it is likely to be mid March.

There is still lots of work to be done and we are always looking for volunteers of any skill set. Please let me know if you are keen to assist and I will send you out dates for next work parties.

John

An Addendum to PLB Use from Helen Peek

Where to Wear a PLB? – The women’s version: In the middle of the chest directly under the boobs. The PLB is worn sideways attached to a band. It’s a little like being pregnant in that the bump is conveniently tucked away out of harm’s way, allows for full use of your arms, and is comfortable enough to forget that it is there, making it easy to wear at all times.

To make a band and attach the PLB will require a little sewing, but the basic concept is that it is like the bottom of a bra made of an elastic band. The directions to make one are as follows:

A strip of elastic band:

Width: to accommodate the PLB, e.g. 30 mm or whatever.

Length: basically to go around the torso when stretched to a tightness that will take the weight of the PLB and be a comfortable to wear.

Clasp: cut the hooks and eyes off an old bra.

Sew the hooks and eyes to the ends of the elastic. Fold in half to get the centre of the front. Fold PLB pouch in half to get the centre. Align centre of both elastic and pouch and stitch pouch to elastic band. Insert PLB in pouch and Voila!



NB. This assumes the PLB comes with a pouch, and I have also attached my PLB cord loop through the pouch so the two are joined together – don’t want to be stuck on a tiny ledge and drop the PLB!



I have also found that the band is worn best on the skin, as opposed to over a singlet. Where to wear a PLB is something I have contemplated at length since purchasing my ACR PLB. After analysis of incidents when PLBs have been used, and taking into account a plethora of things including pack hip belts and chest straps, garments worn, tramping conditions, the need to have the PLB on your person at all times, the result has been my under-boobs-band.

Further, when tramping I give my permission to everyone in the group so, in the case of an emergency everyone may access the PLB. (i.e. grope me to access the PLB!). I have no idea if this would work for males, or more endowed women.

We welcome Alistair Hall, Jennifer Lane and Rosemary Lane to the club.

Committee Update November & December, 2019:

Lodge: Although Stage One of the improvement project is nearly complete and has greatly improved accommodation at the Lodge, external funding sought for Phase Two was not successful. The Lodge Manager, John Lyttle, and Lodge Sub-Committee will work to develop a more staged approach, while continuing to seek funds to progress the project. A work party spent a week at the lodge finishing parts of Stage One and made good progress. The committee discussed the need for more, trade capable, club members to volunteer so that the burden of work parties is spread.

General: The Committee discussed the need for the club to communicate our support for people who are ill or when there is bereavement. We agreed that we’d design a card using images from the club, which Richard Lander, general Committee member, has now done. However, our Social Convenor, Linda Campbell, who arranges for cards to be sent, also discussed the need for Committee members to keep her in the loop in these situations so that the club can respond as required.

Minibus: In November, the Committee heard that the purchase of the new minibus was being delayed until the outcome of a funding application to the Eastern and Central Community Trust (ECCT) was known. At the December meeting, we were told that we'd been awarded \$13,000 by ECCT. Further, a group mid-Week trampers test drove a minibus such as that proposed for the club and reported they were happy that this could be our minibus. The Committee asked that our Minibus Manager, Ken Mercer and Treasurer, Ewen Cameron, proceed with the purchase. [At the time of writing this, the arrival of the new minibus is expected within days. The old minibus is being sold on Trade-me *although the Committee agreed that the club should accept the trade in offer by Ford of \$6700 at its November meeting (Ed).*]

Membership: Two new applications for membership were approved. The matter of expired memberships was again discussed. Payment of memberships has been a drawn out process. Although several attempts have been made to contact those who haven't paid, they have been unsuccessful. Expired members, who have not paid their 2019 subscriptions won't be chased for their fees anymore.

Obituary

Sadly Ann Green passed away on 22 December, 2019. Ann joined the club in May 1999 and was an enthusiastic Thursday trumper for at least 15 years. A number of club members attended a reception to celebrate her life in Dannevirke in January.



February Wednesday Tramps			February Thursday Tramps		
05	Carolyn Brodie	027 358 6037	06	John & Gillian Thornley	356 9681
12	Carole Kennerley	329 9694	13	Christine Scott	354 0510
19	Rita Hodson	323 5491	20	Nigel & Jill Spencer	329 8738
26	Richard Iander	021 840 472	27	Judy Swainson	358 4082
February Weekend Trips					
1-2	Taranaki	TBC	Linda Campbell	027 333 4493	
1-9	Lodge Work Party - postponed	See above	John Lyttle	027 433 6307	
8-9	Ngauruhoe	Medium	Ken Mercer	027 364 6475	
9 (not 16)	Pukenaena ex Naena Road	Easy	Ewen Cameron	022 034 1180	
22-33	Mangahao Flats Work Party	Medium	Jean Garman	021 176 0209	
29-1 Mar	Bushcraft	Easy	Tim Swale	022 134 8384	

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 MTSC-owned 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.

1st-2nd February, 2020: Taranaki

Linda Campbell To Be Confirmed 027 333 4493 or lindammc@xtra.co.nz

What we do on this trip is both weather dependent and numbers dependent. We will leave the Manawatu early on Saturday morning to travel to Taranaki. Options include going in from Dawson Falls and heading up to Syme Hut on Fanthams Peak for the night or heading to Lake Dive Hut via the upper route and out on Sunday on the lower route. Another option is going in from the Stratford side walking the Curtis Track to Maketawa Hut, up the Puffer to Tahurangi Lodge, down to Manganui Lodge to the Stratford Plateau followed by a bit of a road walk back to our transport.

If we are to go to Syme Hut, which only sleeps eight, plenty of warm gear is recommended as there is no heating and the hut is situated at 1950m.

Please let Linda know if you are interested on or before Tuesday 28 January.

8-9th February, 2020: Ngauruhoe

Ken Mercer Medium 027 364 6475

I've skied off Ngauruhoe three times but never climbed it in summer. As this is a tramping club trip we are entitled to park at the Mangatepopo road end for the whole day. We could also run a second easier trip in the area. We'll drive up to the lodge Friday evening and stay two nights.

Sunday 9th February, 2020: Pukenaenae ex Naenae Rd

Ewen Cameron Easy 022 034 1180 or ewenacameron37@gmail.com

The planned Easy trip to Pukenaenae scheduled for February 16th will now take place on Sunday February 9th, weather permitting. The plan is to start from the Naenae Road end and head up the track to the Otangane Loop. Once we reach the Loop we'll head off to the left to get to Pukenaenae. As the track up from Naenae road is reasonably steep, we'll take it easy and take a couple of rests on the way up. On a fine day, the view from Pukenaenae is amazing. If you are thinking of coming on this tramp, you should be prepared to cross the Otangane stream (not a biggie, but you may get wet feet), ready for hook grass and you should also know that there are no toilet facilities at the road end. If you are interested, please contact Ewen Cameron, preferably by email at address above.

22nd – 23rd February, 2020: Mangahao Flats Work Party

Jean Garman Medium Fit 021 176 0209

A very sociable event with good food and company where we also do some track and hut work. There is the option to have different groups for different rates of travel and to go out down the river for those who don't mind getting wet.

29th Feb -1st March, 2020: Bushcraft

Tim Swale Easy 022 134 8384

This weekend is an opportunity to develop a range of outdoor skills that will help to make trips into the back country safer and more enjoyable. We will start at the Tamaki West road-end, near Dannevirke, where we can spend some time on topics such as clothing for tramping, navigation with map and compass, route planning, environmental care code, stoves and fuel, leadership etc. After lunch we will make our way up Holmes Ridge to find a suitable spot just north of Stanfield Hut where we can fly camp for the night. We will discuss camp-craft, food and water, emergency communications and first aid. On Sunday the intention is to have a session on water safety and loss of route procedure before following the creek back to the road end. Please be aware that there may be some young people involved!

Happy New Year from Aspiring Guides at Wanaka!

aspiringguides.com

We know you're making the most of the summer season out in the hills, and wanted to invite you to join us in **Mt Aspiring National Park** for our challenging multi-day treks. A clear step up in challenge from the Great Walks, **Aspiring Guides' Treks** take you to remote corners of our backcountry, crossing rivers, navigating wild terrain, and utilising a combination of huts and wild camping with pre-placed supply caches. This means you can focus your energy on the trail and beautiful surrounds instead of your heaviest backpack - we provide all the camping gear and tents, so for many hikes, you'll be carrying a lighter pack than you're used to. We organise all of the logistics, with a qualified guide to help you along the way. You just have to do the hard work of actually tramping!

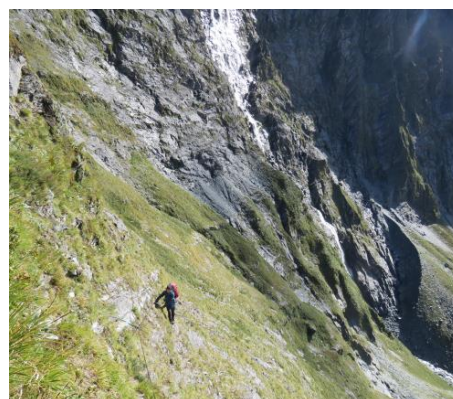
We'd like to offer your club **10% off** one of our upcoming treks, through April 2020. With **options from 2-8 days**, there is a trip for every timeframe and for a range of abilities.

Our more challenging trips like the [Rabbit Pass Alpine Traverse](#), [Gillespie Rabbit Pass](#), and [Lake Nerine](#), require previous rough NZ trekking experience, with some experience in scrambling and abseiling, and the ability to hike 6-8 hours a day and ascend 1,000m+ in a day. The perfect options for trampers looking for a tough challenge and truly wild experience.

For example:

8 Day Gillespie Rabbit Pass Alpine Traverse

Combine the Gillespie and Rabbit Passes for an epic 8 day adventure! You'll need a bit more in your tank for this trek, with over a week in the wilderness traversing the two routes above. We have a supplies cache partway through, so you won't have to carry 8 days' worth of food and gear, but you will need a head for heights and good footing. During the crossing of Rabbit Pass there are sections with significant exposure to falling, and you'll be using small footholds, handholds and ledges to ascend. On two sections of the crossing, a rope & harnesses are used for safety. If you've had your eye on Rabbit Pass, but wanted to add a bit more security to your trip, this is an excellent opportunity to use our experienced guide for confidence & safe travel.



6 day Upper Wilkin Gillespie Pass

Combining two of our most popular Wild Walks, this is a 6 day trek exploring the Upper Wilkin river valleys and lakes, heading into the Siberia Valley and over the famous Gillespie Pass before descending down through the Young Valley. We spend several days hiking around the alpine lakes, valleys and waterfalls near the Upper Wilkin river and then head downstream, crossing the Wilkin river into the famous Siberia Valley. The names here reflect the challenging geography for the early explorers : Siberia Valley, Mt Awful, and Mt Dreadful! By the fifth day when you are heading over Gillespie Pass at 1600m you will be hiking fit, and able to enjoy the magnificent views of Mt Awful. Descending steeply into the Young Valley, our final night is spent in the Young Hut.



Other options, like [Aspiring Discovery](#) and the [Upper Wilkin Experience](#), require good fitness and some experience on rough 'off-track' terrain, but have the flexibility to choose your level of challenge. You can pack in big day hikes to Albert Burn Saddle or glacial lakes, or choose to relax at your remote camp or hut. You won't be disappointed with the views!

Please let us know with any questions you have. Whether you have a group who'd like to organise a private trip or if you'd like to join a scheduled trip as an individual, it'd be great to have you along.

Cheers,
Whitney Oliver

Aspiring Guides 58 McDougall Street | Wanaka 9305 | New Zealand p: +64 3 443 9422

Hut Tickets for Sale

Hut tickets can be purchased from Howard Nicholson at club nights. \$5/ticket for adults and \$2.50 for youth (11-17 years). Information about Back Country Hut Passes, valid for 6 or 12 months, as well as the use of hut tickets is available on the [DOC web site](#).



26th-27th October, 2019: Mukamuka-Papatahi Loop

Trip Leader, Reporter and Photographer: Adam Matich

We travelled 3 km SW along the coast from the DoC Corner Creek Campsite to the mouth of Mukamuka

Stream. Travel up this waterway was very easy, it being wide and shingly. There are no track markers as it is a route in the lower section, but further up when the route finally enters the forest, there are track markers and so finding our way up to the south saddle was trouble free, it taking us 3 hours from the ocean to the Mt Matthews track. We had a rest at the South Saddle and watched the goats gambling on the opposite face. At the track junction we left our packs and made the 2 1/2 hr return trip to Mt Matthews from where we had good views down to Lake Onoke and the coast.



Looking down Mukamuka Stream from South Saddle

There is an informal track heading off the Mt Matthews summit towards the north saddle. Another trip perhaps. Another 90 minutes saw us down in the Orongorongo River via the very wide, shingly Matthews stream. We entertained ourselves on the way counting the dead rats as there were lots of them by the compressed-air powered possum/rat killers. Our best count for a single device was six up near the South Saddle. We camped for the night in the trees next to Baine iti which is on the true right next to the confluence with the main river (7 1/2 hr day). The Mt Matthews track used to go all the way to this rather rustic hut, but that was before Matthews Stream started to take itself seriously and change things. We hung our food up overnight as there were rats around. However, no one was molested in the night.

Part 2.

The next day we headed up the very friendly/easy Orongorongo River and visited the most northerly of the six DoC huts, Papatahi Hut and which is fairly new. These huts are all locked and require bookings, but for

\$100 per night it is all yours. Good luck with finding a hut to book on weekends though; you are better to try your luck during the week. About an hour up-river of our camp spot we climbed up North Boulder Creek, the start of the Papatahi Crossing. The creek was easy travel, but for 100 m after climbing out of the creek it was uncomfortably steep with sometimes uncertain footing. Much safer to go up than down. But we still had dead rat



Orongorongo River

counting to keep us entertained/distracted. There were more dead rats higher above the stream. Two and a half hours of climbing saw us on top of Papatahi in the cloud. On the way up we had to rug up as there were very strong, cold winds; but no rain. There was some really nice goblin

forest...and more dead rats. What a terrible waste of protein. We thought life would be easy from thereon. It was until we dropped below around 700 m. The track east of Papatahi Summit is not well maintained. It is a bit overgrown, and below 700 m it got steep again with care needed with one's footing and some trouble with route finding. The ground trail was not always obvious and the track markers were often obscured by vegetation. People don't use this part of the crossing very much at all. We did see our second little black pig but there were no more dead rats to count as the traps had run out.

The track marking seemed to stop when the track reached the Wharepapa River and, it being choked with vegetation, we found it easiest to get wet feet to make our way down to the clearing from which the hut is accessed. Fifteen years ago this area was all wide open, shingly and bridle-track grade travel. It is not so good now. Wharepapa hut is looking a little tired and is in danger of being totally surrounded by stinging nettle. The last entry in the logbook was July, 2019. We then made our way down the Wharepapa River to the road bridge; easy and eventually boring travel, but which could have been a mistake as the lower section of the river appears to be private land. So don't travel it unless you talk to DoC or the land owner first. All that was left was the final drag along the coast to Corner Creek Campsite while trying to keep the grit out of our eyes as the sand was whipped up by the very strong wind gusts (8 1/2 hr day). We decided that the Papatahi Crossing section of the trip was a once in a lifetime, but the Mukamuka, Mt Matthews, Orongorongo section was a nice area. If you want a nice easy trip into the area rent a hut and go in from the Catchpool side. We were Brenda Thomas, Jenny McCarthy, David Harrington and Adam Matich



Heading to Mukamuka Stream from Corner Creek camp site

Wednesday 20th November, 2019: Pukerua Bay

Trip Leader and Reporter: Ian Brookes
Photographer: William

Eighteen intrepid trampers and a small dog left Memorial Park at 7.30am for their annual trip to the beach at Pukerua Bay. On our way south, the weather looked rather threatening, with low cloud over the Tararua Ranges (using the terminology recommended in Backcountry), but clearer out to sea. We assembled at the end of the Pukerua Bay Beach Road to walk round the Wairaka Headland to Plimmerton and return via the inland route. There was a chilly breeze from the West as we set off, but this dropped once we rounded



Wairaka Head and the weather from there on was fine and sunny. The path is flanked by steep, grassy slopes on which a number of feral goats were seen grazing. We soon reached a strategically placed wooden gate leaning against the rocks which is easily climbed and then, after a scramble round the headland, made it on to a long sweep of beach. This consists of large pebbles and small boulders, which need care in negotiating. On the way, we encountered a small dead blue penguin washed up on the beach. There is plenty of driftwood at the high tide mark, and after an hour's walking we chose to sit on some largish logs for morning tea. The beach eventually leads to a further half hour's walking

on a gravel track heading towards Plimmerton. While on the track, we encountered a walker with two large dogs. An attempt to get them onto leads was only partially successful and one of them charged towards one of our trampers but no damage was done.

Having passed through the Hongoeka Marae village, we reached the Boating Club, where four of our number decided to head into Plimmerton and take the train back to Pukerua Bay. The rest of us continued into the Karehana Bay Scenic Reserve, where we had lunch at the bottom of a long and steep flight of steps. These provided a challenge immediately after lunch, but the party all reached the top, albeit somewhat puffed. We then headed up the Taua Tapu Track passing alpacas and donkeys on lifestyle blocks. The track reaches a trig at 114 metres and then descends to Airlie Road. We followed this past the Whenua Tapu Crematorium until we reached the Ara Harakeke walkway which runs parallel to SH1. This winds uphill for about 2 kilometres to the Pukerua Bay shops. Walking on the asphalt left some trampers in need of refreshment so it was disappointing to find the dairy's ice cream chiller had lost power. Another 20 minutes along Rawhiti Road led to the Goat Track, which descends by a number of steep steps down to the beach. Everyone was back to the vehicles by 2.15pm to find the train travellers had arrived safely before us. We then reconvened for coffee and ice creams in Paekakariki.



Towards Wairaka Head

It was generally agreed that this was the preferred route, rather than that in previous years, when we went inland first. Doing it this way meant the rocky beach was tackled at the start of the day, even though the finish involved the rather tedious walk up the shared cycle path. The statistics collected at the end of the day showed we had walked a distance of almost 17 km. Our thanks to the drivers – Robbie in the van and Marion and William in their cars.

23rd November, 2019: Toe Toe Loop Track and Platinum Mines

Trip Leader: Ewen Cameron

Reporter and Photographer: Nicola Wallace

I arrived at the Kahuterawa Road end carpark to find Ewen and Shelley waiting for me, and we left the cars at about 8.30 am. The morning was noteworthy for the large number of walkers heading away from the carpark, many of them taking their dogs for a walk. (The trip was going to be run the previous weekend, but Ewen wisely postponed it because of rain.)

A short way up the Sledge track we came across a dead rat on the track, only a small one so maybe a youngster. It was a cloudy morning, and we were soon sweating on the uphill. After a brief stop at the Ross Creek picnic table to replace those lost fluids, we started climbing the stairs up to The Elevation. There are close to 200 steps, and the steepest part of the track is near the bottom. Soon the steps were left behind, and the gradient eased. It wasn't long before we reached the Toe Toe Junction. While we enjoyed a pleasant morning tea at the picnic table, the last of the cloud burnt off, and the sun appeared, instantly turning it into a hot day. We heard the distinctive *kek-kek-kek* of a falcon. Here we encountered a trio of trampers we would meet several times on our walk: a German, a Belgian and a Canadian. They too were going to the Platinum Mines, but were walking the Toe Toe Loop clockwise versus our anticlockwise.



It was lovely to head back into the cool bush, a short uphill to the Otangane Loop turnoff, then a gradual descent to fern clad bush. A clearing revealed many tall, dead trees – killed off by possums? After another

climb, we were in Horopito country, at another picnic table, and the start of the Platinum mines loop. As it was well before lunchtime, we set off immediately round the loop. There was a horizontal drive first up, followed by about 4 vertical shafts, surrounded by wooden fencing (to stop the unwary falling in). Aluminium



ladders made the vertical descents easy (each descent was about 15-20 feet). Once at the bottom, a belly-crawl would be needed to progress horizontally, and none of us were willing to do that. I loved checking out the mines, and imagining the history behind them. Completing the loop, we had a long lunch in the sun at the aforementioned picnic table. Standing atop the lookout hill by the table, a fantastic red-green vista was revealed: so much Horopito!

Back onto the Toe Toe Loop track, and the last mine, a horizontal drive dating from 1875. Much water lay in the mine. Shelley braved it, as she wanted to see the cave wetas. The water came halfway up her calves, her boots were well and truly flooded, but she was happy and got some good weta photos. The next section of track was the hottest of the day, as it was quite open, but we didn't hurry, and we really enjoyed it. We heard the falcon again, and got a good look at the bird flying round, looking for a feed. Soon we were back at Toe Toe Junction and had first afternoon tea, before descending to Ross Creek where we had second afternoon tea. On this walk, the picnic tables are well spaced, encouraging you to stop, have a short rest and replenish before carrying on. A brisk walk back down the Sledge Track (but still with some good uphill) had us back at the cars at about 3pm. It had been a really enjoyable walk, because the weather was good, and we didn't hurry. Many thanks to Ewen and Shelley for their friendly company.

Wednesday 27th November, 2019: Powell Hut and Mountain House

Trip Leader and Reporter: Anne West

Photos: William Laing

Twentynine trampers assembled at the Holdsworth carpark on a fine morning. Seventeen were eager to check out Powell Hut which had recently been replaced; they set off up the Gentle Annie Track. The remaining 12 headed along the Atiwhakatu valley. It was very dry underfoot, the stream was beautiful but the kidney ferns were sadly turning to crisps. Five trampers chose to remain in the valley and continue to Atiwhakatu Hut, while 7 of us took the ridge track uphill to Mountain House. On the way up we passed several groups of people descending after having spent the night at the hut. The breeze was getting up as we lunched at Mountain House. Meanwhile, up at Powell, the others were admiring the new Hut. A small party ventured further towards the tops, to see what the wind was like up there - quite strong apparently.

All groups returned to the vehicles by 3.20 p.m., happy with their day out and impressed with the new Powell Hut. Many thanks to drivers Robbie, Margaret, Peter, Dennis, Marion and Cheryl.



29th November, 2019: Longview Hut and Rocky Knob

Trip Leader, Reporter and Photographer: Chris Mercer

“This was the second hottest tramp we’ve ever done”, said Suzanne; ironically the hottest one was up to Toka which we could see to the west from the Longview hut ridge. It was so hot we all ran out of water and my Whittaker’s Almond Gold chocolate bars became squidgy pockets of liquid. We had a delightful start, before setting off, as Allan found both purple and white examples of the *Thelymitra* sun orchid at the car park. I looked for them on our return in the afternoon but they had gone; too hot for them too, I suppose. Later we saw the green hood orchids, *Pterostylis* beside the track. Also in flower were the *Gaultheria rupestris* shrubs with their pretty tubular flowers.

This tramp is remarkable in that we are never in the bush so enjoyed the views all the way, albeit hazy from the NSW fire smoke. The open track is in part due to the shallow soil but also due to fires. We saw charcoal and tree trunks in the tussock from the original bush and, intriguingly, remnant patches of bush in the valleys which had survived the fire.

We left Palmerston North at 7.30 am, started tramping at 9.30 and arrived in the hut area at 11.30. Most of us went on to the Rocky Knob prominence to the south for lunch. Chris inspected the 8 pest traps we passed along the ridge. These had been cleared a week previously so DOC was interested to learn what had been caught in that time. One trap had two weasels and another had a rat. The traps are doubles with two DOC 200 mechanisms. Thanks to the drivers and also to Earl, our new young member, who said “This is a remarkable group!”



Friday 29th November, 2019: Kapiti

Photos: Cheryl Dawson

Map: William Laing



29th November-1st December, 2019: Leitch's Hut

Trip Leader: Mark Learmonth

Reporter and Photographer: Nicola Wallace

Mark drove Adam and me up to the Taumarunui campground on Friday afternoon. He had booked us a cabin there, and there were some nervous moments at the front counter of the campground office when the staff couldn't find our booking. It turns out they never made the booking, but luckily there was a cabin available though the place was very busy. After settling in we had takeaway tea in town, and were in our sleeping bags by 10pm.



After breakfast we drove North to Eight Mile Junction, then headed SW to Piopio. The little town was buzzing on this sunny Saturday morning, with lots of travellers stopping at the loos and the café. We headed West, past amazing rock formations in the hills, and after a very long drive through big, hilly country we arrived at the Mangatoa Saddle, where our track started. The drive from Taumarunui had taken about 2.5 hours. On stepping out of the vehicle, we could really feel the heat of the day. It was now close to 11am. Peering down the bank in this undeniably isolated spot, we could see about 30 tyres discarded in the bush. Strange. The sign said 4 hours to Leitch's hut, so that wasn't too long.

The track was of a good standard at this stage, well marked, and we climbed steadily for about an hour and a half before having lunch at the day's high point, 567m ASL. It was very muggy indeed, and we poured sweat constantly. We smelt billygoat along the track. I was looking forward to descending to a stream so I could refill my bottle. After lunch, there was more windfall on the track and travel became slower and more difficult. Later, as we descended to a side stream, the track disappeared, and it took some skilful searching by Mark and Adam to find it, and some difficult scrambling over treefall to get onto the track.

We had a good rest at Waikawau Saddle, where the Kereru were plentiful, then Mark and I took our time and Adam went on ahead. This was a pretty part of the track, sidling above the stream, but it was a slow and frustrating journey as there was windfall to scramble over or under every few metres. This situation carried on all the way to the clearing. If this track was cleared, it would be a very good track. After more than 5 hours Mark and I reached Leitch's clearing, out into the sun! This is a big, grassy clearing, with 'arms' heading in different directions, and I could well imagine Sam Leitch out there with his sheep, about 100 years before. 'We should see the hut anytime' said Mark, but no, not yet. After crossing the Awakino River, there it was, on the edge of the clearing. It had taken Mark and I nearly 6 hours to get there.



Adam was on the veranda eating potato chips, keeping company with our 3 hutmates from Devonport in Auckland. With a good veranda, in the shade, it was the ideal spot to look out at the tall grass and foxgloves. The river was only a minute's walk away, so I had a refreshing wash. Leitch's Hut was built in 1994, has 16 bunks, lots of room inside, a big cache of food on the shelves, and a woodstove with a wetback and accompanying hot water cylinder. It was far too hot to light a fire so we didn't try it out. I wasn't looking forward to going out the next day on the difficult, windfall-strewn Mangatoa track that we'd come in on, so I resolved to enjoy my time at the hut to the max. Too soon it was teatime, then bedtime. Adam slept outside, on the veranda.

The next morning Mark was going out via the main track, so I gladly went with him. Thank goodness Adam was happy to go out on the Mangatoa Track, drive round in Mark's 4WD and pick us up. The main track was an absolute pleasure to walk on, yes *walk*, not scramble. This track was originally intended for a road that was never built. Much was through bush, there was lots of Paritaniwha, and 3 hours later we were walking by a fenceline, before emerging into the carpark. The Aucklanders arrived a few minutes after we did, and kindly gave us a ride to the bottom of Leitch's Road. Soon Adam arrived to pick us up. He had taken only 3.5 hours to come out on the Mangatoa Track.

It was a very interesting drive home, as we went via Mokau and the Taranaki Coast, where I had never been before. We arrived home before tea time, after a wonderful trip in very good weather. Many thanks to Mark for running this trip, and for all the driving, and to both Adam and Mark for their good company.

Wednesday 4th December, 2019: Hihitahi

Trip leader and Reporter: Bill Milham

Photos: Carol and Rod

Twenty one of our Wednesday Wander's group journeyed up to the Hihitahi Forest Sanctuary, north of Taihape. The day was fine with a slight cooling breeze at times. The few wet areas on the track early on in the walk caused minimal discomfort and were traversed by all with no incidents. The steeper lift up the ridge did get the heart racing; however, once negotiated, the track was a wonderful walk through to the elevated clearing and the old trig location. The day being so clear the views were extensive and made the effort worthwhile.

Eleven of the group decided to venture down to Zekes Hut where all enjoyed their lunch on the sunny deck while taking in the forest views and discussing past trips to the area in bygone years. We were serenaded by a Long Tailed Cuckoo on the return walk which, though it insisted on accompanying us for a time, proved to be as elusive as they are known to be, as no one was able to get a sighting. The trip was enjoyed by all and topped off with coffee/tea and icecream stopover in Taihape on the way home.

Our thanks to van driver Robbie and car drivers Rita, Ewan and Chris.

5th December, 2019: Keritaki Hut

Trip Leader: Dave Grant

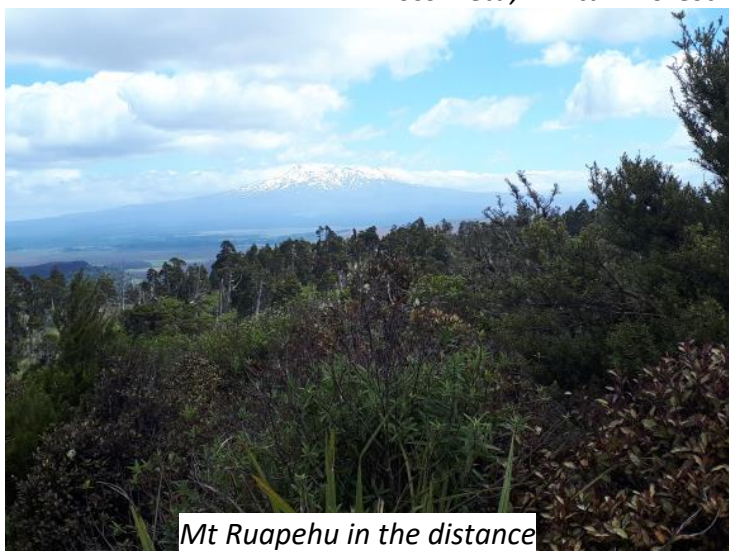
Reporter and Photographer: William Laing

The plan our leader Dave Grant developed was to travel up Fairbrother Road behind Dannevirke, pass through a locked gate, and access a hunters' track from over the farmland. From there we would walk to the Kiritaki hut and back out again.

Twenty trampers set off, just before 9:00am, up a steep grassed ridge to the bush and along a reasonable hunters' track continuing up the ridge. We reached a high point at a bit over 700 m and soon turned right along a second ridge with mainly low vegetation in the form of Horopito and leather wood. The wind was



Moss weta, Hihitahi Forest



Mt Ruapehu in the distance

strong and frequently the track was blocked by blown over trees, but the track was easily recovered due to the sharpness of the ridge. Generally speaking the track was overgrown and needed maintenance but was not difficult to follow. We then joined a wide, well cleared DOC track that led up from the Raparapawai Stream. This track, which initially went steeply down hill, then passed a rather obscure junction with the track from Number One line in the Pohangina valley, finally leading to a broad grassed track and on to Kiritaki hut and lunch.

We had regrouped frequently so the party of 20 rapidly consolidated at the hut and lunch was enjoyed both inside and outside. We met two hunters there, who did not appear to have shot any deer but had seen some. At this stage we planned to return the way we had come, but the hunters suggested we could make a circuit by descending to the Oruakeretaki stream (note spelling change) and following the stream back to the farm gate. They suggested using a hunters' trail down the ridge to the stream rather than the DOC track down as it cut off some of the worst of the upper stream transit. On the way down the ridge the front party of 14 missed the track and ended bashing their own steep path before regaining the hunters track, but the hind six managed



to keep to the hunters track and get down before the 14. The larger party could smell smoke and got to the stream to find a carefully contained fire in the middle of the stream to welcome us. Two of the six had gone upstream to make sure we weren't on the true DOC path so the majority of the party started their way down stream while five waited for the two upstream to return before hurrying down the boulder strewn stream to the end of the farm road. While we changed our intentions and split into alternative parties twice, we ensured we updated our intentions in the hut log, and were aware of where all parties were all through the tramp. Dave kept good control of us with frequent heads counts and stops to consolidate. The tramp was enjoyed for

its diversity and challenges. Thanks to the drivers for transport.



Scrambling down the steep route to the river

11th December, 2019: Rangitikei Rambles

Trip Leader and Reporter: Margaret McKenzie

Photographer: Linda Darbyshire

Our Wednesday tramping group of 37 set off for our end of year Xmas event to the Rangitikei. We visited and walked 4 "old- growth native forest" bush reserves which were donated by the landowners back in the 1940s and 1960s to Forest and Bird. The reserves are jointly managed by F and B volunteers and Horizons Regional Council. Walkers couldn't help but notice the height of the spectacular trees, mainly kahikatea, miro, matai, rimu and totara and only imagine how old they may be. The weather was perfect with blue skies and no wind and the Turakina River Valley was very picturesque.



After spending 3 hours or so walking both McPhersons Bush and Sutherlands Puriri, we travelled on to Sutherlands Mangahoe to a pleasant spot in the bush for morning tea. The final reserve to visit was Lairds Bush which included a short walk uphill on a farm track passing some 4 mares with their very new baby foals.

We concluded the day with a shared meal at the picnic area at Hunterville which happened to have a cafe and toilets nearby. Thank you to Ewen for driving the van and to Bev, Ian, Marilyn, Rita, Jenny, Chris and Robyn for taking their cars.

14th December, 2019: Mid Pohangina Hut

Trip Leader, Reporter and Photographer: Adam Matich

The normal lack of interest in weekend tramping meant we didn't have enough people to justify opening up the lodge, so we decided to visit Mid Pohangina Hut instead. We travelled the Holmes Ridge Track into Stanfield Hut and the river was low enough for us to keep our feet dry, on the few river crossings. There were two deer carcasses by the river near Stanfield Hut. After leaving the hut we headed up-river to climb out onto the base of the spur. There is a section near the bottom where the spur is sharp and eroding away, making things a little awkward. On our return the next day we found a bypass which avoids this section. The proper/easy route, on the way in, is north up the side stream for 50 m to find the DoC sign-post marking the beginning of the track up the spur. A much easier option.

We made our way to Cattle Creek Hut for lunch (4hr) and after that enjoyed 2 hours of interesting travel in Cattle Creek on our way to Mid Pohangina Hut. Not far below Cattle Creek Hut we encountered another two deer carcasses; red deer not reindeer. Cattle Creek is not somewhere to travel during or after heavy rain as there are some tight, gorgy sections. In one spot there is a chain to hold onto if you wish to keep dry by sidling along the steep wall of the valley. On our return trip the next day we decided it was easier and safer to just get slightly wet and avoid the chained sidle. Downstream of this section is a small waterfall that requires a small sidle at the height of the top of the falls; an easier proposition than the chained section. Not far below these two engaging spots, we encountered the steep climb out of the creek, up and over to Mid Pohangina Hut. This section required a little bit of care as there is no proper track; fortunately there is friendly vegetation to hold on to. However, due to some slippage, it is not practical to climb at the sign-post; best a little bit down stream.



Mid Pohangina Hut was in good order and we ended up sharing it with one other person. It rained overnight, which was slightly concerning, but it was just being playful as the next day on our way back up Cattle Creek there was no noticeable change in the water level. We were Jenny McCarthy and Adam Matich.



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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	\$40	\$58	
Secondary School	\$32	\$48	
Primary School	\$26	\$42	
Pre-school (3-5 yo)	\$13	\$13	

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.