

beechleaves

Newsletter of the Manawatu Tramping and Skiing Club



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

Issue 05 June, 2023

MTSC Website: A new look for the MTSC web site is due to go live around 1 June, 2023. You will still visit [https://www.mtsc.nz](http://www.mtsc.nz) See page 4 for more information.



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.

7.30 pm Tuesday 6 June, 2023: Logan Brown on Rivers and Streams as Habitat

Logan is Horizon's Freshwater and Partnership Manager and he will talk about the living things (fish, invertebrates, algae and bacteria) that make rivers and streams their home as well as the impact that water quality, quantity and barriers have on what lives where.



17-18 June, 2023: Midwinter Weekend Social Get Together at the MTSC Lodge



Crater Lake by Philip Browne 3 April, 2023

Nicki Fielder 022 515 3807 or

nickifielder@gmail.com

Come along to our Potluck Dinner and social weekend and bring your partner / significant other if you would like. There will be optional tramps on Saturday and Sunday or just relax and enjoy the lodge. More information on page 5. *There is still some space at the lodge so do contact Nicki if you wish to come. (Note: this is not a club meeting.)*

7.30 pm Tuesday 4 July, 2022: Club Members on a recent Cobb Valley tramp

7.30 pm Tuesday 1 August, 2023: Photo Competition

It's time to look through your photos ready for this year's competition. The best 3 images in each category will be chosen by an independent judging panel and the best image in each category will be chosen by popular vote on the night. Categories will include:

- Alpine scenery with **no** people or man-made objects

- Alpine scenery **including** people or man-made objects
- Bush/lowland/subalpine and **no** people or man-made objects
- Bush/lowland/subalpine **with** a human element
- Historic Photographs (Before 1 January 2020)
- New Zealand native flora & fauna
- Long exposure

There will be a prize for every photographer who enters an image as well as prizes for the best image in each category and the best image overall. The competition rules are [on the club website](#). Entries need to be in by Friday 21st July.



MTSC President: Tim Swale

president@mtsc.org.nz

It was good to see so many members at this year's Club AGM on 16th May. With a few committee members stepping down, it was wonderful to have willing volunteers to take their places so that we can keep every aspect of the club's operation running smoothly. It is a real team effort with so many people doing their bit in order to keep our club thriving. Of those leaving, I would like to publicly thank the following people who have given so much of their time to the club:

Sue Nicholson has been our Membership Secretary since 2016. She has worked tirelessly in the background keeping our membership database up to date, sending out subscription reminders, attending meetings and liaising with other committee members to make sure newsletters etc. get to the right people. Whilst Sue is stepping back, I suspect she will still be called on to help our new membership secretary, Anne Jolly, get to grip with the job. Thank you Sue.

Richard Lander has been on the committee since 2019 providing wise council at meetings and working tirelessly in the background to bring a richness to our club that we have very much appreciated. Richard's passion for photography has seen him running the annual photo competition and also being responsible for logo design, minibus signwriting and producing calendars and cards for the club. He has also been responsible for the Food Safety Plan for the lodge which is now a legal requirement. Richard intends to continue his involvement with the club but, in the meantime, we wish him well and thank him for his service.

Peter Rawlins is a life member of the club who has been involved with the running and administration of the club

over very many years. Whilst Peter is taking a break from his roles as general committee member and Ski Captain, he has agreed to continue as SAR advisor and to monitor our Intentions website. I am sure that his expertise in alpine instruction will see him in continued demand. Thank you Peter for all of your work.



Rimu Walk 3 May by Cheryl Dawson

As well as Anne Jolly taking on Membership, other new committee members are John Salisbury, who is an active mid-week tramper, and Rob Pringle who is returning after a couple of years break and will become

our Ski Captain. Howard Nicholson has been the club Secretary for the last two years but, with a new website and booking system to get up and running, he will stay on the committee but will pass on the Secretary's job to Linda Campbell. In turn, Nicki Fielder will take on the role of Social Convenor, so if you have ideas or offers for a club-night, please have a word with Nicki.

Also at the AGM, two awards were announced. These were:

The Beech Leaf Award, for service to the club, went to Ivan Rienks for his many years of invaluable work at the lodge, particularly in installing and maintaining electrical systems.

The Most Spirited Trampler Award went to Nicki Fielder for her boundless enthusiasm and involvement in just about every aspect of the club. The recently formed biking group has been driven by Nicki and has been a really popular addition to club activities.

Finally we had the pleasure of bestowing life membership upon long time member Rob Pringle:

ROB PRINGLE – MTSC LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Rob has been a club member for most of his life, becoming involved as a youngster with his family back in the early 1990s. His love of skiing saw him spend a lot of time at our club lodge, and over the years, developing a real connection to the place. Rob has given a huge amount of his time to the betterment of our club, serving as Ski Captain (2009-2012) and on the committee as Lodge Manager (2004-2006) and as President (2018-2021). He has organised food carries, represents us at RMCA meetings and is currently Gear Custodian for the Club. However it is his involvement with the lodge that has been truly exceptional. Rob has had a pivotal part in so many of the improvements to the lodge, from the complete re-lining of the bunkrooms, construction of the bunks, the huge project to extend the basement and turn it into a drying room, and recently, the upgrade of the toilets. It is Rob's trade knowledge and skills, along with his willingness to bring all the tools needed for a job that have made these projects viable. Those of us who have worked alongside Rob never cease to be impressed with his lovely manner and patience in guiding his less skilled club-mates to contribute. It cannot be over-stated how valuable this has been to the club.



The committee has therefore bestowed a life membership on Rob as some small recognition of the huge contribution that he has made to the club.

Lodge Fees increase from 1 July 2023

The MTSC strives to provide great value, family-friendly on-mountain accommodation at the Manawatu Lodge. The committee recently reviewed our lodge fees and reluctantly agreed to increase them. In 2019, we intended to raise the rates slowly each year, but during the Covid-19 distraction we decided to hold the fees steady. Four years on, there are several factors driving the need to increase fees again. Insurance and food costs are rising at an alarming rate. Maintenance costs are on the rise too and we are extremely fortunate to have several skilled, and unskilled but keen, volunteers to do the heavy lifting to get the work done. Also notable is that the materials for recent works and other costs have been largely covered by generous grants from Pub Charity and The Lion Foundation Charitable Trust. Still, we need to ensure the viability of the club and ensure that our assets are managed appropriately.

The lodge is a great place to stay and a real asset for all of members, all year round. Staying at the lodge remains great value at these new rates (see <https://mtsc.nz/lodge.php>). *The new rates are also listed at the bottom of the last page of the newsletter.*

A New Look for the MTSC Website

A new-look website, incorporating an online booking system for the lodge, will go live in June. You will notice the new look from around 1 June 2023, with the booking system going live a few weeks later. You will still access the website using the same URL, i.e. <https://www.mtsc.nz>.

We expect the cutover to the new site to go smoothly, but if you notice anything amiss then please get in touch via email to web@mtsc.nz.

Once we have the new web site up and running, we will notify our members when the online lodge booking system will be available; in the interim, please follow the usual procedure for making bookings and contact the lodge booking officers.

The online booking system will allow current members to:

- See when beds are available
- Make a booking for themselves and their guests
- Pay for lodge bookings from a virtual wallet (which you will top up prior to making bookings) or by credit card
- Manage a booking (cancellation, change dates)

More information will be posted on our website in the coming weeks.



June Wednesday Tramps			June Thursday Tramps		
			01	Chris Mercer	021 292 6292
07	Denise Shailer	027 386 1733	08	Wayne Lincoln	021 0680 5237
14	Nicki Fielder	022 515 3807	15	William Laing	022 099 7988
21	Lorraine Barr	06 358 5516	22	Judy Swainson	06 358 4082
28	Marion Beadle	021 206 7046	29	Jenny McCarthy	021 215 2197
June Weekend					
10	Chris Brunskill	021 0267 4246	Biking <i>Details over page</i>		
17-18 June	Nicki Fielder	022 515 3807	nickifielder@gmail.com <i>Details over page</i>		
30 June- 2 July	Howard Nicholson	027 294 1941	Lodge Food Carry <i>Details on page 6</i>		

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.

Saturday 10 June, 2023: Bike Ride:

Chris Brunskill

021 0267 4246

brunskilldenise@gmail.com

The ride starts at 10.00 am outside Tutaenui Hall, Griffins Road (near Marton). Directions: Travel along State Highway 1, past Sanson and Bulls; continue along Highway 1 past the turn off to Marton and the Moomaa cafe. Then turn left into Norwood Line, left into Jeffersons Line and then right into Griffins Road. You will have arrived at Tutaenui Hall.

We will be cycling on some tar sealed roads and some metal roads also over some “Gentle Rolling” countryside. You may even stop and take photos of some awe inspiring back country scenery.

You will travel along Griffins road following Kevin Waters, who will lead the way, along several roads including, Warrens Rd, Galpins Rd, Taurimu Rd, Turakina Valley Rd and, eventually, back to where it all began. Yippee. Chris Brunskill will be at the back of the bunch making sure we all get to the finish. Hopefully you will have a very good ride. When everyone gets back we will go to Moomaa cafe, on State Highway 1, for tea, coffee and cake.

17-18 June, 2023: Midwinter Weekend Social Get Together at the MTSC Lodge

Nicki Fielder 022 515 3807 or nickifielder@gmail.com

Come along to our Potluck Dinner and social weekend and bring your partner / significant other if you would like. There will be optional tramps on Saturday and Sunday or just relax and enjoy the lodge.

Important – **This is limited to 32 people (Lodge capacity) so please respond asap if you keen.** 😊

Please include in your reply email the names of those joining us. Contact Nicki nickifielder@gmail.com

Open to all club members with transport by the club van and private vehicles.

There will be a bed for everyone in the lodge’s shared rooms. Choose your bed as you arrive (we will not be allocating beds). **Cost:** \$40 per person per night plus the cost of transport based on mileage.

Food/Drink: Bring per family (to share for dinner)—a dessert or snack/starter plus a main dish (meat or veg). Also bring what you would like to drink, bread (if you would like it for lunch/breakfast) and any special food/drink you would like. The pantry and freezer are well stocked at the lodge so most things will already be there for all other meals.

Gear: <https://www.mtsc.org.nz/gear.php> : pillowslip, sleeping bag or bedding; footwear for inside the lodge; wet weather gear; normal gear for sleeping /walking/relaxing.

Suggested Itinerary:

Saturday: Leave PN at 8 am;

morning tea in Ohakune;

12 pm (noon) – Those joining the tramp to meet in car park opposite DOC or Skotel Centre. TBC

Taranaki Falls Loop Walk (2 hours – Easy). Take normal tramping gear & packed lunch

Visit Visitors’ Centre – optional

4 pm Everyone to meet at Lodge. Get settled, sort beds, gear, etc

Music, Munchies ‘n’ Mingle

Shared dinner and social evening.



Richard Lander from Mt Ruapehu Jan 2022

Sunday: There are four options...

1. Own time
2. Sky Waka – Could meet ‘Option 4’ trampers at Café
3. Silica Rapids Walk to Chateau - Van/car shuttle return – 2 hours.....Easy
4. Lodge to NZ Alpine Club Hut to Café / down via Sky Waka; weather dependent (there will be another option if this is not available); 3 hours.... More challenging.

Additional Info:

- There’s also the option for people to head to the lodge for Friday night or stay Sunday night.....or longer.

- Everything you bring must be able to be carried to the lodge from the car park. This is approximately a 15 minute walk.
- We will need a trip leader for each tramp.
- As usual, the van will leave from PN and we can sort carpooling to suit.
- Once we know who is coming, Nicki will gather more info re what people are wanting to join, etc.
- The aim is to keep it relaxed, flexible and weather appropriate.

30 June – 2 July, 2023: Lodge Food Carry

Trip leader: Howard Nicholson 027 294 1941

The lodge at Mt Ruapehu will be restocked with food in preparation for the upcoming Winter season, which involves carrying a tonne of food from the Top 'o the Bruce Road to the lodge, and usually takes just a few hours to complete. Porters, inventorialists, cleaners, stackers and scone makers are all welcome. The lodge needs a jolly good clean, following recent construction work. Let's celebrate our success with a sumptuous dinner while we are at it.

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. Hopefully, we can enjoy some pre-season mountain delights before heading home. All welcome!



Wednesday 26 April, 2023: The Mystery of the Carrington Loop Backpack & Atiwhakatu Monster



Earina autumnalis
(Native Easter
Orchid)

Trip leader and Reporter: Anja Scholz
Photographers: Linda Campbell & John Salisbury

The weather forecast had worsened over the course of a week, but all five forecasts on my radar said the same: 'orange wind warning' for the drive to Holdsworth road end; rain, turning to showers from 9am (or 10am, or midday) and generally pretty fine by 3pm, round about the time we would be on our last wet legs back to the carpark. Alas, there was persistent rain, but no wind, on the drive down and the hills were invisible. It certainly didn't look like breaking up anytime soon. The van and two cars spilled 21 trampers at the Holdsworth shelter and we rugged up with rain-coats and -pants galore: fourteen to tackle the Carrington Loop and seven to hasten to Atiwhakatu Hut for lunch and shelter.

At 9:45 we stepped out from under and, lo and behold, about a minute later the rain stopped, like someone had turned off the tap; it did not return for the rest of the day. While a bit drippy in the bush, we didn't even get another shower and eventually even saw some welcome sun. Happy days!

The Carrington Crew made their way past the 'Viewpoint 700m – 1 hour' sign. Yes. One hour. In my heyday on the flat I walked 700m in about 7 minutes. Says a bit about the gradient... and my age. - However, with a group of tramping buddies and at a steady pace the climb was not that daunting and we shaved 10 minutes off the DOC time. Morning tea was well earned at the viewpoint, with limited views but NO RAIN!

We now left the official track to go bush in Tiger Country! Or so I had envisaged, not having done the track before, but armed with a lot of 'not so secret' intel. Not to be!! The 'route' was pretty much a continuation of the track, with fewer markers and an occasional fork which called for a decision. It was easy to follow

and would have required a concerted effort to get lost on. A bit more climbing to 'Point 670' and then a steady descent to the Gentle Annie saddle, from which the track climbed straight back up. At about 12:35 some rumbling started at the back of the group – empty stomachs? Or grumbling on the way to mutiny – way past lunchtime! (No one actually showed any signs of worry or discomfort earlier at 10:16 and 10:19 – did anyone feel the rumble that was the 'severe' earthquake that shook Porangahau? I certainly didn't.) Not quite at the top we stopped, found some suitable logs and mosses to perch on, and lunched.



That's when Margaret mentioned that she had spotted a backpack, wedged into a tree, some 20 odd metres off the track, and wondered whether it belonged to a hunter that had maybe used it for reference to come back to the track. A short while later it was suggested that maybe we should check it out, just in case anything was amiss and someone needed assistance. It certainly seemed a bit odd – Margaret pointed the pack out to me and I discerned a dark (grey and black) sizeable pack stuck in a tree fork less than 2m off the ground, with something that looked like a radio/antenna attached. Tim sat closest and was

asked to go check, and he proceeded to approach it, asking several times where the pack was as he couldn't see it while walking right towards it. Finally he stopped, about 2m in front of it and said "Where IS that pack" - answer "about 2 metres in front of you!!" (Was there something wrong with his eyesight?) "It's a TREE!" "What?" "It's just a TREE!" Those of us who had seen the pack shook their heads and adjusted their eyes and glasses. With a lot of imagination, one could just imagine that the thing in the distance could potentially be a tree. But we had seen, and were still seeing, a backpack, with a radio. It's hard to unsee what has been seen and hard to convince our brains that what we see is not what is there.

Onwards and upwards, past a nice 'non-DOC' sign pointing the way at a junction. With the track soon splitting into several options (straight back to Gentle Annie Track, towards Mountain House, or using 'the old track down') we opted for the old track, which was again easy to follow but a bit rougher underfoot, ending in a short downhill slippery overgrown 'tunnel' that had a couple of trampers use their bums for extra traction. We checked out the 'original' Rocky Lookout and then used the Gentle Annie track for the final 2 km back. Tramp time 6 hours – pretty much on target, and, did I mention it, NO RAIN!



Meanwhile the Atiwhakatu–Team had returned, bar two folk who arrived a few minutes later. They had made good time to the hut for their lunch break and had ambled back knowing that the C-Team would be a little while, so no hurry. The Atiwhakatu Monster (R) was spotted by the A-Team, and photographed later by John. It didn't attack us :-).

We were:

A-Team: Wendy (driver), Denise, Jenny, Judy, Robyn, Harold and Bob

C-Team: Angela, Leonie, Christine, Marion, Marilyn, Margaret, Linda, Richard, Tim, John, Rod, Geoff, Terry, Anja (trip leader).

The five forecasts I follow are : <https://www.metservice.com/mountains-and-parks/national-parks> , <https://weather.niwa.co.nz/parks> , <https://www.yr.no/en/forecast/daily-table/2-2181857/New%20Zealand/Tararua%20Range> , <https://www.windy.com/?-41.367,174.715,5> and <https://www.metvuw.com/forecast/forecast.php?type=rain®ion=nzni>

Regarding the perceived backpack I recommend some interesting reading on what and how we see: *Chapter 4, 'Perceiving from the Inside Out'*, in: Seth, Anil. 2021. Being You: A New Science of Consciousness.



Thursday 27 April, 2023: Panatewaewae area

Trip Organiser: Suzanne Clark

Trip Leader and Reporter: Ewen Cameron

Photographer: Tony Evans

A sadly depleted group of six departed the second gate beyond the North Manakau Road end to begin the first leg of a tramp known as "Carl's Loop". Having located the start of the uphill section, we were pleased to find that most of the windfall across the track had been removed. We were less pleased to find the tracks left by a motor bike that had taken the same route. During the climb to the grassy summit at the 510m point, the sunny weather and occasional slip which removed the dense regrowth, enabled us to get some great views of the Panatewaewae Stream valley and the summit of Waitewaewae in the distance. After a brief morning tea in a sunny, and thus not dewy, part on the grassy area, we headed off along the Panatewaewae Ridge Track, through

various mud pools, past "Not Down There" to the 470m mark and "Carl's Track". Carl's track follows a steepish ridge down to the Panatewaewae Stream. The track is well trodden and marked with pink tape so it's an easy route. Once we were down to the stream, we made a couple of stream crossings before stopping on a sunny streamside bank for an early lunch. [Despite my best attempts and those of Ian August, I did not get a good photo of the rata in flower beside us 😞].

After lunch we followed the track downstream making many crossings along the way. [No fungal fruiting bodies seen]. We arrived at the Waikawa Stream junction soon after 1pm. Five of us then decided we'd add a detour and spent an hour heading to and from the Waikawa Sawmill site on the banks of the Waikawa River, while one of us decided that the grassy clearing was an ideal place to enjoy the sun, the bush, the bird song and the sounds of the streams. The loop was completed by mid-afternoon - still in the sunshine although the afternoon at the cars was much warmer than it was when we arrived.

Wednesday 3 May, 2023: Rimu Walk

Trip leader: Leonie Lowndes

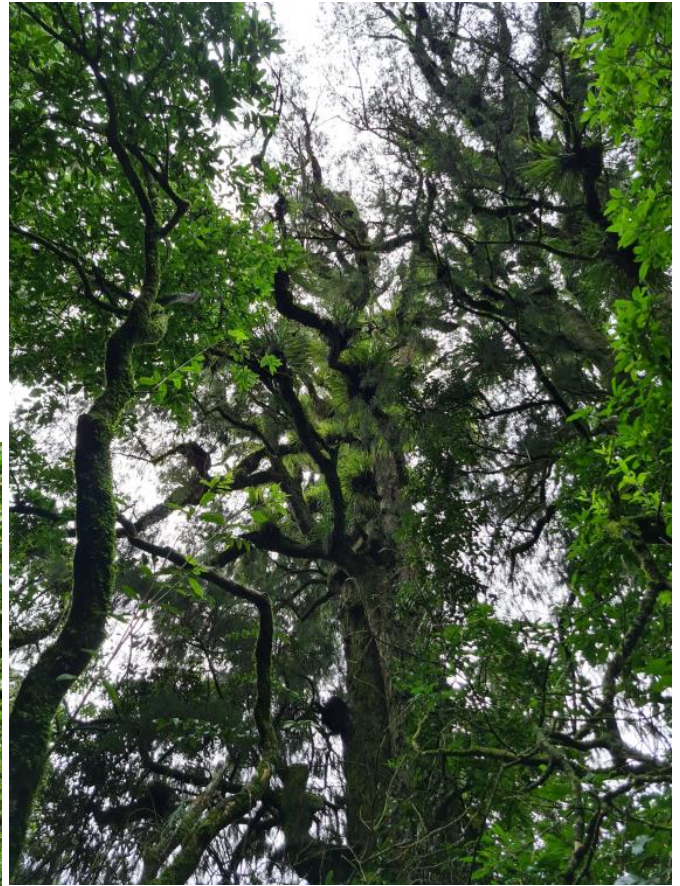
Reporter: Mary Mercer

Photographers: Angela Cameron and Cheryl Dawson

Despite the dire forecast due to another atmospheric river flowing over NZ from the tropics, the day was fine and warm as 26 trampers gathered at the Tamaki West Road end. Our Trip Leader, Leonie, outlined the plan for the day before we set off across the Tamaki River West Branch which was low enough for me to keep my feet dry (Yea!) then up the hill on the Homes Track. A morning tea break near the high point gave the slower walkers a chance to catch up before we headed down through the bush to rejoin the river. By then two of the group had decided to turn back. Three other fast walkers choose to continue up the river to check out Stanfield Hut before returning to the main bunch. The rest of us went a short



distance down stream on the true right bank, crossed a side creek and climbed up the hill to the Rimu Walk (which is closer to the creek than the marked track at this end). We walked past a number of tanalised posts, thought to be the remains of a deer enclosure indicated on a wooden sign, then past a “track closed” sign. Though a bit overgrown in places, the track was mostly fairly easy to follow at this level with a mixture of old metal, pink tape and orange triangle markers. We made our way up past a number of Rimu trees to a grove of these magnificent giants. A short distance further on we turned back towards the river then walked downstream a little way to a lunch stop on the



true left bank. After we had sat down, a small group, who had explored the Rimu Walk a bit further, popped out of the bush high above us, on the opposite bank, where there was a 10 metre vertical drop to the river - due to a slight misunderstanding of my directions via a radio! - During our lunch break, Cheryl and Marilyn found some native Easter orchids (see pic on p 6), a bit past their prime but still emitting a delightful, vanilla-like aroma.

From there we made our way down the river, mostly on the recent, extensive gravel deposits

alongside it, but crossing and re-crossing the watercourse as the cliffs and willow trees dictated. As we approached our start point we did some intermittent bush bashing before reaching Ken’s cairn indicating access to the track. About 15 minutes later we came to DoC signs pointing back up the river to Stanfield Hut and uphill to A Frame Hut. Interestingly the signs were almost buried in the mud and gravel.

We were all back at the road end within two hours of leaving our lunch spot – just enough time for the tail enders to change out of wet boots before it began to rain quite heavily – a perfect end to the walk.

Thanks to Leonie for organising a very pleasant tramp to some beautiful trees.

Wednesday 10 May, 2023: Rangiwahia Hut

Trip Leader, Reporter & Photographer: Carole Kennerley
Despite my best efforts, the weather did not play ball and my plans to go to Mitre Flats Hut had to be cancelled with a hopefully safer decision made to go to Rangiwahia Hut instead. The numbers dropped from 20 to 11 on the day, with three of us wanting to do the overnight and eight day trampers. The forecast was for heavy rain followed by a cold southerly change and it ended up being a very accurate forecast!



As we left the car park we could see the front approaching at great speed! The light drizzle turned to heavy rain by the halfway point; then we were in the middle of a brief but very scary thunderstorm, with what Ken reckons is the longest thunder clap he's ever heard followed soon after by the loudest one. The lightning bolt in between was staggeringly close. We reckon it touched down within about a km of where we were walking. This caused us some concern about our metal hiking poles!!



There have been more slips on this track and some of the group took a closer look at the slips, reporting back that they are still moving!! We all made it to the hut somewhat wet and very pleased to reach our safe haven out of the cold and wet. Strava told us we had climbed just over 600m in the 2 hrs to reach the hut. After lunch the three overnightrers stoked up the fire as the day trampers headed off down and out. A relaxing and warm afternoon was spent by the fire watching the weather patterns as they moved across the Ruahines. We were joined by another club member who had walked in independently.

In the morning our wishes came true when we woke up to 10 cm of pristine snow. So amazingly beautiful that we were reluctant to leave! It was hard to capture the beauty on camera. The snow began to fall again as we left the hut and headed back down to the carpark. A stunning winter wonderland adventure in autumn!



Thanks to Ken for driving the van and taking the role of co-ordinator for the day trampers. We learnt some interesting lessons – that we need to ensure that a radio stays with the front and tail group at all times..... so this means that sometimes the person carrying the radio needs to pass it over to someone else if they choose to leave their particular group so that all groups have a radio at all times.

😊😊 A wonderful overnightrer and thanks to all who came along and participated 😊😊

Thursday 11 May, 2023: Carrington Ridge Loop

Trip Leader, Photographer and Reporter: Nicki Fielder
The weather reports were keenly watched all week and consensus was that it would clear just in time for our tramp at Mt Holdsworth. Alas; on Wednesday night it was still bucketing down and Thursday morning was both cold and wet. Eight hardy trampers decided to go for it anyway. Visibility was poor and the rain persisted the whole way down but incredibly, the fog lifted at the Holdsworth carpark! Things were looking up.

So should we continue to walk the Carrington Ridge Track as planned or go to Atiwhakatu Hut instead? The



decider would be being able to navigate the stream at the start of the track. Surprisingly, the stream was lower than when the Wednesday Group walked it a couple of weeks earlier so we were on our way. The light rain brought the bush to life and everyone enjoyed being amongst it. After a climb to the old Hut remnants and beyond we headed across the ridge. With the weather the way it was we all opted for a number of short stops rather than longer morning tea and lunch breaks. Comment was made about the gorgeous moss and undergrowth. The group split in half to head from the ridge back down to the main track; half took a minor track and the remainder followed a trapline. We made great time and were back at the start point by 2.30pm ... so there was even time for a snack stop on the way home.

We were all pleased to have stuck to the original plan and it was an excellent day all around. Many thanks to Tony for driving and washing the van.

Saturday 13 May, 2023: Dam Block Bike Ride

Trip Leader and Reporter: Judy Swainson

Photographer: Brendon Todd

A group of 28 cyclists assembled at Fitzherbert Bridge carpark with clear blue skies assuring a fine weather ride. The large group, ably led by Pam, soon spread out. The route went up Summerhill Drive, turned into Old West Road and then straight ahead on to Turitea Road. At the end of this sealed road there's a steep climb on a gravel road which then narrows to a single track. Here there are views of open countryside and the odd windmill. The group reassembled at the top of Greens Road from where you can see across the Manawatu farm land and out to Kapiti Island. Back on the sealed road, the group made its way down to Kahuterawa Road, left onto Old West Road and left again along SH57 into Linton. After a few more turns in the Army Camp we joined the He Ara Kotahi track back to Palmerston North. Coffee was enjoyed by almost all sitting in the sunshine at Cafe Esplanade.

It was a pleasure to organize this trip and to share a local ride especially for those who have not done it before. It is great to see this group growing and meeting new people. Thanks to Pam for leading the group and to Nicki for organising the Cycle Group as well as following up at the rear on the day. See you all next month.



Wednesday 17 May, 2023: Ross Peak

Trip Leader and Reporter: Jenny Williamson

Twenty four trampers gathered at the No 2 Line road end in anticipation of a tramp which the Club has not done for some time. The weather was looking good and we were not the only ones making the most of the day. A small plane made multiple passes over the nearby farmland distributing fertilizer.

Before we set off it seemed a good opportunity to talk about being properly prepared for a day in the Ruahines, especially as there were several new trampers - hopefully prospective club members. - Two of our more experienced members gave advice on being alert to one's surroundings and on what gear we should all be carrying and wearing. Christine Finnigan kindly emptied her pack to show what she always carries, weighing about 7kg. This included spare clothing, wet weather gear (overtrousers, rain coat, pack cover), gloves, hat and socks, spare bootlaces, bivvy, emergency blanket, PLB, compass and first aid kit, extra food, water and a torch. (Editor's note: Also [see the list on the Club web site.](#))

Radios were distributed and I gave a quick summary of what to expect. DOC had done some work on the track earlier in the year, and Chris Teo-Sherrell and his friend Kyle have made some improvements, with extra marking making the route much clearer.

We tramped for about an hour and a half before stopping for morning tea at a grassy patch with views of the farm land below. A hunter, who had joined us on the farm land, then dived off into the bush to check out the deer possibilities. Two members turned back at this point and ten decided to get ahead of the main group as they wanted to move faster and further. The track is steep initially, as well as muddy and slippery. It flattens out towards the top and there were some great views out over the Manawatu towards Ruapehu and Ngauruhoe although Taranaki was not visible. Then the weather started to close in with mist covering our surroundings. After another hour of tramping, it was clear that it was not going to be possible to see much even if we reached Ross Peak so we stopped for lunch then began the return trip.

The bush was quite beautiful with moss and lichen covered trees and debris (windfall) all very green and moist: lots of tree and ground ferns and some interesting fungi. On the way down we were accompanied by a Kereru which almost seemed to be following us.

All back at the vehicles by 2.45 pm, we decided we needed coffee and cake at the Herb Farm, something we don't always get with most cafes closing at or before 3 pm.

Many thanks to a great group of trampers for making it a happy day and looking after each other. Special thanks to Mary for driving the van, Denise, Geoff, Christine and Marion for providing transport for all the rest.

Thursday 18 May, 2023: Makahika Track

Trip Leader, Reporter & Photographer: Royce Mills
I may not have promoted this tramp very well, describing it as a "wet feet" tramp but six signed up to join me for a tramp along the Makahika track from the southern end. For most of us it has been some time since walking in here and it was good to be back. We were fortunate to have perfect tramping weather although with several stream



crossings, yes, it was wet feet and some porridgy mud in places too. We emerged out of the bush at Archey's lookout and enjoyed the views. We chatted here for a while and I noted some team reluctance about leaving the warm sunshine and heading back into the gloom of the forest. Anyway it was not too much further for a lunch stop at the platform at Horowhenua lookout. In spite of high cloud we enjoyed clear views here of the peaks of both Taranaki and Ruapehu.

On the return journey we took a detour on a newly cut and marked track to view a Foxhole. Little is known about the history of this large pit, but it is thought to have been dug by soldiers training before and during the Malay conflict of the 1950's and 60's.

It had been a walk of 17km taking almost 7 hours, including stops. Ken was carrying his bush saw and



enthusiastically tackled supplejack and other obstacles all along the track. He and helper Tony certainly left the track in better condition than we found it.

Thanks to Ken for driving the van. Thanks also to everyone for your very good company on the day (and not one complaint about wet feet) - although being the only woman I did find the conversation was occasionally rather "blokey". We were (L to R) Wayne Lincoln, Tony Evans, Ken

Mercer, Chris Mercer, Ian August, Jeff Baldwin, and photographer, Royce Mills.

Wednesday 24 May, 2023: Blue Range Hut or Mikimiki Track

Trip Leader and Mikimiki Track Reporter: Harold Petterson

Blue Range Hut Reporter: Mary Mercer

Photographers: Alan Hawkins and Mary Mercer

Twenty five trampers, including two new members, met at 9 am at the end of Kiriwhakapapa Road. There was a choice of tracks: ten went on the Mikimiki track and fifteen to Blue Range Hut. After last week's reminder of what gear trampers needed, some had checked their equipment and rectified any shortcomings.

Mikimiki Track

The track was in quite good condition and not particularly slippery. There were some bogs which meant muddy boots though there were detours on some bad patches. The track is not entirely flat but the climbs are quite steady. The stream was not high but crossing it did involve wet feet. Two people chose not to cross the stream and instead investigated the nearby trees, mosses, fungi etc. There was much to see in the beautiful surroundings. The main party stopped for lunch near the experimental plantation. The tramp took longer than anticipated but all were back by about 3.30 pm.



Blue Range Hut

After a brief outline of the day's plan from our trip leader, Harold, the 15 aiming for Blue Range hut set off along the lovely wide path through giant red woods in the midst of native NZ bush. The Kiriwhakapapa Stream was running clear below the bridge and the tributary a bit further on was easy to step across. It was a bit muddy and slippery as we began to climb fairly steeply up though tree roots surrounded by beautiful trees and shrubs with lots of moss and ferns in many shades of green. Ewen kept a tally of the trampers and we stayed in one, somewhat spread out, group til after our morning tea break. As we got higher the air became cooler and, by the time it began to rain, I was glad to stop and don my raincoat for protection against the breeze as well as the water drops.



After the turn off from the track to Cow Creek Hut at about 960 m, the Blue Range Hut track sidles around the hill and then down to the hut at 900 m. (According to the NZTopo50 app on my phone we climbed 751 m in total from the Kiriwhakapapa car park at 320 m above sea level.) The front runners took a bit over two hours to reach the hut (discounting our tea break) and the rest of the group were

ensconced in the hut for lunch within another 35 minutes or so. Unfortunately the clag meant we could not see the surrounding peaks of the Tararuas but it did remain fine on our trip down the hill and we were all back at the car park well before 3 pm and first of the Mikimiki groups.

The van and some car occupants stopped at the Mount Bruce cafe and Palmerston North was reached just at dusk. My thanks to Wendy, who drove the van, and to the vehicle drivers, Ewen, Terry, Jenny and Bernard.

Thursday 25 May, 2023: Punga Hut

Trip leader and Reporter: Ken Mercer

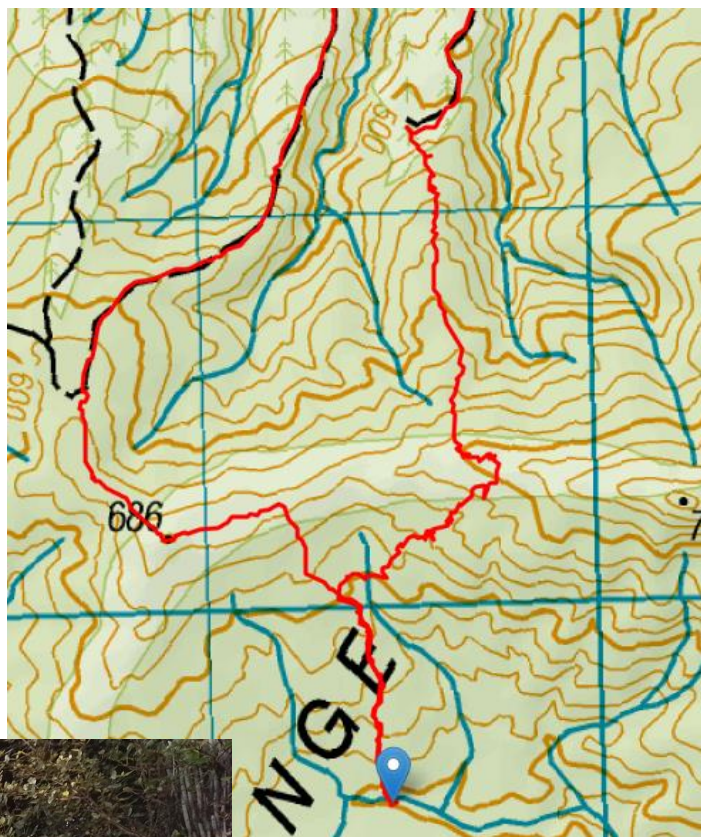
Images: Ken Mercer (map) and Anja Scholz

Equipped with the GPS track from my first and only visit to Punga Hut, a 7.30am start and lovely weather, what could go wrong? Too much chatter, that's what, as we overshoot by 800m the road junction we should

have taken in the Gordon Kear forest. Continuing up the present road to the tops then rejoining the track would give us a track, with an additional 100m climb in regenerating bush. As a bonus we'd complete a loop which has to be better than there-and-back! Hopefully there'd be a hunter's trail or we'd bash some bush to get to the clear area on the top. Well, we should have looked more carefully as the shading of the top wasn't indicating tussock but leatherwood. Remarkably there was still good cheer even when we realized the track to the hut didn't go along the ridge – duh - I'd been misled by an errant point on my electronic track.

It was only 400m along the ridge to the actual track but we opted to drop over the south side to get below the leatherwood and angle our way towards the track to the hut. We had multiple unmarked watercourses to cross which, at that altitude, weren't too precipitous and eventually reached the track to the hut which was even marked with orange triangles!

Twenty minutes later we'd descended to the hut which is primitive but lovely and has survived remarkably well for many years.



The return trip had its own small drama at a point where the track was hidden with monster tussocks which also concealed an old fence. Eventually we got back to the road end to find that Chris, who had gone ahead, had reversed the minibus down the hill to the barrier bridge and saved us the final climb! It was great to hear that the group of 12 had generally enjoyed themselves and have even said they'd go with me on future trips!





Contact Details

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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 and two bivvy bags. Ice axes, crampons, and helmets are also available. We have three personal locator beacons (PLB) for which there is no charge. Contact the Gear Custodian: Rob Pringle on 020 426 2176.

Website <https://www.mtsc.nz/>

This contains club information, photos, contact details and back issues of this newsletter, Beechleaves. The club website is maintained by Howard Nicholson 027 294 1941 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 internet payment (please email to confirm before depositing) Westpac account number 03 1521 022035300 or by cash to 179 Cook St Palmerston North 4410 in person.

	Members	Guests	The lodge phone number is (07) 892 3860.
19+ yrs (Adult)	\$50	\$75	
12-18 yrs (Youth)	\$40	\$60	
5-11 yrs (Child)	\$32	\$52	
0-4 yrs (Pre-school)	\$0	\$0	