

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 09 October, 2023



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 7pm.

7 pm Monday 2 October, 2023: Interclub Photo Competition MUSA Lounge, Massey Uni campus

7 pm Tuesday 3 October, 2023: Manawatu Geopark by E. Professor Vince Neall

Moves are afoot to create a Manawatu Geopark centred upon Te Apati, the Manawatu Gorge and its surrounding environs. There is a wealth of geological and geomorphological opportunities for designated geosites which help explain the evolution of the region, both from a neotectonic but also past climate history standpoint. In this talk I will explain the basis for a number of these sites and what you can see and understand about the geological history above a convergent plate boundary.



Cheryl Dawson Pukeatua Tramp

7 pm Tuesday 7 November, 2023: Penguins: Antarctic field work and little penguin conservation

John Cockrem is a penguin biologist who has worked with Adelie and emperor penguins in Antarctica, and with hoiho (yellow-eyed penguins) and kororā (little penguins) in New Zealand. He will talk about field work with



Cheryl Dawson Pukeatua Tramp

penguins in Antarctica, including trips around Ross Island and camping on sea ice to work with emperor penguins. The second part of the talk will cover conservation studies of kororā at Napier Port, Mana Island and other North and South Island sites, work with community groups, and advocacy for kororā that face threats such as marina building and sand mining off the coast of Taranaki.

Tuesday 5 December, 2023: 6 pm Walk and 7.30 pm Dinner

Meet at the Summerhill car park for a walk in Summerhill Reserve then back for dinner at the Indian Summer Restaurant.

Lodge Work Parties

Lodge Manager: John Lyttle

This coming year's work plan is to repaint the exterior of the lodge and do some internal touch ups.

Each weekend will be free for helpers with possible transport available from various centres dependent on attendees. We need all levels of help from painters to cleaner uppers to cooks. Work parties will only occur with a reasonable future forecast so please register your interest so that we can contact you directly as to whether the weekend is on. Most equipment will be provided by club but do bring usual lodge requirements as well as painting clothes, electric sanders, powers lead and your favourite paint brush.

Any questions and/or registrations for the weekends to John Lyttle at lodge.manager@mtsc.nz or text 027 433 6307.

Dates	17-19 Nov 2023
	15-17 Dec 2023
	26-28 Jan 2024
	9-11 Feb 2024
	8-10 Mar 2024



Crazy Ideas Corner

Our President is overseas and Brett Gillies suggested that we have an "ideas" segment ages ago so, finally, here is the first of an occasional series by our Chief Guide, Ken Mercer, and, we hope, others.



By Robyn Laing

The Raincoat Problem

It's a Hobson's choice. Walking in the rain I get wet, from the outside. Wearing a raincoat doesn't help – I sweat and still get wet. Additionally, my hood closes around my ears and I cannot follow the conversation and isn't that why we go tramping? A waterproof hat generally solves the latter problem. As a kid I was desperate to get a coat with a hood but I've since learned that it's not a panacea so, for a decade or so, I've reverted to a rain hat, most of the time. A hat helps with the ventilation too.

Another issue on wet days is my pack gaining weight as it absorbs water. Important stuff inside is safe in drybags and a pack cover is a great help. However, rain runs down my back where the pack cover isn't and the water soaks in. The straps and hip belt both soak it up too.

I'm now up to version 4 of my combination pack cover and poncho which goes a long way to improve things. It doesn't replace a proper coat for really heavy rain so I'll always carry a coat. Also my back still sweats but that's an issue for another day, sunny or otherwise. However my combination is airy enough (tick), doesn't mess up my hearing (tick), protects my whole pack from the rain (tick) and deflects most of the drizzle (½ tick). It's also only added 50g to my pack cover. It's even useful for protecting my pack in rain heavy enough to need a rain coat as well.



MTSC 2024 Calendars for sale . \$20 each

Features winning photographs from this year’s photo competition; A4 printed on both sides in colour, saddle stitched and hole punched for hanging.

If you would like to purchase a calendar(s) contact the Beechleaves Newsletter Editor at newsletter@mtsc.org.nz or other Committee members.

January 2024



We welcome the following new members to the club: Campbell Boulton, Anne Marie Guiney and family (Benjamin, Charlotte, Georgina and Olivia Hoy), Kevin Low, Ben Runciman and family (Jess, Emmanuel Keziah, Phoebe and Rebekah), Karlos Schaaf, Tim Stonehouse and family (Catherine Coombs).



October Wednesday Tramps			October Thursday Tramps		
04	Mary Mercer	027 372 5375	05	Anja Scholz	027 749 5811
11	Rod McKenzie	027 246 8156	12	Christine Scott	021 724 098
18	Carole Kennerley	027 264 0232	19	Jeff Baldwin	027 448 4483
25	Ewen Cameron	022 034 11780	26	Suzanne Clark	021 078 6279
October Weekend					
14	Linton & Beyond Bike Ride – Mary & Ken Mercer 027 372 5375 (Details over page)				
November Weekend					
04-05 Nov Lodge Social – Jeff Baldwin 027 448 4483 (Details over page)					
February or March, 2024					
Bridge to Nowhere via Mangapurua Valley - Graham Baker / Alan Hawkins (More below) Cycling or tramping					

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.

14 October, 2023: Linton and Beyond Bike Ride

Mary & Ken Mercer 027 372 5375 or Mary.Mercer.NZ@gmail.com

We will depart from the Esplanade side of the He Ara Kotahi bridge at **9.30 am** to ride to Linton Army Camp, then right on to Camp Rd, left on to Whitmore Rd and right on to Weld Rd for a short distance. From there we will cycle through a private farm (with kind permission from the farmer, Jared) and onto Akers Rd, near a railway crossing. Then it's left into Te Puna Rd past the turn off for a bit, then back to Lochmoigh Rd, left into Linton Drain Rd, right into Craws Rd then right into Linton Station Rd and along to the historic Craw house (built in 1897). Then it's back to Akers Rd and a retrace of our route and on to the Esplanade Café for a coffee. Total distance is about 40 km with very few hills. The farm track is unsealed and a bit bumpy but all the roads are sealed and fairly quiet.

4-5 November, 2023: Weekend Social Get Together at the MTSC Lodge

Jeff Baldwin 027 448 4483 or jpbaldwin@inspire.net.nz

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 Jeff jpbaldwin@inspire.net.nz

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:** \$50 per person per night plus the cost of transport based on mileage (likely to be about \$50).

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: <http://mtsc.nz/lodge-trip-gear/> :

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) – Everyone to meet at the MTSC lodge. Have lunch; get settled, sort beds, gear, etc

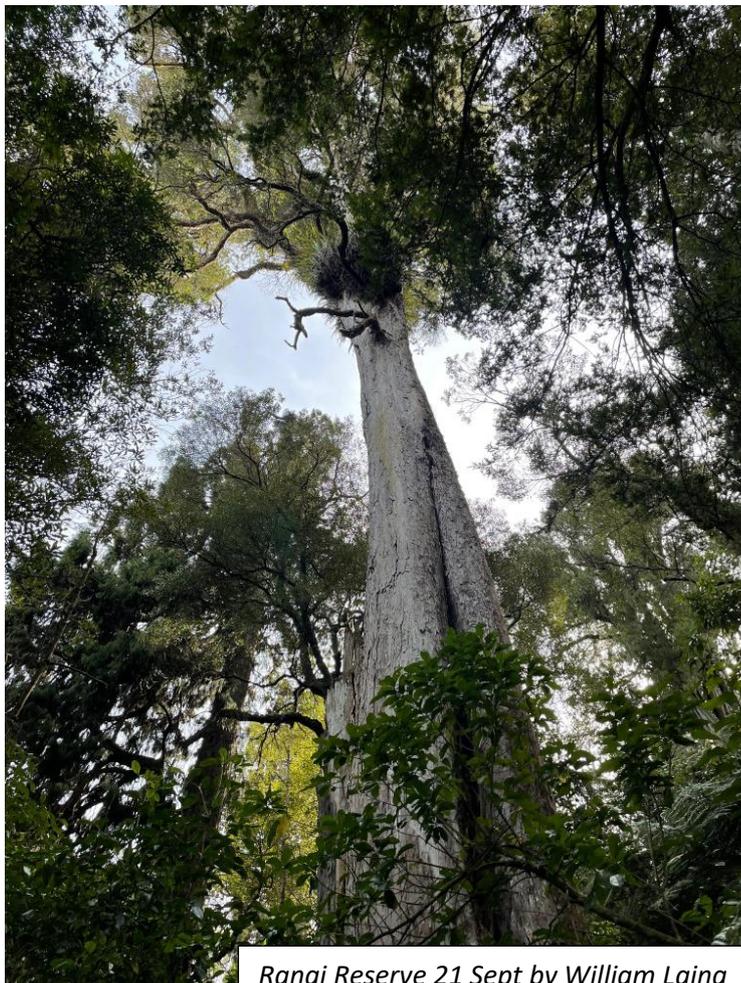
Relax and/or do local walks

Later....Music, Munchies 'n' Mingle

Shared dinner and social evening.

Sunday: There are four options...

1. Own time
2. Sky Waka – Could meet 'Option 4' trampers at Café



Rangi Reserve 21 Sept by William Laing

3. Silica Rapids Walk or maybe, if keen, Tama Lakes – Transport to be sorted on the day
4. Lodge to NZ Alpine Club Hut to Café / down via Sky Waka; weather dependent; 3 hours.... More challenging.

Additional Info:

- There is 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, Jeff will gather more info re what people are wanting to join, etc.
- The aim is to keep it relaxed, flexible and weather appropriate.

February or March, 2024: Bridge to Nowhere via Mangapurua Valley

Graham Baker 027 288 7875 G.Baker@xtra.co.nz or Alan Hawkins 0210624106 kiwitampa2@gmail.com

The proposed trip would be open to bikers and trampers. Accommodation will be at Raetihi (approximate cost \$60 per night per person).

Shuttle from Raetihi to road end and start of the track. Cycle or tramp to the Bridge to Nowhere then Jet boat ride to Pipiriki. Shuttle from Pipiriki back to accommodation in Raetihi. Total cost of Shuttles: \$180 per person. Fuel cost, at 10c per km, will be approximately \$50 from PN to Raetihi. Total cost will be about \$300 plus food.

There will be an option to bike the Old Coach Road on the way home. If you decide to book an extra night's accommodation, allow another \$60 per person. If interested, contact Graham or Alan



Punga Hut Loop 20 Sept by Denise Shailer

TRIP REPORTS

Friday 25 August, 2023: Te Araroa Trust Managhao / Makahika Work Party

Reporter: Terry Carkeek

Photographers: Terry Carkeek & Heather McGregor

Seven people split into two parties working from each end to cross over with a vehicle key swap in the middle. A long 8 1/2 hour day saw us out just before dusk, but well worthwhile.



Wednesday 30 August, 2023: Pukeatua/Fence Line

Trip leader and Reporter: Margaret McKenzie

Photographers: Ewen Cameron, Cheryl Dawson

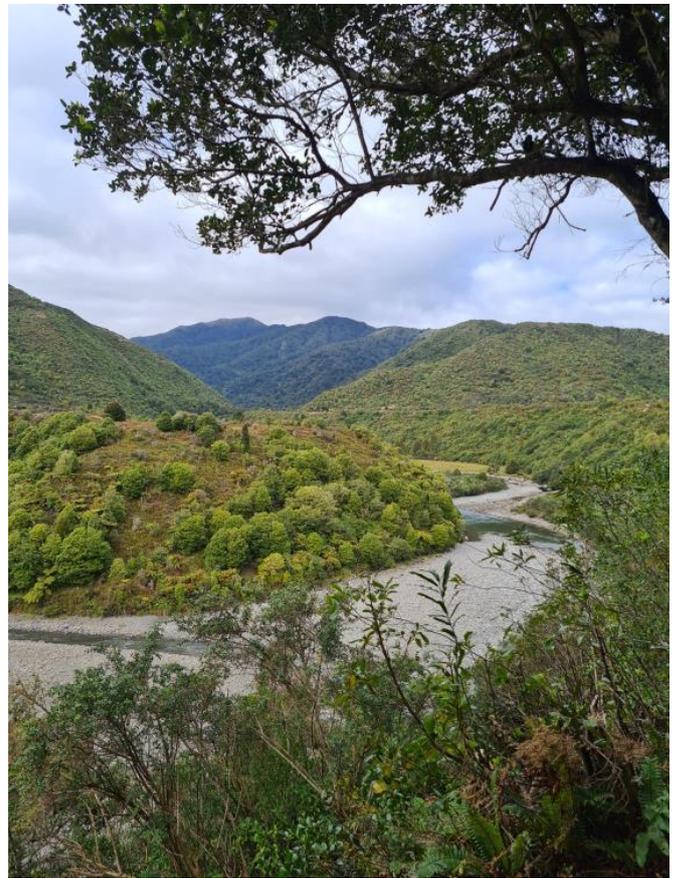
Trying to think of somewhere we haven't been for a while led me to Waitewaewae Hut track, Otaki Forks. However, on advice from Brett Gillies, I changed to Pukeatua Track which is a leg of the Te Araroa Trail between Otaki Forks and Waikanae. It turns out that very few of us had done the walk. I asked Brett to lead us up this beautiful track since he had worked on it earlier in the year.



Thirty two of us arrived at what is now the road end of Otaki Gorge Road. From here it is a 6 km walk in, over a slip and down the old road, to the start of the tracks. From the shelter which included excellent maps of the area and the tracks, eight chose to walk the alternative Fenceline Track, a decent 3.7 km loop up through the bush. The other 24 didn't have time to get to the highest point but still managed to reach 550 m where we stopped for lunch. The total Pukeatua tramp for the day was 17.4 km.

We now have a good knowledge of these two tracks for the future. It is sad to see the lovely camping spots in the area now unused because there is no road access.

Many thanks to Brett for his assistance, to Anne West for leading the Fenceline group, to Mary for driving the van and to the drivers Geoff, Terry, Trevor, Jenny, Ewen and Pam with husband, Jon.



Wednesday 30 August, 2023: Ngawakahiamoe Reserve Recce

Trip Leader, Photographer and Reporter: Gay Janssen

Margaret Foot, Coralie Davies and Gay Janssen visited this reserve on farmland near Poroutawhao School. This is a private reserve currently being setup in a Trust. Historically a significant swamp area which could be accessed via channels from the Manawatu River, now largely drained for farming, the area has been found to contain rare land snails. ([See DOC website.](#)) The owner, with significant support from local Hapu, community and school is extending the bush area with plants grown from seed taken from the reserve.



We arrived at 10am and were invited inside to see maps, snail samples (viewed through magnifying glasses) and learn something of the early Māori history before being driven down through the farm to the reserve which contains the most significant stands of Pukatea in the area, as well as several other notable trees. At present only part of the reserve has fairly rudimentary tracks, and the area where the photo of the Pukatea tree (L) was taken, no tracks at all so at present access is restricted. At times the water table makes areas impassable but we were lucky that all places were accessible for our visit. We stopped at 12 midday for a snack at the site of a proposed toilet block and recently erected signpost of sponsor and supporters. Future plans here also include an accessible cottage. After completing the walk we went back to the house for lunch and chat finally leaving at

3pm. We thanked our hostess by way of donations to the Reserve and also purchasing cards made using photos from the reserve.

Thursday & Friday 31 August 1 September, 2023: Jumbo Hut

Trip Leader: Jenny McCarthy

Reporter: Jeff Baldwin

Photographers: William Laing & Bill Milham

A fine winters day and eighteen of us left Holdsworth carpark at around 9:15 am to head to Atiwhakatu. We all lunched together at the hut then most returned, while Alistair, Jeff, Jenny, Bill and Heather continued up the steep climb to Jumbo hut to stay the night.

Our arrival at 3 pm meant we had plenty of time to prepare a warm fire. Luckily Jenny had brought kindling and Alistair paper to get the wet wood started. Disappointingly none of the gas stoves were working in the so called 'serviced' hut. Again, this mighty bunch of experienced trampers came to the rescue with 3 gas burners to share.



We all settled in for the night with a warm hut, warm food, a little alcohol and card games. Alistair taught a new game of Up River and Down River with Jeff pleased to uphold his standards and be the winner. There were lots of laughs. Alistair entertained with his original delicious cuisine of chocolate and noodles. A great moon rose above the horizon and we were all snug in bed by 7.45pm.

We headed out to an incredible sunrise and clear skies at around 8.10am, after minimal snoring through the night. It was important we rugged up across the tops, and after a couple of hours we dropped down East Holdsworth track to get out of

the cold; rather than persevering to Powell. By 2.30pm we were back at the carpark after brilliant leadership from Jenny who made sure we kept safe and kept to a good pace to suit us all. To finish the day Bill boiled water to satisfy his need for coffee but, after his boiling water landed on the grass, it got too hard to wait. Next stop: BP service station coffee before heading home, reminded once again how wonderful it is stay out overnight and be on top of the Tararua ranges.

Wednesday 6 September, 2023: Pinnacle Circuit or Mountain House

Trip leader and Reporter 1: John Salisbury

Photographer: Ken Mercer

Twenty six trampers gathered miraculously at the Holdsworth carpark. Two groups were formed, the larger one to tramp up to Mountain House and the smaller one to tackle the Pinnacle Ridge. Many thanks to Margaret who commanded the larger group, got them there and brought them all back safely. (See her report below.)



Pinnacle Circuit: A good stretch for the seven bold souls who braved the shorter* Pinnacle circuit: a lovely day, only a smattering of rain and good views from the top though pretty slippery underfoot in places.

We swapped leaders' role whenever I walked off the track and managed to get all the way to the top and down to the river near Donnelly Flat without mishap. The river was low but still had to be crossed with care, so no one was lost downstream. Ropes at both sides assisted descent and ascent. Then there was a short sprint back to the van. Thanks to Ken for driving, and everyone who made it a team effort.

**Editor's note: Pinnacle is 877 m cf Mountain House at 660 m above sea level.*

Mountain House

Reporter 2: Margaret McKenzie

Photographer: Cheryl Dawson

The good thing about tramping in the Mt Holdsworth area is that there are quite a few track options. Fifteen of us chose to walk the Atiwhakatu track to meet up with the River Ridge track which ultimately meets up with the Gentle Annie track. As most of us had only walked down the Ridge track in the past, it was the day to try the opposite direction. It proved to be a good choice as the climb was long but gradual and the beech trees lovely. At the junction near Mountain House shelter we met up with the Fearsome Four who had chosen to walk up the Gentle Annie track.

All up everyone tramped their preferred track, courtesy of the Mt Holdsworth track options.



Thursday 7 September, 2023: Atene Skyline

Trip Leader and Reporter: William Laing

Photographer: Jeff Baldwin, William Laing

I never realised that Atene was the word Athens transliterated into Māori and, in a way, the semicircular basin with steep walls that represents the enclosed old loop of the Whanganui River does look like ruins that you could imagine built in Athens in Ancient Greece.



We walked in a clockwise direction, up to the top of the 'wall' through mainly reverting farmland until we reached the top which undulated up and down, through bush along a narrow ridge. Going clockwise was easier as the uphill path was an old farm track which meant it was on a reasonable gradient. As you walk along you can look down from the top and realise that this ridge we are walking on is only a metre or two

wide with steep drops to each side. Luckily, along much of the way, there were trees growing down the steep bank to catch you if you slipped. For the first part of the walk, the bush was mainly regenerating trees from old farmland but, after the shelter (a little over halfway), there were taller more established beech trees showing this ridge, at least on its upper reaches, had not been fully cleared.



In uphill and downhill parts, the track was muddy and slippery but the mud was not deep. Along the undulating top, the track had a dry surface, with lots of brown rewarewa leaves lying on the ground. They don't seem to rot fast. Some of those undulations were quite steep, so although the highest point was only about 500 m above the start, we climbed a total of 650m.

We had a pleasant lunch in the sun at the shelter and then completed the circuit. Several members of the party hurried on ahead to reach the exit to the road in less than 6 hours. They then walked the 2.2 km back to where the vehicles were parked and drove them back to the exit, saving us the final road walk. That was much appreciated.

A great day out, good tramping weather, pleasant bush with wonderful views including the Whanganui River sparking in the distance and enjoyable company. Thanks to Helen and Jeff for driving.

Saturday 9 September, 2023: Mt Curl Bike Ride

Trip Leader and Reporter: Chris Brunskill

Photographer: Royce Mills

The day dawned with a clear sky and no wind. Fifteen beautifully fit, enthusiastic bike riders turned up in Marton for a 40 km ride. At 10.30am we left, travelling down Tutaenui Road, then Galpins Road, right into Warren Road (all going well have not lost anyone yet), left into Mt Curl Road where we took in some lovely hill country views and climbed some hills. Next was payback for all that climbing: down hill for 2 km (yippee!) then right into Leedstown Road, right into Jeffersons Line and back to the cars on Tutaenui Road. Coffee was at Moomaa café and home by 3 pm. What a good day!!!



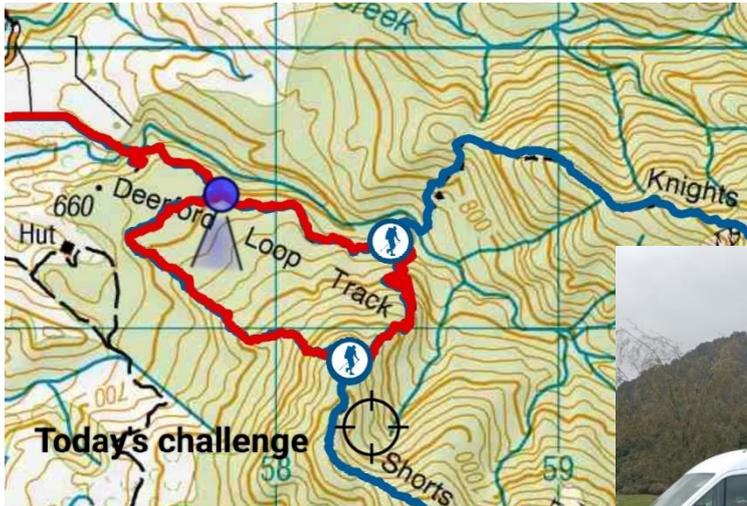
Tuesday 12 December, 2023: Cruisy Tuesday 2

Trip Leader, Driver and Reporter: Bob Hodgson

A small band of five started at about 9-30am from the Balance end of the Gorge Track and made their way up the many steps then down to the junction with the Klein Track which we then followed it to the Balance Bridge. As we arrived the wind became very gusty and strong making the walk across the final bridge a bit adventurous. We arrived at our starting point soon after noon. All in all, a very pleasant wee tramp, with the ascent and decent of the equivalent of 30 flights of steps so it was also a reasonable work out. Thanks to Bob (2), Mary, Coralie and Marilyn for your company.

Wednesday 13 September, 2023: Deerford Loop Track

Trip Leader and Photographer: Trevor Bain



1

nineteen brave souls



2

trudging up hill



3

and down dale



4

destination achieved



The view from Deerford Loop Track by William Laing

Thursday & Friday 14 -15 September, 2023: Hatepe Tree Planting

Trip Organiser: Chris Mercer

Trip Leader: Jeff Baldwin

Photographers: Ken Mercer & Jeff Baldwin

Trip Reporter: Mary Mercer

After organising the funding for the trees and volunteer planters, Chris ended up in hospital just before this trip though we are pleased to report that he is back home now and we all hope his upcoming therapy goes well. As a result, seven of us gathered at Jeff's place on Thursday morning with an impressive amount of luggage for a two day trip. It was just as well that Alistair and Anne chose to take their own car! Three hours later we arrived at Chris' family bach at Hatepe, right beside Lake Taupo. After a rather late morning tea we set off by van or, for Jeff and me, on foot to collect a wheel barrow from a neighbour's place, and then to meet the truck and trailer from Rotorua



loaded with 1000 native seedlings. It didn't take very long to unload all the pots and trays near SH1. The two wheelbarrows and one little four wheeled cart

came in handy for transporting the plants, poles, fertilizer tablets and other gear to the two areas Chris had marked out for planting with road cones. Again, thanks to Chris, the sites had already been cleared of the extensive blackberry and other scrub so Jeff was able to lay out the seedlings in quite a dense pattern ready for planting. Some very prickly blackberry branches remained on the surface ready to attack the unwary but the soil was reasonably soft. Fortunately, the lumps of pumice in the soil were easy to cut through with a shovel so the digging and planting went ahead at speed. By about 4.30 pm we reckoned we had planted about half the seedlings and decided our backs deserved a break. The short walk back to Chris' bach was very therapeutic. That evening was spent, snug in the bach, enjoying drinks and nibbles then a delicious meal prepared by Leonie, Jeff and Jenny while admiring the wind-whipped waves on the lake. Once dark we could see the lights of Taupo.

There was rain overnight but, amazingly, it stayed fine all Friday morning though we set off for the planting areas in overcast, rather cooler conditions. As on the previous day, some of our group transported seedlings to the site, Jeff laid the plants out, others dug and planted and yet others marked out the little plants with big poles. Both the dense planting and carpet square laid around the plants are intended to reduce the weeds.



By 10.20 am we all felt we had earned a break and, just as we sat down, Greening Taupo, DoC, Project Tongariro and Pathways volunteers turned up. Jeff set them to work and, while we relaxed, they finished the planting. We returned to the bach about midday, ready for a quick lunch, clean up and pack up so we were on our way back to PN by 1.30 pm.

We were Jeff Baldwin, Alistair and Anne Hall, Leonie Lowndes, Jenny McCarthy, Steve Glasgow, Ken and Mary Mercer and Audrey Shepherd. Thanks to Jeff for taking over the organisation, to Jeff and Ken for driving the van and everyone for great company and a job well done. Also thanks to Chris Mercer for organising a very satisfying expedition. (Just hope the pigs, clearly active very close to the Hatepe baches, don't dig up too many plants!)

Wednesday 20 September, 2023: Punga Hut

Trip Leader & Reporter 1: Anja Scholz
Photographer: Denise Shailer

Punga Hut – Not

Those that follow me - not on Twitter but on more or less muddy, steep, unmarked and otherwise curse worthy tracks – know by now that my trip reports tend to feature learning opportunities, i.e. how could I possibly write a trip report without a language lesson? Some of these new insights can then be casually dropped at dinner parties, theatre intervals, and other social occasions where one wants to be viewed as a well rounded, learned citizen.



Sooooooo, Punga Hut: Looking at above photo one might think the construction material of the hut has something to do with its name. NOT SO! The Māori dictionary advises us that the main meaning of 'punga' is 'anchor' (noun) or 'to anchor/secure' (verb).

Incidentally, most of us had been slightly mispronouncing the written name, calling the hut 'Ponga Hut' instead. Lo and behold; here we strike a bonanza (although the 'dry forest' bit is debatable considering the condition of the hut's surroundings...):

ponga

1. (noun) silver tree fern, *Cyathea dealbata* - tall, native tree-fern with prominent, peg-like frond bases on the trunk and having fronds green or yellow-green above and silver-white beneath. The frond stalk is white. Common in dry forest and open scrub.

And now that we have established where we went, some notes on the actual 'getting there'...

A small but select group of 34 trampers arrived in the club van and six cars at the Scotts Road gate to the Gordon Kear Forest. I had roped in Bev and Gary, key holding, useful-Toyota-4WD-truck driving, loop track knowing hunters and trampers. On the outwards journey toward the parking area we luckily only had to drag one tree off the road, which was done with bravado, as well as the help



of the above mentioned vehicle, Ken and his trusty handsaw and a number of helping hands. The extra kilometres on the



forestry roads saved about a couple of hours walking – much appreciated, especially on return to the vehicles.

Trying to save some dollars for my upcoming trip to Germany, I had yet again been stingy with the sun-o-metre, so the wind was up, temperature and cloud down, and donning long sleeves and -johns did now not only defy the overgrown track but also the weather. Bev's spiel about the loop track that she and Gary were to lead proved more popular than my lame 'there and back' option to Ponga Hut, so off that group went with 20 intrepids: >>> Royce's loop track report (over the page) can be read from here on.

The rest of the group under my capable leadership made it all the way into the first toetoe/tussock clearing before getting briefly flummoxed regarding the eternal question of 'right or wrong' track. Incidentally, right was wrong and left was right so we were soon on the bush track leading up to the ridge and high point of our trip at 686m. The loop group had veered off to the right (which was right) and we carried on left (which was east) along the ridge. Wind still very cold and views of inside cloud, so as the group spread out a fair bit, I tried to shuttle back and forth to get everyone to the point where we dropped off the ridge and could have morning tea in a more sheltered place. Some grumbling was heard about morning tea timing and dehydration; however my concern was the other 'hy' word, so I pushed everyone into the trees for a stop and snack. Thought that I might have missed my vocation as drill sergeant (lol).

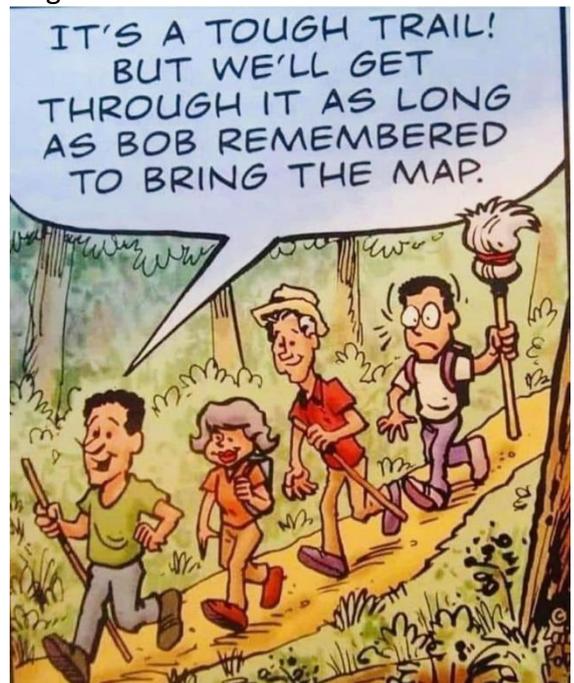
As the group had spread out so much due to differing speeds I commandeered a couple of further assistant leaders, Helen and Mary. Since no one wanted to retrace their steps after morning tea - the second 'high' point in form of Ponga Hut looming - we all carried on down the muddy slippery hill. I was tail end Charlotte, and soon it was just me and Bob making our way slowly down. At lunchtime Bob had decided to have a break and abandon Ponga Hut in favour of return to the vehicles. All the others, meantime, made it to the hut and, while it mightn't have been the easiest track for some, I think reaching this little gem made it worth the tramp. >>> Some added comments here from the 'made the hut!!' group hopefully added for perusal! *Wow, there it is! Yea! We made it! What an interesting little hut.*

By now we had also heard from the loop group which had navigated some extra challenges to get to the hut.

The return journey for me and Bob was slow but steady, with somehow more mud to contend with once we dropped back down from the ridge. We only had minor deviations from the track (damn you, tussock) and got caught up by some speedy trampers from the 'made the hut!!' group. The last slippery downhill to the vehicles, and behind us we could already hear that everybody was catching up, so we all got back in good time (3pm-ish).

Getting to the hut, and navigating some off track, seemed to have gone down well with most folk – thanks very much loop leaders and tail end Charlies, as you would have had a tricky time keeping such a large group together in that terrain. Thanks also to my group's assistant leaders. Thanks to drivers Mary (van), Lorraine, Jenny, Marilyn, Trevor, Rod and Gary and apologies you all had to do a major car clean afterwards. Thanks Royce for doing the loop trip report. In my state of relaxation (brain shut down) after we all made it back to the vehicles, I left my radio lying on the grass – thanks Ken for seeing it and picking it up!! Apologies to Bob – I just HAD to put the little cartoon in though I know you would never forget the map!

Last words.... I was thrilled that my trip to Ponga Hut was popular and that nearly everyone got to the hut. The size of the groups, though, was a bit of a concern in hindsight, as keeping people with varying speeds together in off track / route terrain proved not an easy task. Something to ponder –



as I would still want to offer, and others to offer, trips to popular destinations. Now I just hope for someone who's been there to offer the Ponga Hut loop so I can follow....



Thanks all – it was a good wee effort!
(Remember from a previous trip report, I got that understatement thing down pat.)

Punga Hut Loop

Reporter 2: Royce Mills

After our convoy of cars and the van drove into Gordon Kear forest as far as we could go with our vehicles, we divided into two groups. Twenty of us chose to join Bev and Gary on a longer loop track to Punga hut. This was a hunters' trail and we were mostly in low bush and scrub above head height which gave us good shelter. The trail was generally well defined; however from time to time we had to stop and think about our route and we were glad to have Bev and Gary's knowledge and leadership to find our way. One of the highlights was crossing a deep v-shaped valley with a small stream. It was more open here and as we climbed out we had a view of a waterfall and the impressive surrounding bush and hills.

We arrived at Punga hut at 1.15 pm and enjoyed a well-earned lunch. It's a very long time since I have been there

and the hut was almost derelict then. It certainly has been renovated to become a comfortable "shelter from the storm". Departing the hut we followed the regular track uphill and out - it was rather porridgey in places! We were back to our vehicles at 3.15 pm.

It was very satisfying to complete this circuit, a tramp of almost 8 km with an elapsed time of 5 hours 45 minutes which shows the going was fairly slow!

Thanks Bev and Gary for leading this enjoyable and adventurous route through terrain so close to Palmerston North, but rarely visited except by hunters. Thanks Anja for choosing and organising this tramp - we were a very large group and your communication by email sorting out transport was very clear and impressive. Thanks also for obtaining the key which saved us a long, steep walk through Gordon Kear Forest. Thanks also to the drivers on the day; there were many of you!

Thursday 21 September, 2023: Rangī Reserve

Trip Leader: Judy Swainson

Photographers: Royce Mills, Jinny Andersen



Eight of us set off under the guidance of Mary Bielski. This 130 acre sanctuary of virgin native bush is relatively untouched from pre settler days. As we walked, Mary passionately pointed out the magnificent collection of giant podocarps: Matai, Rimu, Miro, Kahikatea and a few giant Totara. These tower over a lush forest floor, covered with sprawling giant Rata roots. Other specimens include Northern Rata, Hinau, Maire,

Rewarewa, Black Beech and several varieties of tree ferns.





Contact Details

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Committee 2023 - 2024

President	Tim Swale	022 134 8384
Secretary	Linda Campbell	027 333 4493
Treasurer	William Laing	022 099 7988
Chief Guide	Ken Mercer	027 364 6475
Membership	Anne Jolly	021 067 5898
Newsletter Editor	Mary Mercer	027 372 5375
Lodge Manager	John Lyttle	027 433 6307
Mini-Bus Manager	Ken Mercer	027 364 6475

General Committee: Nicki Fielder, Howard Nicholson, Blair Petersen, Rob Pringle, John Salisbury

Appointees

Lodge Bookings	Hugh & Liz Wilde	021 054 2560
Gear Custodian	Rob Pringle	020 678 0747
Ski Captain	Rob Pringle	027 678 0747
Social Convenor	Nicki Fielder	022 515 3807
Wednesday Trips	Rod McKenzie & Marion Beadle	
Thursday Trips	William Laing	022 099 7988
Biking Trips	Nicki Fielder	022 515 3807
Website Administration	Howard Nicholson	027 294 1941
Lodge Food Coordinator	Howard Nicholson	027 294 1941
Facebook	Rob Pringle, Karen Tutt, Howard Nicholson	

facebook@mtsc.org.nz

New Members

Prospective members must be nominated by a Proposer and a Secunder who are current MTSC members and have been so for at least one year. New memberships are confirmed at the next monthly committee meeting. Prospective members are encouraged to go on a club trip or attend a club night before joining. For further information or an application form please see the club website.

Club Equipment

Hire equipment: we have packs, 2 and 3 person tents, tent flies (small and large), snow mats, gas cookers, size 8 and 9 boots, billies 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 (Pres-school)	\$0	\$0	