

post: P.O. Box 245, Palmerston North
web: www.mtsc.org.nz



Upcoming club nights

club nights: 7.30pm, 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month, at the Manawatu Aero Club rooms, Airport Drive.



2nd May – Hugh Wilde's "GPS evening"

We are going to borrow Garmin Etrex GPS units off the local SAR committee and have a play with them. We'll navigating a pre-arranged course near the aeroclub rooms with co-ordinates loaded into the GPSs, like we did a few years ago. Then a quick look at how to set one of these up for NZ Map Grid (i.e. topomaps) as sometimes people fiddle with them and change the settings. Jean and Ivan have kindly offered their help for this evening, so come along and learn how to use a useful tool that can aid (but not replace) map reading skills.

16th May – AGM 2006

The MTSC AGM will be at 7.30 p.m. at the Manawatu Districts Aero Club rooms. This will be an important opportunity to get involved with the way the club is run or voice your opinion on something in an open forum. Come along and have your say on any particular issues or just see how the club runs and vote for new committee members.

AGM

6th June – Victoria Range

In March Jean Garman and Ivan Rienks visited the Victoria Forest Park which is located inland from the Paparoas on the West Coast of the South Island. Despite its size it has limited tracks and huts but lovely open bush, fabulous tops, rampant bird life, sites of historical interest and wasps. A neat place to visit come along and be inspired to plan your next South Island trip there. Photo credit: www.niwasience.co.nz.



Saving twigs...

A club member recently emailed to ask that I add them to the newsletter email list and remove their name from the newsletter postal list. At present you have three options for receiving the newsletter: (1) by post, (2) by email, or (3) by both methods. Benefits of the email version are that it is in colour and you get it a week before the posted version.

If you'd like to revise the way you receive your newsletter then send me an email and let me know your preferences. Happy trails out there!

Wei-Hang Chua (Newsletter Ed.)
morepork@ihug.co.nz

Where we've been...



Above: Entering an Antarctic crevasse. See page 11 for part two of Dave Mitchell's report. Photo sent by Dave Mitchell.

Club notices



President's Piece by Christine Scott

We look forward to seeing you at the AGM. As always we are looking for new blood to come on the committee and we would be interested to hear from anyone who would like to help in the running of the club. The committee is sometimes criticised as not getting out and doing enough tramping. There are 2 ways to solve that: either committee members make more of an effort to get out tramping or some of our regular trampers make more of an effort to help in the running of the club. Thank you everyone who has been on the committee over the last 3 years - in particular thank you Howard and Doug for your support as secretary and treasurer. All the committee members have been great and it is unfair to single out anyone in particular. Good luck to Robert Pringle (Lodge Manager), who is heading overseas. We were very sorry to hear of the passing of John Gee Taylor recently. He has been a very active member of the club.

Christine Scott
Phone (06) 354-0510
or email: C.A.Scott@massey.ac.nz

Chief Guide's Report

by Tony Evans

We are responsible for our own safety in the hills so what should we take with us, here is my list.

1. A brain in working order. Good planning and common sense will prevent most, but not all, problems.
2. Adequate clothing and food. Even a short day tramp can lead to an unexpected night out and it can get cold out there at night, even in mid-summer.
3. A fly (or tent). With shelter from the elements and the above items a group can wait in comparative comfort and safety for help to arrive or for daylight or for an improvement in weather.
- 4, 5 & 6 equal. GPS, cellphone and PLB (Personal Locator Beacon). All very useful items and worth carrying but they have limits and do not replace the above 3 requirements.

1, 2 and 3 are essentials while 4,5 and 6 are optional extras, and remember also that a helicopter will not come to your aid in darkness, cloud or high winds. In

an emergency a fly can be set up as a shelter or simply pulled over a group to conserve and share body heat, it can literally be a lifesaver. **A fly should be carried on EVERY tramp, there is always one in the passenger door of the club van and they are available from the Gear Custodian at no charge.**

New Club Members

The club welcomes the following new members:

Ian Thomas & Kathryn Russell (Auckland)

Nicolas & Barbara Mels (PN).

Obituary

by Gary Bevins

Sadly John Gee-Taylor passed away at the fit age of 65. We extend our deepest sympathies to his wife, Annette and family. He will be dearly missed by all fellow trampers, but not forgotten. John was always keen to lead trips for the club and often attended club nights. After retiring from his farm at Rangiwahia, John had more time for tramping with many trips over seas at great heights (Nepal etc). He was a fun man to tramp with and we'll miss his favorite saying - "I don't mean to be rude or tell you how to do your job, but...".

Dave & Janet Allan have kindly offered to lead John's upcoming Longview Hut trip, but will not be able to take phone calls so please could you give your details to Tony Evans who will pass them on to Dave.



Season Ski Passes

Don't miss out. Buy your season ski pass before the 31st of April. Mt Ruapehu season passes: Early bird rate \$359 for Adults, \$309 for students, \$209 for youth (\$679 for adults after April). Save yourself \$10 off these prices by buying online at: <http://www.mtruapehu.com/rates.asp> The regular day price for an all mountain day pass is \$76 so if you ski for 5 days or more then you will be better off getting a season pass.

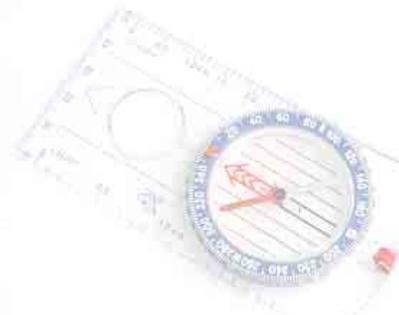
Skiing from Queenstown

Is anyone interested in up to 5-7 days skiing based from Frankton (Queenstown) in August? I have extra cheap accommodation in Frankton for up to 9 people (would have to include 2 couples as 2 beds are double beds!)

and a car. Public transport is available from Frankton to Coronet, Remarkables and Cardrona.
Contact Christine - 354 0510.

Gorge Track Sundays

Just a reminder: there is a standing invitation to anyone who would like company walking the Gorge Track of a Sunday morning. I go more Sundays than I don't (anywhere between 7:30 (seldom) and 8:30 (more usual)), meet my wife, Leslie, at the Beyond-the-Bridge Cafe for morning tea (or lunch more often) and get a ride back through the gorge (or, very occasionally, walk back). So if you want to join me for a walk, and us for lunch, just give us a call. David Newstead (025) 576 175.



Upcoming trips

TRIP GRADING

The times listed below include tramping, rest and meal stops. In assessing the trip times and grades, terrain, weather and party fitness (a party is as fast as its slowest member) must be considered. As these factors will never repeat themselves, times are only estimates. *Contact the trip leader if you are unsure about trip gradings for a specific trip.*

ALL: All welcome

EASY: 4 hours per day, pace slower than E/M. Does not relate to terrain.

EASY/MEDIUM: 5 hours per day at a pace slower than medium.

MEDIUM: 7 hours per day at a standard walking pace.

MEDIUM/FIT: 8 hours per day at a pace faster than medium.

FIT: Over 8 hours per day at a pace faster than medium/fit.

TECHNICAL: Qualifying requirements to be announced by Trip Organiser.

Thursday Trampers

27 Apr

Graham Pritchard

Call for details.

Easy-Medium

357-1393

Howletts Hut

29-30 Apr

Tony Evans

From Kashmir Road end we will travel up to Longview Hut, across Pohangina Saddle and up to Otumore, along the ridge and across the saddle to Taumatataua and along Daphne Ridge to Howletts Hut for the night. Next morning we have a choice of routes to the road and plans may change to suit the weather.

Medium

357-4355

Longview Hut

30 Apr

Dave Allan

Call Tony Evans on 357-4355 for details.

Easy-Medium

323-9734

Thursday Trampers

4 May

Stewart Malcolm

Phone for details.

Easy/Medium

358-3409

Purity Hut

7 May

Dave Allan

Phone for details.

Easy/Medium

323-9734

Wednesday Trampers

11 May

Ivan Alve

Phone for details.

Easy

356-3123



Weather websites

When Richard Heerden spoke on the weather, how we can read it, predict it etc for our outdoor activities last week, he said that he would let us know of useful websites. They are listed below.

<http://eng.jcu.edu.au/JCUMetSat/sector-d.gif>

<http://eng.jcu.edu.au/JCUMetSat/ausmovie.gif>

<http://www.metservice.co.nz/default/index.php>

<http://www.metvuw.com/radar/radar.php?location=nz>

<http://www.metvuw.com/forecast/forecast.php?type=rain®ion=nz>

<http://www.metvuw.com/nzweather/>

<http://www.wunderground.com/weatherstation/XDailyHistory.asp?ID=IMANAWAT1>

<http://www.wunderground.com/global/stations/93404.html>

http://homepages.paradise.net.nz/tmcgavin/current_nzweather.html

DoC Snippets



New Ruahine Hut

11 April 2006

Purity Hut, one of the most popular in the Ruahine Ranges is about to close while its replacement is built. The hut in the north-west Ruahine is old and no longer provides an enjoyable experience. Work begins on the hut on May 1st and while the new hut is being built the old one will be closed to the public, to allow contractors to base themselves there. The new hut should be open for use by early July. It will sleep six instead of three, have a deck around the outside, and a pioneer stove for heating. The hut will be situated 30 m above the old site, where spectacular views will reward the weary trumper.

Recreation manager Arend Renting says it's an exciting time for the department, as this is the first new hut to be built in the western Ruahines since the early 60s, when huts first went in. Purity Hut is a popular overnight stay on the way to the Hikurangi Range. It is the gateway to Waterfall Hut and provides a jumping off point for west-east crossings. It is situated close to the Mangaweka Trig (1733m) which is the highest point of the Ruahine Forest Park.



Heritage Lodge

Manawatu Deer Stalkers working with the Department are progressing plans and permits to rebuild Heritage Lodge, destroyed by fire in 2005. It is anticipated the new hut will be built 2006/07.

Manawatu Gorge Track

New metal is being added to the Ashhurst end of the gorge track to make the track less muddy. The track is being benched and boxed in places so that the metal will stay on the track.

Centre Creek and Opawe Shelters

As per the recreation opportunities review, both of these structures have been removed.

For further details contact:

Jo Greig (Community Relations Manager, Department of Conservation, Palmerston North Office. Email: jgreig@doc.govt.nz).

Thursday Trampers

12 May

Ivan Alve

Phone for details.

Easy/Medium
356-3123

McKinnon Hut

13-14 May

Royce Mills

Phone for details.

Easy/Medium
358-4398

Rangiwahia Hut

14 May

Tim Swale

Rangiwahia Hut is in the western Ruahines a little north of Apiti. The intention is to leave Palmerston North at about 8am, drive to the start point at the end of Renfrew Road and then make our way up to Rangii Hut for lunch.

Easy
06 376-6556

The route passes some spectacular scenery including a bridge over a deep and narrow gorge and a humungous slip which has to be bypassed. (This entails half an hour of fairly energetic scrambling up DOC's newly cut track). It takes about two hours to the hut from where, weather permitting we should have superb views across to the snow clad slopes of the Central Plateau. We return by the same route.

Thursday Trampers

18 May

Jill Spenser

Phone for details.

Easy/Medium
329-8738

Otukota Hut

20-21 May

Tony Evans

Easy/Medium
357-4355

From the Mokai Road End the route leads up onto the northern end of the Mokai Patea Range, this is public access across private land so we keep to the poled route and no dogs are permitted, south along the open tops and left at the junction, leaving the private land and open tops the track follows a ridge down to the hut by the Maropea River. Sunday morning another track follows a different ridge up onto the Mokai Patea, reaching the top (not far from Colenso trig), we head north along the range and back to the road end. The plan is for a leisurely stroll in one of the more remote corners of the Ruahine Forest Park, the Park map rates the route to the hut as a 3 to 4 hour walk so it should not be too strenuous.

Irongates Hut

21 May **Easy/Medium**
Darlene Westrupp **354-5764**

Wednesday Trampers

24 May **Easy**
Bernard Cobb **328-8088**
 Phone for details.

Thursday Trampers

25 May **Easy/Medium**
Ray Pratt **328-7884**
 Phone for details.

Poutaki Hut

27-28 May **Easy/Medium**
Adam Matich **359-2796**

Poutaki Hut is a small hut tucked behind Poutaki Peak in the Wakarara Range. This is South East of Ellis (Murderer's) Hut and therefore can be accessed from where Wakarara Road runs into the Makaroro River or from further North through the logging tracks if one obtains the key to the locked gate.

At the moment it is intended to go in via the Makaroro River, then via Wakarara Road to the end of Leatherwood Road, where the small creek is crossed before heading up the rough track on the sometimes steep spur. Once up on the tops we wander along past Poutaki Peak and drop down to the hut. It will probably take no more than 2.5-3 hours from the road end. This is only a four berth hut and is sometimes

used by hunters so it is best to go prepared to sleep on the floor or outside where flat ground is limited.

Powell/Mt Holdsworth

28 May **Medium**
Mark Street **353-7442**

This tramp starts from the Holdsworth roadend (eastern Tararuas). We take the Gentle Annie track to Powell Hut and then for those who want a little more exertion head up to Mount Holdsworth. The ascent to Mt Holdsworth is 1150 metres, so on a good day – which I have already booked with Huey – the views out to the Wairarapa are very rewarding. Total tramping time: 6-7 h. Departure from P.N. will be 7:15 am.

Mid-Ruahine Meander

2-4 Jun **Medium**
Tony Evans **357-4355**

From the Heritage Lodge car park take the popular day walk up to Tunupo, a little way north along the Ngamoko Range and down to Top Gorge Hut, then up to Longview Hut for the night.

Next morning across the Pohangina Saddle and along the ridge where the Ngamoko and Ruahine Ranges meet to the where the track leads down to Iron Gate Hut (a GPS will be carried). Then following the track and the Oroua up to Triangle Hut for the night.

And on the third day we head up the track on to the Whanahuia Range and ignoring Deadmans and the track down to Rangi Hut we head over Mangahuia and on south, as we drop off the end of the range we pick up the track down across the Oroua and onto the Iron Gate track and back to the car park. Because we climb to 1500 metres each day and cross both the Pohangina and Oroua Rivers this trip needs good weather so plans may need to be changed to suit the conditions.

There are no long days planned and this is a good opportunity to walk some of the country we look over on our shorter walks from either side of the ranges.



Editor's Note:

Janet Allan is my copy procurer. If you have led, or are scheduled to lead a trip, Janet may phone to remind you to send in a preview or report. Don't give her any lip!

Extended Sledge Track Loop **12th March**

As always, finding the track that loops around the headwaters of the Otangane Stream and along the ridge joining points 573 and 622 presents a bit of a challenge. I have done or attempted to do this loop on 5 separate occasions from both directions and each time there has been a variation.

Last time I led a club trip here there was a lovely tussock covered knob on the route leading down into the Otangane - "Come down to there. It's a good view across the valley from there", I promised Ken and Mary. However the Otangane Stream was reached before any view points and Ken and Mary decided to return as they had to be back in town early afternoon. It wasn't until we were up on the ridge below point 573 that we could look back and see Toitoti Flats and the promised tussock knob. Four pairs of eyes were definitely better than one pair as we moved along the ridge to point 622 trying to find sparse markers in head high scrub. Lots of bush lawyer made it even more interesting. Lunch was had on a lovely sunny open tussock spot above the eastern branch of the Otangane looking down into the Wairarapa on the opposite side. It wasn't much further to south range road and from there a much quicker pace back past the platinum mines

and back home. We were: Alla Seleznoyva, Kay Firth, Linda Campbell, Mary Neilson, Ken Mercer and Christine Scott.

Tramp to The Cone March 15th

by Rose Strahan

A full tramp van headed off to Paterson's Road, Table Flat, to explore The Cone, a privately-owned hill property adjacent to Ruahine Forest Park. Our driver Ken Rush displayed no confidence in trip leader's assurances that we would be able to turn the van at the end of the road, and all the logging skid sites kept grabbing his attention - "Shall we stop and turn here, Rose?". What we did learn though, when we reached the end of the narrow road but with good parking at Glencone Lodge, was that the metal trucks were going up and down the road. We were a bit lucky.

Glencone is owned by Roger McIntye and is part fallow deer farm and part bush, leading up to the cedar trees level at 000 a.s.l. We had a look through the lodge, which Roger had thoughtfully left unlocked for us, and headed up the hill via the fern loop track which brought us onto the wide, bulldozed track leading straight up the hill to the hut at the top of the Cone. A good aerobic 1 and 3/4 hours later had us circling around the hut site to seek out 360 degree vistas of the forest park and farmland beyond - Tunipo looked dark and somewhat forbidding from this southern angle with its steeper sides exposed to the view.

Lunch in the sun, and a peep into the tiny hut (Roger has plans for this one too). We spotted a narrow trail leading down the hill and thought it would be a good idea, as the bulldozed track was very steep and slippery near the top. Bev plunged bravely down, and we dutifully followed. Fortunately it joined the main track about a third of the way down. It had been the old deerstalkers track in the 50s and 60s.

We left the lodge turning area at the bottom of the track to walk through to another hut, but ended up in



Above: Search and Rescue Exercise in the Ruahines in March. Club members took part as searchers, co-ordinators and one of the lost parties. Linda Campbell is seen being stretchered out down the Orua River before being taken out by Helicopter. Club members were again out with Search and Rescue walking Burton's Track from the top of Shorts Road across to Shannon. We learned how to transport an injured person in a Stokes basket stretcher.

(SAREX | 03/2006 | Photo: Tim Swale).

paddocks. So back to point A and up the right track to Stewart Hogan's neat chalet deep in the bush. Extra walking, thats good. Rita and I then explored the upper track back to McIntyres while the others traced their steps back to the lodge and the sunshine. (12 trampers)

Forest Lookout & Carrington Ridge March 16th

by Bev Akers

This is the peak on the left, not far over the main bridge when you come to the big sign post. It says Forest Lookout - (1 hr). Its a steep but pleasant climb up to the Lookout, took us about 40 mins. There's a dial that points you to the direction of the different pecks that you can see looking north. Then its a matter of pushing through the vegetation and find an old track which takes you along the ridge till you get to the old remains of a shack (15 mins).

We could hear Bellbirds kicking up a riot in the trees above us. Up on a branch above us was a Morepork beginning harassed by three Bellbirds, poor chap. Now its a drop off to the right to get onto another track. This is where it gets tricky - Not knowing when to turn off right to the saddle, as we found the cut track led us beyond. Thanks to the GPS and compass, we back step to find an obvious cut route down Carrington Saddle. Now I can relax... lunch time.

It is a 30 min climb up to Carrington ridge another half hour along a good track gets you to the old Holdsworth sign. From here we headed right (east) along the old track taking us onto the main track just above the lookout rock. Back to the car park (6hr day). Nice to do something different and get to use GPS & Compass. (11 trampers)



Mt Taranaki **March 18-19th**

by Linda Campbell

Tim Swale, Ian Algies and I, left for Taranaki late morning on Saturday 18 March. After a lovely lunch at Hawera's Woodsy's Café we headed for Mt Taranaki. It was quite warm by the time we set off on the walk to Kapuni Lodge and we were soon rather hot as we climbed in completely still conditions. Dark cloud hung around not far above Kapuni Lodge and we wondered about our chance of climbing on Sunday. Jenny, our guide from Mount Egmont Alpine Club, was already at the lodge with her family and quite hopeful that the conditions would be good for Sunday.

Sunday morning dawned perfectly clear and completely still. After breakfast the four of us set off up Fanthams Peak. This is a steady climb up wooden steps, scree and rock. When we stopped for an early morning tea not far below Syme Hut the climb to the summit of Taranaki looked incredibly steep. Fortunately it didn't look quite as steep as we set off from a slightly different angle, although there were times it felt like it was as steep as it originally looked.

The snow in the crater was crisp as we headed toward the summit for an early lunch. We spent some time there chatting with another Mt Egmont Alpine Club member who had brought some British visitors to the top via the north route. (Definitely easier than the south route!)

As we finished lunch the cloud came in and at this stage we were glad of Jenny's knowledge of the mountain as we couldn't see far ahead at all. It was Jenny's one hundred and thirty ninth climb and she is the only woman to ever do a quadruple traverse of Mt Taranaki taking twenty eight and half hours to complete this marathon feat and days to recover!

After lunch it was all down hill back to the lodge for an early afternoon tea before returning to Dawson Falls. This was a most enjoyable trip in great company.



Above: Climbing Mt Taranaki.
(Mt Taranaki Trip | 18-19/03/2006 | Photo: Linda Campbell).

Rangi Hut - Maungahuia Loop March 23rd

Leader: Carolyn Brodie
9 trampers.

Forest Lookout Carrington Loop March 26th

(see map below)

This 4.5 hour trip started from the Holdsworth road end. Shortly after crossing the Atiwhakatu Stream a left-hand turn headed us towards the Forest Lookout, a sometimes steep climb past a Pa site. After 45 minutes we reached the lookout, but because it was overcast could not view any of the features indicated on the viewing post. From there we headed straight up the overgrown track and sometimes headed along the top and sometimes sidled just below for the next 15 minutes before we spotted the scant remains of a hut on the northern side of the ridge. We dropped straight down from the hut site to land on a track about 10 metres below. We followed this track to head down into Gentle Annie Saddle.

Before reaching the saddle we encountered a turn to our right, which was marked by a tree with red and blue electrical tape wrapped around it. After this turn the track sidled along a slope. This was the difficult section, because after only a minute or two of this it was necessary to turn off this track onto the right compass bearing to head down into the saddle proper. A tree with blue electrical tape wrapped around it

marks the turning point. It is not that hard to miss, as the Thursday trampers found the week before. It is necessary to follow the electrical tape markers until they run out and by then the route is obvious again. Roughly two hours travel from the road end saw us in Gentle Annie Saddle for lunch to the music of screeching Kakas. After lunch all we had to do was climb out the other side of the saddle until we reached the Carrington Ridge Track, which we followed all the way back up to the old Mount Holdsworth Track. We followed this until it dropped us onto the new track and headed down to the Holdsworth road end. We were Harold Pederson and Adam Matich.

Wednesday Trampers Trip to Square Knob March 29th

by Rosemary Hall

When tramping on a regular basis it is sometimes a problem for the designated Leader to explore new and interesting areas without too much travelling. So it was that we found ourselves on Gladstone Road heading up Square Knob into the Tararuas. Square Knob is accessed 2 km past the Pipe Bridge to Poad's Farm. The ridge runs parallel to the Blackwater stream, which is the source of drinking water for the Levin area.

There were sixteen of us in the party, which included 2 members of the Levin Tramping Club, who kindly

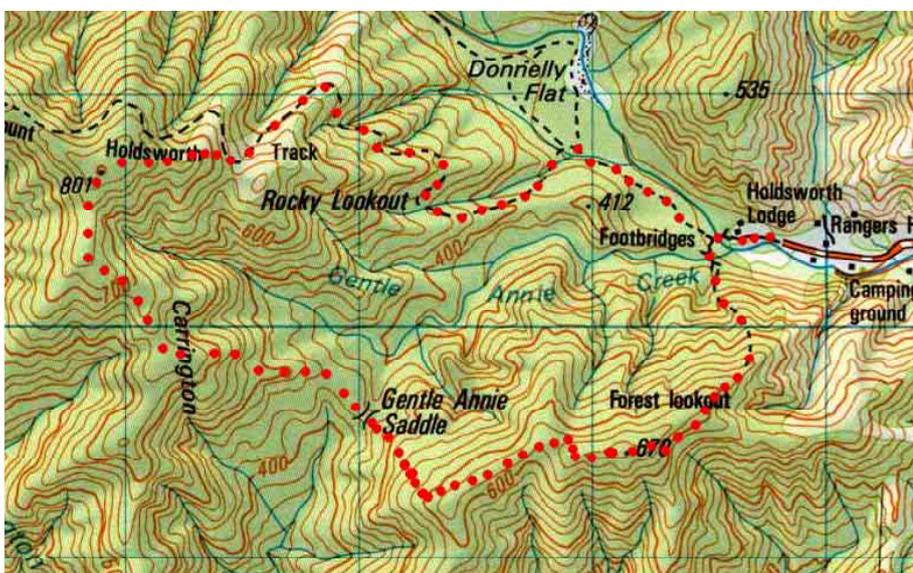
offered to be our guides. Before setting off we were given a few facts on the area. Square Knob was pointed out to us and as we looked up, it seemed a helluva long way off and very steep. Ah well, the weather was on our side as we set off full of enthusiasm and a spring in our step at 9.30 am approx. We soon came upon a high gate which was locked and not an option for short-legged people to clamber over, so over the barb wired fence with lots of shouting and "ouching" and straight up over a steep grassy hill for about 20 minutes – well that warmed up the muscles. The track was obviously not used too much and was overgrown and rough in places, although Sue (from Levin) had been in at the weekend and worked for 4 hours clearing and marking it. It was typical Tararua up and down stuff, but mostly up in my recollection (please refer Ken Rush). At one stage we had been slogging up and up when a voice behind me said "it gets much steeper when we're nearing the top", hells bells what can be steeper than vertical I thought! Well the last of the group staggered to the top at 12.45 pm. We had a grand view of the surrounding peaks and marvelled at the majesty and vastness of the Tararuas. We looked across at Twin Peaks and the new Waiopahu Hut to the right and recalled another hard slog some years back.

We returned via the loop track which some of us slipped and slithered down for the next 3 hours to be rewarded with a feast of luscious blackberries further down the track. We arrived back at the carpark about 4.00 pm after a very enjoyable and satisfying day. We highly recommend this as an alternative tramp, but for people not familiar with the area the track going up the ridge needs to be negotiated carefully in places. However, the loop track coming down had better markings. (16 trampers)

Colenso Trig and beyond March 30th

by Ann Green

12 trampers reached the Trig in 2 hours. It was a perfect day, no wind,





Above: Thursday trampers at Colenso Trig, the weather was great – a good day. (Colenso Trig Trip | 30/03/2006 | Photo: Keith Fisher).

sun and good views, so we wandered on along the tops until lunch time. Unfortunately only 11 trampers returned as one person who was with us for the first time had to be taken off by helicopter with a suspected mild heart attack.

Te Matawai Work Party 2006 April 1-2

by Jean Garman

The weather had not been suitable for helicopter flying for most of late summer and autumn so DOC was a bit behind on their building schedule. The new deck and entrance for Te Matawai Hut were near the bottom of the 'to do' list so come April Fools Day it hadn't happened yet but off we went anyway.

A pleasant walk up the Ohau River saw us going no deeper than up to our knees. A few brief episodes of 'scotch mist' progressively cleared so by the time we reached the helipad at Te Matawai there were stunning views of the surrounding ranges.

We started on the nibbles to boost our strength for the afternoons work then ripped into clearing more trees back from the helipad and clear-

ing the track between the pad and the hut to make it easier to carry through building materials. We dutifully sawed all the fire suitable wood into appropriate lengths then at the stage when I thought the troops would be calling for knock off time Adam spotted a branch hanging over the track that he thought was unsafe/untidy/unnecessary. With the proviso that if we cut it off we had to clean it up Brian set to with the bow saw. A wee while later with a bit of encouragement it hit the ground. We stripped off the mossy covering, cut it into manageable segments and began the task of cutting it up back at the hut. Soon darkness was threatening so a halt was called. The fire was cranked up, a wide variety of nibbles were consumed with wine, followed by a thai curry, the door to the bunk room was opened to cool things down a bit then a raspberry fool appeared for desert. The fool was beautifully prepared in individual servings topped with fresh mint sprigs, what a shame no one was there to view our decadence.

Fools finally finished and a torch was spotted through the window. A late night party of four and a dog stumbled into the hut. Darkness

had hit them as they descended into Butchers saddle and from there by the light of one torch and one cell phone progress was rather slow. Being the old farts that we are we crawled off to bed before the others but were entertained in the night by some very vivid sleep talking after they came to bed. They were up early and out the door while we cleaned the hut and toilet and finished cutting up all the wood we could manoeuvre our hand tools through.

We decided to take a different route out so headed round to Girdlestone Saddle getting some lovely views of Dundas Peak and the head of the Mangahao Valley on the way. The route down into the Ohau River was very steep in places. The upper stream was quite scrambly and slippery with copious amounts of hook grass; several pieces were spotted hanging off various eyebrows. We picked up a couple of sidle tracks to get around difficult bits and after the final drop into the Ohau we headed upstream into a very pretty, dark green, mossy gorge to view Dowling falls. Back downstream at the junction with Butcher creek we picked up Christine's hat, which had cam-

ouflaged itself when we had lunch there the day before. Also spotted a couple of little goats on the way out – very hard to miss considering the amount of noise one of them was making. Although the forecast had been for rain for most of Sunday the first drops didn't fall till we were back at the cars. All in all great company, great food, great hut – thanks to all the workers. Christine Scott, Jenny McCarthy, Brian Webster, Doug McNeur, Malcolm Thomas and Jean Garman.

Mill Block

April 2nd

by Howard Nicholson

As a teenager growing up in Levin I had heard about people heading into the "Mill Block" for hunting and walking, however it was not until I had children of my own that I ventured into this area. On this occasion, we parked the car at the end of Gladstone Road, in the foothills east of Levin, and with bags chockablock with scroggin we headed north-east, following the Makahika stream across farmland until we came to a fork in the track. From here, Hugh chose the uphill track (good on yer, boy!) which we followed until well into the bush. A small clearing was the ideal place to eat our lunch and to enjoy the birdsong and other sounds in the area.

We decided to bush-bash to the stream below. While Sue, Tara and I took great care to find the path of least resistance, Hugh hunted out the gnarliest pieces of supplejack-infested gully for a spot of jungle adventure. Apart from Tara tangling with a local bush lawyer, we were soon down to the stream and heading back along the lower track, which may become a part of the Te Araroa walkway one day, back to the track junction. Discussions about a dead cow, mushrooms and toadstools kept us occupied on the walk back to the car.

For a spot of nostalgia we bought ice creams and bubblegum at my old local dairy before heading back to Palmerston North. Yet another perfect tramping day well spent by Tara, Hugh, Sue and Howard Nicholson.



Above: Te Matawai Hut. (Te Matawai Work Party | 1-2/04/2006 | Photo: Jean Garman).

Sledge Track - Harding's Park

April 6th

Leader: Merv Matthews

Took 6.5 hours. (10 trampers)

Rangi Hut (alias Toka Look)

April 9th

by Christine Scott

The weather forecast promised high winds, rain and thunder and it was definitely looking very stormy as we headed towards the Ruahines. There were only 3 of us and as one of our group was new to the tramping game and had never been out in storm conditions we decided to head for Rangi Hut and see what the weather was like when we got up there. The track was shrouded in cloud all the way to the hut with strong winds at exposed points and enough rain to keep our raincoats on. Just after we reached the hut, the cloud lifted just enough to see out across the valley, but rolled back in as we headed up to the ridge towards Mangahua. We could see enough to know that it would be a beautiful place in fine weather, but with rain threatening, a very cold wind and low visibility we decided to opt for the relatively pleas-

ant conditions on the Rangī track and were treated with views out across the valley all the way down. The rain set in, just as we reached the car. We were: Scott Wyche, Lindsay Elwood and Christine Scott.

Sunrise Hut

April 12th

Leader: Bev Akers

21 trampers.

Waitiweaweā Plateau

April 13th

Leader: Gordon Clark

Takes about 3 hrs to the Plateau for lunch. (8 trampers)

Mt Aurora (Black Is. Antarctica)

by Dave Mitchell

Part 2 of 2

After about 1.5 hours we come to a part of the ice shelf that has become very rough including the route we are following, this is caused by sand being blown over the snow, then in summer it starts melting the snow, which then leaves the terrain very rough. This section is going to be challenging for me to negotiate in the Hagglund if not a bit scary as the vehicle can easily tip right over. So while I am gingerly creeping up and down this terrain, Paul (winter carpenter) comes past me at about window level on a skiddoo, next thing he has slipped off a narrow piece of track and the skiddoo is up side down next to me. Between 3 of us we upright his machine and luckily the only damage is 2 mirrors and one smashed screen. That was the only incident we had while negotiating that part but it took the best part of 1.5 hours.



Above: Howard and crew in the Mill Block.
(Mill Block Trip | 2/04/2006 | Photo: Sue Nicholson).

After that section, the route proceeds towards White straight which is in between white and black island, this is where the Ross Ice Shelf squeezes between the islands, there is a rise of about 50 meters up onto the next level of the ice shelf. At the foot of this rise there is several big crevasses we drive over, next landmark is an American survival wannigan (hut on a sledge) called KA08, bit of a cold hole. From here we make our way round the back of Black island to the waypoint where we are going to park the vehicles. It is 1 pm by the time we park up, and have lunch. Everyone puts on their crampons, harnesses and strips off as much gear as they dare ready for the climb. It is only neg.25c today, with a light breeze. After ensuring the Hagglund is plugged into the generator (had to warm the generator up first, before it would start) and we had contacted Scott base by HF, we were able to start walking towards our objective.

Initially there is couple of short steep climbs to get on to the island proper, the slope is solid ice apart from snowdrifts, hence the wearing of crampons was necessary. After that is out of the way, the slope lessens and we walk up and across terrain that is very similar to Ruapehu (minus the plants). The higher we get the worse the wind chill was, so with a couple of people struggling by this stage, we decided to turn around. Full ECWs were necessary to stay warm in this wind. Mt. Aurora was only about an hour away, but the wind and cloud was fair whipping across it. So we all turned around and headed down towards the Hagglands again, only stopping to take photos and repair Ainslee's crampon, which had disintegrated. Back in NZ, Mt Aurora wouldn't be considered very challenging, but down here with the weather it becomes plenty challenging.

When we had all got back to the vehicles, changed sweaty clothes, got the Hagglund warmed up and repacked, it was 4-30 pm. So with a skiddoo rider swap out we headed back for Scott base the same way. We are hoping to return and climb this mountain, possibly mid winter when it is full 24 hour darkness. Hopefully by then our American friends will have regraded the route with there D8 bulldozers. On the way back because I knew what to expect in the rough section, driving the Hagglund through it was a lot better, although my passenger was getting tossed around. The last 2 hours were a relatively straight run back to Scott base, I swapped out onto a skiddoo, these are great to ride as they can be ridden quite fast. We are not supposed to go over 40 km/hr as this would be considered having fun and we officially are not allowed to have fun, Antarctica NZ policy, but we do anyway.

So by the time we all get back to Scott base, refuelled the Hagglund and put away all the gear it is 10.30 pm, it has been a good day and certainly helps to blow the cobwebs out, if you don't get off base every once and awhile, you start getting cabin fever. It also helps to lift peoples morale. We have other trips planned within the Scott base area this winter as time and weather allows. Possibly a trip out towards Cape Crozier.

Club Information

Annual Hut Passes

Support our club huts in the Tararuas. Buy your Annual Hut Pass through DoC Waikanae. Full price \$90, with FMC card discount \$63. Jean Garman will provide you with a form to fill in which will be sent off with your cheque and your FMC card (if you have one) to DoC Waikanae who will post your Annual Hut Pass back to you. Please note that MTSC family memberships only pay one FMC sub so only one FMC card (and therefore discount) is available per family.

Email: jean.garman@fonterra.com or phone (06) 354-3536.

For Sale

Howard's Bargain Basement

DOC hut tickets – discount rates to members. Phone Howard on 357-6325.

Accommodation at the MTSC lodge on Mt Ruapehu

The lodge is reasonably close to Iwikau Village, has power, hot showers, and is stocked with food. The phone number there is (07) 892 3860.



Photo: Anja Feise

Lodge bookings may be made between 9:30am and 9:30pm on any day of the week. Please don't call outside these hours. Note that bookings are not confirmed until the fees are paid. Payment is in advance by cheque or cash.

	Members	Non-members
Adult	\$21	\$33
Sec. School	\$18	\$30
Primary School	\$15	\$26
Group Prices	on application	on application

Booking and use of the MTSC Transit Van

The normal run-of-the-mill things you need to do if using the Transit Van are:



1. Book preferably by Thursday, and certainly no later than 6pm Friday.
2. Cancel bookings by these times so others who may want the van have time to amend their travel arrangements.
3. Check oil, water, and tyres.
4. Fill in the travel sheet (kilometres, people, and dollars).

Trip leaders and those planning trips should seriously consider using this cost effective club asset. Neville Gray is our minibus custodian, and he can be contacted at 357-2768.

Club equipment

We have packs, 2 and 3 person tents, fly-sheets, snow mats, sleeping bag cover, gas cookers, size 8 and 9 boots, billies, two new bivvy bags and two of the big tent flies. Ice axes, crampons, and helmets are also available. Food Dehydrator: ideal for drying large and small quantities of fruit, vegetables, and meat for tramping rips. Easy to use, works well, and is available for hire from the Gear Custodian. Hire cost for members, \$1 per day. Contact the Gear Custodian – Peter Rawlins on 356 7443.

People to contact

If you would like to contact the club with general inquiries, please drop a line to Manawatu Tramping & Skiing Club, P.O. Box 245, Palmerston North and it will reach the appropriate person. If you want a particular topic discussed at the Committee meetings, this is a good way to go about it.

MTSC 2005-06 Committee

President	Christine Scott	354 0510
Secretary	Howard Nicholson	357 6325
Treasurer	Doug McNeur	359 1893
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Lodge Booking Officers	Hugh & Liz Wilde	356 9450
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Mini-bus Manager	Neville Gray	357 2768
General Committee	Ken Mercer	356 7497
	Tim Swale	06 376 6556

Articles for the newsletter

Send by the 15th of each month, to Wei-Hang Chua (editor) at morepork@ihug.co.nz, phone on (021) 212 0369. If you'd prefer to receive your newsletter by email only, please contact the editor. Send changes of address to the Membership Secretary at P.O. Box 245, Palmerston North.

Club website | www.mtsc.org.nz

This includes a club contact e-mail address and is hosted by InSPire Net. The club webpage is maintained by Howard Nicholson and Adam Matich and is kindly hosted by InSPire Net.

