



MAIL: MTSC, P.O. Box 245, Palmerston North | WEB: [www.mtsc.org.nz](http://www.mtsc.org.nz)

## Upcoming club nights - Details on page 2

7.30 pm, 1st Tue of the month | Rose City Aquatic Club Room, 50 Park Road, Palmerston North

1 February 2011

1 March 2011

### New Members

Ian Brookes Palmerston North  
Bob Hodgson Palmerston North  
Tim & Karen Tyler Palmerston North

All prospective members are encouraged to go on a club trip or attend a club night before joining. This is a great way to meet current members who can nominate you. 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 usually confirmed at the next monthly committee meeting.

For further information or an application form please visit: [www.mtsc.org.nz](http://www.mtsc.org.nz)

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If you would like to receive your newsletter by email as a pdf in full colour rather than by post then please send an email request to [editor@mtsc.org.nz](mailto:editor@mtsc.org.nz). Change of contact details please email the club membership secretary at [membership@mtsc.org.nz](mailto:membership@mtsc.org.nz) as well as copying the message to [editor@mtsc.org.nz](mailto:editor@mtsc.org.nz).

The deadline for newsletter contributions is the end of the month. Please include a date with trip reports. Photos are appreciated, any number of images at 1024x768 pixels or greater if possible. For example a 2 megapixel image is 1600 x 1200 pixels. Please include the date and an appropriate caption for the photo, including names of people.

The editor notes that there is not a full roundup of trip reports – all that have been sent in have been included. If you wish to send in one, feel free! The March edition will also feature more trips from the festive period.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**  
**KEN MERCER**  
 president@mtsc.org.nz  
 PHONE (06) 356 7497 or (027) 364 6475



I've had the pleasure during January of enjoying the warmth, in-laws, and other delights of Perth, in Western Australia. We've done a little bush walking and, unlike tramping in New Zealand, one is usually more concerned with carrying enough water than in staying warm. A thin cotton shirt suffices and wandering around at 35+° is a delight if there is a breeze but a challenge otherwise. I've also been listening to a few Audio Books\* and was taken by the following passage from Farthest North by Fridtjof Nansen, which describes the very successful arctic Voyage of the Fram from 1893–96. "I am now reading the various English stories of the polar expeditions during the Franklin period, and the search for him ... How well was their equipment thought out and arranged, with the means they had at their disposal! Truly, there is nothing new under the sun." Enjoy the summer!  
 Ken Mercer



**SKI CAPTAIN**  
**ROB PRINGLE**  
 rob.kate.pringle@gmail.com  
 PHONE 06 354 0218

"Umm, the ski season is closed right now" – ed. Handy hint: the Waterfall Express lift is working at Whakapapa for daywalkers... 0900-1530(last ride up). See [www.mtruapehu.com](http://www.mtruapehu.com) for details.

**CHIEF GUIDE'S REPORT**

After being asked for a brief missive on the state of play in the tramping zone, Kim supplied a(nother) trip report. Seems she's too busy getting out there to fit some creative writing in, rightly too! There are trip reports in the following section where you can monitor some of the action in more detail.



*"Hmm, wonder what sauce I'm having with dinner tonight..."* The Chief Guide outside 2 bunk Piripiri Hut in Ruahine Forest Park, by A.Matich.

**NEW BEECHLEAVES EDITOR APPOINTED**

Tim Tyler; a recent (ir)regular with the Thursday trampers has adopted the newsletter editor mantle from the able Wei, Kate and Kim. He has hopes of following the excellent trail blazed by his predecessors and will be delighted to accept your contributions for Beechleaves. Having spent a number of years based in the UK, he is finding the bushy, hilly nature and paucity of pubs in convenient locations somewhat challenging. However, the leg muscles are definitely getting stronger and the lack of beer is starting to show (he thinks).



**Club Lodge Pricing Structure Changed**

At the last Committee meeting the pricing structure was changed for lodge accommodation after discussion. An across-the-board increase in charges of \$1 has been adopted as the most pragmatic way of managing the change. The increase is due to general running costs and reflects the minimum impact on users the committee wanted.





## Partial Road Closures

PNCC Forester Mark Johnston advises the road through Gordon Kear Forest, (via Scotts Rd) and the road to Mangahao Dams from the power station will be closed to midweek traffic from Monday 6 December until the end of May. Likewise, the first part of the Burtton's Track (from the north end) will also be closed midweek during the same period. There will be access to Burtton's Track and along Mangahao Rd during weekends (& presumably public holidays). There will be an official road closed sign at the power station.

The reason given for the closure are logging operations in the Gordon Kear Forest and along Tokomaru Valley Rd (in from the Mangahao power station); also logging operations west and above the Mangahao Dam road. Here, there is a hazard of cut logs rolling down the hill onto the road as well as the hazard of meeting logging trucks on the narrow road.

## Recent Awards Presented

During the December club meeting, two annual prizes were awarded to members by the President in recognition of service to the club.

One award went to Linda Campbell for embodying club spirit over the year. A separate award went to Hugh and Liz Wilde. The running of the Club Lodge booking system by the couple was held up as a fine example of volunteer activity making a valuable contribution to the goals of the club.

### Lunch on the Mokai Patea range. A.Matich

Could this be a photo of the biscuits & crackers disappearing in early December maybe? Find out at the next club meeting!

## Kiwi Aversion Training

No, it's not a new initiative by Zespri...

Responsible dog owners wishing to minimize the chances of their pet taking a liking to our national icon are able to access local training offered by Willy Marsh of Woodville. DoC is very supportive of this & although the training in itself will not guarantee permits for a dog to enter certain locations, you can bet that it would help any application.

The training is open to all members of the public Kelly Stratford of the Department of Conservation in Palmerston North is a contact, or you can go direct to:

[Willymarsh@inspire.net.nz](mailto:Willymarsh@inspire.net.nz)

Phone number (06) 376 5155

[www.savethekiwi.org.nz/resources-to-save-kiwi/dogs-a-cats/dogs-a-cats.html#avoidance](http://www.savethekiwi.org.nz/resources-to-save-kiwi/dogs-a-cats/dogs-a-cats.html#avoidance)



Hidden Lake, by R.Ellis. One of the places a trained dog can go!

## Free Biscuits – maybe!

Some biscuits/crackers were sent to the club recently that lend themselves to the gourmet- inclined trumper or après-ski nibbler. The idea is for members to get hooked on the artisan delicacies. Given their exact whereabouts are not known currently, this may turn out to have been the case... several different varieties were sent for sampling.





## 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 grading for a specific trip.

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| ALL         | All welcome   |
| EASY        | 4 hours per day, pace slower than Easy/Med. 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 the trip organiser.          |

### TRIP SAFETY

Trip leaders are reminded that trip intentions can be emailed to [intentions@mtsc.org.nz](mailto:intentions@mtsc.org.nz), although this is not a substitute for leaving full written details with the designated contacts within the club. If you require further information on this please contact the Chief Guide. The club also has tent flies and personal locator beacons available free of charge, the club transit van will always have these so there isn't any reason not to take these on a trip short or long, they way next to nothing.

Despite the short month, there is a good selection of events planned for all levels of fitness or enthusiasm. The trip leaders listed below will have information for interested people – call them for details.

|                        |               |                                     |               |
|------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| 2 (Wed) John Ridge     | 357 3744      | 19-20 Tutuwai Hut                   | Easy/Medium   |
| 3 (Thu) Gordon Clark   | 359 2500      | John Doolan                         | 027 468 740   |
| 6 (Sun ) Mt Dagg Loop  | Medium        | 19-20 Tauherenikau River/Hells Gate | Fit           |
| Adam Matich            | (06) 359 2796 | Jean Garman                         | 354 3536      |
| 9 (Wed) Andrew Brodie  | 358 6576      | 23 (Wed) Chris Brunskill            | 354 2511      |
| 10 (Thu) Hugh Wilde    | 356 9450      | 24 (Thu) Judy Swainson              | 358 4082      |
| 12-13 Howlett-Sawtooth | Medium/Fit    | 26-27 Cattle Creek Hut              | Easy          |
| Gary Bevans            | 325 8879      | Tim Swale                           | (06) 376 6556 |
| 12-13 Howletts Hut     | Medium        | 26 (Sat only) Mangakokeke Strm      | Fit           |
| Bev Akers              | 325 8879      | Dave Harrington                     | (06) 839 5766 |
| 16 (Wed) Terry Knight  | 354 1530      | 27 (Sun only) Rocky Creek           | Fit           |
| 17 (Thu) David Grant   | 357 8269      | Dave Harrington                     | (06) 839 5766 |

**Please note** – leaders depend on having accurate knowledge of the capability of and any special needs of trip participants. Please ensure you prepare accordingly to minimize any potential risk to yourself or others.



**Kohiteri Forest & Lake Papaitonga, 20 October. By Pam Wilson.**

Twenty of us set out on a day where we had selected three different options, as the forecast was for more rain, and the forest trip would have been too exposed if there was no improvement in the weather. The 'we' refers to John Hunt, (a champion at finding the ideal trip) and myself. Firstly, we went slightly south of Levin for a wander along the boardwalk to Lake Papaitonga. This is worthwhile if you have half an hour to spare when travelling South. At its entrance is a short summary of the history of this secluded area and the fact that in earlier times it was possible to travel by canoe from here to Lake Horowhenua. Having had morning tea, by which time the rain had cleared, we drove to the high end of Gladstone Road to begin our largely downhill walk, via Arapaepae trig. As we entered the forest a roughly printed warning caused some amusement: 'Please carry ID, so that when we bury your body we can notify your relatives'. The track is well used by Levin walkers and joggers & while only two hours in length, it is a pleasing trip. Thanks to our vehicle drivers, Mike & Patsy who dropped us at the top & did a shortened walk themselves in order to meet us at the bottom. Also thank you John for your input.



Thursday Trampers on return from Top Maropea Hut, above Armstrong Saddle, 28 October. K.Fisher

**Ruamahanga River Track, 11 November. Report by Stuart Malcolm.**

18 people undertook this tramp in fine, warm conditions on a track infrequently used - the last visit by the Thursday group was in 2003. The entrance from SH2 is not signposted but is the 1st drive on the right southbound after crossing the Ruamahunga bridge. The 1st hour is across farmland (call Mike Wyeth 06-3725875), then regenerating manuka and finally superb bush. We had lunch at the junction between the track to Cow Creek Hut and the river route to Roaring Stag Lodge. Total trip time was about 6 1/2 hours.

**Waihohonu Hut Trifecta, 4 November. Tim Tyler.**

It's not often you get to see 3 different huts with the same name in one day. Accessed from the Desert Rd the @15 strong group wandered up to check out the new hut approaching completion. A sidetrip to the nearby springs for a poke around & spot of lunch was followed up by a visit to the "Old Waihohonu Hut" & then the ridge above the recently defunct "Lockwood Waihohonu Hut", giving expansive views around the peaks & desert.



A new standard in DoC huts. 29 bunks with showers, solar lights & heating & great views of the peaks nearby. Decking not complete at time of trip. K.Fisher image

**"Hidden" Lake, 18th November. Leader Report by Merv Matthews.**

In the Tararuas, high on a plateau overlooking the Ruamahunga River, there lies a lake known as the 'Hidden' Lake. Not particularly large, but large enough to show on topo maps, it would be difficult to find without the aid of a GPS receiver. Apart from the occasional faint trail there is no track to it, but fifteen Thursday Trampers made the trip successfully on a beautifully warm and calm day. The leader chose the usual route starting from the bottom of the Roaring Stag track, but after a lakeside lunch we took a shortcut for the return trip by heading due East in order to strike the main track part way up the hill.



## McKinnon Hut via Purity 27-28 November 2010. By Dave Newstead.

This was my 3rd attempt at a McKinnon Hut trip. The first happened to coincide with a train excursion to Gisborne which all 3 potential starters wanted to go on (so we did). The 2nd, we called off because the weather was grotty. This time the weather was perfect (for a summer-bird, like me, that is.) While it was being discussed during the trip-card round, Kim (Fraser) suggested, "Why not go via Purity & take in the whole Hikurangi Range?" Chris jumped at it. I did not take any convincing; it certainly made a better two-day trip for summer. As it turned out, however, Kim found herself committed to the stoat line up the Pohangina.

So it was that Chris (Saunders) & I picked up Mark (Learmonth) from near his place & we were on the track from the Mangakokeke Rd end at 9:30. What a slog, up that fence-line on the end of the spur, 200 m straight up! Three old men; & me not having carried an overnight pack for a couple of years – character building! But what a delight when you reach the track through the red beeches along the ridge, a perfect summer day, never more than a gentle breeze; occasional glimpses through the trees, down into the Mangakokeke Valley to the right; left, over the hilly country to snow-clad Ruapehu dominating the horizon. While to thoroughly revive the spirits after that initial slog, we have the various little forest flowers along the way. Soon the track begins to rise a bit more steeply & you try to remember how much further to Purity, "not that far," you think, "lunch & a cup would be welcome", but it's a while further when the beech trees suddenly give way to mountain cedars, then you know you are nearly there.

There's a locally resident family, two children, parents & dog, just ahead of us at the hut. We settle on the deck beside them for lunch. Mark pauses to take in the view. His sandwich is gone in flash – dog most appreciative – "Oh well, tomorrow's another lunch," he muses resignedly. (Mark is a 'dog person'.) After the rain & snow of spring & now warm sunny weather, the track to the top of the range is fresh & easy going, with early mountain flowers lightening the way – daisies white & yellow, a few mountain buttercups, plus jolly clusters of eyebright (*Euphrasia revoluta*). A spell on Wooden Peg while Chris takes pictures (Mark & I are still in the pre-digital era, & a bit more restricted). A clear day, a panoramic view; Taranaki just at the limit of visibility.

From here looking North, the Hikurangi Range presents a grand prospect: Iron Peg just up ahead, Mangaweka – more a rough plateau than a peak – Hikurangi itself (only 65 m lower) a little off to the right, interspersed with a few lesser, un-named high points, flanks clad in tawny blonde snow-tussock, stretching in to the middle-distance. For some reason today they all look more distant than they really are; the end of the range looks about five miles, the map shows it's only three (better than the other way round!). All along the way we are seldom out of earshot of the song of skylarks & the summer hum of insects. A couple of times we find dark brown, near black, snail shells nearly an inch in diameter (*Powelliphanta wainuia*). What a huge population of them must live among that vast sea of snow-tussock.

From Mangaweka East, to the main Ruahine range in the middle distance, rugged looking with steep dark-green forest-clad lower slopes, the dip of the Waipawa saddle presents a glimpse into another world – a world of farms, of low-land hills capped with dark pine plantations, ranging away into the haze hiding Cape Kidnappers. Then it's on, skirting patches of late snow on SW-slopes, descending from Hikurangi through waist-high tussock, picking our way among clumps of Spaniard, a lot of it showing signs of grazing. (Yummy! Who'd be a deer?) Before much longer we are aware of the end of the range in the distance up ahead, & I wonder, what's that structure that looks like the gate-way to some Texas ranch up there? In a few minutes it is apparent that it is the sign pointing to the hut (20 min), & it's only waist high! The distances are still deceptive; it's not often I've found them shorter than they look. Sure enough, in about 20 min we have negotiated the 200 m odd tortuously winding 'staircase' down the bluff & are contemplating DINNER & early night. The good weather holds & as night falls even the drift of cooling air from the tops becomes still. Until the rise of the moon the clarity of the stars is proverbial, Orion right above the door as you look out. & the two Magellan Clouds as plain as I've ever seen them.

A 06:45 start next day, & Chris was right, the climb back up to the top of the range is nothing like the slog I'd anticipated after the descent. Perfect weather, but for the threat of cloud coming in from the East, so we don't linger. South along the ridge, skirt the little peaks East, skirt Hikurangi West, pause on Mangaweka, skirt Iron Peg, a short chat with a party on Wooden Peg – they are on their way to Kelly Knight's. The edge of the cloud chases us down until we are in the clear below it at Purity, again for lunch (no dogs today). Back down the pleasant ridge track through the forest; a late beech leaves flutter down through the still air. I time us down the fence-line incline: 8 min! Why all the fuss about the slog up yesterday; it couldn't have taken much more than double that. Oh well, that's decrepit old age for you.

Road end by 14:20. So it's thanks to Kim for suggesting the long way round, so making the best of the 'golden weather' (we thought of you sympathetically, stuck on the stoat-line). Yeah, right! – ed.



Adam Matich captured Kim & friends on mustelid patrol in the Oroua. A great place to hear birdsong & go Blue Duck (Whio) spotting.





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Mangiora Stream 9 January 2011. By Jean Garman.

A tall tale of high waterfalls, deep pools & having to crawl on hands & knees in the stream under the leatherwood didn't deter three of us & we were dropped off at the road bridge while two others with a bit more sense took the ute round to the rangi carpark & headed up the track. The stream was not unpleasant but the first waterfall which came just after the first major steam junction proved to be completely impassable.



Completely impassable waterfall. Photo J. Garman

Luckily we could head up the other stream then skip across the spur between the two to get back into the designated branch. After that all the waterfalls were possible to either scale or bush bash around. There weren't too many pools in the lower reaches so we kept our shorts dry until we reached the leatherwood, here things got a bit wetter as all travel was constrained to the water. The leatherwood went from "I can reach out and touch leatherwood on both sides" to "the leatherwood is touching me on both sides". There were frequent pools and on occasion the water entered them via slippery little waterfalls so a couple of leatherwood grovels were required but at only one point did we have to get down on our hands and knees in the water. Before long the leatherwood was broken by tussocks and the getting around obstacles became easier and eventually we were walking in the tussock beside the stream. The stream then fragmented into a myriad of little trickles and we gave up trying to pick which one to follow and headed up to the ridge line reaching the deadmans track at about 2pm – a whole hour earlier than predicted. We glimpsed two figures heading down the deadmans track ahead of us and assumed they were our other two party members so headed down after them. Catching them near the bottom we found they were two other ladies who had seen our two leaving Rangi Hut when they arrived. This gave us hopes that they would be already at the road end and we would all be home nice and early. Alas it was not so. We sat and waited and tried to figure out where they would be and how the others had not passed them along the way.

An hour and many minutes later David could wait no more and headed back up the track while Brian and I had a quick kip in the ute. Half an hour later they all arrived back - the others knowing they had time to kill had done a side trip down to triangle. We were David, Brian and Jean – the river wanderers and Deb and Katrina - the track runners.

**Ngamoko/Piripiri Hut, 15-16 January by Kim Fraser.**

After having this trip on the to do list for two years and 2 trip card cancellations, a quick planning phone call revealed this trip to be the most suitable for a couple of people who didn't want a fit trip or endure the summertime heat. However the condition of the unmaintained tracks was unknown & could cause a rather slow day for us on the Sunday but such things should be attempted at least once. After a leisurely start from Palmy, & late lunch at Mid Pohangina hut we arrived uneventfully at Ngamoko Hut about 4pm. The next day we woke to strong winds & the promise of low cloud on the tops, which was exactly that with the wind being particularly nasty & cold. The track along the tops was mostly easy going having been kept open by the herds of deer that appear to be running crazy in that part of the woods, & thanks to Adams local knowledge we were able to find the track off the saddle & into the Piripiri which quickly turned into slow, difficult travel. After a lunch stop at Piripiri hut we continued boulder hopping our way stream back to the land of civilisation for icecream. We were Adam Matich & Kim Fraser.



A fine shot of Euphrasias (eyebrights) on the track to Ngamoko Range from Ngamoko Hut.

Photo A.Matich



CLUB INFORMATION

## Annual Hut Passes

Buy your Annual Hut Pass through DoC. The full price of an Annual Hut Pass is now \$122.60 but is reduced to \$85.60 with your Federated Mountain Club (FMC) card discount. For further information or for the forms to complete contact Jean at [jeanandivan@value.net.nz](mailto:jeanandivan@value.net.nz) or phone (06) 354 3536.

## Accommodation at the MTSC lodge on Mount Ruapehu

The lodge is close to Iwikau Village, has mains power, heating, hot showers and is well stocked with food. Members and their guests are welcome. (Lodge phone number is (07) 892 3860).

Lodge bookings should be emailed to Liz and Hugh Wilde [lodge.bookings@mtsc.org.nz](mailto:lodge.bookings@mtsc.org.nz). If for some reason you cannot email, please phone 06 356 9450. To confirm your booking, payment must be made in advance by cheque, or cash (in person) to 179 Cook St, Palmerston North 4410. Internet payment is not available for lodge fees.

|                     | Members | Guests |
|---------------------|---------|--------|
| Adult               | \$26    | \$39   |
| Secondary School    | \$23    | \$36   |
| Primary School      | \$20    | \$31   |
| Pre-school (3-5 yo) | \$11    | \$11   |

## 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 6 pm Friday.
2. Cancel bookings by these times so others needing the van have time to amend travel arrangements.
3. 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. There is a Personal Locator Beacon, in the glove box, for people using the van to take with them.

Trip leaders and those planning trips should use this club asset. Adam Matich is our minibus custodian and he can be contacted at (06) 359 2796 or at work (06) 953 7679.

An upcoming club night will be featuring a recent trip by member Tim Swale to China. At time of going to press the date is not confirmed.

## Club Equipment

We have two personal locator beacons (PLB), packs, 2 and 3 person tents, fly-sheets, snow mats, sleeping bag cover, gas cookers, size 8 and 9 boots, billies, two bivvy bags and two 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 (no charge for PLB). Contact the Gear Custodian: Peter Rawlins on (06) 356 7443.

## Club website | [www.mtsc.org.nz](http://www.mtsc.org.nz)

This includes a list of contact details and a club email address. The club webpage is maintained by Howard Nicholson and is kindly hosted by InSPire Net.

## People to Contact

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

| MTSC 2010-11 Committee |                  |   |
|------------------------|------------------|---|
| President              | Ken Mercer       | 06 356 7497<br><a href="mailto:president@mtsc.org.nz">president@mtsc.org.nz</a>   |
| Secretary              | Tim Swale        | 06 376 6556   |
| Treasurer              | Christine Scott  | 06 354 0510<br><a href="mailto:treasurer@mtsc.org.nz">treasurer@mtsc.org.nz</a>   |
| Chief Guide            | Kim Fraser       | 06 355 5496   |
| Day Trip Convenor      | Bev Akers        | 06 325 8879   |
| Membership Sec.        | Jenny McCarthy   | 06 376 8838<br><a href="mailto:membership@mtsc.org.nz">membership@mtsc.org.nz</a> |
| Newsletter Editor      | Tim Tyler        | 06 356 6008<br><a href="mailto:editor@mtsc.org.nz">editor@mtsc.org.nz</a>         |
| Social Convenor        | Lynda Campbell   | 06 323 3836   |
| Ski Captain            | Rob Pringle      | 06 354 0218   |
| Lodge Manager          | Ryan Badger      | 027445 997  |
| Lodge Bookings         | Hugh & Liz Wilde | 06 356 9450   |
| Mini-Bus Custodian     | Adam Matich      | 06 359 2796   |
| General Committee      | David Newstead   | 0274576175  |
|                        | Hillary Hurst    | 021343451   |
|                        | Howard Nicholson | 06 357 6325   |