



Monthly newsletter of PTC. Affiliate of Federated Mountain Clubs of NZ Inc.

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June 2010

President	Leo Manders	356 1731	Mary Hines	942 6486
Vice-President	Kevin Hughes	332 6281	Evelien Baas	03 317 9077
Treasurer	Geoff Price	337 2614	Raymond Ford	351 9496
Trip Planner	Gary Huish	332 7020		
Secretary	Merv Meredith	322 7239		
Editor	Kerry Moore	359 5069		
Quartermaster	Brian Smith	355 9945		

New Member Enquiries Please contact John Borner, 942 0813, to request an info-pack. You will also receive three complimentary newsletters

CORRESPONDENCE, including changes of address etc. can be sent to the club secretary—see above

OUR CLUB consists of people of all ages who tramp for recreation. Regular trips are organised, ranging from 'easy' to 'hard', day trips to long weekends. Various instruction courses run each year to improve members' skills for back-country tramping. In addition to a monthly club meeting, a variety of social events are held.

CLUB NIGHTS are held on the **second Tuesday** of each month at the Canterbury Horticultural Centre, South Hagley Park (entrance on Riccarton Ave), starting promptly at 7.45 pm. Doors open 7.30.

Tue 8 June **PERMOLAT – REMOTE HUTS WEBSITE**

Andrew Buglass, founder of this website and the associated online group will tell us how this project was established and what has been achieved to ensure the preservation of many high-country huts and bivouacs. It's a good example of how the web can be used to bring folk from diverse backgrounds together to create change.

Supper Duty: Rick Bolch, Brian or Mary Jane Bonsell, Sue Britain

Tue 13 July **MEMBERS' PHOTOS**



This is your chance to see images of tramps we've done and more exotic overseas locations. So far we are visiting Patagonia, the Amazon, Angel Falls (highest in the world) but could use more. Contact Leo if you want to participate.

Supper Duty: Sven Brabyn or Kerry Stewart, Jan Brown, Gillian Bryant

COMING TRIPS

Day Trips:

Depart from and return to a convenient point on the side of town near to the destination. Non-members are asked to phone the trip leader in advance. If you doubt your suitability for a day-trip, or if the weather is turning bad, contact the trip leader beforehand. A phone inquiry does not oblige you to go on the trip.

Weekend Trips:

May leave on a Friday night (usually for base camps) or Saturday morning. Please book with the trip leader by the closing date. Be certain you want to go on the trip when booking, as it is not fair on the leader to withdraw after the closing date (good excuses excepted). Numbers on some weekend trips are limited, so book promptly.

5-7 Jun Sat-Mon ■■■	BUCKLAND PEAKS Merv Meredith 322 7239 A moderate trip at the northern end of the Paparoa National Park. The route climbs a forest spur track to emerge above the bushline, then drops a little to Buckland Peaks Hut where you may hear great spotted kiwis at night. A side-trip to the Buckland Peaks, at 1325m, gives views of Mt Cook on a clear day. List Closes: Sat 22 May	Maps BS20; K29
5-7 Jun Sat-Mon ■■■	CHARLESTON BASE CAMP Leo Manders 356 1731 The West Coast is often crisp and clear at this time of year, with snow on the peaks. There are plenty of day walks and potential caving adventures in the area. List Closes: Sat 22 May	Maps BS20; K29,K30
6 Jun Sun ■	LEITH HILL Margot Bowden 332 7020 Easy-moderate trip to the 1384m peak behind Castle Hill Village. Possibility of a round-trip behind the Castle Hill scenic reserve. Start: 8am Church Cnr (away from church)	Maps BW21; K34,35 Approx Cost: \$12
12-13 Jun Sat-Sun ■■	JOLLIEBROOK – GABRIEL Leo Manders 356 1731 Easy-moderate round-trip in Lake Sumner Forest Park. Taking in the open river flat of the Hurunui and the beech forest of Gabriel Stream. Going over a low bush saddle to Jollie Brook and then to Jollie Brook Hut. Downstream from the hut the valley becomes more open and there are a few stream crossings. List Closes: Sat 5 June	Maps BU23; M32,M33
13 Jun Sun ■	MONUMENT - MT HERBERT – GEBBIES PASS Ken Rapson 385 7112 An easy-moderate trip along the eastern rim of Lyttelton Harbour between Purau Saddle and Gebbies Pass. Includes the highpoint of the peninsula, Mt Herbert, Mt Bradley and several bush reserves. Good views, weather permitting. A car shuffle will be needed. Start: 8am Opp. Princess Margaret, Hackthorne Road end	Maps BX24; M36,N36 Approx Cost: \$8
19 Jun	BARN DANCE—SEE SOCIAL EVENTS FOR DETAILS	
20 Jun Sun ■	JOYCES STREAM Kerry Moore 359 5069 Easy-moderate wander up the stream to the south of the Torlesse Range, with good views of the latter. The Midland Rail Line leaves the plains and heads for the hills in this area. Start: 9am Church Cnr (away from church)	Maps BW21; L34,L35 Approx Cost: \$8

26-27 Jun Sat-Sun ■ ■	WATCHDOG HUT - CLYDE RIVER Murray Hight 347 4014 Moderate trip starting from Erewhon Station, with a river valley walk up the Clyde, hopefully in low-river winter conditions with snow covered ridges above. Passing Black Bluff before crossing again to the hut on the sunny side under Watchdog Peak. List Closes: Sat 19 June	Maps BW18,BX18; I35
26 Jun Saturday ■	RED HILL Mary Hines 942 6486 Moderate trip to this 1641m peak between Lake Lyndon Road and Porter Heights. Choice of route depending on conditions. An ice axe will be an advantage if there's snow around. Start: 8am Church Cnr (away from church)	Maps BW20,21; K34,35 Approx Cost: \$10
3-4 Jul Sat-Sun ■ ■	AVALANCHE – CROW Raymond Ford 351 9496 A classic moderate trip ascending Avalanche Peak and following the ridge before dropping down a scree ramp to the new Crow Hut. Sunday is a shorter day to Klondyke Corner. List Closes: Sat 26 June	Maps BV20; K33
4 Jul Sun ■	MT KARETU Chris Leaver 322 6445 Easy-moderate trip to this 970m peak, west of Mt Grey. Starting from Okuku Pass and probably returning via a forestry track. Start: 8am Robbies near Placemakers, Cranford St	Maps BW23,BV23; M34 Approx Cost: \$12
10-11 Jul Sat-Sun ■ ■	MID-WINTER WEEKEND – HAWDON HUT Mary & Geoff Korver 355 3905 Easy tramping to celebrate close to the longest night with a mid-winter feast. Venue is the new Hawdon Hut, 2-3 hours and four stream crossings up the Hawdon Valley. List Closes: Sat 3 Jul	Maps BV21; K33
11 Jul Sun ■	MT WHITE Merv Meredith 322 7239 Moderate trip to this 1741m peak east of Arthurs Pass National Park across the Poulter River from Mt Binser. Start: 7am Church Cnr (away from church)	Maps BV21; L33,L34 Approx Cost: \$19
17-18 Jul Sat-Sun ■ ■	CROESUS TRACK Mary Hines 942 6486 One of the best-known tracks in the Paparoa Range. This moderate trip goes from Blackball to Barrytown taking in lush forest, open tops and plenty of old gold workings. Great views from Ces Clark Hut. List Closes: Sat 10 Jul	Maps BT19,20; K30,31
18 Jul Sun ■	OKUKU HILL TBA Contact Gary Huish 332 7020 if you want to lead this trip Easy-moderate tramp to this 1143m foothill, approached from the Lees Valley Road. Mixture of farm tracks and possibly tussock and scrub. Will probably walk around Pigeon Bush and part of Retreat Stream catchment. Start: 8am Robbies near Placemakers, Cranford St	Maps BV23; M34 Approx Cost: \$12
24-25 Jul Sat-Sun ■ ■	YOUNGMAN STREAM HUT – LILBURN HILL Gary Huish 332 7020 Easy-moderate tramp to the Youngman Stream hut in the upper Ashley. Option of a partial round-trip above the bushline on the Puketeraki Range taking in Tarn Hut. List Closes: Sat 17 Jul	Maps BV22; M34

25 Jul Sun ■	MT ALFORD Chris Leaver 322 6445 Moderate tramp in the foothills south of Mt Hutt, ascending an 1170 m summit at the southern end of the Alford Range. Possible round trip taking in the Ashburton River valley and Alford Scenic Reserve. Start: 8am Church Cnr (away from church)	Maps BX20; K36 Approx Cost: \$14
31 Jul-1 Aug Sat-Sun ■■	MT PEEL Kevin Hughes 332 6281 Moderate-hard ascent of this 1743m landmark in South Canterbury, passing through podocarp forest and subalpine scrub with 7km along the tops beyond Little Mt Peel. Planning to drive down Friday evening, camp at Peel Forest campground. Early start on Sat for Big Mt Peel—a possible 10hr day. List Closes: Sat 24 Jul	Maps BY19; J37
2 Aug Sun ■	RAKAIA GORGE WALKWAY Evelien Bass 03 317 9077 This easy trip offers a return walk with a spectacular clifftop traverse of the Rakaia Gorge to the remains of the Snowdon coal mine. Views across the river to Mt Hutt with its winter (hopefully) coat of snow. Start: 8am Church Cnr (away from church)	Maps BX20; K35 Approx Cost: \$14
7-8 Aug Sat-Sun ■■	WAIUTA - BIG RIVER Leo Manders 356 1731 Easy-moderate walk to a large comfy hut near Reefton. A great area for those interested in the local mining history. Lots of remains to fossick around. Start from Waiuta, which has plenty of its own relics remaining. List Closes: Sat 31 Jul	Maps BT21; L31
8 Aug Sun ■	CASTLE HILL PEAK - GAP - KOWAI STREAM Kevin Hughes 332 6281 Moderate climb from Porters Pass to the highest peak on the Torlesse range at nearly 2000m. Fine views all around. Returning through The Gap and Kowai Stream. Start: 8am Church Cnr (away from church)	Maps BW21; L34,L35 Approx Cost: \$12
14-15 Aug Sat-Sun ■■	MT GRIFFIN Merv Meredith 322 7239 Moderate tramp onto the Griffin Range, north-west of Arthurs Pass National Park. Good bush, great views and historical interest at the serpentine mine. List Closes: Wed 4 Aug	Maps BU20,BV20; K33

President's Report

We have had some great trips away recently including the Milford Track. See Trip Reports in this newsletter. I have had a preview look at the draft trips programme and there is quite a range of exciting trips coming up over the next 12 months starting in July. We hope to have the new trip list to you next month and will make further comments then. Thanks to those of you who turned up for our club night hosting the Minister of Conservation, Kate Wilkinson, last month. We had a good crowd and a great night with many topics discussed and answers provided. The people I spoke to enjoyed the night as did the minister. Thanks to those members who provided valuable input. The minister is based in the Waimakariri Electorate with an office at 130A Percival Street Rangiora. A new office is also opening this week at 356 Main North Road Redwood. Any of you are more than welcome to drop in and discuss conservation matters with Kate.

Barn Dance

The highlight of our social calendar, this year's Barn Dance is being held on Sat 19 June. See **Social Events** in the newsletter for further details. Your executive has worked hard in getting all the last-minute detail sorted to ensure a fabulous night. It would be really helpful if you can buy your tickets **as early as possible** as we need an idea of numbers for catering etc. It will also ensure Mary Hines our organiser doesn't have sleepless nights before the event wondering about ticket sales. You will need to buy your tickets before the event. If you haven't been before, come and find out why this is our top social event.

Weekend, Multi-Day and Base Camps

In order to ensure the best opportunities in securing accommodation for these trips, it is important that members book in as early as possible and definitely well before the closing time. If you think you may want to go on a trip, book in early. You are most welcome to book in even months ahead. You always have the right to pull out before the trip close-off deadline. This helps the trip leader get an idea of numbers so they can plan accordingly. A good example recently was the Okarito Base Camp which, like many areas we visit has limited accommodation and is usually popular on long weekends. We ended up with the last accommodation available as members were slow in booking for the trip. A few of you had to be turned away as a result. For Base Camps the trip leader books the accommodation but we need numbers. We can't pre-book accommodation and then cancel those bookings as popular weekends are crucial to accommodation providers who obviously don't want to turn others away.

Mountain Safety Courses

As published in April Footnotes MSC is running a number of courses. After discussion at our last executive meeting PTC will again be subsidising courses at a rate of 50% and MSC is once again running a number of Alpine Instruction Courses this year similar to last year. All the courses we publish in Footnotes will be ones that PTC will subsidise. We do have a proviso that if you want a club subsidy you'll need to be approved. We will be looking for such things as your trip leading abilities or leading potential, benefits of you up-skilling, helping other club members etc. Contact me if you want to participate. We have also included Outdoor First Aid Courses to encourage members to up-skill. Your executive will monitor uptake and where necessary may alter things in the future, so get in and take advantage of a great opportunity for you to improve your tramping experience.

PTC Promotion Brochure

We are in the process of putting together an A4 folded to DLE size, colour brochure highlighting the benefits of joining our club. This will be a very helpful tool in encouraging new members to join PTC. We would like you all as members to give these to your friends, workmates and acquaintances, as often these make for the best members. We will also encourage you to leave these at places of your work, community centres and even waiting rooms—doctor, dentist vet etc. We need members of all ages and we are particularly doing a drive for younger members. By helping your club in talking to people about us and distributing our brochure will help tremendously in attracting new members. Coupled with an exciting trip program, encouraging instruction as mentioned above, upgraded safety equipment, a great new website which now has lots of information about us, and a range of other membership benefits; we are in a great position to be attracting new members. Once the brochure has been finally approved and printed it will be made available to members both on request and for you to pick up at our club nights. Will let you know further when we have it ready.

Facebook

Evelien Baas is currently looking into putting Peninsula Tramping Club onto Facebook. Will let you know when this is up and running. You will then be able to follow us both up the track in the bush and in cyberspace. Again this is another tool in helping to attract new members.

Happy Tramping - Leo Manders

SOCIAL EVENTS

Annual PTC Barn Dance

Dust off your dancing shoes and join us on
Saturday 19th June from 8pm to midnight
South New Brighton School Hall, Beatty Road, off Estuary Road

The **Incredible Ceilidh Band** will be playing with their MC Colin Forsyth calling the dances so you don't need to know how to dance and you don't need dancing shoes!
 Tickets are \$30 and include a generous supper, all drinks (beer, wine and soft drinks including Merv's tasty and thirst-quenching fruit punch), games and spot prizes!
 Get your tickets from any committee member or from Mary Hines, 942 6486 hinestandm@clear.net.nz

Laughter Yoga

Wednesday 16 June. 6.30-7.30pm **Note date change from May newsletter**

Canterbury Health laboratories corner of Hagley Ave and Tuam St
 (entrance on Hagley Ave) Park on the road.

Meet outside the building entrance at 6:25 Donation of \$5 (maybe less depending on numbers)

Join Terry Thomsen for a laughter yoga session for PTC members. Despite the name, this does not involve yoga exercises and only a little stretching. Mostly it's about laughter in the context of playfulness and breathing, winding down with relaxation exercises at the end. The idea of laughter yoga is that acted-out laughter is as beneficial as natural laughter, and in a group leads to real, contagious laughter. More information at <http://www.laughteryoga.org.nz/>. Be warned—you will have to leave your self-conscious side at the door! We will go out for a meal afterwards.
 For more information contact Terry (379 8481)

NOTICES

Calite stove fuel - available in 1 litre bottles \$7.00 ea Contact Brian Smith ph 355 9945 or brian21@attglobal.net with your order and you can collect or he will take fuel to a Club Night

Deadline for July newsletter Sat 3 July Trip reports, news and items of interest may be e-mailed to Kerry Moore, moorekj@xtra.co.nz phone 359 5069

Next committee meeting 7:30pm Tue 29 June at Kevin Hughes' place

BITS AND PIECES

The Ortovox Winter Forum - Avalanche and Alpine Education Evening

The Twisted Hop, 6 Poplar Street, Lichfield Lanes, Christchurch

Wed 9 June or Wed 23 June

Time: 7.30 pm **Entry:** \$5

Tickets from **Mountain Designs** or **Bivouac** – a limited number will be available at the door. Come along for this event, brought to you by **MSC**

Heights of Winter Rogaine

Shade of Grey. **Saturday 26th June** North Canterbury Area,

45 minutes from Chch.

12 & 6 hour options see www.rogaine.org.nz for details and entry form.

MSC Courses, Canterbury

<http://www.mountainsafety.org.nz/Training/training.asp>

INTRODUCTORY ALPINE & AVALANCHE AWARENESS (Weekend course)

Introductory course aimed at those with little or no experience on snow. Day one covers equipment, ice-axe, self arrest and crampon use. Day two covers same content as Avalanche Awareness course. Fitness essential.

Sat 31 July - Sun 1 August, Cheeseman \$250

Cost includes one night's accommodation @ Snowline Lodge (DBB). Transport and lunches own responsibility.

ALPINE Intro (One Day)

Introductory course aimed at those with little or no experience on snow and/or ice. Course covers personal equipment and mountain movement skills such as ice-axe use, self arrest on snow and crampon use. Fitness essential. Food and transport own responsibility.

Sat 10 July Cheeseman \$100

Sun 11 July Cheeseman \$100

ALPINE Basic (Two days, Overnight in field)

Introductory course aimed at those with little or no experience on snow. Course covers personal equipment, mountain movement skills such as ice-axe use, self arrest on snow and ice, crampon use and snow caving/emergency shelters. Fitness essential.

Sat 24 July - Sun 25 July, Cheeseman, Forest Lodge \$180

Sat 11 Sept - Sun 12 Sept, Cheeseman Forest Lodge \$180

Cost includes back-up accommodation. Food and transport own responsibility.

ALPINE Intermediate (Weekend residential)

For those with basic mountain movement skills who are looking to move onto steeper slopes. Course will introduce tying knots, anchors, belays, rope management, abseiling, rock and ridge travel, and two tool climbing. Applicants must have 10 days experience in mountain travel, and have completed a MSC intro or basic alpine course and an avalanche awareness course or equivalents.

Fitness essential.

Friday 6 August - Sunday 8 August, Temple Basin \$280

Cost includes 2 nights' accommodation, breakfast (2) and dinner (1). Lunch & Transport own responsibility.

ALPINE Advanced (Weekend residential)

This course provides moderately experienced climbers with an introduction to the specialist techniques required for safe climbing in steeper terrain. Topics include tying knots and rope management, escaping the system, raises and lowers including pulley systems, and multi-pitch climbing. Applicants must have 20 days experience in mountain travel, and have completed a MSC Alpine Intermediate course and an avalanche awareness course or equivalents.

Fri 24 Sept - Sun 26 Sept, Temple Basin \$300

Cost includes 2 nights accommodation, breakfast (2) and dinner (1), lunch & transport own responsibility.

Note: Most Alpine courses have prerequisites and acceptance is at the discretion of the coordinator.

AVALANCHE AWARENESS

This is an entry level instruction on avalanche awareness for those with some experience on snow. Covers use of equipment, risk assessment, route selection, terrain recognition and rescue scenarios. Each course includes a compulsory theory session 7-10.30 pm held at the YMCA Christchurch on the Friday before, followed by a field day at Mt Cheeseman or Mt Hutt Ski Area. Mt Hutt theory venue for Sept TBA. All Courses \$100

Fri 2 July (evening) & Sat 3 July, Mt Hutt

Fri 2 July (evening) & Sun 4 July, Mt Hutt

OUTDOOR FIRST AID

A popular 16 hour course which teaches outdoor users the skills to manage accidents and sudden illness in the outdoors. Theory plus teaching through scenarios in the outdoors. Course begins Friday pm.

19-21 Nov 2010 Craigieburn EC \$150.00

Accom. Included, transport and food extra.

OUTDOOR FIRST AID REVALIDATION

For those with MSC certificates under 2 years old, a one day revalidation course is available.

Sun 10 October \$80.00

RISK MANAGEMENT

A course for those leading others in the outdoors. Increase awareness of your own strengths and abilities, learn how to handle risks in the outdoors, manage crises, plan and implement outdoor activities. This is a non-residential course at Cracroft.

16-17 October 2010 Cracroft \$120.00

TRIP REPORTS

Discovery Stream – Sudden Valley 27-28 March

Coordinating by text message, **Gary Huish, Sue Piercey and Paul Smith**, from the east side of Christchurch and **Yvette So, Sue Johnston and Kerry Moore** from NW Chch met at Springfield and set off to Hawdon Shelter on warm nor-west day. As we walked up the Hawdon we passed Sudden Valley Stream just 1 km from the shelter. This is where we planned to emerge the following day on our Hawdon, Discovery Stream, Sudden Valley circuit. With a variety of tracks up the wide Hawdon valley we tended to choose different paths but came together at the East Hawdon branch for a snack stop. Passing the charred piles of the old hut we arrived at Discovery Stream but those that hadn't seen the new Hawdon Hut were keen to see the place so we all had a break at the big new hut. Back-tracking 5 minutes we headed up our stream. Gary had been there before arriving from Sudden Valley. Kerry had been up Discovery Stream on a PTC trip a few years back, taking a NW branch but was prevented from getting to a little tarn below the Polar Range by an impassable waterfall. This time we planned to go further up Discovery Stream to a marked waterfall, bypass it and climb to the ridge that overlooks Sudden Valley.

Walking up Discovery Stream is fun with lots of big boulders and many crossings to be made. Walking poles were useful but one of our team dropped a pole in the stream and was very lucky to find it. Drizzle became rain at times but it was still warm. At the 30m waterfall we walked 100m up a graveled side-gully and found a steep but useful way up into the bush. 15 minutes in the trees and we emerged well above the falls into a pleasant tussock and scree-covered basin. Avoiding the tall, damp tussock we walked up the stream which became a dry stream bed and headed up a steep, bouldery scree towards a low point on the ridge near point 1738.

Unsurprisingly, Gary was first to what was now a cold, windy ridge and began looking for ways into Sudden Valley. The first option was a no-go so we tried going up the ridge to find the notch where Gary and Margot had crossed 20 years ago. This point is probably where Sven's guide would send us. Gary tried another gully but loose rock and the steep mountain-side barred the way. The weather was now cold and drizzly and our ridge too ragged for us to go on, so we retreated.

The basin has no good tent sites but we made the best of the terrain where the stream emerged from a dry bed. One tent was pitched on a flat patch of stones in the stream bed. Two were pitched on a tussock terrace—neither site was flat. Gary fired up the MSR and in a short while we'd had a hot drink and a cheering hot chicken curry with coconut milk—most welcome in cold drizzly conditions. Skipping dessert we scurried away to the downy warmth of sleeping sacks inside minaret tents, emerging in the morning to improved weather.

Sudden Valley was forbidden to us. We headed back down-valley bypassing the 30m fall the way we'd come the day before. Gary's biological positioning system (BPS) guided us unerringly through the woods to the tricky little bit near the 30m falls. We had a good lunch stop at Hawdon Hut then headed at a brisk pace along the quad-bike track back to the cars. Next stop Springfield, then home. Thanks to Gary for a well led exploratory trip. Gary is thinking the NW passage, avoiding the gorge, to the tarn and then onto the Polar Range could be our next approach. I'm keen. 🏔️ KM

Kowhai - Hapuku - 24-25 April 2010

The scheduled trip, Ranger Biv in Arthurs Pass, was off-limits with rain forecast so we elected to do the tried and true Kowhai Rr, Kowhai Saddle, Hapuku Rr walk. With a short first day there was no hurry to get away, though we did have to secrete a bike at the Hapuku end and navigate the changed road layout at the Kowhai end. We were walking by 11:30 on a cool, grey day. Soon we had wet feet as we made the first of many easily managed river crossings. Our first lunch was by a rocky section as we attempted to escape the cool wind. Jade, our guest tramper from Auckland was carrying his cell phone but that wasn't as silly as it seemed as the device sported a useful 5 megapixel camera. Early afternoon, rain threatened but limited itself to a mere drizzle. Carefully looking for cairns allowed us to take occasional shortcut tracks through scrub and avoid rock-hopping. An hour from the hut a good track goes into manuka scrub alongside the left bank of the river. By mid-afternoon we'd arrived at Kowhai Hut where we lazed. Dan and Kerry tried to chop into a very knotty log and gave up. Margaret read an FMC article on mining in national parks. Jade posed questions such as—the man taking the lift to the 14th floor and then having to walk to the 20th. We failed to guess why he had to do this.

Early evening, a family of five arrived complete with red spaniel. With 6 bunks and a total of 10 people in the hut they knew some of them would need to sleep on the floor. They elected to do their cooking on the wooden porch of the hut and then came inside where Jade kept the kids amused with card games. Margaret had reservations about allowing the dog to come inside but the quiet, well mannered animal won a place on the floor with its family. Overnight a NWER came up so we woke at daybreak to a very mild Sunday.

We dined and packed up in good time, took group photos of the tramping family and our foursome and headed for the upper reaches of the Kowhai River. The bush section of the track is getting overgrown and notes in the hut book have complained that the track is hard to follow. The saddle isn't the high point of the Kowhai River. The river arises a few km further inland on the flanks of Uwerau. We took photos on the saddle and headed steeply into the headwaters of the Hapuku River. Older maps show the track descending a spur but it goes down the gully. Lower down a good bush track begins and goes all the way to Hapuku Hut. After a brief mid-afternoon break at the hut we set off on the last leg—a short stretch of river, bush track, a river crossing, then a climb in bush to bypass a gorgy section and finally a broad expanse of gravelly river. Back at the river, we crossed easily in low-flow and walked along an impressive gravel terrace.

Back at Hapuku Hut Dan and Kerry were plotting how best to retrieve the car quickly. We reasoned that Jade, being the youngest by a long margin would be fastest and the obvious candidate to walk ahead and then ride the bike 18km back to get the car. Jade agreed to do the deed and set off without his pack. A noble Dan agreed to carry the extra pack. The three tail-enders arrived at the Hapuku car park well behind Jade and brewed a cuppa. Soon after we'd downed the drink Jade rolled up in the car—a plan well executed.

We chose a café in Kaikoura's tourist locale to stoke up and then motored on home. This is a good trip and ideal when rain threatens on the main divide. We were **Margaret Clark, Dan Pryce, Jade Wood, Kerry Moore**

 KM

Milford Track - 9-12 May 2010

Twelve of us drove down on the Saturday, taking about nine hours, and stayed the night at Te Anau Lakeview Holiday Park, (recommended at \$26 p.p.). Our drivers positioned the cars at Milford on Sunday morning, getting a ride back. This took about 3 hours so we had more than enough time to explore Te Anau. The big bonus was that we were able to see Takahe roaming freely in a large enclosure at the wildlife centre, close to the motor camp. We caught the 1pm bus to Te Anau Downs, then had a pleasant one hour boat ride to Glade Wharf, which was under water due to recent heavy rain. However despite the lake being 2 metres above normal, (down a metre from an 8 year high the previous week), our track was dry and mostly undamaged.

Glade House, the first night's accommodation for guided walkers, is just 5 minutes from the wharf. Clinton Hut, our destination, was a little further but still only 1½ hours easy walking beside the Clinton River. Each of "our" huts cater for 40 independent walkers. Guided walkers use different facilities at more luxurious huts.

Next day's walking was mostly on wide, level paths through nice beech forest with some quite huge trees. We followed Clinton River past the forks where North Branch swings away to the right and on to a smart lunch hut

with covered BBQ area for guided walkers, where there are views of Hirere Falls. Gradually the near-vertical walls of this glacially carved valley closed in on us. Everybody eagerly took photos at the marked site of our first good view of McKinnon Pass; for us just a high misty saddle between higher grey mountains. Both Sunday and this day had been overcast with no rain. We got occasional glimpses of the sun through the clouds, which mostly stayed clear of the mountain tops. Hidden Lake, just off the main track was at the foot of a mighty, almost sheer rock face reaching up 1,100 metres before angling back out of sight. Somehow bits of sparse vegetation clung to the rock, creating a green wall with one thin waterfall angling down it. We walked on for another hour then had lunch at Marlene's Creek, just past the Bus Stop shelter. This stream flows from Castle Mount 2,122m above and often stops walkers during heavy rain. We could see where a mass of water had skewed the heavy bridge foundations, leaving the debris-strewn bridge on an angle over a mass of boulders—but today, no water! The half metre of rain ten days before had wrought its damage and run straight on.

The track was a little rougher from here, and started to push uphill, but was still easy. We passed Pomplona Hut just as a helicopter was taking off from its helipad but the grumpy warden would not let us in. St. Quintin Falls is 230metres high, yet looks smaller than the one we saw at Hidden Lake.

It took about six hours for the 16.5km from Clinton Hut to Mintaro Hut. Again the inside water supply was shut off for winter and flush toilets locked up. The placing of winter water taps at both huts seemed badly thought out. Clinton's tap ran straight onto wooden decking creating a potential ice hazard. At Mintaro, lack of a drain caused a soggy standing area. Mintaro is a two storey hut which must rarely get the sun in that narrow canyon.

Day three was all we had hoped for. The weather forecast was spot-on with clouds disappearing as we zigzagged up towards the pass. The sign said two hours from Mintaro Hut, which it may have been to the high point of the track but we all made the pass itself well within that time. We had been walking mostly in shade with sunlit snow tussock getting closer above us. Then over a rise a cross quickly became the top of a stocky monument to Quintin McKinnon, the first European to discover this route. Looking back, we could see the chasm of Clinton Valley, dark and mysterious, whilst all around us were sunlit peaks.

Small tannin stained tarns dotted the tussock saddle, its pommel stretching up towards a great amphitheatre of rock, the source of the Clinton River and above, remnants of ice and snow on Mount Hart and Aiguille Rouge. The way forward though seemed blocked—just a vertical "12 second drop" not 20 metres in front of the memorial, seeming to stretch away to both sides until meeting the surrounding buttresses of Mount Balloon and Mount Wilmore.

Over-towering all was Mount Elliott, (1990m). Kevin wriggled forward on his stomach, and extending his camera on a pole over the lip of the valley wall, tried to capture the view below. The rest of us took more conventional photos in all directions. We played around for half an hour or so, revelling in this incredible experience. Several of our party had done the track before in poor weather and not seen a thing. Today was just exceptional in every way.

Finally, we moved on another 20 minutes to the high point of the track at 1,069m. The old shelter was being replaced and we were just a few days too early to see it completed. The views were fantastic but how were we going to get down? The track took us further east, until we reached the head of a broad gully sweeping up from below and we finally started down, quite steeply. The 8km walk to Dumpling Hut rapidly drops 970metres, following Roaring Burn which is fed by the Jervois Glacier. We walked until we ran out of sun, sitting down for lunch at 1pm. This was when we discovered one of our party missing. Kevin did all the right things but it still took some time to discover that our missing member had just carried on ahead. Our fears of someone inadvertently testing how long it really took for something to hit bottom, from the pass, were thankfully unfounded.

DoC has built a staircase down the Roaring Burn, allowing us continuous views of its numerous waterfalls. Blue-grey rocks, shot through with quartz, and worn into scallops, slopes, steps and bowls pour the sparkling water in endless cascades, all hidden in dense bush, except to we privileged few. It was hard to drag ourselves away and press on. Then suddenly through breaks in the trees we could look back and up to see the great wall of "12 second drop". The map shows a 500 metre sheer cliff. On, past Dudleigh Falls viewpoint to the side-track for Sutherland Falls. We crossed the swing-bridge, past the Quintin Public Shelter and guided walkers' hut. It is

impossible to describe the force a 580m waterfall creates crashing down on the rocks below. It's like walking into a storm, with spray billowing out, and up, wetness, noise, sodden tussock and exhilaration. Looking up, there was blue sky and white tumbling water. Turn around and it's all sunlight and rainbow. Several folk from another group emerged from a scramble behind the falling waters, soaked and excited, babbling, frozen but not wanting to leave.

Back at the junction, Kevin counted heads before we headed off on the last hour's walk to Dumpling Hut, or huts—named after Dumpling Hill across the valley to the west. It is a bit of a damp trudge from bunkroom huts to kitchen block and further to the "winter" long drop. I wonder how many get lost on the way at night. Fat wekas forage between the huts and even in them, given the chance. Our fellow trampers celebrated a 50th birthday and fussed over a 13 month old baby brought in from Milford by dad to join his mum at the party.

We were up early for the last day, keen not to miss our 2pm boat at Sandfly Point. The promised rain came on as we started walking but was never too unpleasant, just adding more life to the luxuriant forest. It is 18 km to the finish but again is very easy walking, though with plenty more swing bridges and board walks. We became almost blasé about the lovely waterfalls along the way. McKay Fails and Bell Rock still had us grabbing our cameras, though. Then, beside the Arthur River and around Lake Ada, the path followed a rock terrace blasted out of the cliff by prison gangs and contractors in the late 19th century. We walked there on the ruptured edges of vertical strata heaved from horizontal by unimaginable forces over the millennia.

Another hour further on, there is a shelter and toilet stop. The various parties we had shared huts with, but saw little of during the day before, all seemed to group there for a last lunch in the rain. Wekas competed with the baby for attention as we sorted through our remaining food for treats to avoid carrying them out. Then with mixed feelings we walked the last 90 minutes to Sandfly Point, not wanting to finish but also eager for real coffee and hot showers.

We had seen blue ducks and tuis as well as numerous tits, fantails and waterfalls, and had a great time. I would love to have seen kakariki too, but one needs a reason to return. Some of our group had planned to continue on to the Routeburn Track before returning to Christchurch, but the weather was not suitable so we all enjoyed a final night at Te Anau Motor Camp before the long drive home.

Everybody should walk the Milford Track—preferably before any more hand-rails and notices are added. It is easy walking, not too long, and still not too crowded. Those who can now cross it off the list, thanks to **Kevin Hughes** our very capable leader, are:

Margaret Clark, Pam Crosswell, Linda Gardner, Helen Harkness, Tim & Mary Hines, Mary McKeown, Yvette So, Trevor Blogg, Barry McKessar and Bill Hambidge. 🏠 BH

Barn Dance

Saturday 19th June



A great
winter
warmer